

# God's Jealousy for His Glory

*[Note: the audio of this message does not address all portions of this pdf due to time constraints.]*

Good Morning!

All creation, like the flowers in the picture, reveals the glory of God. Psalm 19 says: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Eventually, these flowers will fade if things go according to the historical pattern, but God's Glory will not fade. That's the topic for today – God's Glory.

SLIDE: You might remember that, a couple of weeks ago, Bill read this passage from Ephesians:

"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. **In love**, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the **praise of the glory of His grace.**"<sup>1</sup>

It is a wonderful passage to begin this topic. You will notice that Paul concludes his statement by pointing out that all that God has done for us results in "...the praise of the glory of His grace."

- **Question:** WHY didn't Paul STOP the sentence after he wrote "... according to the kind intention of His will"?

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 1:4-6

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**CLICK:** The passage still would have made complete sense to us, right?

But, Paul DIDN'T stop there because the Holy Spirit evidently wanted to highlight a **FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH** that our human nature almost always fails to notice.

- ❖ All these things serve to illustrate **HOW GREAT HE IS, NOT HOW GREAT WE ARE**. The way we were saved – thru grace – shows His GLORY.

**SLIDE:** God lovingly chose us long before we could do anything to earn it – it is 100% grace thru Christ. And **in extending grace towards people who are totally undeserving, God showed His glory**. It leads us to praise Him and thus give Him glory.

God leaves His Holy fingerprints for us to find. It's like we're at a break-in on an episode of NCIS, but instead of stealing things, God has left priceless presents, and His fingerprints are all over the place. He wants people to see it and He wants us to know Who did it – and for us to glorify Him in return. But this is a double edged sword – He also is very PROTECTIVE of His glory that He does reveal. As we discussed the last time, He is so protective of His Glory that He Himself says that He is JEALOUS for His Glory.

**SLIDE:** GOD'S JEALOUSY FOR HIS GLORY

Read: "I am ADONAI; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols." Isaiah 42:6

The title of my presentation today is 'God's Jealousy for His Glory'. God's Jealousy – the notion sounds a little strange for several reasons, doesn't it? That God has jealousy *at all*, and that He is jealous for Glory. Lord willing, it won't sound so strange when we finish.

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*May the words of the Lord be on my mind, on my lips and in my heart.*

**SLIDE:** Do you remember the first *City Slickers* movie with Billy Crystal and Jack Palance? It's about a group of guys from the city who go on a cattle drive to escape their troubles. Billy Crystal plays the lead city slicker (Mitch Robbins) and Jack Palance plays Curley Washburn, a tough old cowboy. Great dialogue in one particular scene:

Curly (Jack Palance) asks Mitch (Billy Crystal): Do you know what the secret of life is? [and Curly holds up one finger]

Mitch: Your finger?

Curly: One thing. **Just one thing.** You stick to that and the rest don't mean horse pucky.

Mitch: But, what is the **"one thing?"**

Curly: [he smiles] That's what you have to find out.

**'ONE THING!'** Perhaps that should be the real title of this presentation.

➤ *What's the One Thing we're to pursue in life?*

**It may not be exactly what we think.**

**SLIDE:** CATHOLIC CATECHISM

I'm going to start today with a quiz. For us former Catholics, here's a question from your Confirmation class:

Question#6 in the Baltimore Catechism: **Why did God make you?**

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<CLICK> Answer: *God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.*<sup>2</sup>

➤ Pretty good answer.

**SLIDE:** PROTESTANT CATECHISM

And for you who grew up in denominational protestant churches like the Presbyterians, Question #1 of the Westminster Catechism:

**What is the chief end of man?**

<CLICK>: Answer: *Man's chief end is to **GLORIFY GOD** and to enjoy Him forever.*<sup>3</sup>

Both answers are similar, but this one is shorter and more to the point. Our chief END is to Glorify God.

**OK – what does it mean by the word ‘end’?** It definitely does not mean it in the same way that we would speak of the end of a jar of peanut butter or the end of a TV show; it isn't referring to the end of our life either. The Westminster Catechism was written in 1647, and the word ‘end’ here is an old fashion way of saying what a person hopes to accomplish, the PURPOSE of why someone is doing something. “*To what end*” is a modern phrase that captures this concept. To speak of the *end of man* is to speak of our goals, our **purposes**, and the things that we want to accomplish.

Of course, we have many *ends* (plural) in our daily life, don't we? Some of us work in order to provide for our families – and some of us are retired and spend the day trying to avoid the honey-do lists. From my perspective, both of these ends are valid and commendable. Some play soccer or make dents in the side of the barn with a football to have fun, some knit, and some play video

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<sup>2</sup>

[http://catholicism.about.com/od/baltimorecatechism/f/Question\\_6\\_BC.htm?utm\\_source=emailshare&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=mobilesharebutton2](http://catholicism.about.com/od/baltimorecatechism/f/Question_6_BC.htm?utm_source=emailshare&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=mobilesharebutton2)

<sup>3</sup> Question #1 Westminster Shorter Catechism [http://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/wsc/wsc\\_001.html](http://www.shortercatechism.com/resources/wsc/wsc_001.html)

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games. Most of us here obey traffic laws, even in places where they do not make sense, in order to avoid an expensive ticket. All of these are ends.

But some ends are more important than others. The question in the catechism is: "*What is the CHIEF end of man?*" The chief end is that end which is *most important*. It is the one end that should be the compass for guiding the pursuit of all other ends.

Well, the chief end of man – the chief **purpose** of our life – is to Glorify God. This is NOT what the *world* would choose for us: such as captured on the bumper sticker that reads "*the one with the most toys when he die wins*". And, the chief end of man is not the choice that we – on our own without Christ – would chose for ourselves. The only valid chief end of man is **the end that God has chosen**. And that is to "glorify Him".

We have many other ends in our daily life, but the Glory of God should guide HOW we pursue them. We were **made to glorify Him**, to **reflect His glory** and **announce it to the world**.<sup>4</sup>

This answer is drastically different than I would have given back in Confirmation Class at St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in Johnston, RI. I believed that my primary purpose in life was to be good and be kind, say my prayers, respect my patents, go to church and maybe even help out at Bingo. These were all good things *in-and-of-themselves*, and I was motivated to do them because... WELL, JUST BECAUSE I SHOULD.

And by me doing all these good things, I would also somehow *please* God. But the Glory of God was never a prime motivation for my actions – in fact, it was never even mentioned! Even of it had been mentioned, I would have had no clue as to what it meant.

