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To God Be the Glory

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Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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To God be the Glory

Our gracious, loving, precious God, creator, sustainer, deliverer and friend, we worship You, we praise You, we adore You.

And we bow before You this morning, Father, acknowledging it is not in us, it is all in Thee.

And our prayer, Father, is that somehow Your precious spirit would overwhelm us, overtake us and transform us this morning.

All to the glory of Jesus Christ, in His name we pray,

Amen.

It is indeed one of the most difficult subjects there is to teach. It is as well one of the most difficult subjects there is to hear about. But here we go again.

I think it's so difficult because the subject itself is as deep as the character of God Himself. Therefore, in essence, it is inexhaustible and to some degree, it is indefinable. The subject is glory. And while we looked at it in great detail as we studied the subject of prayer a few months ago, this morning we want to look at that subject with one basic thought in mind. And that thought is this: that with every breath we breathe, every word we speak, every ministry we perform, *the glory belongs to Him*. Not *most* of it, not *almost all* of it, not even 99.999% of it. All of it. The glory belongs to Him. This morning our goal will be, as much as possible, to let Scripture simply speak for itself. For it alone can communicate a subject so overwhelming—the glory of God.

THE STORY

First of all is the story. You remember we are continuing our look at the living legend of Joseph. He has endured trial after trial. He has lived a roller coaster existence. And yet, through all of that, he has come through as more than a conqueror. His afflictions have seemingly brought God glory, which is, incidentally, what our afflictions were designed to do. It's why Peter and Paul, as well, said, don't try to squeeze your way out of your problems, but

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rather, give God the glory *in* your problems. Joseph was a guy like that.

Joseph's latest injustice, you probably remember if you were here last week, was being thrown into prison for resisting the advances of his master's wife. Once there, he literally became a servant in a dungeon. But even this, Scripture says, he did to the glory of God. We read how he served the king's butler and baker in prison and how he interpreted their dreams and then once again was a forgotten man. As we left off last week we saw that two long years had passed. Pharaoh finally had two dreams himself and neither the magicians of the land, nor the wise men, could interpret them. Then the butler remembered Joseph and so Pharaoh sent for this young Hebrew man. He shaved and cleaned up and he stood before the most powerful man in the world. You remember the scenario. Pharaoh looked at Joseph and said, "Son, can you interpret dreams?" Can't you just imagine the awesome silence of the moment? Joseph looked at that powerful man and said, "No sir, I can't, *but God can*. Would you like to meet my God?" Joseph repeated that as he bore testimony.

Verse 16 in chapter 41 of Genesis reads,

God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do.

(Genesis 41:25b)

What God is about to do, He shows unto Pharaoh.

(Genesis 41:28b)

It is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

(Genesis 41:23b)

Now Pharaoh, you remember, was an unbeliever, but he got the message. You see the world *has* to get the message when a man or a woman gives all the glory to God. So here's Pharaoh in verse 38, this unbeliever outlining a job description for his new secretary of state. Now some of you are in personnel and can get a picture of this. It was his job description. Verse 38,

Can we find such a one as this [to fill this slot], a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this [Joseph], there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: (Genesis 41:38b,39b)

Now think of it as if you are a personnel agent and you are looking for a man to take over an agricultural program, which will

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either make or break your nation. He will be the number two man in the entire country. And these are his credentials:

- He's a kid
- He's a foreigner
- He's a member of a hated minority group, and
- He's a prisoner of the chief executioner.

This qualifies him, right? But you see, Pharaoh was not so impressed with Joseph's credentials; Pharaoh was impressed with Joseph's God. Wouldn't it be great if that were our testimony in the world we live in?

Joseph had learned the secret of success—it is not in me. Now, as we learned last week, there are two sides to that coin and we're going to look at the second side of the coin this morning.

Side number one is the concept of the surrendered life. It says, "I can't, but He can, watch Him." But the second concept goes along with that and has to do with those garments of glory that only God can wear. And it goes like this. "I didn't, He did, praise Him." You can see the two-fold unfolding, "It is not in me."

For many of us, the second concept is more difficult than the first because it is so insidious and so difficult. The world has so squeezed us into its mold that we have redefined our concept of glory. It is totally contrary to the nature of man to believe as Joseph did, that it is not in me. But the danger even beyond that is when God acts *through* you, and the world gives its acknowledgments *to* you. The danger is taking just a little of that glory for yourself.

