



World Christian Fellowship

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Glory of God- Part 01 New Year 2022

2 Corinthians 3:18, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The culminating reality of the new covenant is that it is a transforming covenant.

In the new covenant we look at the glory of the Lord revealed in the face of Jesus Christ unobstructed.

We see Christ in all His wonder, in all His beauty and all His glory!

2 Corinthians 4:6, *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

So, as we look at the face of Christ, we see the glory of God revealed. Nothing obscures us.

We don't have a veil over our face like Moses did. There's nothing obscure or hidden or dark or shadowy.

The new covenant, the gospel, the message of Jesus Christ is clear. The light has been turned on, and we can look with an unobstructed view right at the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

As we look at the glory of God and focus on the glory of God revealed in Christ, we are moved from one level of glory to the next by the Holy Spirit, who is moving us into the image of the very glory we behold.

This is what progressive sanctification is all about.

This is Christian growth.

This is the process of becoming like Christ.

Moving from one level of glory to the next as we gaze at the glory of the Lord.

We as believers, who have come to participate by faith and by grace in the new covenant, have been put into a relationship with God by which we can see His glory radiated through Jesus Christ. As we look at Him unobstructed on the pages of Scripture, and in so looking can literally be transformed into His image from one level of glory to the next.

All of that simply to say we are to live to the glory of God.

We are to live to move from one level of glory to the next level, ever more and more like Jesus Christ, increasingly devoted and manifesting to the glory of God.

If we say we are going to glorify God with our lives, how do we do that?

How do we really move from one level of glory to the next?

The Bible teaches about glorifying the Lord, how to move from glory to glory in your life.

1. Aim for the Glory of God.

If you want to glorify God you have to aim your life at that purpose, you must aim your life at that purpose.

The very goal of your life is the glory of God.

That is the focal point.

That is what you direct your life toward.

Jesus certainly did that.

John 8:50, *And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.*

Jesus didn't live for His own glory.

Jesus didn't live to fulfil His own agenda.

Jesus always honoured, exalted, pleased, and lifted up God.

Even when lifting God meant humbling Himself,
Even if exalting God meant humiliating Himself,
Even if setting God in the place of worship meant putting
Himself in the place of cursing.

He was willing to do that because He was always focused on
the glory of God.

God being glorified was His purpose. So it is in our lives that
we must live to glorify God.

1 Corinthians 10:31, *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or
whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

it's a life focus. It isn't so much talking about eating and
drinking, it's talking about all of life going down even to that
which is as mundane as eating and drinking.

The commonest thing we do. You would think that might get
left out.

Glorify God when you speak,
glorify God when you act and behave,
glorify God when you do ministry,
glorify God when you worship,
glorify God when you meet people's needs,
glorify God in spiritual and religious ways
Glorify God in the ways of your behaviour.

But eating and drinking?
That's mundane thing.

That is the whole point.

At the very basest point of human existence, eating and drinking, when you are just meeting biological need, do it to the glory of God. That becomes the focal point of everything you do in your life. That's the focus.

Ask yourself, "Does it glory God?"

Will it glorify God?

Will it bring honour to His name?

Will it exalt Him?

Whatever it is, no matter how apparently or superficially mundane, it has inherent in it a capacity for you to honour God, even the simplest behaviour like eating and drinking.

Now, you must aim your life to glorify God.

That must be the all-consuming purpose of your life.

That must be all-consuming direction of your life.

You are never going to do anything wilfully, knowingly, that does not bring honour, that does not bring glory to God.

You want to honour Him with everything you do.

You want to exalt Him, praise Him, lift Him up, worship Him, glorify Him.

But let me take that a little deeper because that's general.

Do a little inventory in your life, and you can ask yourself a few questions that will help you know whether you are aimed at that purpose.

a) Prefer the Glory of God above everything

Do I prefer the glory of God above everything else?

Simple question yet it has profound implications.

Is the very purpose of my life to bring glory to God so much that His glory transcends any of my own personal desires, relationships, goals, dreams, ambitions?

It can be very costly to aim your whole life at glorifying God.

Some illustrations.

When you make the commitment to glorify God as a way of life, there may be some serious consequences.

Moses, in Exodus 32, had come down to find the people of Israel worshipping a golden calf. He had been up getting the law of God.

