

**Russell Kelfer**

# **Completing the Glory Cycle**

**#1334-B**

(Original title: That They May Behold My Glory, Part 2)

**Series: Prayer: God's "Secret" Weapon**

**dtm** DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.  
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • [www.dtm.org](http://www.dtm.org) • [dtm@dtm.org](mailto:dtm@dtm.org)



# Completing the Glory Cycle

*Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Friend, we worship You.*

*Thou art the omnipotent one the one who holds my hands, the very essence of power, the one who blinks an eye and the world trembles, and yet, the one who's given the very power to us that raised Christ from the dead. We worship you, the omniscient one, the one who knows the beginning from the end, the one who knows the very depths of our hearts, the one who knows every thought that we think; we worship you. Thou who are perfect love, we worship you, the one who even before the foundations of the world determined to redeem us. You would give us Yourself. We cannot grasp that love but we can receive that love and return that love in part and thus glorify your name. We worship You, this morning, Father, because of who You are, and we praise You and we thank You that You have given to us the opportunity to bow in Your presence and to literally have fellowship with the One who made us. Now, Father, we pray that these moments we spend together would be filled with Your presence and that You would, in spite of us, because of who You are, teach us.*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*

We have, this last week or so, been standing apart and yet standing alongside Jesus, listening. It's an awesome atmosphere. Just think about it. God is talking to God and we're there. He's talking in words we can understand, not just a phrase or two. He is actually demonstrating on planet earth what it's like to have fellowship with the Father. God the Son is talking to God the Father. I suppose we could take this passage of scripture and stay there at least until the Lord returns and perhaps we would have touched on the fringes of the depth that is there. You can relax, we don't plan to go that long unless the Lord comes quickly, and He may. But we do plan to spend at least one more Sunday looking at the same aspect of that prayer we did last week. And

## Completing the Glory Cycle

then in the next few weeks cover the remainder of the subjects.

The subject, you remember, is glory. It is one of the three dominant themes: glorification, unification, and security that dominate the prayer in John, Chapter 17. Glory—there's more glory in that prayer than there is about anything else; it literally permeates every word. There are other aspects involved, but even those aspects are related to glory. One aspect is that the Father's Glory is being given to the Son, whatever that means. You know that means, I pray, that maybe after our last session together, all of us are beginning to grasp a little bit of the awesomeness of what glory means.

Jesus spoke of the Son giving glory to the Father. He spoke of the same glory the Father had given to the Son, being passed on to the disciples who, in turn, would pass it on to us, so that you and I would have the same glory He had. In fact, He went on to say, "greater works than these which I have done will you do, because I go to the Father. And when I go to the Father I will send the Spirit who will be no less than the glory of God, living through you." He spoke of a relationship between glory and unity. He spoke of the glory He had being returned, the glory which He had before the world was.

Now you think about it. If God was that interested in talking to God about glory, don't you think we ought to pay some attention to what it means? I think we had better and that's what we'll be doing this morning as we continue our look at the subject "that they may behold My glory". One day we will behold His glory, but between now and then, we can receive that glory, reflect that glory and return that glory through praise and adoration and worship. What a glorious way to live by dying, because as we die to self the glory is free to shine through us even as it did through the Lord Jesus Christ who never, of His own self, did anything.

In our last study we looked at the two major aspects of Christ's dissertation on glory. First, we looked to see how He began to demonstrate His glory in the Old Testament, by revealing the awesomeness of His nature. And, remember, that's what glory is. Glory is a revelation of how God and the awesomeness of His nature is different from man's. And it's a revelation that's so awesome that we can do nothing but fall down and worship at the thought of His glory. It is visible, tangible paintings of His glory and is on the canvas of eternity. It is the invisible glory that was

## Completing the Glory Cycle

going to be placed in us when the Holy Spirit came.

