

Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How to Live for God's Glory

Scripture: Psalm 50:23; Psalm 51:12; 2 Samuel 12:26–31; John 14:13; John 15:8–11; 2 Corinthians 4:15; Philippians 4:11; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 1 John 1:9

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“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.”

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

How does a person glorify God? No question is more practical or more significant. The supreme purpose in life for any man or woman—for anyone who has ever been born into this world—is to glorify God. That is what living is all about. Glorifying God is the end result of the Christian life. Spiritual maturity is simply concentrating and focusing on the person of God until we are caught up in His majesty and His glory.

I would like to suggest some practical ways for the Christian to glorify God:

- **Confess Your Sins.** Confession of sin glorifies God because if you excuse your sin, you absolve yourself of responsibility and blame God for letting you get into a mess. Adam illustrates this. When God confronted him, what was his excuse? “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12). He was practically saying, “You did it, God. If You hadn’t given me this woman, none of this would ever have happened.”

To do that is to blame God and thus to assign guilt to Him. But God is never at fault when we sin. Implying that He is somehow responsible maligns His holiness. So those who try to sneak out from under the absolute responsibility for their own sin commit a grievous sin against the glory of God.

First John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The Greek word for “confess” is *homologeō*, meaning “to say the same thing.” To confess means to agree with God that sin is all our fault and to repent. That act glorifies God. We don’t have to beg God for forgiveness. He is faithful and just to forgive as soon as we agree with Him.

- **Bear Fruit.** In John 15:8 Jesus told the disciples, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit.” Why? Because then the world can see the results of a Spirit-filled life. That is what we are here for—to put God on display to the world.

Colossians 1:10 says, “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work.” Good works are fruit. When we live a life of good works, the world will see and glorify our Father in heaven.

- **Give Praise to God.** Psalm 50:23 says, “He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me.” Praise honors God. One way to praise God is to give Him credit for everything. In 2 Samuel 12:26–

31, when Joab won the victory against Rabbah and got possession of the enemy's crown, he sent for David so he could present the crown to him. This is a good illustration of how the Christian should act toward the Master. You win a victory in your life, but you don't wear the crown. You give it to the Lord, who has won the victory for you.

- **Be Content.** We may be discontented about ourselves and about our circumstances. But who made us? God. And He promises to supply all our needs. When we are content, we acknowledge God's sovereignty in our lives, and that gives Him glory. If we are discontented, it's the same as questioning God's wisdom. That doesn't glorify Him.

Paul testified, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" (Philippians 4:11). Paul was confident that God would use all things—poverty as well as abundance, comfort as well as pain—for Paul's good and God's glory (Romans 8:28). He didn't say, "I'll give God glory in spite of my pain." He said, "I will give God glory because of it."

A Christian who is discontented for any reason—job, spouse, finances—is a terrible testimony about the goodness of our God. What kind of God do we have? Is He really sovereign? Can He really be trusted? Glorifying God means that we praise Him with absolute contentment, knowing that our lot is God's plan for us now.

- **Pray According to God's Will.** Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). Jesus' name signifies all that He is and all that He would want. Praying in His name means praying in accordance with His character and His will. And God delights to reveal His glory in answered prayer. That is why He commands us to pray—so He can show us His greatness and we can give Him the praise He's worthy to receive.

- **Proclaim God's Word.** Paul wrote, "Brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you" (2 Thessalonians 3:1). How was the Word glorified through those believers? Because they heard it and believed. They trusted Christ and were born again—and God got the glory.

Presenting the Word clearly and accurately always gives Him glory. Every time a Sunday school teacher teaches a class of kids, every time a Bible study leader opens the Word in someone's living room, every time a father sits down with his family and starts talking about the Word of God, God is glorified. We honor Him by making His Word known and understood.

- **Lead Others to Christ.** God also gets glory when people are redeemed. He is glorified when Satan's prison is broken open and men and women are turned loose from the power of the evil one. People are saved from their sins in order to give God glory. So the more people who get converted, the more thanksgiving is going on, and the more there are in the choir singing, "Hallelujah!" (2 Corinthians 4:15).

How to Enjoy God

When we live to glorify God, He responds by giving us overwhelming joy. "Well," you say, "I have a tough life. I just don't have any joy." May I suggest an answer? Start glorifying God.

Joy does not necessarily always make sorrow, discouragement, pain, and failure go away, but

Christians can experience supernatural joy even in the midst of those things. In fact sin is ultimately the only thing that can steal Christians' joy. When our joy begins to fade, it is a sure sign of encroaching sin or unbelief. What can we do in times like that? Get down on our knees and confess the sin in our lives. We need to pray with David, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Psalm 51:12). Then we yield to the Holy Spirit, and joy returns.

Jesus desires that His joy remain in us (John 15:11). His joy that we know in part now is what we will know perfectly in heaven. Perhaps the greatest promise in all the Bible is 1 Thessalonians 4:17: "We shall always be with the Lord." Now that's joy!

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