The truth of the matter is I can't, He can, watch Him. I didn't, He did, praise Him. And therein lies the downfall of so many. So many actually let God *do* it, then share the glory *for* it and thus lose the blessing *of* it. Therein also lies the ruin of many a ministry; a man or men "doing" things for God, are stealing the glory that belongs only to Him. The inscription on the tombstone, Beloved, of some of the world's great churches, the world's great denominations, and the world's great humanitarian movements ought to read something like this: "Satan lied to Eve and shouted to mankind, 'We and God, what a team!'" It is a lie. God alone is the team. We go along for the ride. What a privilege.

THE GLORY

Do you want to see your church continue to grow? Do you want

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to see your ministry continue to grow? Don't glorify your church. Don't glorify your Sunday school class. Don't glorify your preacher, your teacher, or your ministry. Don't glory in the giving. Don't even glory in your living. II Corinthians 10:17 says,

But he that glorieth [what?], let him glory in the Lord.
(II Corinthians 10:17)

Here he gives us the reason:

...and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, (I Corinthians 4:7b)

The danger comes in every one of our lives when we begin to ask God to do it all and He does, and little by little we begin to think, *Gosh, God, You really got a neat deal when You got me. Or, Gosh, God, what a neat church we are. It's no wonder You're blessing this church. We're pretty tough stuff.*

In Deuteronomy chapter 8, God had a word for the children of Israel, you remember? He said now that you're entering into the Promised Land, you are going to have everything I promised you. Now you have to be careful.

When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which He hath given thee.

Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day:

Lest when you have eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply [or thy congregations multiply], and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied [or your offerings are multiplied], and all that thou hast is multiplied,

[Be careful that] Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of a rock of flint;

Who fed thee with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

[Beware] And thou say in thine heart [or even think it], My

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power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth the power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

(Deuteronomy 8:10-18)

Let me give you an assignment for this week. I know you are just waiting for it. In fact you've got your pens poised so you can write it down. I want you to take that passage that we just read and personalize it. By that I mean, when it comes to things like "it was He who brought you out of the house of bondage, who led you through that wilderness and so forth," you substitute things God has done for you. He brought you out of the pit of despair and saved you. You fill in the blanks. You put in experiences in your life God has done. And then you go down to verse 17 and you memorize it. Beware lest...

...thou say in thine heart [or even think it], my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

You do that and you meditate on that passage this week. It could save you from drifting off course to the land of self-glorification.

You see God says that even when you let Him do it and you begin to live in the victory of what He has done you need to be careful because Satan has his designs on us and it is very insidious.

Now what is glory?

Glory is the praise and honor due only to God for Who He is, for what He does, and what He will do.

Glory is the essence of God, which provokes the praise of men.

And the key to this study this morning is just a gentle reminder, or may be a not so gentle reminder, that the garments of glory fit only God. Glory is the expression of the nature of God so it can't be attributed to any person or anything apart from God.

Revelation chapter 4:11,

Thou art worthy, oh Lord, to receive glory and honor and power for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.

In other words, He is saying, all things initiate in God, therefore, all glory must go back to God, the Creator who is the only One worthy of praise. The creation has no claim. Can you imagine going to an art gallery tomorrow and you are walking along and all of

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these paintings start shouting on the wall, “Look at me. Aren’t I pretty?” Well number one, you better run. But number two, even if you decide to stay remember, Beloved, a painting is nothing but the work of the artist and only the artist is worthy to be praised. Listen as Jesus speaks of the Father:

For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen. (Matthew 6:13b)

The whole passage of Job chapter 40, you remember, is a series of interesting questions. God looked at Job and said,

[Job] Hast thou an arm like God’s? or canst thou thunder
with a voice like Him? (Job 40:9)

Would you, like God, array thyself with glory?
(Job 40:10 paraphrase)

God said, “Job, you know who I am. Are you going to share My glory? Let me ask you a couple of questions, Job. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, where were you? I didn’t see you there, Job. You see, Job, you cannot share My glory because you don’t have My attributes. You are not the creator.” Listen to Paul:

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to
Whom be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)

Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth
wondrous things.