The glory cloud and the pillar of fire are the evidences God gave in the Old Testament of the awesomeness of His nature. And then it happened, didn't it? John, Chapter 1, verse 14, reminded us that the Word was made flesh in Jesus and dwelt among us. And it says that:

...and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten  
of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

On planet earth He had two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears and a heart that went thumpety thump, thump just like ours. He had the same pain, same misunderstanding, same persecution, and same disappointment. But Scripture says something incredible happened. It says that He never acted independently of the Father's glory. Every time glory was there He stepped out of the way and brought the glory to the Father by letting it shine. And then we read that the ultimate glory would be brought to the Father when He died. The best way for Him to glorify the Father, the Scripture said, was to die. And, Beloved, the best way for you and me to glorify the Father is for us to die to self and let His Spirit become in us, the living glory of God—that exciting vibrant revelation of Himself, poured through our spirits into the world in which we live. Now the truth is at hand. In John 17 the Son was about to lay down His life so His glory could come to restore us. But before He did, privately and publicly, He talked to His Father about what was about to happen. And knowing what was about to happen, He asked the Father to glorify the Son so that the Son could glorify the Father.

We looked at that a little last week and also looked at two ways you steal the glory of God. Do you remember? Jesus never did either. We steal His glory by resisting His perfect ways, which are higher than our ways; they're not the way we would reason out living life. But when He allows that will to be made known to us, if we do not resist it, we allow Him to be glorified. That's what the secret is. Jesus didn't resist; He didn't get in God's way. He went to a cross and died so that the Father could be glorified.

Secondly, we learned that we steal God's glory whenever we accept glory, however small, for something He did. We'll learn a little more about that this morning. And we found that everything that is eternal God has done. Jesus never took any glory from the Father. He did always those things that pleased the Father and

## Completing the Glory Cycle

said, “I do not receive glory from men”.

We looked for just a few minutes in closing, the last time we were together, at how God’s glory being resident in us can be quenched in the same two ways: if we either resist his plan for our lives, especially the crosses that loom on the horizons of our lives, or if we accept even a tiny bit of glory for that which He has done for which the glory belongs to Him. And, incidentally, there is a third way that we frustrate the glory of God. That is when we have acknowledged His sovereignty and accepted His higher ways, even refused to compromise and share that glory; but for whatever reason, we don’t return the glory to Him through praise, adoration and worship. So the glory cycle gets interrupted and we lose the capacity to receive more glory. That’s why Jesus responded as He did.

Remember when the cross loomed on the horizon of his life? Jesus said,

...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. (John 12:27b,28)

What a moment!

This morning I want us to look at a couple of other issues where glory is concerned, found in John, Chapter 17. And then we should move on, the Lord willing, in the next few weeks to look at the other issues that unfold in John 17, relating to prayer.

The first one has to do with the timing of glory. Let’s read again John 17:1. It says 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: (John 17:1)

That’s an incredible statement, and I think if we read it and gloss over it and don’t study it, we may miss the meat of what’s there. What did He mean by “my hour is come”? It’s a crucial phrase and is used many times in the New Testament. If you tie them together I think you begin to see what He meant.

In John chapter 2:4, you remember, Jesus said,

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. (John 2:4)

## Completing the Glory Cycle

Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. (John 7:30)

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. (John 8:20)

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (John 12:23)

Now what do these passages say? When Jesus was asked to perform the miracle at Cana of Galilee, which He did, He prefaced turning the water into wine by saying, “mine hour is not yet come”. In other words, you’re not going to understand the depth of this miracle or even the reason for this miracle; you’re just going to want more miracles. One day the time will come when the veil will be lifted and truth will be revealed to those who have eyes to see, and you’ll understand what it means to turn water into wine and what the spiritual significance is to honor His mother and obey His heavenly Father. He did it. The spiritual significance would come later.

In John, Chapters 7 and 8, the enemy said, “Let’s put a stop to this man Jesus, and that swelling tide of spiritual power that is sweeping through the nation. We will take Him before His appointed time and arrest Him or murder Him or confine Him, and thus we’ll defeat His plans.” Or Satan learned (I guess he didn’t learn, he never does), but he should have learned that no one touches God’s anointed before His time. Until your time has come, Beloved, Satan can harass you so far as God allows him, and only to the degree that his attacks will bring you good and God glory, if you’re a believer. But as with Job, Satan had to ask God first. And so often as with Job, the Father will say you may do that, Satan, but you can’t take his life, not until I say.