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<sup>4</sup> Isaiah. 43:6–7

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But, according to the answer on the slide; it says that “*Glorifying God*” is to be the **PRIMARY MOTIVATION** – the **PRIMARY PURPOSE** – of our lives, and the *GOOD ACTIVITIES* are only a *means* to pursue that end. So...

**SLIDE:** ...TO GLORY GOD AND TO ENJOY HIM FOREVER

- **The “Just One Thing” that Curley talked about in the movie, then, is THE GLORY OF GOD.**

But, WHAT is the glory of God, and HOW CAN I POSSIBLY CONTRIBUTE to His having *MORE* of anything when He already has *EVERYTHING*? We’ll get into this today, Lord willing.

As you may remember, we’re in Chapter 25 of the Book of Numbers. Chapter 25 relates the tragic incident of some Israelite men being enticed by Moabite and Midianite women – at the suggestion of Balaam – into worshiping the Moabite god Baal on Mt. Peor. Yehovah is furious at this spiritual idolatry and instructs Moses to have the leaders of the tribes killed and hung up. Moses revises the order to lessen its severity and tells the judges of each tribe to have the ringleaders killed. But, nothing is done, so God takes action Himself and with a plague.

As Moses and other leaders gather at the entrance of the Tabernacle to commiserate about the situation, an Israelite man and a Midianite woman walk into camp and enter his tent in order to have sexual relations. Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, is enraged at this insult to God, picks up his spear and goes into the tent and impales both of them with one thrust. God then stops the plague and commends Phineas for his action and Godly jealousy.

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**SLIDE:** Ok – there are THREE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES in this chapter, and all three involve the Glory of God in one degree or another. These controversial issues are:

- # 1. The fact that Yehovah God HAS Jealousy.
- # 2. That the pathway to idolatry described in Chapter 25 has counterparts today. In what way? We are seeing Christians and Jews compromising their faith as they try to “*play nice*” with people of other religions and with those who hold non-Biblical moral values. “*Let’s all just get along*” is the motto of our age

Now – dialogue is not wrong per se; we are to love everyone and we can agree on common values that are in line with Scripture, but we CANNOT hide the Light of the Gospel under a basket as it is often done today in the name of establishing friendly relations. What we see is Christians downplaying of the fundamentals of the Faith in order to open up lines of communication. There IS only One God, and Jesus is the ONLY Way to the Father – but we often hear silence on these issues in the dialogues. And it predictably leads to idolatry.

You see, idolatry in Scripture – *worshipping other gods* – doesn’t *necessarily* imply that people actually adore those false gods. Rather, it *can* mean that they are fine with acknowledging their existence and thereby giving *respect* to them. Let’s take Islam for example. Yahweh says that ALL glory and praise rightfully belongs to Him Alone, and He will NOT share that glory! When Christians imply that we and Jews and Muslims all worship the same God – as so often is done today – **we’re elevating a false god** to the throne.

- ❖ In doing so, we’re attaching cruel and devious characteristics and motivations to the True God and thus poisoning His Holy Name and

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Reputation. **It robs Him of His Holy glory. Equating Allah with Yehovah is idolatry! It is a devilish untruth of the highest order.**<sup>5</sup>

**SLIDE:** YEHOVAH'S JEALOUSY

#3 : And the third controversial issue in Chapter 25 is that God commends Phineas for His actions in killing two people who were dishonoring Him and He equates Phineas' emotion with **His's Own jealousy** toward this dishonor of His Name.

All three of these controversial issues involve God's Jealousy for His Glory. We talked about the first two issues last time, and we'll get into the specifics of the Phineas incident in detail next time – Lord willing.

**Today, I want to concentrate on God's Glory and His JEALOUSY for His GLORY.**

Now, if the statement that *God is jealous for Glory* sounds strange to you (as it did to me when I first heard it), it's probably because it raises an uncomfortable question:

**Q:** Since Yehovah is the One True God Who is Perfect and thus doesn't need anyone or anything else to make Him *more* perfect, WHY then does it matter so much to Him that everyone recognize it? **Is God insecure?**

Of course, the answer is NO, and I'll explain why in a moment. First, I want to briefly revisit the overall issue of God's *Jealousy*, as we discussed last time, because His Jealousy plays a central role in His activities throughout human history.

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<sup>5</sup> See Session 30 *Idolatry at Shittim, a Jealous God* for more comments on this apostasy.

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Now – in case you haven't noticed, God's jealousy is a topic that is actively avoided in churches today. The reason, I suspect, is that:

- We view jealousy as a horrible trait in ourselves, and thus we don't want to think of God as having Jealousy.

**SLIDE:** ISN'T JEALOUSY A SIN?

*Isn't jealousy a sin?*

Yes – jealousy CAN be a sin. The reason why we dislike the word is that our understanding of jealousy is usually based on our experience of it in our own lives. **Our jealousy is seldom uncontaminated with sin, oftentimes unwarranted and often taken to ungodly extremes, so we tend to understand it only as a negative emotion.** Jealousy is an UGLY word for us. Because of this, it can be extremely difficult for us to understand how this could be a Godly emotion. But – **Scripture says God HAS jealousy.**

I think it is fairly obvious that we – on our own – would *never* have come up with the idea that Yehovah God is jealous. But, in Scripture, God frequently states that He has Jealousy. For example, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment, God says:

**SLIDE:** 2<sup>ND</sup> COMMANDMENT

“You shall not make for yourself an **image** in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not worship them or serve them; for **I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.**” Exodus 20:4-5

God says here that He is so jealous about us giving our worship to Him Alone that we are not even allowed to *make an image of Him*, that He NOT to be

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*visually represented AT ALL – even if done with good intentions!* Why? Because people inevitably end up worshipping the image itself or what the image suggests rather than God Himself. Our perception of reality is formed by pictures and images – carved pieces of wood/stone back then – movies, *YouTube* videos and stained glass windows today. However, our perception is unavoidably shaped by our fallen nature.

- To make an image of bull to represent Yehovah, as they did with the Golden Calf, it may *somewhat* capture the idea of God's *strength*, but it doesn't reflect His love or *Holiness* or *wisdom* or *sovereignty*. Therefore, since we can never capture the complete picture of Him thru an image, so ALL images are necessarily FALSE images. **God is saying here that He is even Jealous that He is PERCEIVED accurately!**

It's easy to be tricked into a false perception of reality, isn't it? I experienced this recently. Donna and I went to a restaurant (Janell gave us a gift card) and we were handed menus by a smiling waitress. I was hungry (so what's new?) and my eyes set upon the picture of a steak.

SLIDE: STEAK PICTURED IN MENU

It was juicy and large – it covered the whole plate in the picture, so I ordered it. Doesn't that look nice?