And blessed be His glorious name forever: and let the whole
earth be filled with His glory. Amen. (Psalm 72:18)

So the glory belongs only to God, never to man and never to that which man has done. Now God does choose to reveal His glory to man, and often God chooses to reveal His glory *through* man, but always that it might be returned *by* man back to God.

Now that may seem narrow to you but please hear the Scripture out. Glory is a boomerang. It begins and ends with God. And anything we do to short-circuit it, robs Him of His praise and honor.

We studied a little bit about glory in the past so we won’t look at anything this morning except how we steal that glory and how to keep from doing it.

Remember, first of all, that God has chosen, He has decided to reveal His glory through us His children, so that we might return it to Him. Incidentally, that’s why we were created. Did you remember

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that? Isaiah 43:7 says that I have created everyone and called them by name for my glory.

There are at least five ways God reveals His glory through His saints. Let's look at them very quickly.

1- When we supernaturally let God be Himself in us. When Christians are so inhabited by Christ that their lives, and their behavior are decidedly different, that brings glory to God. Many of you have been trapped in terribly difficult circumstances. The supernatural way in which you responded, has brought glory to God. Other people may have come to you and said, "Tell me about your God. Tell me what you have." The glory is not to you, but to God. In John 17 Jesus said to the Father;

And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: (John 17:5,22)

Colossians 1:27 gives the secret:

...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The goal is in Ephesians 1:12-14: He, inhabiting us that we should be to the praise of His glory. What that means, Beloved, is that when you let the life of Christ flow through your life unhindered, He brings His glory to the Father and you may be unaware of what has happened. So filled with His presence you'll be, that others will transparently see Christ in you. You will be like a mirror; they will look at you and see Jesus.

2- He is revealed through our afflictions and problems. Paul says:

Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is [for] your glory. (Ephesians 3:13)

In John 11:4, Jesus spoke of Lazarus. This is an interesting verse to memorize at certain times in your life,

...This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? (John 11:4b, 40)

You see how God uses sickness to bring glory to His name? In other words, God is glorified whenever you have a need and He has to meet that need.

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Psalm 50:15 is an incredible memory verse. You knew I was going to say that.

And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.

This is such a difficult thing to understand, but the Scriptures confirm it over and over again. The more you suffer, the more capacity you have to let His glory shine through you. So you don't glory in the problem, you glory in the fact that the glory is going to God.

3- Christ is glorified when men can sense and when women can sense there is an intimacy in your spirit, between you and God.

For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

(II Corinthians 4:6)

That is why II Corinthians 3:18 says we can grow in ever increasing splendor from one degree of glory to another as the world glorifies God.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

When Christ is inhabiting your life, to the degree your light shines from the inside out, glory goes to God.

4- He is glorified by the works you do when you let Him do them.

Your remember Matthew 5:16,

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

And then lastly,

5- He is glorified, perhaps most of all, through our weaknesses.

That is the enigma of the Christian faith; that the weaker we are, the more glory He gets.

I Corinthians 1:27,29 says,

But God hath chosen the foolish [the unwise] things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

To do what?

That no flesh should glory in His presence.

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Or take the glory from Him.

Paul also says if I must glory,

but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses. (II Corinthians 12:5b NAS)

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

(II Corinthians 12:9b)

THAT WE MIGHT COME TO SEE

Oh, that we might come to see
That when all the world can see is me
God is robbed of all His glory
And man is left without God's story.

But when in life, no power I own
Then can His great power be shown
But in my weakness, lies my song
When I'm nothing, God is strong.

So the God of eternity to Whom all glory belongs, has chosen to reveal His glory even through the likes of us, through our afflictions and our weaknesses, in that we, being unworthy of His glory as was Joseph, He has no competition.

Now listen. The problem is that never as individuals or as a church, must we grasp at the glory that belongs to Him. Now I want to give you some verses.

You may think this concept is too narrow. Just let the Word speak for itself.

Remember Acts 12:23 where an angel of the Lord smote Herod because he gave not God the glory? Then look at I Thessalonians 2 where Paul says,

Not of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others,... (I Thessalonians 2:6)

Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, (Psalm 115:1a)

Pretty clear isn't it?