So you know what that means, Beloved? It means you are invincible until your time has come. Satan can plan, pursue, and protest but he cannot touch you, and he could not touch the Son of God until the Father gave him permission. If Satan were able to do anything prior to God’s timing, God would not be glorified. For God to be glorified the time must come. Think about it. In John 12:23 Jesus made that clear. Just on the horizon was the moment of moments. The Son would be betrayed, tried and crucified, exactly at the moment in time and exactly in the way that the Father, in eternity past, had appointed. Then the hour would come. That’s why in John 17:1, He can lift His eyes toward

## Completing the Glory Cycle

heaven and said,

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son  
may also glorify thee: (John 17:1b)

The time had come. Now, by allowing His sovereign plan to unfold exactly as He planned, the Father would demonstrate through the Son, what God looks like on a cross. He looks like perfect love. Perfect love, you remember, is any time God is glorified. It is when every one of His attributes (all of them), are demonstrated in such a way that man falls down and worships perfect love. That's what the cross was all about and therefore the Father's nature was revealed to the Son as he died on the cross, and the Son gave the glory back to the Father when He said,

Father, into thy hands I commit My Spirit. (Luke 23:46)

It was Satan's plan for Jesus to stop just a little short and say,

...Father, save me from this hour: (John 12:27b)

But Jesus knew that His time had come, so instead He cried out,

But for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name. (John 12:27c, 28a)

There are three great lessons to be learned here and I think they all should affect the way we pray.

1- God's timing is crucial to God's glory. We forget that. I don't know about you but I love to pray for God's will. When I think I know His will, I try to get everything out of the way so I can move in and do it. That's not the plan. We're supposed to wait for that split second in time when He will most be glorified. Oh, the impatience of man. We simply will not wait on God. Now just think about it. Had Jesus been one second late in any of those divine appointments or one second early, He would have missed the will of God and sinned. But, of course, He never did. Jesus never tried to do anything for God. He waited patiently for God to do it in a way and at a time that only He could receive the glory. I want to give you a challenge. Take and read and reread and reread the story of Lazarus' death. Look at the marvel of the patience of Jesus in the timing of God. He would wait on the Father. When you and I would have zoomed in and really made a mess, He waited and God was glorified. That's truth number one.



## Completing the Glory Cycle

2- God's ways are so much higher than ours. Satan does not have spiritual discernment (believe me, he does not). And because he does not possess the Spirit, he never quite understands what God is up to. So this gives God the opportunity to take Satan's very attacks and use them to accomplish His glory.

3- The third truth is that for God to receive maximum glory, we must surrender to His timing and rest. That's the hard part. I want to remind you this morning, Beloved, that even, and especially, death is in His hands. He will not take His own before their time. He will not. Now for some of us you think of Jesus, you think of Steven, or you think of others. And you think all their time was too early by human standards, but their deaths brought glory to God and allowed them to enter into glory (the place where God's character is displayed in full and unhindered).

We all know others who seem to be left behind, years past their prime. They may be in a nursing home, they may be in other places; they're weary and worn. Many of them are believers longing to go home. They want to be with their loved ones and they say, "Lord, what's taking You so long?" You've heard it. And quietly He whispers the same answer over and over, "Child, your time has not yet come." When it does, and we need not struggle until it does, we must not struggle. Oh, the majesty of the sovereignty of God. Think about it. Satan does not have 1 millionth the strength it takes to overtake the sovereignty of God. Can Satan take a life without the permission of God? He cannot. That's why death is so precious. It means that a sovereign God will call you at the precise moment in history appointed in eternity past, exactly at that millisecond, and take you to a mansion handcrafted by the only real Master Carpenter who ever lived. Don't you forget it.

God reveals His glory only when He can be glorified and that's the case at Calvary, and that's the case in your life and in mine. Have you ever noticed how He often waits until the very last minute so there's no other way for anything to be done before He acts? We get all bent out of shape, don't we? And we don't do it overtly because we have these Christian smiles we put on. But inside we think, "God, what are You waiting for?" What we're literally saying is, "God, You're late." Now I want to ask you a question. How can God be late?

He appoints the rising of the sun; He's the one that designs and sends from heaven every snowflake to its appointed destination.

## Completing the Glory Cycle

Scripture says that not even a sparrow falls outside His will. No rain clouds form apart from Him. He can make the sun stand still. He owns time. He created time, so how could He be late?

