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**That They
May Behold
My Glory**

#1334-A

Series: Prayer: God's "Secret" Weapon

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That They May Behold My Glory

Our Heavenly Father,

We come to You and bring to You that precious name, the name that is above every name, the name before which one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus is Lord. We worship You.

We come, Father, bearing that name and all that that name implies, and we are humbled in thy presence, Father, that we may come and appropriate from the bank of eternity all that is ours because it has all been given to us by that name.

We thank you, Father, for Your grace and Your mercy in our lives this week just passed. What a joy to know that moment-by-moment Your love for us never ceases, never changes. We worship You.

We pray for others in our midst struggling through times of great difficulty whose hearts are grieved, whose hearts are broken, whose hearts are fearful, whose hearts are lonely. And we pray that the precious Comforter, even this morning, might come along side and that they might be able to appropriate that comfort that is theirs in Christ.

Grant as we pray this morning a fresh awareness of who we are in Jesus and who Jesus is.

For we pray it in His name,

Amen.

By now, I suspect, a kind of hush must have settled upon that band of semi-confused disciples. They have been struggling to understand what Jesus was trying to say to them about His going away and His coming back. To them, it seemed He had been speaking in riddles. Little by little, however, the smoke was clearing. And little by little, they were beginning to understand

That They May Behold My Glory

what Jesus was saying. What He was saying was that He was leaving, He was going away so He could go back to His Father. He had to do that so He could send them His Spirit. And then He looked at these disciples and said, “Unless I go I can’t send My Spirit. But when I send My Spirit, you are going to be able to approach My Father with the same authority that I do. You will be able to come to this miracle known as prayer and God will hear you.” But you will have to come He said, “In My Name”. You’ll remember they had never done that before Jesus made that clear. But now they could and now we can come in the Name.

In the last study we looked at the prelude in John, chapter 16, to this moment of moments when Jesus was to tenderly pull back the curtain of eternity and let us actually share in the intimacy that existed between God the Father and God the Son.

Nothing like this had ever happened before, either. The Father had expressed His confidence in the Son at His baptism, but these men were not there for that coronation. The Son had described how to pray to the Father when He taught them to pray on that mountainside. They had seen Him steal away again and again to a mountain apart to pray, to spend time talking to His Father; but they had no idea what went on in that secret place between these two expressions of the Godhead.

Now they were being invited into the Holy of Holies. They were, in essence, approaching the throne of the Most High God as they listened to His precious Son demonstrate what real prayer was all about. It was nothing like the prayers they had heard the Pharisees pray all these years. There was no pretense, no memorized words, no ostentatious strutting around on street corners or standing in the synagogues displaying their own righteousness by the use of glowing phrases and impersonal rhetoric.

This was akin to any son talking to his dad, but the conversation was all about spiritual things. And as you might expect, it was totally unselfish. Jesus was asking the Father to glorify Himself and to communicate that glory to this strangely disjointed band of leaders who would one day be known as the disciples.

He wanted the glory of God to be passed on to them and, He added, to us as well. What an incredible thought. But then, what an incredible God we have. The Father’s glory has been given to us. If there was an overriding thought in this prayer,

That They May Behold My Glory

it was that His glory is ours. The Father's glory is His. Sounds awesome. We talk about it a lot, don't we? We sing about it a lot, don't we? Glory. But what does it mean? And how should our understanding of the glory of God affect the way we pray and the way we think?

Let's steal ever so quietly into the prayer closet with Jesus and the disciples and listen to what He is saying. This prayer has three primary facets: glory, unity, and security. These three things ought to be reflected in our prayer lives, as well. We begin by taking a look at the first of those three, and we ask ourselves, "Why was Jesus so preoccupied with this thing He called glory?" We need to know. We really need to know.

The glory of God is one of the major themes of Scripture. It is directly spoken of more than 400 times in God's Word and is referred to on virtually every page. But if I were to take a poll and ask a room full of believers to define the glory of God, I doubt if many could define it.

The word seems to be used to describe a variety of things; but the truth is that all of them are the same. The Scripture talks about God's name being glory. It talks about God giving glory. It talks about God receiving glory. It talks about a time and place called glory. It talks about stealing glory, losing glory, beholding glory.