Look at Luke 17, when Jesus commended the one who was healed, who came back and gave the glory to God. Or look at Revelation 14:6,7 as the angel announced "fear God and give all the glory to Him". Look at John chapter 7:18,

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He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. (John 7:18)

I am the Lord: that is My name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. (Isaiah 42:8)

What about Jesus in John 8 where He said,

I seek not Mine own glory: (John 8:50a)

But perhaps it is all wrapped up in Jeremiah 9:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

(Jeremiah 9:23,24)

I Corinthians 1:29-31 says that He chose the likes of us that no flesh should glory in His presence. That is why He chose us.

I Corinthians 3:21 says that the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain, so let no man glory in men. Jesus said even of the Holy Spirit in John 16:14 that He was not to speak of Himself, He was to glorify Me (Jesus).

II Corinthians 10 adds,

But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. (II Corinthians 10:17,18)

Now I know that is a lot of passages to consider at one time. But all of it together is so clear. And if you were to boil it down to one simple statement because we do like simple statements it says this. There is only one person equipped to receive glory, the One from whom glory comes, God Himself.

Now in closing, and I like to tuck that word further and futher up into the lesson because ya'll relax when I say that. Anyway in closing, I want us to look at three practical applications on the issue of glory.

The first is, what is the cycle of glory and how does it work? The second is, what is the danger that accompanies success? And thirdly, what are the subtleties of self-exaltation? We want to see practically, in every day living, that we can assume the mind of

Joseph and thus the mind of Christ.

1- THE CYCLE OF GLORY

It is important to understand that the God of glory reveals Himself through the likes of us. He chose people like us to reveal, through our character, our afflictions, our relationships, our works, and weaknesses. The product is glory. But the Scripture indicates we steal God's glory when either internally, that is, in our minds, or externally, by our behavior, we take a teeny-weeny bit of credit. (And that's a Hebrew word, teeny-weeny, laugh.) And when we do the Scripture says it is blasphemy. That's an English word and you can look it up, too. And it is a source of destruction that Satan uses to destroy both men and ministries.

It happens not only when we accept the glory, but when we give glory to men or organizations or programs rather than to God. Beloved, be careful whom you praise when God does the work.

Now should you choose to steal God's glory three things happen:

a- You rob God of His rightful praise. If whatever praise men heap upon you or you heap upon men, is praise that belongs in the courts of the King; if it is music written for the Master's ears, and you receive it for yourself or give it to someone else and don't return it to Him, what have you done? You have robbed God of the praise of His people. And if you are a teacher or a disciple-maker or a mentor or a parent and you are not teaching those under you that truth, you're cheating men and you're cheating God.

b- You rob yourself of eternal rewards. Matthew 6, the passage we looked at a couple of weeks ago, you remember tells us very clearly that there are two banks, one in heaven and one on earth. And this thing called glory is a negotiable item; you can put it in one bank or the other but you can't put it in both. If you put it in the bank here or use it here, when you get to heaven there is nothing there. But if you wait, when you get there, you will have an account stored up for which to worship God, which is what you do with glory in heaven, incidentally. That is what you are supposed to do with glory here.

It's not negotiable in both places. The glory that you give back to God, He receives. He's pleased and He stores it up to an account with your name on it. And when you get to heaven you can withdraw glory from that account and you have that much more with which to worship God. Isn't that neat? But when you keep the

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glory, you lose the glory, and when you get to heaven it isn't there. The problem is we live in a self-centered generation. All generations are, but we take the cake.

People don't talk much or preach about heaven anymore. The gospel, Beloved, is based on a primary thought—that this world is not our home. We're on a trip, we're on our way home and this isn't it. Most of the material being written and preached in the Christian community today focuses is on the social, emotional and physical needs of man, and is problem-oriented rather than heaven-oriented. Now we need a balance and I understand that. But that balance is not present today in our society. Live for glory, Beloved, and when you do you won't want the cheap thrills that temporal glory gives.

But more than that, when we fail to give God His rightful glory we rob others of a vision of God. When God works a miracle in your life and you share in the glory, in reality you're implying you had something to do with it. What did you have to do with it? Any time you let glory stop with you the world thinks that you're what God looks like. What a poor imitation.

2- THE PERILS OF SUCCESS

Secondly, I want us to be reminded of the perils that accompany success as we read in the passage in Deuteronomy 8 and 11. The successful church syndrome is another illustration.

