

A Life for God's Glory

God's Glory
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Well, I'm delighted to open God's word with you again this evening on such a glorious theme as the glory of God as we introduced it last time on Sunday, and what we saw last time was that the glory of God is a pervasive theme throughout every realm of life that you could possibly consider. The glory of God was reflected in our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. You look at Scripture and you see that the glory of God is the theme of the sphere of our entire existence, "For from Him and to Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever, amen." It's the theme, the glory of God is the theme of Christian salvation. It is the highest theme of our supplication. "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Your name," is how Christ taught us to pray. The glory of God is the theme of our sanctification, "You have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body." It's the theme in our suffering and it's the theme and will be the theme in our final sanctuary in heaven where the angels and all created beings will sing praise and glory and honor to our God. So this is pervasive throughout every possible conceivable realm that you exist. That's the theme of everything. The glory of God is everything.

Well, I wanted to come back to the theme tonight to help you consider some practical ways that we glorify God and how that is done. We want to be able to understand the practical things that we do that are aimed at the glory of God and what Scripture says about that. The first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" And the answer as most of you know is this, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The chief end, the primary purpose of man, the highest goal of man, the highest reason for him to live is to express glory to God, to honor him, to praise him, and what I want you to understand as we're starting out here this evening is this, it's not simply a verbal acknowledgment although that's obviously an important part of it, but it is a manner of life. This is an entire approach to living that we do and that we are called to fulfill, and so let's just start at basic things and kind of build from there if we can.

In the simplest way for us to think, each one of you has the life today that God has given to you. God has either given you marriage or singleness. God has given you the realm of relationships that you have. He's brought you to this church. He's given you the job or the retirement or the education choices that you are pursuing. You have precisely the life today that God has in his providence given to you. That's very central to understanding the platform from which you are to glorify God. Because God has given you the life that

you have with all of its past successes and even, my friends, even with its past sins and the things that you regret, the whole totality of that, the entire package today is what God has providentially assigned to you, now in the sphere of this life you are to move forward and glorify him, honor him in the realm of life that he has given to you. And what I think is encouraging about this theme is this, is that contrary to what motivational speakers in the Christian realm would say that, you know, that urge you to do great things for God and big things for God, that's not the emphasis of Scripture at all. The emphasis of Scripture is actually exactly the opposite. God has ordained that even the smallest things in life are acts of worship to him, and we reviewed some of that last time. 1 Corinthians 10:31 could not be more clear nor more mundane in its expression of the realms in which we glorify God. It says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." And so in the simple acts of eating and drinking, if we give thanks to God for what we receive, we're honoring him, we're glorifying him even as we eat, and it is expansive there, "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Every hour of the day is a potential act of worship to reflect glory back to your God. In a similar vein, although the word "glory" is not used here, Jesus said in Luke 16:10 that, "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much."

And so very little things, here's what you need to see, very little things in our eyes matter a great deal in the eyes of God. God does not measure this by human standards. God does not look at outward appearance, 1 Samuel 16 says, he looks at the heart and that's a wonderful blessing and encouragement for those of you that are maybe, you know, in a position of life where it seems like you don't have a lot of opportunities to do things for the Lord, or you know, maybe you're older and your strength is starting to fail a bit, to recognize that the small things matter to God even if they do not matter in the eyes of men. And so even if you are in the midst of a difficult home life, here's what I want you to see, is that God has given you even that circle of life that you have now and that he is pleased to receive your efforts to honor him even in those ways that men would not notice or men would disdain as unimportant. And that matters, that matters when Christians gather together in smaller assemblies. You know, there's no intrinsic merit to a megachurch with thousands and thousands of people that are attending there. Maybe they're glorifying God, maybe they're not in their teaching, in the things that they do, the point is that the numbers are not the significant aspect of it. It's in the small things where faithfulness is measured by God.