I know what you're thinking, that He's taking an eternity to intervene in that problem in your life. Guess what? He has an eternity. An eternity is what He had in mind when He developed time. Time gives Him a platform to glorify Himself on planet Earth. That's why the definition is so real. A miracle is anything the timing of which brings glory to God. I think it was Lorne Sanny who once said it in a tape on the will of God. Sanny said, "God may seem slow but He's always on time." In fact (you might remember this phrase), the longer He seems to be taking, the greater the miracle that is in the making. Remember that. He will move, but only when the time has come.

Our prayer lives should reflect that truth. What does that mean? It means, not only that Thy will be done (that's hard, isn't it) on earth as it is in heaven, we go one step beyond that and we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And, Lord, however long it takes is okay with me." Wow, doesn't that grate against the mind of man. What we like to do is to pray for God to be glorified in a given situation. And then have the gall to give Him a timeline. Learn to pray, Beloved, not only for the will of God but for the timing of God. And remember, the longer He makes you wait, the more reason you have to praise Him because the longer you wait the more glory is building.

You remember that passage we looked at a few weeks ago Hebrew 10:35-37. It's a good memory passage.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. (Hebrews 10:35-37)

You have need of patience. Once your heart is established in what is God's will, you quietly wait upon Him to reveal when it will most glorify His name. And one thing's for sure: He who said that He will come, will. He who said that He will intervene, will. He who promised to comfort and strengthen and sustain you, will. He will not tarry. He will not be late. He cannot be late and still be God.

## Completing the Glory Cycle

The second truth in that passage we'll look at this morning is found in John 17:4. Jesus made this incredible statement to the Father.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. (John 17:4)

I thought about that. What is the relationship between the glory and the finishing? He finished the work the Father gave Him to do.

Lets look at some passages in Scripture and this is one of those difficult quizzes. See if you can find what these passages have in common.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. (Genesis 2:1)

And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. (Exodus 40:33)

You may be getting a clue.

For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over. (Joshua 4:10)

So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it. (I Kings 6:14,38)

And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. (I Chronicles 28:20)

So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. (Nehemiah 6:15)

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John 19:30)

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (II Timothy 4:7)

## Completing the Glory Cycle

Now see if you can figure what those passages have in common. I knew you'd get it. They all have something to do with something God wanted done and they all involve one of His servants who stayed in place and didn't falter until it was finished, thus giving glory to His name.

Think about the work Jesus had to do. He had to take a motley crew of twelve guys, one of whom was an imposter and a fraud, the other eleven of whom would forsake Him, curse Him, hide from Him, and flee from Him when the battle got hot, and through this act of redemption, transform them in such a way that at the age of 33 years, He could walk away from the task and know that He was finished. Then think about by today's standards, these guys didn't have anything. They didn't have any audio-visual aids. Think about how they didn't even have the Ten Commandments on a CD-ROM to run on their laptop computers. They had no formal seminar training, they had no physical buildings to use as a drawing card to get people to come in, they had no public relations experts to train them in how to make the church relevant.

They had only three things, three years at the feet of Jesus, an immutable Word, and a Living spirit. Jesus had finished the work. He had done all He needed to do. He finished the work. When He said yes to the Father and joyfully went to that cross, that would be the end of His earthly ministry. It is the beginning, I believe, of the greatest work of creation God ever did. I know creating the world and man was an incredible thing. But I think, at least on an equal scale, when God created the church, He took a group of weak, sinful, prideful men and gave them the capacity to receive the actual glory of God through surrender, so that His life would shine through theirs. There would be lives transformed, hope renewed, and the world turned upside down.

I looked at what these passages tell us. Jesus refused to stop short of the goal, but He didn't go one step beyond it either. All the lessons we can learn—think about how that would affect the way you pray. God created the world and he rested. Why? He was finished. Moses didn't stop building the tabernacle until he was finished. An interesting thing is the next verse after that one says then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle because it was finished. Joshua stood on the bank and gave each of the people every word God had for him to share. He wouldn't stop until he was finished and

## Completing the Glory Cycle

then they could pass over.

Solomon built the temple as he was instructed. Every stone, every piece of fabric was ordained. He made no substitutions, no alterations, and no shortcuts. He did what he was told until it was finished. David's instructions to Solomon were, "Be strong, be courageous, don't be afraid, God will be with you. Just stay in place until you're finished" (see I Chronicles 28:20).