Now don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with success in the church. So long as success is the by-product and not what you're looking for. Growth for the glory of God is beautiful. But remember that God is not impressed with our numbers. Did you know that? His isn't sitting in heaven with a scratch pad saying, "Ah ha, they had three more in Sunday school. Oh, the baptisms are up or they've got twenty more people in church today. God isn't even impressed with our facilities. Do you know what pleases God with the church? He is pleased proportionate to how much our lives reflect the glory of God, and how much of that glory is given back to Him. The world's way today is to proselytize members for larger rolls, to give more money for bigger buildings which cost more per member and leave less for members to give away, and which draw the world's attention to "our" church and "our" buildings and "our" programs and "our" pastor. Churches today run ads in the paper saying, "The world's friendliest church", or "the church that cares". They might as well put up a sign that advertises their humility.

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Remember, Beloved, the difference between religion and Christianity.

Religion says:

Man is looking for God
We must do for God.
Man can become.
Self can please God.
Do

Christianity says:

God is looking for man.
God did it all.
God Is, therefore we already are.
Self is dead.
Died and it's done.

So, Beloved, it really is a do or die situation. And the devil has so imposed his satanic substitute over the Christian movement in the name of Christ that the world can no longer tell the difference. Religion gives every man a cause to be proud of himself and Christianity gives none. Religion glorifies the work of man and Christianity glorifies the work of God.

The keys are these:

- 1- God alone, through Jesus Christ, saved you.
- 2- God alone, through Jesus Christ, keeps you.
- 3- God alone, through Jesus Christ, enables you to live in victory.

This world is really only in need of one thing. Not fancier churches, not bigger crowds, but they need a Savior. And He is the source of all the glory and to Him all glory belongs. Just as the world is often impressed by a mighty God who uses men in their weakness, they may well be more drawn to Him by a church of less than adequate facilities, filled with less than adequate people, who have a more than adequate God. You attract people to a church and sooner or later they will be disappointed. You point people to Christ and they will *never* be disappointed. I saw a Sunday school survey not too long ago in a Christian magazine where they interviewed great Sunday School teachers about the necessary ingredients for a successful Sunday school. I think there were 8 people interviewed and there were 8 different answers. The only thing they had in common was that each of them said that the answer was something they did.

The key to a successful Sunday school is the Lord Jesus Christ. The key to a successful church is the Lord Jesus Christ exalted and given the praise due His name. When we exalt the name of

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Jesus and men see Him and are drawn to Him and are filled with Him, growth takes care of itself. He is the key.

3- THE SUBTLETY OF SELF-EXALTATION

It happens so insidiously. God takes a weak man, any man, and uses him because he is weak, because he has nothing in and of himself to draw attention to himself. And the reason God chooses someone like that because then He gets the glory. Then, unconsciously, both he that ministers and he that is ministered to are tempted to take the miracle of an omnipotent God who works best through nothing and attribute it partly to God and partly to the servant. They are forgetting that God chose the servant in the first place because he was so weak, and it goes downhill from there.

And one of the most dangerous ploys of Satan is premature elevation of new believers to positions of spiritual authority. Scripture says don't do it. I Timothy 3:6, Paul says he must not be a young Christian for he might become proud and pride comes before a fall. Satan is proof of that. But what a devastating experience happens over and over and over in churches when people violate that principle. I'll give you an illustration.

Johnny Jump-for-joy comes to Christ as his Savior. And God leads him to the Mean-well Evangelical Church. And there he becomes a member and he loves the church. He loves the Lord. He's so excited he shows up every time the doors are open. He even shows up before the doors are open. He shows up Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night. He comes to every seminar; he makes the one on Christian dog-raising. He signs up for how to be a godly wife. He sits on the front row on Sam's seminar on self-acceptance. Pretty soon he can discuss practical theology with any one. So the Mean-well church appoints its nominating committee for the church year. They need some leadership. You can hear it. "What about Sammy Sound-off?" someone asks. "He's not faithful," someone cried. "He never comes on Sunday night. Scratch him." "What about Wally Whisperlow?" "He's too quiet. He wouldn't add a thing to the meeting." "How about Ronnie Run-late?" "He not a faithful man, he's always late to church." "How about Perry Poor-boy?" "No, he doesn't understand the business end." Soon Pastor Do-good has an idea. "What about Johnny? He's here every Sunday. He even comes on Sunday night," the pastor announces casting a glaring glance at two or three of the members of the committee noted for their absence on Sunday night. "He

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witnesses and even took the layman's lunch hour leadership course and came in ninth. His wife isn't as spiritual as he is, but he's so faithful he leaves her with the six kids and comes to church night after night." "Wow," gasps the committee. "Here's the man we're looking for, a potential chairman. "Is there a second on Johnny? Moved!" A second and it's unanimous.