Moses came down and found that they were worshiping a golden calf. Not only were they worshiping a golden calf, but they were engaged in horrific iniquities, gross sins and he had to confront this.

The saddest point of all was that his own brother, Aaron, who was supposed to be in charge of spiritual leadership was leading the people in this lascivious, lewd, immoral idolatry. In fact, what was going on was a violation of the first half of the Decalogue that was being given on the mountain. It was very defiant, happening at the very time God was giving His law. His law was being violated.

Exodus 32:25, *Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies),*

It was a terrible dishonour to the God they claimed was their God for them to behave in such a terrible way.

What glory did it bring to God?

None.

It detracted from His glory, for here they were worshiping and conducting themselves in immoral way, which was blasphemy against His holiness.

They were causing themselves and God to be mocked among their enemies.

Aaron had led them into this out-of-control behaviour.

Exodus 32:26, *then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side—come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.*

Now the issue here is the honour of God.

The issue here is the glory of God.

The issue here is to exalt the character of God as over against this debauchery.

Who wants to glorify God?

“And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him,”

The priestly tribe came, those who were responsible for the spiritual side of things, the worship.

They said we are with you. We are willing to glorify God. We are going to take our stand.

An unpopular stand, because all the rest of the people were happy to be doing what they were doing.

Sin has its pleasure.

Exodus 32:27-28, *And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side,*

and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.”²⁸ So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Do you want to glorify God?

Put your sword on and go kill everybody.

Go kill your brother.

Go kill your friend.

Go kill your neighbour.

Moses was not asking them to go kill some enemy.

Moses was not asking him to go kill strangers.

But their friends, brothers and neighbours.

Are you really devoted to the glory of God so much so that you will take this kind of action against those who are closely related to you?

God’s glory is at stake here.

His name is being dishonoured. This is a very pivotal moment in redemptive history.

They have been led out of captivity.

They are now in the wilderness.

God is giving them, His law.

God is reconstituting you as His people.

God is for the first time ever in history giving them the Decalogue, giving the Mosaic Law.

They are coming into a new relationship with God based upon that.

This is a new day, and God wants to make something very clear one thing, ***Disobedience is intolerable.***

This is a pivotal moment!

God wants to lay down the message that He doesn't tolerate disobedience. Just like He laid it down with Ananias and Sapphira in the early days of the church.

God wants these people killed, a representative number of them slaughtered. God is gracious, and He doesn't always do this and even in this case He didn't kill everybody. Amid His wrath there is always mercy.

But He wanted a very clear lesson given to people that there is a blessing and a cursing tied with this law.

If you disobey it, there's going to be a high price.

If you obey it, you will be blessed.

Do you want to glorify God?

Put on your sword and go kill your family, friends, and acquaintances.

We know that these Levites didn't just roll over and let their head get chopped off. They didn't just lie there while somebody ran a sword through them.

Can we even imagine the chaos and the debacle?

Can't imagine what was going on in the camp as these people were trying to escape from the murderous Levites who were trying to carry out the will of God by slaughtering them. By the time three thousand were dead, killed in hand-to-hand combat, God said, "That's enough, I have made My point."

Sin is a very serious thing.

Exodus 32:29, *Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.*

With obedience comes blessing.

This is a graphic, early on demonstration of blessing and cursing coming with obedience or disobedience.

Exodus 32:30, *Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."*

These people had worshiped an idol, and the price for that is high. For some of them, death.

Focus on the people who were willing to glorify God even if it meant a severing in their family, a severing in their friendships, a severing among their neighbours.

There may be a price to pay in your family, there may be a price to pay among your friends, and there may be a price to pay among your neighbours. You may generate a great hostility.

There is enough carnality and compromise in the Christian church that if people decide they are going to live solely and only to the glory of God, they might find themselves losing Christian friends who are willing to live at a compromising level.

They might find themselves being severed from acquaintances that have been long-time acquaintances who aren't willing to live at that level of spiritual devotion.

They might even find that they become the strangeness in their own Christian family because they are so totally devoted to the glory of God.

If you aim your life at the glory of God and you are going to live that way, then you will prefer Him above everything and everyone no matter what, even if it costs you a family.

Jesus said it.

