

The Glory of God and Glorifying Him

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In today's culture people tend to glorify other people. Athletes are glorified (praised and given great honor) for their physical talents and championships. Political leaders are glorified for their leadership. Unfortunately, we are often disappointed by these all too human objects of glory. We discover that the glorified athlete cheated and the glorified politician lied.

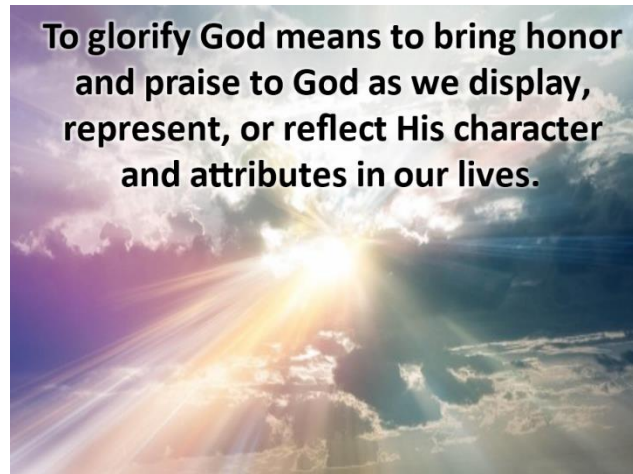
This is why the Christian is to focus on giving God glory. What is the chief end or purpose of man? This well-known and classic answer has been given in the Westminster Confession. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Now this is keeping it simple! Just glorify God and enjoy His presence in our lives.

The glory of God signifies the magnificence or awesome splendor of the display of His attributes, perfections, and person which are vividly portrayed as brilliant light coming forth from His throne (Dan. 2:22; 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 22:5). The glory of God relates to the splendor of the eternal and unchanging God whose character and attributes make Him the unrivaled and only God of the universe. One way to summarize God's glory is "his majesty" (2 Pet. 1:17), "the majesty" (1 Chron. 29:11), "full of majesty" (Ps. 29:4), or "clothed with honour and majesty" (Ps. 104:1). This "majesty" refers to the greatness and magnificence of God and His eternal attributes and perfections as God which are not only visible in Heaven (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; Luke 2:14) but also on earth (Isa. 6:3; Rom. 1:20).

It is this glory (God's attributes and character) that we as Christians are to reflect and display in our lives and before others. This is called glorifying God or properly representing God's character and ways in our daily conduct. In other words, we bring a small sample of God's magnificent and resplendent glory down here where we live when we act like God!

This is what Isaiah 43:7 means when it states: “For I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” This is true for every Christian. When we become God’s new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) we are born again and are now to glorify God with our lives – revealing His glory in our conduct and living.

The Bible teaches that we glorify God in both worship (our lips) and our conduct and character (our life). To glorify God means to bring honor and praise to God as we display, represent, or reflect His character and attributes in our lives. Think about it. We cannot bring glory or honor to God if we are not properly representing who God is in our daily living and relationships with others.



1 Corinthians 10:31 says:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory (*doxa* – *praise and honor*) of God.”

In other words, in all our giving, living, eating, drinking, working, worshipping, and playing of sports God is to be glorified. This means God is to be honored as we reflect His character through all our actions and attitudes that pertain to our everyday living. In order to glorify God or give Him the honor He deserves we must display and represent Him in everything we do. In other words, we glorify God when we represent His holiness, righteousness, love, mercy, and grace in our worship, relationships, and everyday living.

The New Testament word for “glory” (*doxa*) is where we derive the word doxology.

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”

To glorify God means to give Him doxology or praise. The etymology of the Greek word actually connotes forming an opinion, judgment, or view of something or someone. In the case of God, we form a right opinion of Him for He is holy, good, righteous, loving, and merciful. Our estimate of God results in glorifying Him in praise, honor, worship, thanksgiving, and with all aspects of our living.

One preacher compared our understanding of God with our understanding of the sea. He said, "I know the sea but I don't know the vastness of the sea. There is a part of the sea that washes up on the sands of my life. I can swim in it. It lulls me to sleep with its waves. And yet, I know only a very little part of the sea. In a similar way, God is so near that we can't help but hear and see Him. It is like stepping into the sea and feeling the refreshing sensation of the water rushing over our toes. It is like the sea saying, 'Come on in, there is more. Take another step and see how good it feels.'"

God is so close we can almost reach out and touch Him. And yet, He is so glorious and magnificent in His eternal character and attributes that we will never completely understand all about Him. I think there are times when God reaches down and helps us in special ways, and we realize beyond any doubt that it's the Lord doing it. He is our glorious Lord, filled with splendor and majesty, and we should always be ready to glorify or honor Him with our lives.