Nehemiah followed every mark on God's blueprint for the wall. He made no changes and used only God-ordained subcontractors on the job. He went neither to the right nor to the left until he finished the work.

Jesus walked up that hill called Calvary and, without as much as a doubt in his heart, gave up His life for you and for me. Until He did so, His task was incomplete. Oh, He performed a lot of miracles, but that's not why He came. He raised up a half-hearted crew of disciples, but that's not why he came. He turned the religious establishment upside down or right-side up, as the case may be, but that's not why He came. He did all those things on His way to a cross—that's why He came. And if He'd stopped one foot, make that one inch, short of that cross, no matter how magnificent were all of His works, you and I would be lost in our sins. We would have no Redeemer, no hope, no future, no salvation. If Jesus had gone all the way to the cross and at the moment He was to yield up His spirit for the sins of man, cried, "Father take me down, send me twelve legions of angels and destroy these hypocrites", He would have done it all and accomplished nothing.

Instead, He remained in place until He could say to the Father, "It is finished." And when He did, the courts of heaven rang out an anthem of awesome victory; the angels must have folded their wings in astonishment and adoration. Satan and his hosts must have fallen to the earth in grief and agony. God had done what only God can do—finish the work of redemption. With that in His mind, Jesus said in his heart that now I'm able to say, "Father, I finished the work which You gave me to do. Glorify your name."

But the problem, Beloved, is this, Scripture also is filled in the pages of history with unfinished works and uncooperative saints, the almost obedient, almost finished tasks. In fact, so rare are the stories of those who remained in place and completed their story that we tell them over and over, don't we? They are the

## Completing the Glory Cycle

exceptions. The sin nature of man, I believe, has an almost-gene in it to move towards perfection and stops short of the mark. The world has missed the glory of so many who, in God's energy, moved the ball to the one-yard line and left the game.

God is glorified through every act and activity that you let Him accomplish in your life. But I believe there is special glory accrued to the Father when we allow Him to finish whatever He's doing in us, either in terms of character or in terms of ministry. We're not strong finishers, by and large, as believers. We like to start new things. We like to be involved in new ventures. But for the most part, toward the end of the road, many of us decide to pull off and try to find someplace to rest. I believe there's extra joy in the Father's heart when He can look at you and look at me and say, "It's finished".

Now Satan has some ploys that if he can't prevent us from letting God use us, he'll allow us to get to that almost-gene—that almost-part, give up-part, go astray or not finish the task. So in closing this morning, I want to look at three ways Satan does to that. Satan's way is really not complicated. But I think it is, primarily, because the heart of man, apart from God's grace, is deceitful and desperately wicked. So he wouldn't have too hard of a job getting us to cooperate. But I think Satan's computer has three glory-interruption programs on it that work well enough. He just uses them over and over and over. He's not very creative; he doesn't need to be. We're told in II Corinthians 2:11 not to be "ignorant of his devices". But we're also told in 1 John 4:4 that,

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:  
because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in  
the world. (I John 4:4)

So we don't need to be afraid of him, but we ought to be aware of him. That's the balance. Let's look, if you will, at what it means to God and what it means to Satan when we almost finish the work we're called to do. Let me ask you a question. How many of you would go to a car dealership tomorrow and plunk down \$10,000? That eliminated 99% of you. But assuming you had the \$10,000, you went to the car dealer and plunk down the money. The guy says, "Well, I'll tell you what I can do for that money. I've got a car for you," he said. "It is beautiful and it's almost finished. It doesn't have an engine and the two back fenders are missing, and it's only got three wheels, but it is a beauty." Now would you be interested? Of course not. Why not? Because it's almost

## Completing the Glory Cycle

finished.

Suppose someone took you to a play this week and you were all excited. In the momentum the plot built and built and built and then the curtain went down. Then at the end of the second act the lights went out and everybody went home. You say, "Wait a minute, how does it end? We don't know because we never finished it. It wouldn't mean much, would it?"