Luke 12:51-53, *Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. ⁵²For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. ⁵³Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."*

Even if it costs you a friendship, even if it costs you alienation from your neighbours. It's sort of like taking a Nazarite vow, you just stick out, you are just kind of odd.

In John 21 Jesus meets the disciples in Galilee in a post-resurrection appearance. He has told them to stay in the mountain and wait for Him. But the Lord comes and asks Peter three times if he loves Him.

Jesus had taught Peter, *"If you love Me you will keep My commandments."*

Peter had disobeyed, and therefore his love could rightly be questioned.

Peter replied three times, *"You know I love You."*

Jesus responding to the affirmation of Peter's love.

John 21:18-19, *Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.*" ¹⁹This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

Now that must have been good news to Peter, because every other time he faced death he chickened out.

Every other time life was at stake, he vacillated.

When confronted even by a little girl and asked if he knew the person from Galilee named Jesus, he denied it. Peter had been a classic coward.

The Lord told him that the day would come when he would be a hero just to sustain him through life with the confidence that in the end he wouldn't fail.

The day would come when somebody would say to Peter, "Peter, either you deny Jesus Christ, or we are going to kill you." Peter would say, "Kill me, I will glorify Him at any cost."

That's new for Peter.
He hasn't been like that in the past.

It must have been wonderful to know he would be like that in the future.

Tradition tells us they crucified him, and that he didn't want to be crucified like Jesus, he didn't think he was worthy, so he asked to be crucified upside-down, which they did. But that's how he glorified God. It cost him his life.

It could cost you your life.
It could cost you your neighbours,
It could cost you your friends,
It could cost you your family.

Just to aim your life at that purpose is definitely going to isolate you from the crowd. But if you are a person who is completely committed to the glory of God, there's a price to pay.

It was Peter who, by the wonderful grace and power of God, was willing to pay that price who wrote.

1 Peter 4:16, *Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

If you must suffer to glorify God, suffer.
The Spirit of grace and glory rests on you.

What a great promise.

So, what does it mean to aim your life at that purpose? It means to be consumed with the glory of God so that you prefer it above all else. It really doesn't matter what the consequences are at all.

Hebrews 11:36-39, *Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— ³⁸of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,*

Why did they do it?

Because they cared more about the glory of God than anything else.

What makes the apostle Paul hear people say to him, “You go to Jerusalem, and you know what’s going to happen you? You are going to be put in prison. You could die.

Paul replies.

Acts 21:13, *Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*

The compelling issue.

When you live your life to the glory of God you really are willing to sacrifice family, friends, neighbours, your own life, your own life.

- You are not liable to die, or get martyred in this culture, but you are liable to have to give up your ambitions.
- You may be asked by God to give up your goals, your dreams, your plans, your possessions.

Therein lies a grave measure of self-sacrifice.

b) You suffer when God suffers.

You feel pain when He is dishonoured.

Ask yourself the question,

Do you feel pain when God is dishonoured?

If the answer is yes, then you are living to His glory.

We are talking about empathy.

Whoever you love the most has the tightest grip on your heart and if they feel pain, you will feel it!

Look at that precious little child that God has given you, and anything coming into that life that brings pain to that little life wrenches your heart.

Look at that life partner God has given to you. Whatever comes in to his or her life to tear up that life that you love so much, tears your own heart out.

Do you feel the same about God?

Do you understand empathy toward God?

Do you understand sympathy toward God?

Do you have a heart of compassion in terms of feeling the pain that God feels when His name is reproached or dishonoured?

Psalm 69:9, *Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.*

David is so passionately consumed with the honour and the glory of God that it consumes him.

“Zeal” is a marvellous word.

Zeal is a mixture of passionate affection and righteous indignation.

Zeal means that there is something I love so much I hate anything that taints it, stains it, injures it, detracts from it, threatens it. It's that mingling of holy affection and righteous wrath.

David said, "I look at the temple, I look at Your house, and I just have such passion, such holy affection for what it stands for, and such righteous indignation for anything that threatens its purity."

When You're dishonoured, I feel the pain.

When Your name is shamed, I feel the agony,

When you hurt, I get hurt.

We live in a culture where God's name is dishonoured all the time, where God is mocked and scorned and laughed at in every imaginable form of entertainment that are a stench to the nostrils of God. A blasphemy to His name and a shame. We can just kind of take them or leave them.