This is how glorifying God works. First, we form a proper opinion, sense, and understanding about God from the Scriptures (God is holy, righteous, loving, merciful, gracious, etc.). Second, we then bring praise and honor to Him (ascribe His worth back to Him) as we reflect these same Godlike qualities in our own worship, character, and conduct. In other words, glorifying God is always linked with a proper assessment and understanding of His character and ways - who God really is in His eternal being and attributes. Therefore, I glorify or honor God when I properly assess what God is like and then represent or display His character and attributes in my time of worship and lifestyle choices.

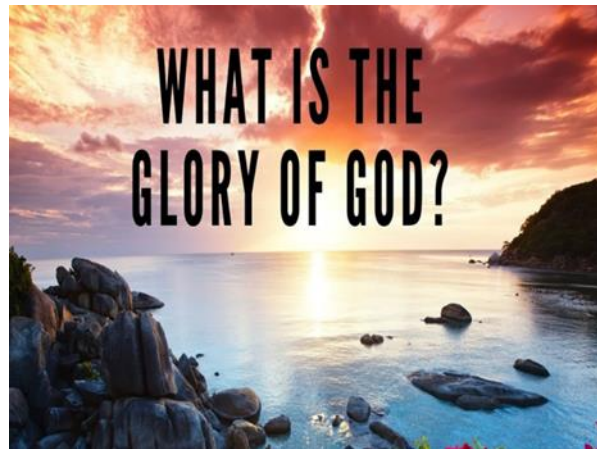
For instance, when we seek to glorify God in our worship we are essentially saying: "God, this is what I think about You. This is my opinion and assessment of your character and attributes." This is somewhat alarming when we see the marketing of worship today which in various ways has become fleshly-oriented, man-focused, and man-pleasing entertainment instead of truly God-glorifying.

Johann Sebastian Bach once said:

"All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub."

Bach headed his compositions with the words: "Jesus help me." He ended them with "To God alone the praise."

When we think of the glory of the Lord, our minds are often flooded with images of brilliant light. This is actually a Biblical truth for God reveals His eternal and invisible existence and the intrinsic glory of His majesty, splendor, and greatness through a visible display of light on His throne (Rev. 4:1-4).



1 Timothy 6:16 declares this about God:

“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

This is why we sing:

“Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.”

It is certainly fitting to understand God’s resplendent glory as a visible expression of light. Scripture often describes the glory of God in terms of a radiant light that shines brighter than anything that we experience on earth. The term glory is a word used in the Bible to describe God's eternal splendor and majesty which is reflected in radiant light.

Exodus 33:18-23 gives a well-known account of God’s outward display of radiant or brilliant glory in a theophany, which is a visible expression of God to man, who is normally spirit or immaterial in His existence. “And he (*Moses*) said, I beseech thee,

shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness (*an attribute of God and expression of His glory*) pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by (*the outshining brilliance that is a reflection of God's eternal being, deity, existence, character, and attributes, which portray the dignity, magnificence or awesome splendor of God*), that I will put thee in a clift (*hole or crevice*) of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by (*an anthropomorphic expression of God – assigning a body to God who is immaterial in His external being and existence – John 4:24*): And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”

This is an amazing account of God's radiant display of His own glory. Now think about this. It's this same glory that we are to represent and reflect in our day-to-day living. It's the light of God's attributes, character, and ways which we are to display in our speech, worship, and relationships with others. Why? So we can bring glory to God or honor who God is in His eternal essence or being. Actually, the glory of God is the invisible character of God that is made visible as we properly reflect His attributes and ways in our daily conduct.

1 Kings 8:10-11 also speaks of God's display of outward glory:

“And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD. So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.”

Again, the brilliant light that emanates from God's eternal being represents who God is in His unchanging attributes, character, and ways. In the simplest of terms, God's glory is the essence of His nature, and we give glory or honor to Him by recognizing and representing His nature and likeness in our everyday living. God's glory is the radiance of his crowing attribute of holiness and the radiance of his many other infinitely worthy and valuable perfections. This means we can only give Him glory when we properly reflect His attributes in our daily lives in relation to everything that we do and say. When I am holy I glorify God. When I am loving I glorify God. When I am righteous I glorify God. When I am merciful and gracious to

others I am glorifying God. When I am humble, a servant, compassionate, and forgiving I am glorifying God with my life. This is why we can sing these words.

“In my life Lord,
Be glorified, be glorified;
In my life Lord,
Be glorified today.

In my song Lord,
be glorified, be glorified;
In my song Lord,
Be glorified today.

In your church, Lord,
Be glorified, be glorified;
In your church, Lord,
Be glorified today.

In my heart Lord,
Be glorified, be glorified;
In my heart Lord,
Be glorified today.”

Only when possessing a right view about God can we properly reflect God in our worship and overall lifestyle. When glorying the Lord, we demonstrate before the world who God is and what God is like in His eternal character and ways. Everything we do is to revolve around God’s glory which means we are to bring honor to God as we reflect and display His attributes, character, and righteous ways in our daily conduct and living. In other words, we can only glorify God when we uphold His character and properly represent Him in everything we do.