And here's where we want to go with this, with that little bit of broad introduction, is that you see this displayed, I believe, not only throughout all of Scripture but we're going to use the book of Ephesians as kind of a foundation to stand on and to explore these things, and I think that this will become very evident to you. What we'll find is, if I can use a little illustration here, I'm not too good at illustrations, but we're going to use the book of Ephesians like the hub of a bicycle wheel and then there will be different spokes going out that show how this is connected to other parts of the Scripture. But rather than jumping around randomly on different texts that we could look at and the glory of God has been taught in that way, I want to do something a little bit different here with you this evening. And so just like last time we had seven, we looked at seven realms where the glory of God is the purpose of existence, we're gonna have another seven realms here

talking about daily life, talking about your life, things that you can take and appropriate and say, "Okay, I start to see how this fleshes out in my life," and it's rather exciting to think about, and I think that when we're done, you're going to be encouraged as I was as I was preparing this, and just recognizing the things that you just unassumingly do that these are the realms in which you are already glorifying God as a believer. And so it's going to be a wonderful encouragement as well as setting a path forward for us as we go forward. The title of tonight's message, "A Life for God's Glory." A life for God's glory, being mindful of the fact that providentially you have right now today the life that God has given to you, and now what do you do going forward.

Well, point 1 tonight is that you would seek salvation in Christ. If you are not a Christian, that you would seek salvation in Christ because that is where the realm of God's glory begins. You cannot glorify God if you are not a Christian and so you must be a Christian in order to glorify God. It is in the realm of biblical salvation that we are introduced into the realm of God's glory.

Ephesians 1. I'm going to review these verses again just ever so briefly. In Ephesians 1:6 salvation is "to the praise of the glory of His grace." Verse 12, "we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." Verse 14, the Holy Spirit "is given to us as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." Now I know we've gone over those verses many times but it's really important for you to understand this as we expand on it here this evening. Here in Ephesians 1, Paul is laying a foundation for everything else that he says in the letter. Everything else in the remaining chapters builds off of this foundation of the glory of God and that's going to be very important to understand as we move forward but we're going to hold that thought for just a moment, okay? This is a foundation for everything else that he says in Ephesians.

Well, let me show you a couple of other passages. Flip back one book to the book of Galatians 1 and you see Paul referring to the Gospel of Christ, referring to the redemption that Christ purchased for us at the cross, and you see that here again the realm of salvation is unto the glory of God. Galatians 1:3 he says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." What did Christ do? He "gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore." And so Christ died to reconcile us to God and this was unto the glory of God forever.

Now turn on to the other side of Ephesians to the book of Philippians 2, and we see how the confession of Christ as Lord is essential to entering into the realm in which we glorify God. Having spoken of the humble death of Christ in verse 8 on the cross, verse 9 he goes on to say, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." One day every man, woman and child will confess that Christ is Lord. There's a coming day where even those who deny him now will be compelled by force to acknowledge him as Lord before

they're banished into eternal judgment. What we find here for us that helps us and encourages us, for those of you that are here tonight which are many if not most of you, those of you that in the humble depths of your heart acknowledge Christ as Lord, those of you that freely confess him before men as your Lord and Savior, as our brother Andrew did in the waters of baptism just on Sunday, what Scripture is telling us here is that that confession brings glory to God. Your very confession of Christ as Lord is honoring to God. You are glorifying God as you confess him as Lord himself and as your personal Lord.

So as we gather together in this humble room in this humble place, God is glorified when because here in this place we gladly, openly, humbly acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and that confession brings glory to God. How could it do anything else? Christ was sent by the Father into the world to be the Savior of the world, Christ has declared, "My Lord and My God," by the confession of the disciples, and so we are joining in with the purpose of God when we acknowledge Christ as Lord and that glorifies him, that brings honor to him. It is no small thing for you to confess Christ as Lord and so I have to ask you, those of you on the live stream, watching the video later on, those of you that are here in the room this evening, have you begun at that basic point? Have you truly confessed Christ from your heart as Lord? Have you received him as Lord? Do you rest in him as your all-sufficient Savior? Has Christ in the language of the passage that we looked at from Galatians, do you know something of having been rescued from this evil world, from this evil age, and been delivered into the realm where Christ is openly acknowledged as Lord? Do you know something about that because that is where glorifying God in your life begins.

Now that's the end of point #1. What I want to say in addition is just to say this. You know, Scripture acknowledges very openly that when it comes to the Christian church, the body of believers, that there are not many of us that are noble, there's not many of men of fame that are Christians, there are not many that are acknowledged or respected by the world and indeed Jesus said the world will hate you, well, I find this very encouraging and very helpful to recognize, that in the midst of your quiet, humble, unrecognized life and a life that the world considers to be insignificant, the courts of heaven judge differently. The opinion of God the Father about your life, you who know and name Christ, is much much different. As you acknowledge Christ in the humble realm of life that God may have given you, understand that God is greatly glorified and greatly pleased with that. You are expressing the work that he first did in your heart, right? We are born again. We are born from above. God saves us. God imparts new life and as we confess him before men, as we acknowledge him before men, Jesus says in Matthew 10, "I'll gladly confess him before My Father who is in heaven."