We read of glory being visible, then of its being invisible. We read of glory as something tangible; but for the most part, it seems intangible. We sing about it a lot. "Oh, that will be glory for me" we sing. "Glory be to the Father and to the Son" we sing. Sometimes I think we understand what we are singing about; other times, I'm not sure. We talk of glory belonging only to the Father. Then we read of glory being given to the Son. We read of the Father glorifying the Son and of the Son glorifying the Father. We read of glory as something we have fallen short of, as something we are seeking to avoid, as something we are seeking to appropriate. Which is it? And why is it so nebulous?

Let's listen to Jesus as He beseeches the Father concerning His glory, and let's ask His Spirit to reveal to us what He is asking for, and what we are to ask for as we pray for God's glory to be revealed and returned.

Let's stop for just a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to give

That They May Behold My Glory

us insight into this seemingly very difficult subject because it is spiritual in nature and only the Holy Spirit can teach spiritual truth. So let's stop and pray,

Heavenly Father,

We come to You and we ask You to open our eyes of understanding that You might supernaturally, in spite of the teacher, teach us truth this morning that would not just entertain us or educate us but, rather, transform us into Your very own image. That's our prayer, Father. We humble ourselves in Your presence and ask You to demonstrate Your glory by teaching us about Your glory.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

There is more mention of this thing called "glory" in Jesus' prayer in John 17 than anywhere else. It is the dominant theme. The passages, taken in sequence, read like this:

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

(John 17:1,2,4,5)

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

(John 17:9,10)

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

(John 17:20,22,24)

That They May Behold My Glory

Glory. What is it? How do we get it? How do we give it? Why did Jesus want us to have it? Those will be the questions we will be seeking to answer. From this passage alone, we can begin to sense something about what glory is and something about its relationship to God. We know that:

- 1- Jesus said, “My hour has come.” This was the Father’s cue to glorify the Son (verse 1).
- 2- This thing of glory was to be a two-way street. He was asking the Father to glorify Him so He could glorify the Father (verse 1).
- 3- Part of Christ’s bringing glory to His Father was wrapped up in His finishing the work He was given to do (verse 4).
- 4- Jesus was asking for the same glory He once had before the foundation of the world to be returned to Him once again (verse 5).
- 5- Jesus was praying for us and stating that His glory had already been transmitted to us (verses 10,20,24).
- 6- Glory and unity had something in common (verse 22).

That information gives us an understanding of the breadth of the subject, but unless we understand what glory is, it only seems to add to the mystery. The glory seemed to bounce back and forth between the Father, the Son, and His people. It seemed to be something to pray about, and it seemed to be something that God had to be involved in, or it couldn’t happen. But unless those disciples understood more than we do, I imagine they were in awe of what Jesus was saying, but not at all sure what to make of it. I’m not sure most of us know what to make of it either.

Let’s try to define the word “glory”, and then let’s look to see if we can capture the depth of it as well the breadth of it. What is glory? The Hebrew word translated *glory* in most places in our Bibles is the word *kabod*. Its most common definition is honor or honorable. It has to do with that which is worthy of being honored or revered. The Greek word we see translated glory is the word *doxa*, from which we get our word “doxology.” It is translated glory, honor, splendor. Now all of that seems somewhat vague and doesn’t help much. We see it used in the secular sense in Proverbs 16, where we read,

A gray head is a crown of glory.

(Proverbs 16:31)

That They May Behold My Glory

We read in Proverbs 19,

...it is to a man's glory to overlook a transgression.

(Proverbs 19:11)

We read in Esther

Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches.

(Esther 5:11)

There was glory and honor attached to anything that gave a person worth or respect, humanly speaking. But nearly all of the references to glory or honor in Scripture are used in regard to God. It is God who is to be the object of glory, the giver of glory, and the originator of glory. It starts with Him, He gives it away, and when properly received, it goes right back to Him. Like a boomerang, glory starts and ends with God. But what is it?

The glory of God, Beloved, is what sets God apart from everyone and everything else. It is that which causes man to bow down and adore Him. His character is so incredibly different from man's that it represents glory! We talk of power, but we don't understand power until we see the power of God. We talk of wisdom, but we don't understand wisdom until we see the wisdom of God. The glory of God is that which comes from the revelation that God and His ways are so much higher than ours that we cannot even fathom them apart from the Spirit's revealing them to us; and we fall down as we behold His glory.

It can be likened to standing in front of a spotlight that is ten trillion times stronger than anything we have ever seen and trying to look straight into it. We would be blinded by it. We would be overcome by it. We might even flee from it. Light, we understand. Light this brilliant we cannot fathom. God is not a man like us, and God's character is not flawed like ours. So every single time we behold who He is or how who He is sets Him apart from us, we ought to be filled with awe. We ought to fall on our faces and worship. We ought to give Him—glory. Glory is that revelation of God's nature that demands worship. We read:

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering
and come before Him, Worship the Lord in holy array.