<click> But, when it was delivered to the table, the steak was significantly smaller I had been led to believe. The plate in the picture must have been from a set of Barbie doll dishes. The reality of the steak's size and juiciness was significantly less than I had imagined based on the *misleading* picture.

Man-made images of God – whether chiseled in stone, painted on canvas or conjured in our minds – are all misleading because they can never capture

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the full magnitude of Who He is. And, when we worship a false image of Him, we are engaging in idolatry. The 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment commands that we MUST NOT use our fallen imagination to characterize Him, because **it inevitably will depict Him as having less Glory than He really has.** Any image we may make *on our own* inevitably is a false one.

➤ Q: SO, HOW THEN ARE WE TO THINK OF HIM?

We are to characterize God only as HE characterizes Himself – and that comes from Scripture alone! *Sola Scriptura.*

God is supremely jealous that He is perceived only in the way He has revealed Himself in Scripture. And he says that he has jealousy.

**Everyone OK?**

Now, we need to remember the distinction between '*jealousy*' and '*envy*'. Scripture NEVER says that God has ENVY; it says that He has JEALOUSY.

➤ Unfortunately, we often use the words "*Envy*" and "*Jealousy*" interchangeably today, so we can get confused as to what Scripture means about God's jealousy. **There IS a significant difference between envy and jealousy!**

**SLIDE:** ENVY VS JEALOUSY

➤ **Envy** involves wanting something which belongs to *another* person and despise them for it. When you envy, you think you need something that belongs to someone else. Joseph's brothers *envied* their father Jacob's love for him and sold him into slavery. Scripture uses the word "*covet*" as a synonym for envy.

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- **Jealousy**, on the other hand, involves something that is *ours* and it is in the process of being taken away by another. It is ALWAYS good in God, and it can be either good<sup>6</sup> or evil in man.

**Envy** is when you want some thing or some advantage that *another person* has but you don't, and you feel bitter about them for having it. Envy can tear you up inside; I remember once reading a quote by Gore Vidal: *"Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies."*<sup>7</sup> Envy caused the fall of Adam and the fall of Satan – they both envied what God had but they did not.

**Jealousy** involves *something or someone* that IS ours– like our spouse. We suspect that our spouse is being lured away by some other person who, in their eyes, seems to be more attractive, capable and successful, and we are afraid of losing them.

- "Envy" is always a sin because it involves **coveting** something that is NOT ours – it is essentially saying that God is not doing right by me.
- "Jealousy" has to do with something that IS ours that we want to protect. *"Jealousy is the desire to maintain exclusive devotion within a relationship in the face of a challenge to that exclusive devotion."*<sup>8</sup>

Jealousy crosses over into sin with us when it becomes an ongoing paranoia of *unjustified* suspicion and we need constant reassurance from our spouse because of our own insecurity. But, God is not insecure. And, since He is all-knowing, there is no ambiguity in the situation – **something He holds dear IS being drawn away.**

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<sup>6</sup> Numbers 5:31 – the trial of jealousy - *"The husband will be innocent of any wrongdoing, but the woman will bear the consequences of her sin."*

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.iwise.com/Gore\\_Vidal/Envy\\_quotes](http://www.iwise.com/Gore_Vidal/Envy_quotes)

<sup>8</sup> *Godly Jealousy: A Theology of Intolerant Love*, p. 13-14

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**SLIDE: HOLY JEALOUSY**

So, to answer the question – *“Isn't jealousy always a sin?”* – the answer is **no!** Jealousy can be good or bad. God's jealousy is always a Holy jealousy, and occasionally **we too** can have a godly jealousy, as shown by God's approval of Phineas' motivation.

For God, jealousy is *“...an emotion springing from the very depths of (His) personality.”* It is more than a passing mood; it springs from His innate character and is THE FOUNDATION of all Godly jealousy.

Ok – you may be thinking: *“I'll reluctantly ACCEPT that God has jealousy because He said it, even though I must admit that I DO NOT UNDERSTAND the reason for the obvious INTENSITY of His jealousy.”*

**SLIDE: JUST ONE THING**

Where does this lead? Remember the conversation between Curley and Mitch about the secret of life – *‘Just One Thing?’* The take-away from all this is ...

**SLIDE: GOD'S ONE THING**

➤ God's Own Glory is HIS **“ONE Thing”**, and He acts to protect it.

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**\*\*\*FINALLY, WE COME TO WHAT I WANT TO DISCUSS ON TODAY – GOD'S GLORY IS HIS ONE THING**, but now that I'm here, I must admit that I feel somewhat uneasy. That's because I have only recently stumbled on this Biblical principal by the grace of God, and while I have thought about it a lot lately, I realize that I have only a *vague* understanding of what this demands of my life. How can I do it justice?

And, in preparing for today, I actually wondered if people secretly consider the *concept as belonging to a bygone era*, like the concept of chivalry. *Is the topic exciting or merely sleep inducing?*

Wow – how embarrassing – I asked myself the question – *“will the Glory of God as a topic be exciting enough?”* But, am I alone in this question? Most of us have secretly asked ourselves: *“Where is the sense of holiness and awe in churches today?”* **“AND Why doesn't it seem to matter that we don't sense it anymore?”**

I believe that it's mostly because we've lost an appreciation of how **IMPORTANT** our acknowledgement of His Glory is to Him. **Since Jonathan Edwards's day 250 years ago, evangelical Christians have not thought about life from the ground up AS CHRISTIANS, because our entire culture has ceased to do so.**<sup>9</sup> We need to reevaluate from the ground up the importance that GOD places on our acknowledgement of His glory!

- ❖ **Most Christians would agree in principle that it's OK for US to be God-centered, right? But how comfortable are we that GOD is GOD-CENTERED?** *How do we feel about the fact that God's One Thing is His Glory, not our happiness?*

It doesn't seem to fit our notion that God is primarily concerned with US, does it? But, **IF** God IS *first-and-foremost* God-Centered, then this would mean that

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Noll, “Jonathan Edwards's Moral Philosophy, and the Secularization of American Christian Thought,” Reformed Journal, February, 1983, p. 26. Noll

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we have an entirely inaccurate perception of Him in a crucial area of His Character.

I know that this may be unsettling to some, but please bear with me even though this may get worse before it gets better. The fact that God IS God-centered leads us to a question that we usually don't want to explore. It is a question that was well formulated by Pastor John Piper. He asks: *"How can you worship... a God who is constantly pointing to his own greatness and constantly telling people that they should recognize this greatness and tell him how much you like it?"*<sup>10</sup>

WE don't think it is necessary that everyone constantly praise us for how good we are, so why does He?