Or suppose a guy came to put in a heating unit in your house and it was really cold outside. You have to use your imagination in Texas for this one, but it's really cold outside. You are freezing to death and this guy comes to install a heater. He pulls out the old one and puts in the new one, and makes a couple of adjustments and then he leaves. You go to start it up but there's nothing inside of it; it's just an empty case. So you call him back and you say, "Where's my heat?" He said, "Well, you don't have any heat but you have a heater. You stand there and look at it and you'll be impressed." You say, "I'm not impressed, finish what you started."

Now, Beloved, I believe that that's the way God feels. And I believe Satan has three things that he does over and over and over again to individuals, to churches, to ministries, to organizations. In closing I want us to look at those three things so that we will not be ignorant of his devices. Satan's three glory interruption programs are built into the computer of his life.

1- The first one is that we take the cross down from the steeple. I don't mean you crawl up on top and get a wrench and take it down, and I don't mean you take it off or scratch it off of your bulletin. We do use it, especially around Easter time. We put it on there. No, what I mean is that the cross ceases to be central in our teaching and in our preaching and in our witness and in our counseling and in our lives. It doesn't happen quickly. If it happened quickly, we'd figure it out and do something about it. It's an insidious thing that happens to Christian organizations all of the time. It happens to churches and it happens to us. It's just a gradual moving away from the simplicity of the Gospel to any other gospel, no matter how good it may be. You remember what Paul said in Galatians 1:8,

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

## Completing the Glory Cycle

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8,9)

And what was that gospel?

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (I Corinthians 15:3,4)

That's the gospel. Now, Beloved, it's wonderful to preach and teach about the social ills of society. It's wonderful to build a ministry training people to be godly husbands, godly parents, and godly witnesses. Those things are important; but, Beloved, it's useless unless those people understand what makes society work, what makes husbands godly, and what makes us salt and light.

It isn't anything we do. It is something God did 2000 years ago on a Roman cross, and it is finished, not almost done. It is finished. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. The only way for a man or woman to be a godly parent is for them to come to the cross. There Jesus paid the price to buy them back from the slave market of sin, and placed them on a solid rock, and gave them an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you (I Peter 1:4). And unless and until they've been born again they cannot be a godly anything. They can be a frustrated imitator of righteousness, but they can't imitate righteousness. It's imputed; it's a gift, and you have to receive it.

Now the political, economic, moral and social ills of this nation are worth preaching about occasionally. If you could enact every law you wanted to enact, if you could correct every ill in society you wanted to correct, and elect every official you wanted in office, but you did not call men and women to repent of sin and receive Jesus Christ as Savior, you would have built the most hypocritical moral kingdom known to man. The Mormons have already done that. It's appealing to man but it is repulsive to God. Why? Because you are implying that something we can do can change the heart of man or the destiny of man, and that's not true. That's why I so love some of the hymns of long ago that



## Completing the Glory Cycle

so elevate the cross. I wonder if in this generation that hymn of choice shouldn't be "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross". There are two sides to the cross. There's the pre-salvation side which shows that man, apart from God, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Then there's the post-salvation side of the cross which says that even as a Christian, apart from God, you can do nothing.

Eternal means He did it, He does it, and He'll do it. The cross—teach it, preach it, sing about it, pray about it, testify of it. What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Nothing. So when you pray and ask God to glorify His name by finishing the work in you that He began, what you're asking Him to do is to return you to the cross, return your ministry to the cross and help you to never again forget that except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

2- The second way we keep from finishing the race is we accept glory that belongs to God. We start out humbly and we're proud of it. We start out humbly, we're grateful and we think God could use the likes of us. And then He takes and makes something out of nothing. He reaches down in lives like ours and in some insignificant way, He uses us and we begin to glory in it, not in Him. And the minute we do, the glory departs. His heart is broken and we begin the fruitless journey of ministering, building, advertising, fundraising even witnessing, outside the pavilion of splendor known as the glory cloud.

Now the truth of the matter, Beloved, is that most men and women can't stand success—not physical success, not spiritual success. Success carries with it that insidious ingredient that caused Satan to fall called pride. We start out saying, "God, You did that." Then we say, "God, we did that." Before long it's, "God didn't You like it? I did that." And it's all over.