I’m convinced that God is not getting the glory in what man identifies as worship. The theatrics and entertainment of men have entered the worship scene and has overtaken the glory of God. God is not represented in His character of holiness and righteousness and man’s entertainment is stealing the glory away from God by placing it upon people and their religious performances. Many today possess the mentality that going to church is “showtime for the sheep.”

Someone remarked:

“When ministry becomes performance, then the sanctuary becomes a theater, the congregation becomes an audience, worship becomes entertainment, and man’s applause and approval become the measure of success.”

Hand waving, the sound of a rebellious rock culture, dancing, wiggling around on the stage, comedian type preaching, organs playing in the background while a man tells tear-jerking stories have turned the church service into the atmosphere of a hockey arena or football game, where certain people are playing on the field, and the rest are like spectators sitting in the grandstands, clapping and waiving their hands. I once saw a so-called preacher on TV light a cigarette and smoke it while making a point about smoking. Is God really getting the glory in such an atmosphere as this or has the glory and focus been shifted to man? It’s clear that much of what is happening today in the modern church is focused on man’s glory but not God’s honor.

Isaiah 42:8

“*I am the LORD: that is my name (not Buddha, Allah, or any other false god or cult leader): and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*”

God will not share His glory with anyone else! Since this is true, I must now officially enter what many call the “worship wars” of the 21st century. Let me get more specific about man sharing and even stealing God’s glory. Historically churches never applauded in response to musical expression in worship. We do not find this part of the early church services. Now, I know what they say. Clapping is a Scriptural response in worship and that I am just too dry in my worship. Psalm 47:1 says, “O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.” This Psalm and others (Ps. 55:12) speak of a universal celebration that will occur someday during the Millennium. It should be noted that clapping with thanksgiving to God is not the same as applauding a religious performer.

I was involved in a 7-voice vocal group in college, and we sang a song called “The Trees of the Field Will Clap Their Hands!” At one point we clapped in expressing praise to God.” Of course, clapping really is not the issue since it can be a joyous expression of happiness and gratefulness to God. The real issue is applauding man and shifting the focus from God to man and how it can easily blend into the world of religious performance and Hollywood entertainment. Of course, we clap after a

performance and in appreciation of what someone has done or accomplished. We applaud those who have served in the military, showing our deep respect for what they have done to maintain our freedoms. We will applaud the young people at their graduation ceremonies to demonstrate our appreciation for the hard and dedicated work they have done to reach this special plateau in their lives.

There is a time and place for applause. However, for the most part church is not the place for applause for we come to center our attention upon God and not man in our time of worship. Church is about God and worshipping Him – not applauding man’s abilities and accomplishments. Many churches over the years have adopted an applauding response and practice to those who are to be glorifying God and it has gotten to the point where worship has become more man-centered than God-focused. At best, applause causes a mixture of man and God’s praise. At worst, it becomes a response to a person’s religious performance and entertaining song and loses the focus on glorifying God.

For instance, many today don’t feel like they have not had any spiritual impact on the lives of people unless they hear the response of clapping after a song or musical number. What are we teaching our young people? Are we not teaching them to expect the applause of man after singing or using their musical instruments for the Lord? I’m afraid that many Christians are not clapping for Jesus today but are simply applauding to a performance. The sad result is that the glory of God is taking the back seat and the glory of man is replacing the honor that is due only to God.

2 Corinthians 10:17

“But he that glorieth (*to vaunt or boast*), let him glory (*boast*) in the Lord.”

I’m probably getting myself into hot water, but I am of the opinion that in church people should not be applauded for applause or clapping aligns with the world’s view of performance. Furthermore, there is no record of it being part of the local church gatherings. Applause can very easily become man-centered and steal away God’s glory – the honor that is only to be directed toward Him.

A. W. Tozer once said:

“People have been over stimulated to the place where their nerves are jaded and their tastes corrupted. Natural things have been rejected to make room for things

artificial. The sacred has been secularized, the holy vulgarized and worship converted into a form of entertainment.”

In respect to applause, which is directly linked to entertainment, 1 Corinthians 14:16 mentions how saying “Amen” was the appropriate and respectful response of praise rendered toward God during the services of the early church. There is no mention of applause nor was it ever alluded to in any fashion whatsoever. Entertainment with applause is historically unknown to the work of God and must be avoided today if we are going to keep the church on target spiritually. A hearty “Amen” (“so let it be true”) rendered up to God is far better than a round of applause directed toward a religious performer.

John 12:43 states, “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Matthew 6:5 reminds us how human nature wants “to be seen of men.” God’s Word teaches that we should not serve “with eyeservice, as menpleasers” (Eph. 6:6) nor seek glory from men (“nor of men sought we glory” – 1 Thess. 2:6). I personally believe applause can very easily become a reflection of entertainment since it is the reflection of a society that is bent on expressing praise to man in some way instead of directing all praise toward God. We must remember that God deserves all praise (Ps. 49:18; 107:8; 109:30; 1 Pet. 4:11).