So even if it seems like your life is on hold or perhaps it seems insignificant from the eyes of men, we must understand and be encouraged and motivated by the fact that God doesn't see it that way, and to realize that in our humble realm of life we are fulfilling the greatest purpose in the universe, that you as a Christian are fulfilling the reason that everything exists. You're part of the real program no matter what men may think about it. And so your salvation is a reflection of the glory of God and if you are not in Christ, then

the word of God would come to you and call you and command you to strive to enter through the narrow door, Luke 13:24. You need to start looking for salvation in Christ that he might reveal himself to you.

Well, that brings us to our second point for this evening and it's this, and this one's gonna surprise you. This one will catch you off-guard, I believe. But our point #2 for this evening is to seek church unity. To seek church unity. Now it's well-known that the Apostle Paul, roughly speaking, this isn't strictly the only way to consider the way that Ephesians is broken up, but in the first three chapters Paul is basically describing Christian doctrine. In the context of praising God and honoring God, he sets forth the doctrine of salvation. In the last three chapters, he sets forth the duty that Christian salvation brings and how it is that we live out Christian life. So Christian doctrine and then Christian duty. The first three chapters, the last three chapters.

Now here's what I want you to see. I think this is very very significant. Remember going back to what I said earlier that in chapter 1 he makes it clear that he's building on the foundation of the glory of God as he expands and expounds on Christian salvation and on the doctrines of election and redemption and adoption and the sealing of the Spirit, all of those great realities of salvation pointing and having as their aim the glory of God. Now watch this. When Paul brings this first section of the book of Ephesians to a close, he closes with a prayer and in chapter 3, verse 14, having said everything that he had to say about Christian doctrine in the first half of the book, he begins to pray and he says, "For this reason," verse 14, "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." Stop there for just a moment. In light of all of these riches of salvation that he has expounded on, he prays for his readers, he prays for the church throughout the ages that God would supernaturally illumine our minds so that we would understand and grasp these things even though they are beyond human comprehension. You can think of it that maybe we've got a thimble full of knowledge and Paul is praying that our understanding would expand to be a vat of 55 gallon drum of comprehension, that we'd go from one level of understanding to another because that comprehension of the love of God is essential for the living out of the duties that he expresses in the final three chapters.

Now you say, "What does that have to do with the glory of God and what does it have to do with church unity? I think he's lost his place in his notes. I think he's lost track of what he's trying to say." No, just stay with me here. Look at verse 20, he says, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us," here it is, "to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." And so Paul here says that his aim in this prayer is the glory of God. The aim of his instruction to the church is the glory of God. The reason that he prays that we would be filled up to all of this abundant

knowledge of God is the glory of God. "To Him be the glory." And my friends, what I want you to see is that you and I are included in the scope of this magnificent prayer because we are members of the church, we are members of the body of Christ if we've been born again, and he says, "To Him be the glory in the church," and he says, "to all generations." And so just as the Lord Jesus in John 17 prayed for those who would believe through the word of the apostles, the Apostle Paul here is encompassing the entire future of the church in this great scope of this magnificent prayer that he has prayed and it's all to the glory of God.

Someone might say, "Wow, this is magnificent! This is truly transcendent what we are reading here." Now so what Paul has done is he opened up in chapter 1 talking about salvation to the glory of God, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," chapter 1, verse 3, he repeats that theme three times in the first 14 verses, and then he circles back after he's done all of this exposition of the doctrine of salvation and he concludes it with the glory of God. He started with the glory of God, he ends with the glory of God in these first three chapters and the closing prayer makes it plain that he has the idea that the fullness of God would be empowering us as we live out our Christian life and he says, "To Him be the glory."

Now look at chapter 4, verse 1, with that in mind and he says, "Therefore," and with that word he bridges between what he has said about the glory of God and uses it as a governing transition to the rest of the letter. Now that we have settled that everything about Christian salvation is to the glory of God, let me tell you therefore how it is that you are to live this out in the practical aspects of life. And so what follows in the final three chapters is the consequence of the glory of God in salvation. Stated differently, what follows in the final three chapters is the manner in which we are to bring glory to God in the daily life of Christian living. Therefore, because everything is to the glory of God in Christian salvation, therefore here are the implications of that.