**SLIDE: SELFISH AND EGOTISTICAL?**

This is a significant question, but we don't think about it, do we? Have you ever asked yourself the question: WHY does *God calls for us to praise Him?* We don't *mind* praising Him, but WHY does He *want us to do it?* Does He somehow NEED it?

Remember Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. I always get a kick over the fact that Jesus often talked with theologians about everyday things and He talked with everyday people about theological things. He talked to the woman about worship; He says...

"...the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the **Father seeks such as these to worship him**. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23-24

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<sup>10</sup> John Piper, *Is Jesus an Egomaniac?*  
<http://www.desiringgod.org/conference-messages/is-jesus-an-egomaniac>

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Jesus said that "The Father **SEEKS** such as these to worship Him."

- ❖ WHY does He seek it? Does He NEED worship?
- ❖ IS GOD INSECURE?

SLIDE: C.S. LEWIS

It may come as a surprise to some that even C.S. Lewis – who wrote the *Narnia* series – had a problem on this very issue.

- By-the-way, the initials 'C.S.' stand for 'Clive Staples' – and if you want to know anything about Staples, you can ask Travis.

Lewis said that a major obstacle in his coming to faith was God's constant demand for praise; it reminded him of – quote – "*a vain woman who wants compliments.*" Let me quote Lewis from his book entitled Reflections on the Psalms:

*"When I first began to draw near to belief in God and even for some time after it had been given to me, I found a stumbling block in the demand ... made by all religious people that we should 'praise' God; still more in the suggestion that God Himself demanded it. **We all despise the man who demands continued assurance of his own virtue, intelligence or delightfulness;** we despise still more the crowd of people round every dictator, every millionaire, every celebrity, who gratify that demand ...*

*The Psalms were especially troublesome in this way — "Praise the Lord," "O praise the Lord with me," "Praise Him." (And why, incidentally, did praising God so often consist in telling other people to praise Him? Even in telling whales, snowstorms, etc., to go on doing what they would certainly*

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do whether we told them or not?) Worse still was the statement put into God's own mouth, "whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoreth me" (Psalm 50:23). *It was hideously like saying, "What I most want is to be told that I am good and great."*

... Gratitude to God, reverence to Him, obedience to Him, I thought I could understand; not this perpetual eulogy ..."<sup>11</sup>

- Lewis said that gratitude to God, reverence for Him, obedience to Him, he could understand; he could not understand God's desire for unending praise...

Lewis eventually broke through this dilemma and saw something very different than he had suspected:

*"My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation."*<sup>12</sup>

Lewis saw that praising God is how OUR joy reaches its highest and most complete level. So, when God is pursuing – even demanding – our praise, He is also pursuing the consummation of OUR joy.

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<sup>11</sup> C.S. Lewis, "A Word About Praising" in *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, 1986)

<sup>12</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958, 93–95]

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I know that this may sound **counter-intuitive** at first – that when we make ourselves small and Him great, when we are glorifying Him and not ourselves, it is at those very moments that WE reach our highest joy. But that's exactly what happens, isn't it? **Our joy reaches its height in those moments when we forget about ourselves and are lost in Him!**

- Remember the Question: *what is the chief end of man?*

**SLIDE:** The answer has TWO aspects to it: **“...to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”** **When we are doing the first, we are experiencing the last.**

What this means is that when God is seeking us to recognize His glory, *He is being loving toward us*. God's “selfishness” is not *contrary* to His love, it's the purpose for which we were made. He has made us both to *show* His glory and to *give* Him glory. We can find purpose in life only through a life whose purpose is about Him.

- ❖ St. Augustine prayed: *“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.”*<sup>13</sup>

What a brilliant design God has worked for us, that the pursuit of our chief end – the pursuit of His glory – should also be OUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF JOY. If this is true – and it is – then **for God NOT to seek His Own glory would be unloving towards us because it would deprive us of what is most valuable and delightful to us.**

- And, if in all this, the idea that God is *selfish* is whispered in our ear **as it was in the Garden of Eden**, remember that our ability to glorify Him comes **ONLY** thru the death of Christ – He made the sacrifice, not us, and our salvation is extended to us thru 100% grace. The sacrifice was all on His side of the equation. God's self-centeredness is far different than

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<sup>13</sup> Confessions (Lib 1,1-2,2.5,5: CSEL 33, 1-5)

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ours, just as His jealousy is far different than ours. Both are ALWAYS Holy.

HOW DO WE GIVE GLORY TO GOD?

OK – God want us to praise Him, to give Glory to Him.

**HOW** DO WE DO THAT?

What does “giving glory to God” involve? There are three thoughts involved here:

First: What IS Glory?

Secondly: What is GOD's GLORY?

Thirdly: How do WE give glory to Him?

WHAT IS GLORY?

Glory is one of those CONCEPTS, like “Beauty”, that it is **DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE** – but we know it when we see it.

Certain painting, a sunrise, the innocent smile of a child... We can mutually agree that these things are beautiful even though we can't actually describe *beauty*.

THINGS, as opposed to concepts, are easy to describe. For example, if someone asks you: “*what is a football?*”

Hollow Oval object about 28” long and 21” around the middle. Made of pig or cattle skin, and inflated by air to a high pressure – unless you play for the NE Patriots...

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So, Glory, like Beauty, is a *concept*. we can tell when it is PRESENT, but it is not a *thing*, it is a *concept*.

OK- WHAT IS GOD'S 'GLORY'?

SLIDE: PSALM 19

"The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world" Psalm 19:1-4

Again, Glory is not a *thing*, it's a concept, but we know it when we see it. The Glory of God is present when HE ALLOWS US TO SEE PART OF HIS HOLINESS. It is God going public with His holiness. He *wants* us to know His greatness.

For me, the night sky is a witness to the *haunting* fact that there IS a Creator and that He is 'kadosh' – Holy – separate and vastly different from us. Sense of awe that produces reverence and a bit of appropriate fear. How easy it is to get lost in looking up at its vastness. And, remember when the crowds went wild as Jesus was entering Jerusalem on a donkey. The Pharisees objected to the noise, but Jesus said "I tell you... if they keep quiet, *the stones along the road will burst into cheers.*"<sup>14</sup> So, the rocks up there and the rocks down here praise God.

VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE? We hear frequently about scientists locating other planets that have the potential for life, and that the chances that

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<sup>14</sup> Luke 19:40 New Living Translation

God's Jealousy for His Glory

we're along in the vast universe are slim. They ask the question: "If God is the Creator and the earth is the only inhabited planet, why is there such a large and empty universe?"