James Denney said:

“No man can bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time.”

Something else needs to be said about reflecting God’s glory. We cannot truly glorify or honor God if His character is being misrepresented or maligned by our fleshly worship, actions, and conduct.

God spoke of Israel’s “solemn assembly” (Lev. 23:36; Numb. 29:35), and “solemn days” (Numb. 10:10; Deut. 16:15). The word “solemn” speaks of that which is sacred and holy and which is a reflection of God’s holy and righteous character, not the rock and roll culture of musical rebellion which was historically related to sex, drugs, rebellion, and immorality. I’m Biblically convinced that our music and worship should never reflect the sounds and words of perverted and paganized culture. The Bible reminds us to “Learn not the way of the heathen” - Jer. 10:2). We are called to live separate from the unsaved within society, refusing to associate with their lack of morals, musical impurity, works of darkness, and unrighteous ideologies (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

God cannot get any glory when our worship becomes fleshly and self-oriented. The real tragedy today among many Christians and churches is that they are misrepresenting God and sometimes don't realize it. God cannot be truly glorified (properly honored, revered, and praised) when we are reflecting musical rebellion in our time of worship and when we are living by the dictates or promptings of our flesh in our daily living instead of the Holy Spirit's leading (Gal. 5:18).



Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Understanding and applying the glory of God to our worship, actions, and decisions is lifechanging. We need to possess a better grasp on what God's glory is and how to glorify God with our lives so that others can see His glory reflected in us. This is what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Everything should begin and

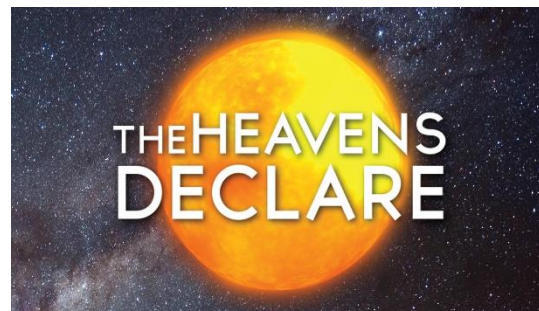
end with God's glory! But again, we must reiterate what God's glory is so we can better understand how to apply His glory to our daily lives as we properly represent God's character and ways in our attitudes and actions. So let's do some more reflection on God's glory.

John Glenn, speaking about his view of the Earth from the space shuttle Discovery, said: "To look at the window . . . as I did that first day . . . to look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible."

Psalm 19:1 -2 says:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

The Hebrew word for "glory" is "kabod" (kawbode) and speaks of honor, glory, dignity, reverence, splendor. The word glory in this verse once again portrays the magnificence or awesome splendor of the display of God's attributes, perfections, and



person. The stars and heavens around us are displaying or telling a story. Better yet, they are playing a silent symphony that relates to God's wondrous glory – revealing Him as the Designer and Creator filled with greatness, wisdom, and power!

William MacDonald shares these facts:

“Here are some facts about the stars and heavens. Think about the immensity of the universe. If we traveled at the speed of light—186,000 miles a second or roughly six trillion miles a year—it would take us ten billion years to reach the farthest point we can see with a telescope. But this would still be far from the outermost limits of space. Now astronomers think that space may have no bounds at all! Our earth is nothing but a tiny speck in a limitless expanse!

“Think too of the number of stars and other heavenly bodies. With the naked eye we can see about five thousand stars. With a small telescope we can see about two million. But with the Palomar telescope we can see billions of galaxies, to say nothing of individual stars.

“Then think about the distances of the heavenly bodies from the earth and from each other. Someone has pictured the distances as follows: if it cost a penny to ride 1000 miles, a trip to the moon would cost \$2.38, a trip to the sun would cost \$930, but a trip to the nearest star would cost \$260 million.

“It takes light from the most remote stars, which can be seen with telescopes, ten billion years to reach the earth. So when we look out into space, we are really looking backward in time. For example, we do not see the Andromeda galaxy where it is now but where it was two million years ago!

“Although the stars may appear to be crowded in the firmament, the distances between them are so great that they have been likened to lonely lightships a million miles apart, floating in an empty sea.”

Here is the point. If creation is so great, how much greater is the Creator! Day and night the heavens are telling the story about God's glory. They are openly revealing His glory – the greatness of His power and wisdom as Creator God.

“Who made the mountains? Who made the trees?
Who made the rivers flow to the sea?”

And who sends the rain when the earth is dry?
Somebody bigger than you and I.”

Numbers 14:21-23 also states this about God’s glory:

“But *as truly as I live*, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it.”