(I Chronicles 16:29 NAS)

His name, you remember, is all that God is. It is His nature revealed. The glory due that name is the adoration and praise that the name invokes. Because He is perfect power, He is glorious.

That They May Behold My Glory

Because He is perfect knowledge, He is glorious. Because He is perfect mercy, He is glorious. We cannot think of those things without realizing that we are not at all like Him, and that very fact ought to make our relationship with Him awesome indeed.

Remember, God dealt with Israel in physical symbols to teach them spiritual truth. He was counting on our allowing the Spirit in us to make the “spiritual switch.” So it is not surprising that the glory of God in the Old Testament was often revealed by a blinding light. It was a physical portrait of a spiritual truth. That truth is that God is so awesome in power, majesty, wisdom and love that nothing man can imagine can even come close to grasping His nature and His attributes. So God did what He so often does: He created a physical miracle to demonstrate something that would one day be a spiritual reality for all believers.

To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.

(Exodus 24:17 NIV)

To them it looked like the mountain was ablaze. He chose to lead His people that way.

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

(Exodus 13:21 NIV)

And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, O LORD, are with these people and that you, O LORD, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

(Numbers 14:14 NIV)

God physically demonstrated His glory by fire. He set the heavens aglow with his presence to let them know that His character was literally indescribable. So the Jews began to understand that the word glory, when it related to God, represented something too marvelous for words. When Moses descended from the presence of God in the cloud, they could not even look upon him because He so reflected the glory of God.

That, however, did not explain how they gave God glory. Glory, you see, is not something man can retain. You cannot receive glory, because it is a garment worn only by God. When you try to put it on, it turns to ashes. So the Jews began to grasp that all

That They May Behold My Glory

they could do was acknowledge God's glory by praising Him or honoring Him, thus returning the glory to its rightful owner.

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

(Psalms 115:1)

In other words, only God could handle glory, so because of His mercy and His righteousness, whenever you beheld His glory, your calling was to give that glory back to God. Worship, then, would consist of beholding who God is (His glory) and returning that glory through praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. In so doing, you would be *giving God the glory* (or giving God back the glory that belongs to Him).

When Jesus came, the glory of God came to earth. John writes:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14)

Man was able to see the glory of God revealed, but not as with Moses, when he had to hide behind a rock, lest he be consumed by it. God placed his glory into a human body so that man could behold it and, at the same time, get a preview of what was to come. And what was to come was God placing His glory in the heart of man by giving to man His Spirit.

Then, *to the degree that man would allow it*, God's Spirit would actually take God's glory (His character revealed in supernatural form) and allow man to grow as Paul shared in II Corinthians 3:18, "from one degree of glory to another." In other words, the more you die to yourself and allow Christ to shine through you, *the more of His glory others can see*. You become increasingly invisible; God becomes increasingly visible. That's what John the Baptist meant in John 3:30, when he said:

He must increase, but I must decrease.

The Amplified Bible states it;

He must grow more prominent; I must grow less so.

(John 3:30)

This matter of glory, then, is perhaps the most crucial issue of the believer's life. It is the measuring stick of the degree to which you are dead, as Paul said:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but

That They May Behold My Glory

Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave
himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Paul was dead. Christ was alive. As long as he, moment by moment, maintained by choice that posture, he received God's glory, because God was able to flow through his life into the lives of others; and *he glorified God because he did not keep the glory for himself, but returned it to God in surrender, adoration, and praise.* Now let's see what Jesus was saying as He prayed that prayer in John 17. Let's look at just one or two of those statements:

First of all, Jesus asked the Father to "glorify the Son so the Son could glorify the Father." Now, I want us to think through this prayer a little differently than we normally would. Based on what we have already learned both from Jesus and from Paul, it appears that Jesus was praying this prayer aloud to teach us how to receive and give glory. This was not a unique occasion in which God was talking with Himself; God was demonstrating how we should pray concerning God's glory.

As Jesus asked the Father to "glorify Him," *He was not asking God to call attention to Him.* He was literally saying, "Father glorify yourself through Me, and I will in turn give that glory back to You." He was saying, "Father, demonstrate your glory (your character which is so unique the world cannot grasp it apart from Your Spirit's intervention), and I will in turn do nothing to steal that glory or rob you of the glory that is due to you."