How does the church bring glory to God? How do we glorify God in our salvation? Think about it this way, where does that prayer at the end of chapter 3 for the glory of God, where does that lead to? It leads to the final three chapters of Ephesians and what does he start with, having the glory of God reverberating in his inspired mind, the words are actually what's inspired but you get what I'm saying, what is reverberating in the apostolic mind as he writes chapter 4, verse 1? It's the glory of God. What is the first theme out of his mouth when the glory of God is preeminent in his mind and in what he's instructing the church in? Chapter 4, verse 1, look at it with me, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." You see, he's reflecting back to chapter 3. He's told us about the call of God in our salvation and now the consequence of that is he says, "I implore you to walk in a manner that's worthy of that. Walk in a manner that is worthy of the glory of God in salvation." It's powerful.

And what does a worthy walk entail? Verse 2 and 3, "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you

were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." The glory of God all over this passage but what Paul is writing and saying is that the lead theme as we walk in a manner worthy of the glory of God by which we have been called is to preserve the unity of the church. He doesn't start with your daily devotions or even prayer or anything like that. He puts the unity of the church at the head of the application of this teaching on the glory of God in Christian salvation.

Now look, I say this gently and I say it to a room full of people that have done nothing but contribute to the unity of the church for which I thank God for each one of you. We have taught on the unity of the church many times from this pulpit and I want you to see that that has not been a misplaced emphasis. The unity of the church matters to God. It matters to Christ. We are one body saved by one true faith, and we are brought into the one true body of Christ and as a result of that in a practical application of it, we show humility and gentleness and patience and tolerance to one another so that this realm of a local church would be a place of peace, a place of refuge for the true people of God, and that means that we check our agendas and we leave them in the parking lot. It means that when disputes come up, we resolve them quickly. It means that when as inevitably happens someone sins against us or offends us somehow, that we are quick to forgive because we understand that there is this surpassing importance of unity in the body of Christ that we pursue not just for its own sake but it is because a unified church brings glory to the God who saved it.

That puts a whole different perspective on this church unity thing, doesn't it? It puts a whole different level of urgency on resolving matters that might threaten to disrupt it, whether it's within your home or within the body of Christ itself, it's urgent, it's important. But tonight to this group in here, what I want you to see and know and understand how I think about you as I teach on this, is this, the humble, unassuming love that you manifest to one another without even trying, without even thinking about it, what you need to understand is that unassuming gentle love that you express within the body of Christ, it glorifies God. It honors him for who he really is. It is a reflection back as a light hitting the mirror. It is a reflection back to what our God is like and it honors him. Your unassuming love within the body of Christ, your thoughtful and yet, in one sense, thoughtless because you so naturally do it, acts of kindness and generosity and service and sacrifice, this is where we glorify God.

Look over at Romans 15 as we look at one of the spokes that radiate out from these themes in Ephesians. It's important that we see that these are themes that are woven throughout the New Testament. The things we're saying are not unique to the book of Ephesians at all, and so in Romans 15:5, the Apostle Paul says this, and remember he's writing to the church at Rome, he says, "Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We honor him through the unity of the church, the unity of the body.

And so, you know, you kind of step back, you step back and maybe a few of you, if not many of you, are saying, "Whoa, I didn't see that one coming," because we don't think about it in these terms and yet when we look a little more closely at Scripture we see how the unity of the church is preeminent. And so having, beloved, having a church that is to the best of my knowledge unified in the life that God has given us here today, do you see our opportunity and our responsibility and our desire to protect that unity going forward? How important it is for us to hold our tongues with things that might spark division, that might spark arguments within the body? No. No. No. No. No, we don't do that because we protect the unity and we protect the unity because we understand this is one of the ways that we glorify God. And so it gives us a sense of joyous caution in the way that we move about in the body, in what we say and how we say it.

Now I've got to keep moving here. Let's go to point #3. We've said that a life for God's glory is found in salvation in Christ, first of all. 2. Seeking church unity. You could say protecting church unity. Point #3: seek spiritual maturity. Seek spiritual maturity and I'm gonna go more quickly through these final five points, famous last words. But point #3: seek spiritual maturity. Beloved, you glorify God when you grow in understanding of biblical truth, when growing in biblical understanding, biblical doctrine, is a priority in your life, when that matters to you and you actually do it.