When someone takes God's name in vain, which is an act of blasphemy, does your blood curdle?

Do you feel empathy?

Do you feel the shame, the pain, the reproach falling on you that falls on Him?

If you are really consumed with the glory of God then you are going to feel the pain that God feels when His name is dishonoured.

I look at my wife, I look at my children, I look at the people around me that I love; I can't imagine I would ever do anything to inflict unnecessary pain on them, that I would ever do anything to shame them or to bring reproach on them, or to injure or to wound them.

Why?

Because I love them so much.

They are so close, so much a part of my life.

Yet, I am the temple of the living God who dwells in me by His Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

How much of your life is spent either wittingly or unwittingly bringing shame upon one whom I affirm to love and who is so intimately related to you?

If I aim my life at the glory of God, then I am going to feel the pain that He feels when He's dishonoured, and if I feel it deeply enough, I am not going to want to dishonour Him.

This was very much the attitude of Jesus in John 2.

When Jesus began His ministry, He went to the temple. He came as the prophet said He would come to His temple.

Jesus went into the temple, and He found things He didn't like. He found money changers, ox, sheep, and doves, and they were all being sold there to be used as sacrifices at exorbitant rates. They were cheating people on the exchange of currency that had to take place because people came from all over the ancient world. It was a wretched marketplace run by a bunch of hypocrites and sinners.

So, Jesus made a whip out of cords which He wove together, and He drove them all out of the temple. Now that will tell you something about the formidable character of His humanity.

He was man. He went into the temple, a massive place filled with thousands upon thousands of people, and single headedly tore the place up, and sent everybody out.

He drove them all out of the temple poured out the coins of the moneychangers, overturned their tables. To those who were selling the doves.

John 2:16-17, *And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"* ¹⁷*Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

Jesus literally put into practice what David felt in Psalm 69.

It was the passion for the purity of the worship of God that caused Jesus to do what He did.

That is the righteous indignation.

That is a holy wrath.

Jesus felt the pain when God was dishonoured. That's the mark of one who lives to the glory of God.

c) You will be content.

You will be content to be outdone by others as long as God is glorified.

Your pride will be gone.

There's a lot of pride among Christians. It can show up in the church, the wranglings and hassles in the church in people who want credit for this and want credit for that.

Ego can be a big factor. We want credit for this, or credit for that. We want to be the most noble or the most respected preacher or teacher.

But if you are aiming only at the glory of God, then it doesn't matter what happens to you. You can humble yourself like Jesus did and take on the form of a servant.

You can be mocked and spit on and imprisoned like Paul was and it really doesn't matter, because all you care about is that God be exalted, the Lord be glorified.

Paul writes to the Philippians while he was in his first imprisonment.

Of course, once he was put into prison his envious, jealous detractors, the next breed of preachers coming along who had an exalted view of themselves wanted to use that as a way to push themselves up.

Paul is in prison because there's secret sin in his life. Or he is in prison because he somehow convoluted the doctrines, or he messed up the truth, and God had to take him and put him in prison.

They were discrediting Paul and speaking evil against his character.

Philippians 1:15-18, *Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷but the latter out of love, knowing*

that I am appointed for the defence of the gospel.¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

Here is a man consumed with the glory of God.

This is a man consumed with Christ.

It doesn't matter to me whether they accuse me.

It doesn't matter whether my reputation survives.

It doesn't matter what people think of me.

What matters is that Christ is preached. Let my candle go out if the Son of righteousness can but rise with healing in His beams.

I am not the issue.

Now there is a life aimed at the glory of God, preferring the glory of God above everything else, feeling the pain when God is dishonoured, and being content to be outdone by others who do what you do if God is glorified.

You may not go to prison, but can you rejoice with your whole heart when somebody else does what you do better than you do it?

If you are consumed with the glory of God. You paint and you want it to be the honour of Christ, somebody else paints better to the honour of Christ, can you rejoice in that?

You sing, somebody sings better.

You teach, somebody teachers better.

You preach, somebody preaches better.

You write, somebody writes better.

You have had an impact on people's lives, somebody's had a better impact, or a greater or more far-reaching.

It is if you are consumed with the glory of God.