His Father answered that prayer. He glorified the Son. He demonstrated His awesome character through the life of His Son on the Cross, and His Son, in turn, glorified His Father by refusing to interfere with His Father's plans or take credit for His Father's work.

Those are the two ways we steal God's glory. We either deny God the right to reveal His nature through us by refusing to cooperate with His ways (which are as much higher than ours as the heaven is from the earth), or we try to invade His glory by taking credit for what He has done in us or through us as though we had something to do with it. Jesus did neither. Now what was it God wanted to do to glorify His Son? He wanted Him to die. Die? Yes, die. For the Father to receive the maximum glory as the Father's nature was revealed and for His purposes to be perfectly accomplished, this one, who was the apple of His eye, had to be

That They May Behold My Glory

nailed to a Roman cross. Only then could God be glorified. His perfect will had to be accomplished. No one else could do what Jesus could do to glorify the Father. How do we know? Because Paul told us:

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

(Romans 3:23)

That means none of us could glorify God through total obedience because we have sinned and fallen short of revealing God's awesome nature. Sin came between us and Him, and His glory could not shine through. Something had to happen to restore us to a place where we could receive God's glory and free God's glory to be returned to Him. Jesus was the solution. Why?

1- He never did anything to interfere with the Father's plan.

In John 12 He said:

Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die; it bringeth forth much fruit.

He that loveth His life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

(John 12:23-25,27,28,49)

Whatever the Father asked, the Son did. Whatever the Father said, the Son repeated. Wherever the Father sent Him, the Son went. He said:

And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

(John 8:29)

So Jesus was able to glorify the Father by perfect obedience. And when His disciples grumbled and the world wondered how anything good could come of God's Son on a Roman cross, He answered,

That They May Behold My Glory

Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name.

(John 12:27,28)

I beg you, memorize that verse. Satan will challenge you a thousand times over *at the very moment and in the very situations God would most be glorified in your life*. He will whisper in your ear, “My soul is troubled...save me from this hour.” When you are able to quietly surrender and respond, “For this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify Thy Name,” you will have learned to enter into that holy place where, like Jesus, you and the Father are virtually one in spirit.

2- What made it possible for Jesus to glorify the Father was that He never tried to take the Father’s glory from Him by drawing attention to Himself. The Spirit, as well, does exactly the same. The Spirit always gives the glory to the Son. The Son always gives the glory to the Father. Oh, Beloved, Jesus was teaching us how to pray and how to live. He was teaching us about glory. Jesus said it this way:

I do not receive glory from men.

(John 5:41 NAS)

But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’.”

(John 8:50,54 NAS)

Jesus would not take the glory from God. He could in and of Himself while on planet earth do nothing apart from the Father. Nothing? Nothing. He could do nothing apart from the Father *that would not steal the Father’s glory*.

Glory—there’s more mentioned about glory in Jesus’ prayer in John 17 than any other subject by a long shot. It is the dominant theme. Jesus understood what it took to glorify the Father. He knew He must never struggle against the Father’s plan, even if, and especially if, it seemed to be an impossible road that would lead to a cross. He knew that it would be for that purpose that He came to that hour. Furthermore, once the Father did a work in His life or through His life, *He never shared the glory or took credit for what only the Father could do*.

God’s Spirit in us will do the same. He will never call attention to us. He will always call attention to the Son who in turn will give

That They May Behold My Glory

the glory to the Father.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
(John 16:13)

God has a simple plan. He wants to take His very own nature—a nature which is so awesome that when revealed apart from divine intervention it is as a blinding light—and place it in us. That glory is so incredible man cannot see it, grasp it, hold it, or describe it unless God Himself does the revealing. So He made a decision in eternity past. He foreknew that sin would enter the world and death by sin, and that His glory (His awesome nature) would be filtered to the point where it could no longer be seen.

So He determined to paint a picture of His glory by sending a glory cloud to reveal a tiny fragment of how infinite were all the attributes of His nature. He sent the cloud to rest over the sanctuary where man would meet with God. He sent it to rest over the mercy seat to protect it and identify it as the place where God's goodness met with man's sin. He sent it as a cloud of fire and a pillar of fire to lead His people, a foretaste of His Spirit's work when the new covenant would come to pass. He wanted man to know that God was not anything at all like man in character or in power. He also wanted him to know that one day the Messiah would come; and He would glorify the Father by being totally available, without sin, and would never steal the Father's glory for Himself.