Look at Ephesians 4:14. Ephesians 4. Remember everything is built on the glory of God as you go forward in these final three books of Ephesians, and we're skipping over many things that we could say. I couldn't do a 17 point message here tonight. I mean, theoretically I could but as a practical matter that's impossible so I'm being a little bit selective here. But in chapter 4, verse 14, the Apostle Paul says, talking about the unity of the faith again in verse 13 which we saw is clearly related to the glory of God, he says in verse 13, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and," there's something else about it, "of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." Beloved, this is lofty. This is lofty. Once we come to salvation in Christ and we become part of a local church, we are to grow up. We are to move from one level of basic understanding through elementary school, middle school, high school, college, we're supposed to grow up, as it were, progressing, I'm speaking metaphorically here, we are to progress in our knowledge of Christ, to build on the basics, to go from milk to meat in Hebrews 5 language. This is one way that we glorify God is that we grow.

And so for those of you here tonight that are Christians, what I want to tell you and encourage you with is this, is that you are glorifying God by being here tonight to study God's word with other believers. Our gatherings on Tuesday evenings, they please God because we are studying his word in order to grow in it. This is why we do it and it's why we proclaim the word instead of doing other things that might entertain people in a different, you know, in a different setting. It's because spiritual growth glorifies God. It honors him. It praises him. And so as you study Scripture publicly, as you read and grow

in Scripture privately in the privacy of your own home, that pursuit of God's word is one of the ways that you glorify him, and the love that so many of you manifest for the word of God and you email me about the things that you're studying and the things that you're excited about or the things that, you know, "Can you point me to other resources?" That is a manifestation, you are glorifying God as you do that. This is what God wants from his people.

Now for the sake of time, I won't have you turn to this verse because I'm only going to stay here for a moment, but you can jot this down in your notes, 2 Peter 3:18. The whole letter ends on this same note. This is another spoke from the Ephesians hub tonight where Peter closes his letter by telling his readers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." Grow in grace. To him be the glory. You see these themes wedded together in Scripture so that how do you glorify God? You glorify God by confessing Christ as Lord in salvation, you glorify him by seeking church unity and contributing to it, you glorify him in seeking spiritual maturity.

That brings us to point #4. Point #4 and it's this, is that you seek personal purity. You seek personal purity. We alluded to this last time out of 1 Corinthians 6. Let me just show you here in Ephesians that you glorify God as you separate from the world's mindset and its conduct. We glorify God, in other words, in our holiness. Holiness is an expression of purity but it's also a word that expresses separation. We see the direction and the philosophies and the mindset of the world and we say, "Uh-uh, that's not for me. I've been set apart for a different way of thinking and a different way of living." Chapter 4, verse 17, the picture, the metaphor "walk" is an expression of the manner of life, chapter 4, verse 17, Paul says having just exhorted us to spiritual maturity, verse 17, "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart," he goes on verse 20, "But you did not learn Christ in this way." There is a contrast between you and the world. Verse 21, "if you've heard of Him and have been taught in Him," if you are indeed a true Christian, then here's the consequence of that, this is how you glorify God in the whole context of Ephesians. Verse 22, "in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

My friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, one of the ways that you glorify God is that there is this increasing division in your mind between what you were like before you came to Christ and who you are and what you are and what you think now. You look back at your former manner of life which was like the world, which was in the world, which was of the world, and your love for sin and your rejection of Christ, the ungodly patterns of thinking that marked your life beforehand, today in this life that God has given to you today and now you are in Christ, you look back on that and say, "I'm leaving that behind. I'm turning my back afresh on that to go after and to pursue this new life that

God has given to me. And as I do that, I am pursuing," look at the end of verse 24, "a life that in the image of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. I'm done with the false philosophies of the world. I embrace the truth. I cultivate, I sow toward," s-o-w, "I sow toward the new life that has been given to me in Christ." And as you separate from the world and pursue your new life in Christ, that growth in righteousness glorifies God.

Now turn ahead, for me it was only one page, to the book of Philippians 1 as we see this principle of seeking personal purity to glorify God reflected also in what Paul said in the book of Philippians, a book that was written in the same general time frame as Ephesians, and Paul is praying again, it's remarkable the doctrine that comes out in his prayer, but he's praying for these Philippians believers. In chapter 1, verse 9 he says this, "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ," and the purpose of it all is "to the glory and praise of God." Paul prays that they would grow in discernment, that they would grow in righteousness, that they would grow in knowledge and sincerity and blamelessness and the whole point of that prayer, the whole ultimate final purpose of it is that their lives would increasingly glorify the God who is producing that within them. The glory of God in our personal righteousness.