- ❖ The simple answer is: **It's not about us.** It's about God! God created us to know Him, to love Him, to show Him and to give Him Glory. **And then He gave us a HINT of what He is like — the vast universe that is beyond comprehension.**

The universe is declaring the glory of God, and a main reason we exist is to see it and be stunned by it and glorify God because of it.

His Glory is His Holiness shining thru. Remember Isaiah's vision of the throne room in heaven. Isaiah wrote:

"I **saw** the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple." Angels are circling around God and crying: "**Holy, holy, holy** is the Lord God almighty..."<sup>15</sup>

They sing "*holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty;*" and "The whole earth is full of His Glory." After three "holys", you might have EXPECTED that the angels would say '*The whole earth is filled with His holiness.*' But, they DON'T - they say "the whole earth is full of His GLORY".

God Glory is the fact that His HOLINESS SHINES THRU all of creation, and it *cannot* be missed!

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<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 6:3

God's Jealousy for His Glory

OK – THEN HOW DO WE GIVE GOD GLORY?

We give glory to God when we ACKNOWLEDGE the glory we see and respond to it in praise and obedience!

All creation is to give glory to its Creator. And since we and angels are part of the creation, we too must give Him glory – but we are the only created things that do it *voluntarily (at least at present!)* INANIMATE objects give glory to God thru their very existence – their *existence* confesses that there is a Creator. With us humans, we have to confess with *our lips*: Jesus is Lord to the Glory of the Father!<sup>16</sup> The rest of the creation gives glory to God by just existing as He created it to exist (albeit it is *less wonderful* now than He create it because of Adam's sin.<sup>17</sup>)

*“... the glory of God ... describes the superlative honor that SHOULD be given to God by everything in the universe.”<sup>18</sup>*

We give glory to God when we privately and PUBLICALLY give credit to Him for everything, acknowledging that He is supreme and Holy.

❖ Question: In giving God glory, are we ADDING to His glory?

**Does He need us to refill His tank, so to speak, as our automobile needs gas after driving around?** NO! He is not lacking in any way. He is perfect is every way already and we aren't adding to anything to Him per se.

For example: We visit to the **Grand Canyon** and are overwhelmed by its vastness & its beauty. We unconsciously whisper: “Wow – that's beautiful”. **Now, our words have NOT ADDED one tiny thing to its beauty – we've only ACKNOWLEDGED the beauty is ALREADY has.**

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<sup>16</sup> Philippians 2:11

<sup>17</sup> The epistle to the Romans (8:19-23) clearly teaches that the animal kingdom and the entire universe experienced a universal death sentence when Adam fell in Genesis 3.

<sup>18</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, page 220.

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- ❖ When we “give Glory” to God, we are NOT giving Him something He doesn't *already* have. “**GIVING glory**” is ADMITTING that we see the beauty of His holiness and greatness in creation, and THEREFORE we acknowledge both HIS greatness and His sovereignty over His creation – including over us. That's “giving” glory.

But, we humans have forgotten how important giving Glory to God is. We have forgotten that both the *acknowledging* of the Glory of God – and the *despising* of it – have **consequences**.

Romans chapter 1 says that the problem with mankind is that men cover our eyes because they don't want to admit that they are not the center of the universe. Men...

“... suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

For although they knew God, **they neither glorified him** as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.**

**Therefore God gave them over** in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Romans 1:18-23

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❖ **SO, THE HEART OF ALL SIN IS AN EXCHANGE OF GLORY!**

Human beings were made to glorify God, but we have “*exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man*” — especially the image of the man and woman in the mirror. This is the essence of what we call sin – a radical transformation in who receives our God-meant glory.

THE PATTERN

You may remember that I've talked about how the Hebrews often saw life events though the **concept of patterns**. They may not know exactly WHY something may be happening, but they recognized patterns and thus could expect certain things to repeat themselves in their future when they saw a particular pattern unfold.

**\*\*\*** We are unfortunately witnessing today in our society the common pattern that inevitably plays out when the glory of God fades from a society's consciousness. As that society abandons Him, there reaches a point where **God gives that society over to corruption** and depravity.

We tend to think that the wrath of God comes after years and years of depravity – like at Sodom and Gomorrah – and it inevitably does. However, **the widespread existence** of depravity in a society is **an unquestionable sign that God's wrath has *already begun***.

God says, in effect: “*If this is what you want, that's what you get.*”<sup>20</sup> And so He removes His protective restraints from a society's conscious. And the result is hell on earth: more and more people become mean-spirited, envious, and murderous – people who think nothing of cheating, lying and bullying, and

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<sup>20</sup> The Message Bible, Romans 1

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it is the immoral and insufferable celebrities who are celebrated! We can see this happening all around us today, where people celebrate and take pride in depravity. Society ends up handing out prizes to those who do the worst things the best!<sup>21</sup>

A few years ago, **Ann Coulter** wrote a book entitled *Godless – The Church of Liberalism*. In it, she – as she usually does – excoriates what she sees as the liberal hostility toward traditional religion. It's an interesting and humorous read. What struck me was a statement she made during an interview with Jay Leno; Leno was critical of the book. Ms. Coulter noted that while many people have disagreed with specific examples *in* the book, *hardly anyone seemed to mind that they were called Godless*.<sup>22</sup> **Much of our society is like that today.**

In ancient Egypt, Scripture says that a Pharaoh arose who did **not know Joseph nor Joseph's God**, and shortly thereafter Hebrew babies were being thrown into the Nile. How many died? We don't know, but we do know that from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014, **327,653** unwanted babies were thrown into OUR **Nile River that is Planned Parenthood**.<sup>23</sup> As the glory of God fades, we should expect such things and even worse, like the selling of body parts for profit.

We as a society have forgotten that both the *acknowledging* of the Glory of God – and the *despising* of it – have pronounced consequences! If this slaughter continues, how long before our nation is judged like Egypt was?

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, Romans 1:32

<sup>22</sup> <http://mediamatters.org/video/2006/06/15/nbc-still-disapproves-of-still-milking-controve/135970>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jan/1/planned-parenthood-327k-abortions-fiscal-2014/>

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OK – LET'S GET BACK TO THE GLORY OF GOD, SPECIFICALLY IN THE CHURCHES.

We wouldn't think that the Glory of God would be a controversial topic IN CHURCHES, do we? After all, we here just finished singing Praise songs to God for 40–45 minutes – and it felt wonderful.

- ❖ But, as I said, God's concern for His Glory – which is His Holiness that is visible for all to see – & His concern for our PROPER response to it, is His "ONE Thing". And I emphasize the words "our PROPER response."