In one sense, God was scolding His people Israel who had ignored the many evidences of His glory (the goodness of God) in taking care of them. Remember the Red Sea when Pharaoh’s army was closing in and how the Red Sea opened before them and they walked through on dry ground (Ex. 14:10-12)? He also gave them the miraculous manna in their journeys (Ex. 16:15). God was giving evidence of His glory – the glory of His goodness in providing their needs.

This reminds me that if I am not careful, I can miss the clear evidences of God’s glory being revealed around me as He expresses Himself to me and others. I can miss God’s greatness, grace, and mercy at work in saving souls and sanctifying saints. I can miss His goodness which He showers upon my life which is also an expression of His glory. I can also lose the awareness of His creative power all around me if I don’t take time to meditate upon Him and His wondrous works that surround me everywhere.

In another sense, because Israel missed the repeated revelations of God’s spectacular glory, they rebelled against Him. As a result, God would also express His glory in another way – as the God of perfect righteousness, judgment, and justice. This particular aspect of God’s glory (the revelation of who God is) would be displayed among His people in judging them for their acts of disobedience. Israel was judged for 40 years in the wilderness. Sadly, they missed the evidences of the glory of God in providing their needs and rescuing them, for this reason the glory of God was certainly being evidence before them in His righteous judgment.

The Bible repeatedly talks about God’s glory, the expression, declaration, and display of who God is in His eternal being and character, which will one day be seen over the earth in a new dynamic way during the Millennium. When Jesus rules as

King the earth will witness God's glory in a specific and dynamic way in His display of righteous justice and judgment over the earth and in His kingliness and majesty.

Psalms 72:19 speaks of this:

"And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen."

Habakkuk 2:14 portrays the same glory:

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

We have a chorus in our hymnbook that reflects these very words in Haakkuk. The last two verses have prophetic overtones and remind us that God will reveal His glory, His marvelous splendor, majesty, and magnificence as the eternal God, when He rules the earth as the King in His perfect justice, equity, and righteousness (Isa. 11:4-5). Today they want equity without righteousness but during the Millennium there will be equity with righteousness! The best is yet to come when the entire earth worships Jesus Christ and glorifies Him (Zech. 14:16-17).

Again, the glory of God is the revelation of who God is in His perfections and perfect ways. Therefore, if we want to glorify God in our lives, we must properly represent who God is in His character and ways. In glorifying God, we express or display His glory, the splendor and magnificence of His character and attributes in our worship and daily living.

Defining God's Glory (Doxa)

Forming a proper opinion, judgment, estimate of God and therefore knowing and understanding God's character and attributes results in His praise and honor ...

Glory relates to God's splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, majesty - the kingly majesty (Ps. 29:4; 2 Pet. 1:17) which belongs to God as supreme ruler in the absolute perfections and attributes of His deity.

We glorify or bring honor and praise to God when we properly understand, represent, reflect, and act like God!
1 Corinthians 10:31

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"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

So how do we really glorify God? How do we devote ourselves to God's glory? The Biblical concept behind glorifying God involves two basic matters.

- We *recognize* who God is by assessing and knowing Him better - His attributes, character, righteous perfections and holy ways.
- We *reflect* who God is by applying His attributes to our lives and therefore honor Him as we display and represent Him in everything we do.

Once again, God cannot be glorified if we are not properly representing Him. We glorify God when we have a proper *assessment* of His attributes and ways and then *ascribe* praise and honor to Him in our worship and everyday living which is to be a reflection of His eternal attributes, unchanging character, and ways. We cannot glorify God if we are not acting like God! We cannot glorify God if we are not representing God in our worship, conduct, character, and attitudes.

Here are some application questions.

- ✓ Are you more concerned about what you want in your time of worship (a feeling, a buzz, rock beats, an emotional high) than properly representing God's character of righteousness and holiness?
- ✓ Are you giving back to God in your time of worship, ascribing worth to Him, or have you been greedily taking what you want out of a self-made worship experience?
- ✓ Can you really be glorifying God with your daily life when you have unforgiveness and bitterness in your heart?
- ✓ Can you be honoring or glorifying God with your life when your heart is filled with pride, jealousy, and worldly living?
- ✓ Can you honor God if you are enslaved to some sin?
- ✓ Can you glorify God in your marriage when there is a rift or division between you and your spouse?
- ✓ Can I glorify God when I am creating unwarranted division in a family or church?
- ✓ Have you been glorifying God, properly represent Him in your speech, inward life, and attitudes?

God's honor and glory does not really matter to many Christians today. Many of God's saints are more concerned about their own honor and ways instead of God's

honor or glory. We are to be a reflection of God's glory (representing who God is) in our worship, speech, and living.

➤ **First, to glorify God means to be devoted to God in worship (with our lips).**

We certainly bring praise and honor to the Lord as we worship Him.

Psalm 86:12

"I will praise thee (in worship), O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."