Now He has gone back to the Father, and the glory He had has been given to us, which brings us to another of the truths in John, chapter 17:

All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

(John 17:10,20,22,24 NIV)

That They May Behold My Glory

“I have given them the glory, Father, that You have given to Me.” What an incredible thought. Literally, it means, “Father, I have given them My Spirit, so they now have *the exact same capacity to receive Your glory and return it as I have had on planet earth.*” Jesus went back to the Father and said, “My hope for continuing to glorify You is now wrapped up in them. As long as they a) do not resist Your perfect plan, and b) do not attempt to steal your glory, they can now do on earth what I did—glorify You.” In fact, you may remember Jesus said,

Greater works than these shall he do because I return to the
Father. (John 14:12 NAS)

Something, however, seems desperately wrong. Two thousand years have come and gone. Churches have come and gone. Denominations have come and gone. Movements have come and gone. It seems as though only a minority of men and women in each generation have risen to the surface whose every word seemed to glorify God; whose very countenance seemed to reflect His glory; whose every ministry seemed to point, not to themselves, but back to the source of that glory, God Himself.

And that awesome, magnificent power that once caused people to say, “these [are they] who have turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6 NKJV), no longer seems to characterize much of what is called Christianity. That love, that incredible love “by which all men may know that we are His disciples” (see John 13:35), no longer seems to be reflected in much of what is called Christianity. Men and women are busy “doing things for God,” subtly stealing His glory. Churches and movements are busy building monuments to themselves, thus overtly stealing glory from God. We can see them—our buildings, our teachings, our ministries, our preachers, our music, our, our, our. Whose?

We place limits on what God can do to glorify Himself. When the very things that would most glorify God come into our lives, we cry out in anguish, “Father save me from this hour.” And if He doesn’t, we say we lacked in faith. How seldom we shout triumphantly, “But for this purpose came we to this hour, Father, glorify Thy Name.” We think we have to justify His nature by demanding that He do things our way so we can say He answered prayer. If we knew how to pray as He prayed, we would be praying, “Lord, the time has come. Glorify thy name through us so we can, in turn, give the glory back to you in praise and adoration

That They May Behold My Glory

and thanksgiving; not because you rescued us, but because you transformed us *from one degree of glory to another.*"

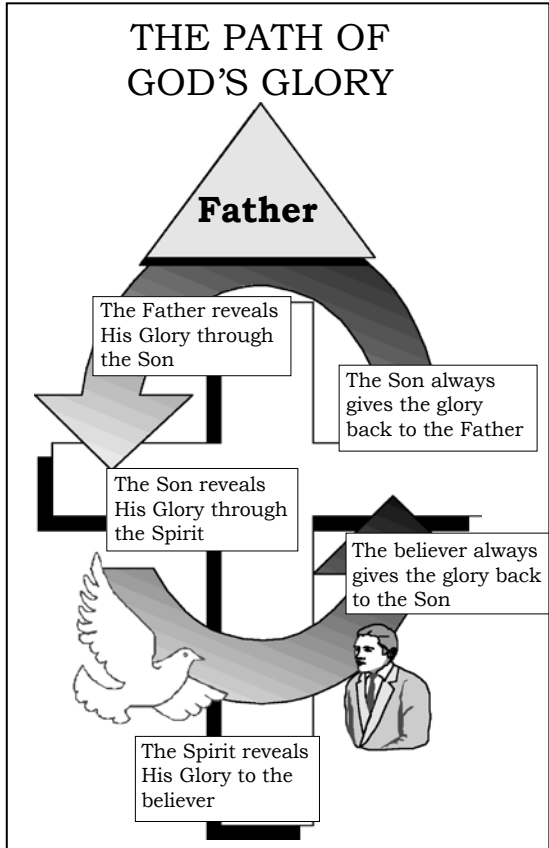
In our next lesson, we will explore in more detail what Jesus meant when He asked the Father to glorify Himself through us, and we will look at a series of truths about glory that ought to make a difference in how we pray.

For now, however, set aside some time in the near future to search your heart and life about these things:

1- Do you, like Moses, spend time at the feet of God,

begging Him to show you His glory? You don't catch it by passing by on a freight train 90 miles an hour. You don't get a whiff of it and let the aroma keep you going. He wants you to climb up into the mountain of prayer and abide there. He wants you to spend so much time partaking of His nature through His Word and in His presence that others can literally sense His glory by the glow on your face and the light in your eyes. Maybe you were there at one time but you began to allow little things, insignificant things, to get in the way, until gradually you lost that sense of commitment to that time? Then, if this is true, you'll never really consistently reflect the glory of God.