Then you look in on Mean-well's church two years later and ask, "What became of Johnny?" "Oh, he's not here any more. He became chairman and became disillusioned. Friction from the pressure from the members, from the staff, even trouble at home. Satan just got hold of him," Pastor answers. "Satan did it." My friend Satan had a lot of help. The leadership of that church did it. Mean-well, meant well, but they violated the Scriptures.

Young Christians don't need to sing solos, teach classes or serve on boards. I don't care if they're vice-president of Greenbacks International or past president of the Grimy Gulch Rotary Club. Young Christians need to grow. They need to be bathed in the Book. Young Christians need to serve, let them park cars, stack chairs, work in the kitchen, paint the building, labor in the shadows. Don't exalt them or you'll force God to humble them.

None of us is immune to the subtlety of exaltation. We get proud of our ministries. We get proud of our knowledge. You wouldn't do this but I've done it and I know some others who have done it. You leave your Scripture memory cards sitting the seat of the car or on top of your desk just in case somebody passes by that they might notice. We get so proud of our church and tell people about our great place of worship. We get all puffed up when someone makes reference to the change in our life as though we had something to do with it. Oh, dear God, that when someone comes up to us and says, "Oh what a neat Christian you are or what neat things you do," instead of saying, "Ah, shucks," we can just say quietly, "It is not in me."

My friend, do you know where you would be today if it were up to you? You would be living a life of total spiritual uselessness, bound for an endless eternity in hell. So would I. So what right do we have to glory? What right have we to glory, save in Jesus Christ, our King and Lord? For *of* Him and *through* Him and *to* Him are all things, and *by* Him all things exist. So to *Him* be all the praise. To *Him* be all the honor. To *Him* be *all the glory*;

To God be the Glory

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!

To God be all the glory!
Oh, that we fools could see,
That every ounce of glory
Oh, Lord, belongs to Thee.

We must not share in any way
The awe or praise of men.
Whatever way we keep that praise
Beloved, turns to sin.

Steal God's glory? Oh, Lord.
May we shout it...Never!
For the glory belongs to God alone
Forever and ever and ever.

Our Father and our God,

Quiet our hearts and sensitize our spirits. Grant us hearts and eyes that are open to see little ways in which we glory in ourselves, our strengths, even glory in the things You do through us, assuming it's because You do them through us.

Dear God, forgive us. Glory belongs to God. To God be the glory and great things He has done.

Dear God, may we leave this place this morning with a song in our hearts and the Word of God totally entrenched in our thoughts and the glory, all the glory is Yours.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

To God be the Glory

For Focus and Application

1- Read the verses on page three of your lesson in context. Can you think of situations in your life that would require similar responses? What are they?

2- How did Joseph's humility make him a candidate for leadership? How does the world view this (humility as a prerequisite for leadership)? Why are we tempted to compromise this principle?

3- Memorize I Corinthians 4:7, II Corinthians 10:17, and Revelation 4:1. Ask God to bring them to mind whenever glory begins to come to you.

4- Study Deuteronomy 8:9-18. What was God saying about the relationship between prosperity and glory? How does it affect a nation? A church? A person?

5- How does time spent outdoors often cause you to glorify God? Why do so many astronauts return glorifying God? What can you do to make the most of this "glory opportunity"?

6- How can you use the elements of nature (wind, rain, snow, sunshine, storms) to glorify God? Give some practical suggestions.

7- What kinds of things that we do are most likely to glorify God? Give examples.

8- Explain Jesus' statement in John 11:4.

9- How could God be glorified in our weaknesses? Give Scripture to support your answer.

10- Why is success so dangerous? What can we do to avoid the pitfalls that accompany it?

11- Ask God this week to give you new, creative ways to pass all the glory you receive on to God. Praise Him in advance for doing so.

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