The Old Testament word "glorify" (kabad – pronounced kawbode) refers to something that is heavy, weighty, and therefore by extension something that is significant, dignified, honorable, exalted, and revered. This is certainly true of God. He is weighty, He should be revered and exalted for He is filled with kingly majesty and reverence which belongs to Him alone as the supreme ruler, possessing majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of His deity within His exalted state of dignity and holiness in Heaven.

"Our God is far greater than words can make known,
Exalted and holy, He reigns on His throne.
In infinite splendor He rules over all;
Yet He feeds the poor sparrows, and He knows when they fall.

He rides the wild heavens, He strides thro' the seas;
The high mountains tremble to hear His decrees.
His voice with great thunderings sounds from above;
But to His own children He whispers His love.

His power is great and will ever endure,
His wisdom is peaceable, gentle, and pure.
But greater than all these glories I see,
Is the glorious promise that He cares for me."

Warren Wiersbe, in his book on True Worship, states:

"We must beware of trying to get chummy with God. I know the apostle John leaned on the bosom of Jesus in the Upper Room; but he fell at the feet of Jesus when he beheld Him in His sovereign glory (Revelation 1:17)."

When we glorify God, we acknowledge His greatness and splendor, extol His attributes, bestow honor upon God, praise His works, and worship Him for who He is and what He has done for us. When we “give Him glory” (Rev. 4:9; 14:7; 16:9) we direct our praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and worship to Him who alone is worthy.

“O come to the Father through Jesus the Son
And give him the glory, great things he has done!”

Remember that glorifying God in our time of worship is giving back to Him – not primary getting something from Him. We have a lot of greedy worshippers today in modern Christianity. They claim they need and want a certain beat, sound, atmosphere, and style of worship for without this they cannot truly worship God. They tell me, “I need my Sunday buzz!” I’m afraid that some Christians have fallen into the trap of worshipping their worship instead of worshipping God!

Notice the repeated emphasis of giving back to the Lord in our time of worship. Worship is not getting what we want but giving back to the Lord, so He alone gets glory and is both the beginning and end of all worship.

Psalm 18:49

“Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.”

Psalm 29:1

“Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.”

Psalm 29:2

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”

Psalm 96:7

“Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.”

Psalm 96:8

“Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.”

Psalm 105:1

“O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.”

Psalm 106:1

“Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.”

Psalm 107:1

“O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.”

In all these worship verses we discover that worship is to be geared around giving back to God His worth, expressing praise and thanksgiving to God for His glory, the revelation of who God is in His eternal and unchanging holiness, righteousness, mercy, grace, love, and goodness.

We have a restaurant in our home area called “Shady Maple Smorgasbord.” When eating at this famous smorgasbord, you can choose anything that you want. As I think of a smorgasbord, this is the way some Christians have come to view worship. Sadly, for many today Sunday has turned into a cafeteria style of worship which says, “Give me what I want, or I cannot or will not worship God.” Many have lost sight of what true worship is all about. Worship is not selfishly demanding something that we think we need to worship God – a rock beat, a certain sound, a specific atmosphere, smoke coming out of the stage, flashing lights, synthesizers, etc.

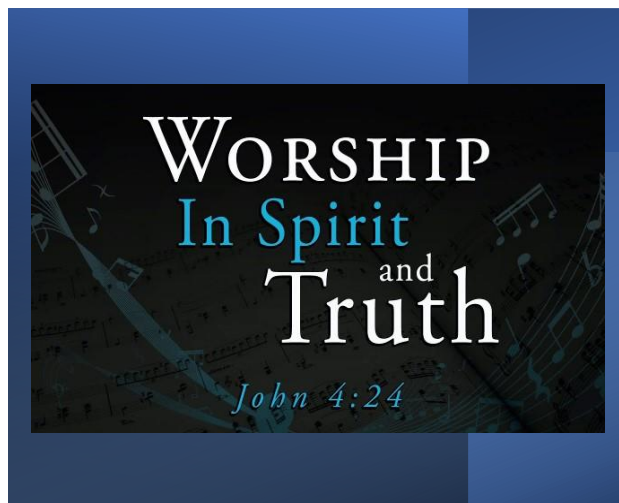
Again, many Christians have fallen into the trap of worshipping their form of worship instead of worshipping God in His eternal character and being. They have come to the table not to give to God but to greedily get something from God in their time of worship – a certain feeling, stimulation, a specific sound, an emotional buzz, jamming, or some kind of euphoric experience which is based upon one’s own desires and flesh.

It's very important to know that worship is reserved only for God – not for our own greedy wants and desires. If we are not careful our worship style can become a god to us, and we can end up missing out on true worship.

In Exodus 20:3-6 God declares:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me.”

Sadly, we can put other gods before the true God in our worship – the god of our feelings, fleshly desires, and false representations of God. True worship is always to be God-centered and not man-centered. When we draw attention to ourselves, we are not giving God the glory. Christians can very easily get caught up in where they should worship, what music they should sing in worship, a specific atmosphere of worship, and how their worship looks to other people. Focusing on these things misses the point of worship. True worship occurs from within our hearts. It has nothing to do with outward manmade requirements and preferences such as strobe lights, rock rhythms, and other religious trappings like altars, candles, and the wearing of robes.



