

Day 1: Glorify God

Soli Deo Gloria

“Glory to God alone.” This great cry of the Reformation has inspired and challenged Christians through the centuries. It declares that everything we are and do as believers must glorify God. As the majestic Sovereign of the universe, God alone deserves our honor, praise and obedience.

God is worthy of our adoration when life is going well and when it goes awry. He has not changed when conflict engulfs our congregations. We are the ones who have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). While Satan tempts us to react to conflict sinfully and worsen the problems in our churches, God’s Word calls us to glorify Him through the ways we respond to conflict. The peacemaker understands that we must look to God, depend on Him and seek to glorify His name when conflict arises. The peacemaker knows that God’s redeeming power can transform conflict to victory. He recognizes that when conflict comes, his role is to lift God’s name above the fray so others will see God’s glory. Finally, the peacemaker knows that even conflict is an opportunity to reflect God’s nature through his own attitudes and actions. There is no fear in conflict, only resolute determination to exalt God’s glory – *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Glimpsing God’s Glory

God’s glory almost defies explanation because of His absolute splendor, holiness and magnificence. Our human limitations prevent us from completely understanding His glory. Like Moses, we would literally die if we were directly exposed to God’s awesome presence (Exodus 33:20). Consequently, God has chosen to reveal himself in ways that we can glimpse but never fully grasp this side of heaven.

Psalm 19:1 tells us that “*the heavens declare the glory of God.*” This verse tells us that the grandeur of creation offers meaningful insight into “*God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature*” (Romans 1:20a). God’s self-disclosure through wonders of the universe is so “*plain*” or evident that we’re “*without excuse*” if we deny His existence and fail to glorify Him as God (Romans 1:19-21).

God’s glory is the way He deliberately and lovingly shows us His nature, character and attributes. When God reveals His glory to us, we discover what He wants us to know about Him. For example, when God’s glory passed by Moses on Mount Sinai, He revealed important aspects of His nature that the Israelites desperately needed to know.

Then the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh. The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with

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So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31



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unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected – even children in the third and fourth generations" (Exodus 34:5-7, NLT).

God wanted Moses to focus on His redeeming nature rather than His appearance. Following the Israelites' gross disobedience and idolatry with the golden calf (Exodus 32-34), God desired to renew the people's relationship to Him with a covenant (Exodus 34:10). God wanted the Israelites to know that He would deal with them fairly and compassionately, forgiving their sin and loving them. That is why God described His nature and character (His glory) to Moses as He passed by Moses on the mountainside. God revealed that He is compassionate, merciful, slow to anger, filled with unfailing love, faithful, and just. God wanted Moses to behold His glory and understand who He was in relation to the spiritual needs of His people.

❖ **Describe ways the peacemaker can intentionally reflect the attributes of God listed above:**

- Compassionate _____
- Merciful _____
- Slow to anger _____
- Unfailing love _____
- Faithful _____
- Just _____



God wanted Moses to behold His glory and understand who He was in relation to the spiritual needs of His people.

❖ **Which of the above attributes is easiest for you to display in times of conflict?**

❖ **Which of the above attributes is most difficult to display in times of conflict?**

After Moses experienced God's glory, he "*bowed to the ground at once and worshiped*" (Exodus 34:8). Worship always has been a natural and necessary response to God's glory. When we get to know God better, we can't help but praise Him for His steadfast, unfailing love.

God's glory was expressed supremely through the incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ: "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). Once again, God's self-revealing glory

disclosed something significant about His nature. Through Christ's life, death and resurrection, God displayed the fullness of His "*grace and truth.*"

On one occasion Jesus declared unequivocally, "*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*" (John 14:9). Jesus enabled the glory of God to be seen through His absolute obedience to the Father's will (Luke 22:42). As Jesus prayed before His crucifixion, "*Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world*" (John 17:1b,4,6a).

The greatest conflict on earth surrounded the arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death of Christ. Yet Christ was not victimized by the conflict. By doing God's will He was the glorious victor in every step on the road to Calvary. As peacemakers we can experience victory by having the mind of Christ and displaying God's attributes, His glory, in the midst of conflict.

The Weight of Glory

The Hebrew word for glory is *chabod*. It refers to the heavy, weighty presence of God. We cannot experience God's glory and remain unaffected. His glory is unforgettable, leaving a profound impression on us as we encounter Him.