Churches and spiritual leaders and ministries start out in awe that God could take them, nothing though they are, and use them to do something eternal. But little by little the awe turns to presumption. The spirit of dependence begins to be infiltrated with tiny little seeds of independence. Soon those seeds grow. The ministry prospers, the people come and the accolades pileup. The mystery of mysteries that God could use even me is replaced by subtle, deadly self-confidence that makes God-confidence obsolete. You started out nothing. God got all the glory. When you begin to think yourself to be something, the glory departs. So

## Completing the Glory Cycle

when you ask God to be glorified in you to finish the race, you're asking Him to remove from you, along the way, every trace of that which brings you glory. It's a dangerous prayer but it's terribly important.

3- The weeds get left in the garden. Lastly, and this is the toughest one of all, Satan keeps us from finishing the race because little weeds get left in the garden—tiny weeds it seems nobody knows about but us. Lustful thoughts, nothing unusual about lustful thoughts, except they lead to lustful ideas. Lustful ideas lead to lustful fantasies and lustful fantasies conceive and bring forth sin. The you that's been hidden in the secret place comes out in the open and instead of being able to finish the race you end up on the bench, counting your accolades from days gone by. And even if they don't come out in the open, like a cancer inside of you, it eats you away because the holiness God planted in you cannot coexist with it.

Maybe it's greed—a seemingly harmless desire to have more. At first, you just want a little more so you can have more to give away. But you get a little more and it fuels a desire to satisfy your longing for things. So you keep most of it and vow if you got a little more, you will give a little more away. But your life slips away and you find yourself controlled by the desire for even more. Solomon tried to tell us. It's just like the wind. It blows by and you try to grab it, but it's gone and so is your life. You had good intentions. As soon as you made a little more, you were going to the mission field. As soon as you became vice president, you were going to give a little more time to ministry. As soon as, as soon as, as soon as—and soon your life is over. You started out okay but you didn't finish well. You say, "What happened?" Weeds! You didn't keep the garden tended. You left little stalks. I don't know about you but I'd like my front yard more if the weeds were the same color as the grass. I'd like to just mow over them because from a distance it all looks the same. My wife says, "No you go out and pull up the weeds or before long, they're going to take over." So when you pray and say God be glorified in me that I might finish the race, what you're saying is clean out the garden, get rid of the weeds even if it hurts.

And I want to leave you with this one last thought. It's never too late, Beloved. You can't reclaim the time you lost, you can't scratch around and dig up all the treasures you would have had. But it's never too late, according to Scripture, to say to God,

## Completing the Glory Cycle

“Beginning today, whatever it takes.” I want to be able to say, “I finished the work You gave me to do. Father, glorify Your name.

Do you want to behold God’s glory? Do you want to enter Glory accustomed to His face? Then it’s time to get back on track for some of us, and finish the course well. God’s pleased with that initial commitment and God’s pleased with the times we surrendered and let Him be God. But what He wants of you and what he wants of me is that we finish the course with joy. And then in a moment of time, we will enter eternity and we will behold His glory. We will be home and we will be at home as well. We’ll close with this.

### IT’S NEVER TOO LATE, BELOVED

It’s never too late, Beloved.  
It’s never too late for you  
To return to that place beholding God’s face  
And do what He wants you to do.

You may have some sowing and reaping  
You may have some scars that remain  
You may struggle in valleys deeply,  
Engulfed by grief or pain

But it’s never too late, Beloved,  
To say to your precious God,  
“Here take it all, I answer your call,  
I honor Your precious Word.

He may call you to tasks that are noble  
Or to that which is humble and poor,  
But wherever He leads or whatever He needs,  
Let him use it your joy to restore.

For it’s never too late, Beloved,  
Take whatever time’s left for you  
And ask God in you to finish the work  
He’s chosen for you to do.

Let’s pray.

*Our Father and our God,*

*We pray in Jesus’ name, each of us individually, and all of us collectively, that by Your amazing grace You would finish the*

Completing the Glory Cycle

*task in us You have given us to do. We pray that we might, to the maximum, glorify Your name, so that one day we might enter Glory with nothing in between and receive all of Your glory and give it all back to You.*

*In Jesus, the glorious One, lies our hope and our salvation.*

*To Him be praise and honor and glory forever,*

*Amen.*

**dtm** DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230

210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

[www.dtm.org](http://www.dtm.org) • [dtm@dtm.org](mailto:dtm@dtm.org) • © Russell Kelfer