Jesus said in John 4:24 says “God is spirit.” The sense of the passage is that God is “spirit” or immaterial or corporeal in His existence as opposed to “flesh” (possessing a fleshly or human body). For this reason, Jesus tells us that true worshipers must connect with God through their human spirit and not emphasize physical locations and outward ceremonies (John 4:21). Worshipping God occurs on the inside and is spiritual in nature; it’s not a mere physical act or tradition.

We communicate with God “in spirit” (the location of our worship - from within) by possessing a sincere desire to worship Him from the inward spiritual part of our human existence – not by worshipping in material buildings or outward locations, with liturgical patterns, and with empty and external forms of ritualistic or self-made worship. All true worship occurs from within – not from without. We also

worship God “in truth” (the way to worship - according to Scripture) by not falsely misrepresenting Him or His character of holiness and righteousness. We worship according to the divinely revealed truth found in the Bible concerning God, His character, and His ways. The human “spirit” that is born again (John 3:6) is the higher part of our human existence. It’s from within the realm of our spirit (“the inner man” – Eph. 3:16) that we delight in communicating with God who is a spiritual being. But we are to do so with “truth” which means in accordance with divinely revealed truth, to worship the true God in a correct manner that represents Him and His ways (John 4:22).

Someone remarked that when we attempt to worship God without truth it becomes "Scarecrow worship" and therefore "It would be better if it only had a brain." Scarecrow worship is a brainless type of worship that lacks truthfulness – it does not align with God’s truth concerning Himself and ways. They also explained there can be “Tin Man worship" that would be better "if it only had a heart!" Tin Man worship means that we can worship God externally but not internally, without any heart and desire to really honor Him. This is basically what Jesus is teaching in John 4:24.

People will sometimes say, “Nobody can tell me how to worship God. I’ll worship the way I want to worship for I am sincere in what I am doing.” However, Jesus tells us how to worship God and we must follow His guidelines for worship no matter how sincere we might be about what we are doing. After all, we could be sincerely wrong! Sincerity must be guided by truth.

Worship should not be entered into lightly or carelessly. The aim of worship is not to get what we want but to give to God what He deserves. Any attempt to worship in spirit without the truth results in the worship of false gods and falling into the trap of the self-made worship of our feelings and fleshly preferences in our times of worship. But to worship in truth without spirit (the inner desire and heart to really communicate with the invisible God) is to fall into dead orthodoxy. We may be doctrinally correct but at the same time lifeless in our worship in our inner being.

A Baptist Christian was attending a liturgical form of worship and shared his experience. “I must confess to you that liturgical forms of worship, with their public confessions and their creeds, make me feel awkward. When the point comes in the service where everyone else recites the Apostles' Creed from memory, and it dawns

on me that the best I can do is the Awana pledge, I feel ignorant and uncouth. And when they come to the place in the order of worship we were supposed to kneel, I go into a panic. They can't be serious! That's for Catholics and Episcopalians, and maybe Lutherans, but not for Baptists like me! But I don't want to seem crass, so I mumble the unfamiliar words and dutifully bow the knee all the while feeling like I am watching someone else worship.

“When I came to worship, it's as if I have been presented with a mask at the door and am expected to put it on when the worship begins. I catered to the demands of others and tried to keep up appearances. But I'm not sure I ever really worshipped God.”

Jesus was teaching in John 4:24 that we must move away from fanfare, fake, and fleshly worship in outward appearance and engage in true worship which occurs within the inner spirit, possessing sincerity and following the truth of God's revelation regarding worship, a type of worship that reflects the character and attributes of God and which aligns itself with the teachings of Scripture.

So in order to bring glory to God in our time of worship we must concentrate on sincerely communicating with God from the realm of our spirit (the spiritual part of our human existence) and our worship must reflect truth as it relates to God's Word and character. Jesus taught that we don't need anything to worship the Father except a sincere heart and the standard of truth.

Of course, worship can include praying, reading God's Word with an open heart, singing, playing an instrument, participating in a communion service, and even serving others. But all must come from within (not without) and align with truth. Worship has nothing to do with outward liturgies, rock rhythms, what we want, think we need, or must have in order to worship God. This is because worship involves giving back to God from within our human spirit and heart – not getting something from God.

So we have learned that true worship and glorifying God involves giving back to God His own worth through praise and thanksgiving. Of course, it's certainly true that we do receive many spiritual blessings when we worship God for we are refreshed, revived, and realize God's closeness to our hearts when we open them to Him (Psalm 16:11; 23; 46:10). But ultimately our goal in worship is not to receive but to

give back to God the worthiness due His name. Actually, as we give our heart's adoration (deep love and respect) to the Lord, we find ourselves receiving spiritual enrichment, fulfillment, and refreshment in Him. Our hearts will be filled with gratitude, great wonder, thanksgiving, and praise.