2- When life's crosses loom on the horizon of your life, do you shrink back in horror and ask God to save you from that hour?



That They May Behold My Glory

Or do you quietly begin to praise Him and realize that “for this cause came I unto this hour” and begin to pray, “Father, glorify Your name?” Don’t pray for God to be glorified in you if you are not willing to walk up that hill to Golgotha with Him. His glory is an awesome light. Light shows up best when the sky overhead is dark. When you pray, “Glorify your name through me today,” you are asking Him to let the sun go down, if need be, so those about you can see that incredible light God has placed in your soul. Don’t fight it. Welcome it, and you will glorify His Name.

3- As you are maturing in Christ, are you becoming increasingly grieved at anything and everything that would steal God’s glory? Or has Satan sold you the party line that you can take glory for what you do without stealing that glory from God? Be careful, Beloved, this is a subtle lie. If Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, *could of His own self do nothing*; if the King of Glory, who laid aside His robes of righteousness to become a slave, could not receive glory of men without passing that glory on to the Father; if God’s own Spirit, who lives to comfort us and lead us, *cannot accept glory, but must transfer that glory to the Son who then gives it to the Father*, how can we compromise on so basic an issue?

As I said, it is so subtle. You serve in some capacity in the church, and people begin to heap accolades upon you for your talent or your availability. You begin to think about it. “I was pretty good,” you think. Or “I do a lot more around this church than Brother Joe, and he’s a deacon.” Or “What a message I gave today. God, *you and I did a good thing.*”

No, Beloved, you and God did not do a good thing. Every good and acceptable gift comes from God (alone), “in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). It comes from God, period. And the glory for it goes to God. Period.

Do you know what churches do when they advertise their bigness or their friendliness or their zeal? They steal God’s glory. Do you know what organizations do when they promote their ministries for their own gain or to make them stand tall compared to other ministries? They steal God’s glory. Do you know what you do when you subtly tell your friends how many people you’re discipling or how many people you led to Christ, or how much money you gave this year? You steal God’s glory. And what do you do when you ask people to pray for you, but in reality you are only letting them know something that will make you look

That They May Behold My Glory

spiritual? Are you stealing God's glory?

Beloved, the robes of glory fit no one but God. We know that, but in practice, so often we try them on for size. They not only don't fit when we try to wear them, God can no longer wear them. They are good for nothing after that but to be trampled under feet.

The glory of God. Jesus asked the Father to give it to us, so we could give it back to Him. It is His gift to the church. He pours His very life into ours and as long as we *do not resist His will*, as long as *we do not share His glory*, and as long as we *return that glory through worship, praise, and thanksgiving*, the glory multiplies. He gives us more of Himself. We praise Him more. He gives us His love. We give it away. We give Him the glory. He gives us more. More and more of Him. Less and less of us. More glory to His name. Less consciousness of our own worth; more consciousness of His. Less "striving"; more "resting." Less "living for Jesus"; more "letting Him live through us."

It builds; it multiplies; it expands, until that wonderful day when we see Him face to face, and the transition to glory becomes perfectly natural. Why? Because we began the transition years before, when we learned to give the glory to whom the glory is due. May our heartbeat for the "rest" of our days be this:

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)

That They May Behold My Glory

That they may behold My glory,
What an incredible thought;
God himself living in us—
But that's what Jesus taught.

As Jesus raised His precious head,
We heard the prayer's prayers.
He prayed, "Father, glorify them,
Let My life flow through theirs.

Let My very nature,
My love, My power, My grace,
Transmit itself so powerfully
You'll see it in their face.

Their lives will grow abundantly
With all life's passing days,
As they cooperate with Me,
And don't resist My ways.

And as they see Me flow through them
As touching others' hearts,
May they not steal that glory
By keeping any part.

May they but give it back to Me
And never forget, no never,
That the glory belongs to God alone
Forever and ever and ever.

Let's pray,

Our Father and our God,

What a difficult subject, but what a glorious subject. What a glorious God we have.

We give You the glory this morning. We return it to You in adoration and worship a portion of your nature that You have so freely given to us. We are so undeserving. We fall on our faces before You and our hearts break and yet are so grateful. Because of Your grace You take the likes of of us into Your presence. You cleanse us and You give us more of Your glory.

Father, some of us need to get out of Your way and let the glory do what the glory was meant to do. Glorify Thy name.

In that name we pray, Amen.

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(02.25.20.dvd)