And this is exactly WHY it is controversial – because IF His Glory is His One Thing, then it should be MY PRIMARY purpose in life – as question #1 of the Westminster catechism says. But, **I have to admit that I am not like David; I am not a man after God's Own heart**<sup>24</sup>.

- I want to be, but things have to change in my life for it to be so.

PARADIGM SHIFT

Here's where better understanding our chief end –the Glory of God – can start a PARADIGM SHIFT in our thinking. Does everyone understand what I mean by a *paradigm shift*? It is when your view of everything radically changes to a new perspective – it is a revolution, a transformation, a sort of metamorphosis.

**SLIDE:** Here's an example of a paradigm shift – Normal Rockland's painting entitled "*The Discovery*" (1956). Santa Claus was real this morning, and now he's just dad dressed up in red cloths. The world was flat, and now it is round. The

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<sup>24</sup> | Samuel 13:14

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earth was the center of the solar system and now it is not. Bill Cosby was a hero, and now he is not.

Our greatest paradigm shift was what happened after we accepted Christ, of course. Think about how your friends saw you 10 years before Christ and how they see you now. A paradigm shift has occurred in how we see things and how we act (usually).

Ok. I want to discuss another potential paradigm shift in our thinking that is plainly revealed by God in Scripture but which our human nature tends to overlook. We saw that the chief end of man is not the glory of man himself but the glory of God.

❖ OK: WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF **GOD**? The chief end of God is also the Glory of God – that His glory be recognized by everyone and everything!<sup>25</sup>

The Person in the Universe Who is the MOST Passionate for God's Glory is God Himself! Let me repeat that: *The Person in the Universe Who is the MOST Passionate for God's Glory is God Himself!*

And, not only is God *jealous* for His glory, the paramount reason for EVERYTHING He DOES is for the sake of His Glory!

- ❖ Let me repeat that – EVERYTHING – and I emphasize EVERYTHING – that God does is first-and-foremost done for the sake of His glory.
- ❖ What this means is that God's primary focus is not on us but on Himself!

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<sup>25</sup> John Piper quoted in Louie Giglio, *PASSION: The Bright Light of Glory*, Nashville, W Publishing, 2014, p.98

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Jonathan Edwards, in his book Concerning the End for which God Created the World, concluded: "[I]t appears that all that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that one phrase, 'the glory of God'." NOTE: A great exposition on Jonathan Edward's insights is contained in John Piper's work mentioned in the footnote.<sup>26</sup>

SLIDE: New Heart and a New Spirit

Consider this familiar text from Ezekiel chapter 36 that describes what happens when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior: God will us a **new heart and a new spirit, He put His Spirit in us.**

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a **new heart and put a new spirit in you**; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will **put my Spirit in you** and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God."

God promises Israel that He WILL do all this, and all this DID happen to us when we accept Christ as Savior and receive the Holy Spirit

**(click) But WHY will God do this for us? What was His primary motivation? Was it His love for us, or because of the covenant with Israel?** Well, yes, He does love us & He does keep all of His promises, but – there's an overriding issue at stake here. God explains WHY He will do this in the lead-up passage to this text:

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<sup>26</sup> John Piper, GOD'S PASSION FOR HIS GLORY - Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards, Crossway Books, 1998, <http://document.desiringgod.org/god-s-passion-for-his-glory-en.pdf?1439242050>

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<SLIDE>: Ezekiel 36: verses 22–23

"Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is **NOT for your sake**, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but **for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will **show the holiness of my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when **I am proved holy through you** before their eyes."

He does this for the sake of His Name, His reputation as the Holy One. And THIS IS WHERE the topic of God's Glory *really* gets controversial for us because He says He did not do this primarily for our sakes but for His sake.

Let's listen to a few Scriptural passages that gives God's perspective on WHY He does what He does:

In Isaiah 43:6–7, God says:

"(I will) bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, **whom I created for MY glory.**"

- ❖ God created us for His glory – in other words, to allow His Holiness to be seen in creation and in our salvation.

Again, back to the question, "*what is the chief end of man?*" The glory of God. **This is an easy concept to say but a hard one to really grasp.** We were **created** so that He would receive glory thru us.

Q: Why did God rescued Israel from Egypt?

Psalm 106:7–8: "Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works . . . but rebelled by the Sea, at the

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Red Sea. Yet he saved them **for his name's sake**, that he might make known his mighty power.

Why did God defeat Pharaoh at the Red Sea? Exodus 14 tells us:

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord . . . And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, **when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh**, his chariots, and his horsemen." (Exodus 14:4, 17-18)

Why did God spare Israel in the wilderness?

I acted **for the sake of my name**, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. (Ezekiel 20:14)

OK – you make be thinking, perhaps this is understandable for what happened in the *Old Testament*, but the Cross and 'Salvation' is about *you and I*, isn't it?

❖ Jesus died to save us, RIGHT?

Well – yes, Jesus' death allows our salvation thru belief in Him. **But**, if everything God does is primarily for His Own Glory, then...

➤ **THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE CROSS IS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, NOT FOR US.**

**SLIDE: LUTHER AND SALVATION**

THE CROSS IS PRIMARILY ABOUT SHOWING GOD'S **GLORY**.

Now – before someone runs out to the shed to grab some **pitchforks** – remember that Scripture says that the Glory of God is Him allowing us to SEE

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aspects of His Holiness. In that context, the cross and our salvation show first-and-foremost His Holiness. Before I explain this, consider some additional Scriptures:

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed:

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this purpose I have come to this hour. **Father, glorify your name.'** Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will **glorify it again'** (John 12:27-28).

And in John 17, Jesus prayed: Father, the hour has come; **glorify your son that the Son may glorify you.** (John 17:1)

- ❖ Jesus says that He will endure this suffering so that the Father's Name – His Holy Reputation – would be upheld for all to SEE.

WHY are we to do good works? Jesus said to do them so that **THE FATHER** gets glory:

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works **and give glory to your Father** who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Jesus even said that the reason He answers prayers made in His name is **so that the Father would be glorified:**

"... I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, **so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**" (John 14:12-13)

Jesus' priorities were *always* about the Father's Glory.

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TO DWELL WITH US

Please don't get anxious here when Scripture says that God does things primarily for His benefit. It does not negate His love for us in any way. In fact, the Cross happened because the Father *desired* to dwell with us. Jesus' atoning death on the cross in our place permitted that to happen in a way that protected the Father's Holiness. You and I ARE the apple of His eye, but Scripture says that **Jesus died first-and-foremost to bring about what the Father's wanted.** We didn't want it – He did.