Revelation 15:4

“Who shall not fear thee (*expressing deep and profound reverence for God*), O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”

Fear and worship are often coupled together (2 Kings 17:36; Ps. 5:7; 96:9; Rev. 14:7; 15:4) since a deep and profound reverence is to be part of our worship experience with God. The goal in all our worship should be to express fear or reverence before a holy God and therefore glorify His name which as we have seen means to properly represent God in our times of worship, reflect who God is in all of His holiness, hollowness, and honor as the eternal King of the ages.

1 Chronicles 29:11

“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty” (*splendor and honor*).

Psalm 29:2

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”

Psalm 96:6

“Honour and majesty *are* before him: strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.”

Psalm 96:9

“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear (*possess reverence*) before him, all the earth.”

Psalm 104:1

“Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.”

1 Chronicles 16:29

“Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”

These verses reveal that when we worship God and truly want to glorify Him, we are returning praise to Him for His unchanging holiness, splendor, honor, and majesty. It means that if our worship is going to glorify God it must properly reflect His holiness and represent His righteousness. It should not be a reflection of the musical rebellion and sound of a rock idiom which was not created to glorify God but promote rebellion against God and the ethical standards of society, to promote the use of drugs, unbridled sex, and godlessness. This kind of musical rebellion cannot glorify God for it does not reflect who God is in His essence or nature and therefore becomes disorderly and a distraction from God’s glory (1 Cor. 14:40).



God wants us to inspect our worship (John 4:22) and make sure it is not “strange fire” (Lev. 10:1; Neb. 3:4; 26:61) and therefore a reflection of the worldly culture (Rom. 12:2). A holy and righteous God cannot be properly glorified (represented) when we imbibe and mimic the sounds of a rock and roll culture of rebellion in our time of worship. Righteousness and unrighteousness and light and darkness are

incompatible realms (2 Cor. 6:14-17). From the very beginning and throughout the Scriptures God tells us how to worship and lays out His code of worship ethics. He states that we are to worship Him alone, reflecting order, reverence, His holiness and attributes, and therefore glorify Him through our worship (Exodus 20:3; 34:14; Isa. 42:8; 48:11; Lev. 23; Ps. 96:9; 1 Cor. 14:40).

In a very practical way in our Christian life, we need to be devoted to God’s glory through our worship of Him. Praise changes things. It will change your life. It will bring freshness and victory into your life (2 Chronicles 20:21-22; Judges 7:15) as you focus your attention and worship upon glorifying God instead of glorying in your own flesh.

“When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awaking cries:
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus I repair:
May Jesus Christ be praised!”

- **Second, to glorify God means to be devoted to Christ in our character and conduct (with our life).**

1 Corinthians 10:31 again states:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

This includes much more than just our worship. We must apply God’s glory to everything we do in life – right down to our golfing and eating habits! We should want to reflect His name (character) in all of our actions, attitudes, and aspirations in life. Reflecting the glory of God should always be our aim and purpose in life (Rom. 15:7; 2 Cor. 4:15). We should always strive to glorify God in our speech, business, work, hobbies, sports, singing, marriage, relationships, churches, and overall character. Our goal in life should be to glorify God in all that we do and desire.

Remember that the root meaning and understanding of the word “glory” is to form a proper opinion or judgment about God. Therefore, we must not only worship with a correct opinion of God in our hearts, but we must also live for Him in a way that reflects our opinion that we have about God (His holiness, mercy, love, kindness, giving, etc.). To glorify God therefore is to bring honor and praise to His name by the way we live, as we mirror His image and likeness in our character and conduct, or when we seek to uphold His reputation and character in our daily lives and before others. What we say, where we go, what’s happening on the inside of us, and how we use our bodies becomes a reflection of our opinion of God.

Again, when we glorify God by the way we live or how we conduct ourselves, we are essentially saying: “This is what I think about You God.” To glorify God means that our attitudes, decisions, character, conduct, emotions, worship, what we do in life, and every area of our lives becomes a living expression and testimony of what

we think about God, how we view God, what our opinion is concerning God. God can only get glory (praise and honor) when we become a reflection of His attributes in our daily speech and conduct.

1 Corinthians 1:31

“That, according as it is written, He that glorieth (*boasts*), let him glory (*boast*) in the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 10:17

“But he that glorieth (*boasts*), let him glory (*boast*) in the Lord.”

As Christians we have nothing to glory or boast about. It’s all about the Lord, who He is and what He has done for us, and what He is doing in our lives today. Look at the cross, remember how Christ rescued us from the hell and damnation we deserved, remember how He made us into a new creation, remember how we were nothing until He found us, remember His saving and sanctifying touch of grace upon our lives. We have absolutely nothing to boast about!

Jude 1:25

“To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

“To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
Who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that we may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory;
Great things He hath done.”