As we've just read in the Book of Exodus, Moses fell down in worship after experiencing God's glory on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:8). When construction of the tabernacle was complete, Moses could not enter it because of the intensity of God's glory (Exodus 40:35). Likewise, when Solomon dedicated the temple with a magnificent praise and worship service, the priests were forced to leave the temple because "*the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God*" (2 Chronicles 5:13-14).

The Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle and later the temple, contained the Ark of the Covenant. Once a year the high priest entered the Holy Place to make atonement for the sins of the people. God certainly considered His residence to be holy. If the high priest desecrated the Holy Place by not following God's precise instructions, he would die (Leviticus 16:2). God's holiness, His glory, is not a trifling matter.

The prophet Isaiah was completely undone when he saw a vision of God's glory (Isaiah 6:5). In the New Testament, the Apostle John fell in fear "*like a dead man*" after beholding the awesome glory of the resurrected Lord (Revelation 1:17, HCSB). The peacemaker never loses this sense of awe as he or she beholds God's glory in His Word and in every circumstance of life, including church conflict.



We cannot experience God's glory and remain unaffected. His glory is unforgettable, leaving a profound impression on us as we encounter Him.

Woe is me, for I am ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.

Isaiah 6:5
HCSB

❖ **Consider the prominence of God’s glory in your personal and congregational worship experiences. Answer these questions.**

1. How do you honor God’s glory in your personal worship? _____

2. In what ways does your lifestyle, attitudes and actions reflect God’s glory? _____

3. What can you do personally to elevate God’s glory in your life?

4. What does your church do to corporately honor God’s glory in times of worship? _____



God’s glory cannot be taken lightly. When we see who we are in light of God’s majesty, we are humbled and are profoundly grateful for His grace.

Church controversy swirled all around Ida May, a church member well into her eighties. However, she joyfully stood firm on the Solid Rock of her life. She reminded everyone of a lighthouse in the midst of a storm. Waves of gossip, dissension, discord, and anger smashed against her, but she remained unmovable. Before the controversy, everyone in the church considered her their personal and favorite grandmother. Neither perceptions nor affections from any quarter changed during the conflict or after it subsided.

Always faithful to her Lord, ever a beautiful reflection of God’s glory in her own life, Ida May could not be shaken. Several times women she had known for years tried to pressure and coerce her to take sides. Her loyalties were with her Lord and she simply lifted both factions before God’s throne. She exhibited compassion, a gentle tongue, and unconditional love for her brothers and sisters in Christ. Ida May was a peacemaker. She maintained the peace that Christ brought to her own heart. She refused to enter into the divisiveness of those who were determined to disrupt the church. God’s glory had a life-changing affect on Ida May. As she reflected God’s glory in the midst of conflict, others were changed by her testimony.

Reflecting the Lord’s Glory

Today God’s glory resides in people who are fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The temple in Jerusalem no longer exists; *“We are the temple of the living God”* (2 Corinthians 6:16). We experience God’s glory as Christ dwells in us through the power of His Spirit. Just as Old Testament saints could not remain unaffected when they encountered God’s glory, we too are changed by the glorious presence of Jesus in our lives:

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

As we increasingly reflect the Lord's glory in our everyday lives, other people will come to know God better by watching Christ fill and transform our lives. Glorifying God is more than our personal devotion and commitment; it is allowing God's nature, character and attributes to flow through us to others.

Glorifying God in Church Conflict

How does experiencing God's glory through Jesus Christ prepare us to glorify God when conflict erupts in our churches?

1. Because God's glory has enabled us to experience His mercy and forgiveness through Christ, we can be merciful and forgive others: *"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you"* (Colossians 3:13).
2. Because the glory of God's holiness and justice has enabled us to deal honestly with our sin, we can be humble and gracious in difficult situations, *"speaking the truth in love"* (Ephesians 4:15).
3. Because God's glory has shown us the unity that He has with His Son, we can maintain our unity in Christ despite the issues that threaten to tear us apart: *"[I, Jesus, pray] that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one"* (John 17:21-22).
4. Because God's glory was in the Light of the World, we can reflect Christ's light, His very countenance, when facing conflict. *"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 4:6).
5. Because God's glory reveals His sovereignty, power and majesty, we can trust His control over any church conflict, relinquishing our agenda and believing that God's plans and purposes will prevail. We can let go and focus on magnifying His name: *"I will meditate on your wonderful works. They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds"* (Psalm 145:5b-6).



Glorifying God is more than our personal devotion and commitment; it is allowing God's nature, character, and attributes to flow through us to others.