Remember that God stated His intention to dwell with men and women from the very beginning in the Garden and then in the Tabernacle. But for Him to allow ANYTHING less than sinless perfection into His direct presence would be a denial of His Absolute Holiness. Christ's atoning sacrifice on the Cross takes away our sin and thus serves to protect His Holiness and allows us into His presence – which is what He wants. **First-and-foremost, the Cross was for His purposes, and we are the beneficiaries of this intention.**

- ❖ **The Cross allows us to dwell with Him – which is what He *always* wanted and we *now* want – and it did it in a way that protected His reputation as the Holy One.**

Everything God does is to both show and protect His Holiness, His Good Name. Once we accept that, we can understand some of the Biblical concepts that may have puzzled us.

FEAST & WEDDING BANQUET

Perhaps we may see some of the parables of Jesus in a different light now. For example, have you ever wondered about parable about the man who

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throws a banquet and forces people in, and then he throws someone out for not having the proper attire?

There are two similar parables, one in Matthew and the other in Luke, and they are not exactly the same in detail because Jesus would have adjusted His conversations to the crowd in attendance. In Matthew, Jesus has a king as the main character, in Luke He talks about the master of a house, but the point of both parables is the same. I'll stick with a king for this illustration.

A king planned a large banquet and sent out invitations. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to contact each of the invited guests, telling them that all was ready and the meal was about to start. One after another, the guests made excuses for not coming. One had just bought a piece of land and said he had to go see it. Another had purchased some oxen and said he was on the way to yoke them up and try them out. Another gave the excuse that he was newly married and therefore could not come.<sup>27</sup>

When the king heard these excuses, he was angry. He told his servant to forget the guest list and go into the back streets and alleyways of the town and invite "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame". But, when the servant brought in the downtrodden townspeople, there was still room in the banquet hall. So the king sent his servant to: "Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full". (Luke 14)

"So the wedding hall was filled with guests "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer

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<sup>27</sup> Luke 14 talks about "master of the house"

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darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'  
For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22

OK. Did you notice the reason the King forced people to come in? It was... "so that my house would be full."

The king did all this for HIS own honor, forcing people into his house so that it would be filled. How embarrassing and insulting it is to throw a party and no one shows up. He didn't force them in for their pleasure, although they would later be completely happy with the meal. A full house would be a reflection of his grandeur, and if need be, people would be *compelled* to attend.

- ❖ When you think about it, that's what God did with you and I, isn't it? We had no intention of pursuing Him, we were spiritually dead when He called us, and then the Holy Spirit *compelled us* to come to Christ and we're enjoying Him now.

I go back to that idea that God's Glory is that aspect of His Holiness that He allows us to SEE - we can SEE it in creation, in the preservation of Israel and now in our salvation thru Christ's death.

- ❖ Jesus didn't die from the horrendous scourging and beatings of the Roman soldiers *behind closed doors*, even though He probably should have. But, this would have been out of the sight and hearing of the people. He was lifted up IN PUBLIC so that all could SEE the Innocent One die in our place.

It was fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus said that He HAD - HAD - to be lifted up for people to SEE: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the

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Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." <sup>28</sup> His PUBLIC death put God's Holiness on display for all to SEE.

Scripture continually emphasis that salvation is by grace alone so that no one can boast."<sup>29</sup> You see, if we ourselves COULD EARN some part in our salvation – *even in some minute way* – then WE would be due part of the credit. But, we cannot because we're not holy in and of ourselves – that's the issue. The fact that Jesus HAD to die shows that that He is the Only Holy One.

❖ Holy God could NEVER PRETEND that we aided in our own salvation just to make us feel important. He can have no part in a LIE!

From the creation of the heavens and earth which was done to show His glory<sup>30</sup>, to the creation of man and woman which He did for His glory<sup>31</sup>, to salvation by the death of the innocent Lamb, to the final judgment<sup>32</sup> and then to the heavenly praise – He will receive glory for all eternity<sup>33</sup>, **God's Glory is His One Thing.**<sup>34</sup>

HOW THIS APPLIES TO MY LIFE

OK – let's start to wrap up this concept. We are to give Glory to God in our lives. God is not just *mildly* interested in His glory – He is **RADICALLY** committed to seeing that His Glory is esteemed as the **SUPREME VALUE** in THE

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<sup>28</sup> John 3:14-15

<sup>29</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9; Isaiah 42:8 "I am the LORD! That is my name! I WILL NOT SHARE MY GLORY with anyone else, or the praise due me with idols." NET Bible

<sup>30</sup> Psalm 19:1-2

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 43:7

<sup>32</sup> Revelation 15:3-4

<sup>33</sup> Revelation 4:6-11

<sup>34</sup> à la Thoennes' Godly Jealousy, p. 35

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UNIVERSE. I think that our setting aside of at least 50% of our service to worship God is fitting!

So, we here realize that we are to give glory to God. **BUT, DO WE KNOW THE EXTENT OF DOING SO IN OUR LIVES that this necessitates?**

- Consider this question: why do people join a particular church?

**SLIDE:** WE BELONG TO A PARTICULAR CHURCH BECAUSE...

*Why do people join the churches they do? Perhaps more precise: Why do they stay in a church when it's not perfect?*

Well, some people join and stay in a church because they belong to a denomination – Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, etc. Many of us did exactly that at one time. And I recognize that some may stay there because they *like* it. But, most of us here left denominational churches or other independent churches because we were seeking something else.

So, WHY does someone join or stay in a particular church and not another? Why Christian Community Church and not Cornerstone Fellowship Church, or vice versa? Because they are “called” here? That’s part of it, but over the years people who were *called* here have evidently been *recalled* elsewhere. So why are WE here?

**CLICK:** Some might say that they wanted a “*church where they think that they can better ‘grow-up’ in Christ*” – and that would be a proper goal. <CHECK>

**CLICK:** Others might want to be with a “*body of Christians that seeks greater intimacy with Jesus*” – and that is a commendable journey. <CHECK>

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**CLICK:** Some are attracted because it has a music ministry that helps them enter into God's presence. Nothing wrong with that. <CHECK>

**CLICK:** And others might say that concentrates on outreach to the community – praise Jesus! <CHECK>

All of these motives are commendable and are marks of a Spirit-filled church. But, notice that all of these are **ME-centered**, person-centered.

- ❖ But, the scriptures we just examined say that the ultimate purpose of the church is God's Glory, not our personal happiness and comfort.

What is the primary reason that I grow in my Christian walk? Is it for my own benefit or so that He will be seen in us by others?

Am I saying that singing **worship songs** and attending **soakings** and having **good men's meetings** and **missionary outreach** are NOT PRIMARILY to make ME feel good about myself and my relationship with Christ? **YES!** Precisely.

Scripture says that the reason He wants us to seek His presence is not just because it makes us feel good or helps us to become more like Him (*although it does do exactly that*). **He wants us to seek His presence because our SEEKING ACKNOWLEDGES that HE is EVERYTHING; OUR BECOMING MORE LIKE HIM ACKNOWLEDGES that HE is EVERYTHING!!!**

Paul wrote: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act **in order to fulfill his good purpose.**" <sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Philippians 2: 12-13

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His purpose! I often want to get closer to Him because that is **what I want**. In reality, my effort should be primarily because that's what HE wants!

- ❖ I am “me-centered” all too often, and I tend to look at my Christian walk with “me-centered eyes”.

Our redemption points directly to God's glory and His love. It humbling to admit that God doesn't exist so that He could redeem me. It is humbling to admit that He doesn't owe me anything. **The fact that He loves me when I was undeserving and that He redeemed me thru the Cross only glorifies Him all the more.**

- ❖ **Salvation glorifies God alone, but that hardly means He doesn't care for us.** The One produces joy in the other – that's how it works!

Like the Samaritan woman who talked about crumbs of bread, we who are at the Master's table receive the benefit of the bread of life.<sup>36</sup>

OK – the final slide...

**SLIDE:** DO ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31

God's Glory is His **“ONE Thing”**. And **THIS is WHY** it is controversial – because if **His Glory IS His One Thing**, then it also needs to be **MY CONSCIOUS, EVERY-DAY PRIORITY** in life.

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<sup>36</sup> Matthew 15:27

God's Jealousy for His Glory

We – **you and I** – need to start asking ourselves **WHY** we do *ANYTHING*. It should be for the glory of God. If I believe that, then...

- ❖ Our day-to-day decisions take on a whole new perspective. Is my being critical over *nonessential issues* for the glory of God? Notice I said "nonessential" issues; essential issues DO concern the glory of God. Complaining over nonessential issues does not.
- ❖ How about having hissy fits – and we ALL do have them – when we're in a bad mood – is that for the glory of God? Well, **if I say to you, "that's just the way I am"** – **I want you to say to me: "OK, that's good! You recognize it. Now, now CHANGE it – for the Glory of God!"**

I may find myself doing all of the work on some project and others just sit around and enjoy themselves – does it glorify God if I become resentful?

You see – I'm trying to remember to ask myself a basic question in whatever I do:

- ❖ **Why did I – or should I – start the activity?**

**"WHY are we doing things" is an issue that's so easy to overlook.** Is it so that the hallway has a fresh coat of paint or is it for the glory of God? Should it matter to me if I am the only one who show up for a work day?

- ❖ WHY did I show up *at all* if not for the glory of God?
- ✓ **I'm starting to see that it's not how loudly we sing, it's how loudly His GLORY sings thru us.**

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~ And the fact that Christ lives in us adds a new perspective to the command to love one another. God's temple is now His Church, the people in whom He dwells through the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup>

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Each and every teaching we hear on Sundays should be evaluated thru the filter of God's Glory. Did it advance His glory? Was Christ lifted up, or was the presenter or some newly revealed gimmick the prime focus?

We hear a lot about God is going to do something new in these last days, and some say that we need to follow individuals who they identify as new apostles and new prophets. These calls to do something new always "tickle the ears,"<sup>38</sup> but rarely are they from God. The Book of Ecclesiastes says:

"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."<sup>39</sup>

You see, claims of new apostles and new prophets to the churches are NOT "new" – they are as old as the 1<sup>st</sup> century. And let me advise you again thru the Biblical concept of patterns: 100% of the time, ALL such "new apostles and new prophets" movements in church history have ended in disappointment and injury to the Body of Christ.

I guess it is human nature that we look for the easiest way – something new and improved must be easier, right?

In the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pilgrim and his companion Hopeful are tempted off the Holy Way that led to the Celestial City and they walked in By-

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<sup>37</sup> Ephesians 2:19-22

<sup>38</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3 "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires..."

<sup>39</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9

God's Jealousy for His Glory

Pass Meadow because it looked easier and it seemed to be going in the same direction; however, it led to the castle of the giant named Despair. They had to hurry back and find where we left the King's Highway. I think that we too periodically need to go back and evaluate if we're headed off in a different direction because it looks easier.

The Christian WALK itself is NOT easy – it isn't meant to be – but the BURDEN we now carry is light because of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

- ❖ The Church doesn't need new apostles and new prophets with watered-down credentials to show us their vision of the way.<sup>41</sup>
- ❖ What the church today needs is to REdiscover – or perhaps FOR SOME, TO DISCOVER FOR THE FIRST TIME – our chief end: fervor for God's Glory.

Remember how our spirits stirred when we came to Christ? It wasn't just because we felt joyful – it involved something more, something greater than ourselves. The churches need to **reclaim something they have lost** – the sense of God's glory that churches had 150 years ago and that WE had the moment we were saved.

- ✓ We need a revival of our OLD thing!
- ✓ And for some, that may be something new!!

\*\*\* I'm not talking about trying to relive some *emotional* feeling we had previously and I'm not talking about trying to reach new emotional highs today. If by the grace of God they come, thank You Lord. But our

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<sup>40</sup> Matthew 11:29-30

<sup>41</sup> See discussion in session 28 on Prophecy. Many of the points made against the neo-prophets also apply to the neo-apostles.

God's Jealousy for His Glory

goal *cannot* be to achieve an emotional high, because IF it is, we're NOT living for the Glory of God – we're living for the enjoyment of ME. It's the historic trap – MY glory – **idolatry cloaked in a spiritual setting!**

Instead, I'm talking about reclaiming that RESTORED VIEW OF GOD'S OVERWHELMING AND AWESOME WONDER that we once had. I want to get to the point where I do not have to ask: "*where is the sense of God's glory in the church*". I want to get back to where I don't constantly have to ask myself: "*where is the sense of God's glory in my life?*"

Here is the bottom line: God is the One Being in the universe for whom self-exaltation is not the act of a needy personality but an act of infinite giving. **God seeks our praise NOT because He won't be fully God until He **GETS** it, but rather that **WE** won't be truly happy until **WE GIVE** it.**

- This is not arrogance. This is grace.
- This is not selfishness. This is love.

So... "Whether, then, you eat or drink or **whatever** you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

*"gloria tibi domine"* – Glory to you, Lord

Amen.