So we've seen four so far: salvation in Christ, church unity, spiritual maturity, personal purity. I ran out of words that end in i-t-y for point #5 but let me just say to close this on the personal purity matter, is that when you in the privacy of your own heart, when you at your own keyboard before you or your phone before you and temptations pop up, when you resist those ungodly thoughts and ungodly influences, in the privacy of those moments, my friends, you're bringing glory to God as you're growing in righteousness and being filled with that godly holiness that the Spirit of God produces within us. Point #5: you forgive personal offenses. You forgive personal offenses and how do we glorify God when you've been offended? Well, you show grace, you show kindness to others just like God showed to you in your salvation. You glorify God by being like him in how you respond to offenses.

Chapter 4, verse 32. We're skipping over a lot that I really shouldn't skip over but I've already explained why we're doing that. Chapter 4, verse 31, remembering the whole book of Ephesians is built on a foundation that salvation is to the glory of God, the practical outworking of salvation in our daily lives therefore is to the glory of God. One aspect of that is found in chapter 4, verse 31, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Look, the glory of God is seen in Christian salvation. Christian salvation declares that God forgives all of the sins of those who receive his crucified and resurrected Son, who trust in Christ alone for forgiveness and eternal life, and that by faith alone without works of righteousness or works of merit, God forgives the one who receives his Son fully, completely, and eternally. What we find here in Ephesians 4, then, is that one of the ways

that we glorify God is by forgiving those who sin against us in a manner that reflects the way that God has forgiven us.

Jesus in different parables made a big point of this in his teaching on the nature of forgiveness and so, my friends, when you forgive someone particularly within the church, particularly within your home life, when you forgive someone for wronging you, you are glorifying God. The Spirit of God brings this to your mind. The Spirit of God gives you the power and the desire to do this, but what I want you to see is that those times in your perhaps sometimes challenging family relationships, a challenging marriage, or challenging relationships otherwise within the home, my friends, what I want you to see is that when you adopt a gracious attitude, sometimes maybe against what seems to be your immediate self-interest in that, that you can take great encouragement from the fact that this glorifies God for you to do that because it reflects what God is like. It reflects, it mirrors back how God has dealt with you in Christ. God forgave all of your sins, then you freely go and freely forgive.

Look over at Romans 15 as we see another spoke coming from the Ephesians hub here. Romans 15. Paul says, "Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God." You know, once you become aware of this theme of the glory of God, you realize how quickly you've read past it and overlooked it as you've gone through Scripture because it just bursts through, the glory of God bursts through the pages of Scripture like the sun bursts through the dawn of the morning sky.

He goes on to say, verse 8, "I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy." And so Paul here writing in the context of the Christian church of accepting people who have different opinions about matters, he says you accept one another and you do so for the sake of the glory of God.

So of course, as we go through life, as you go through your marriage, as you go through work relationships and different aspects of life, beloved, of course we're going to bump into each other along the way, of course there's going to be times where conflict comes, just understand that this is an occasion, this is an opportunity within the broader life that God has given you to glorify him by the way that you respond to that other person, and when you forgive your spouse, that fellow family member, that fellow church member, that fellow work associate, this is what brings glory to God. It's very practical. It's very private. It's not something on display. It's not something that you're going to fill an arena of people with in the name of whatever they do. What I want you to see is what Scripture points us to is these smaller realms of life, so called smaller, these private realms where we practice the glory of God and where we honor him.

Well, point #6. I kind of alluded to this when I was speaking about church unity, but point #6, you practice corporate worship. You practice corporate worship and what a delight to point this out within this room. It is important biblically that we gather together. Ephesians 5:18. Ephesians 5:18 says this, "And do not get drunk with wine," and you know, being intoxicated does not glorify God, "do not get drunk with wine, for

that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," and what's the consequence of being filled with the Spirit? Well, it's not speaking in tongues as some would say, rather it's this corporate dimension of worship. Verse 19, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." Notice that it's plural, that we're doing this in the context of corporate worship, honoring God with our songs. Verse 20, "always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." When we gather together corporately, when we sing, when David or Larry or someone else is leading us in corporate singing, it is an act that brings glory to God. It's why we approach it, or at least we should with a sense of enthusiasm, of earnestness as we sing, with our hearts engaged, not mumbling out the words but singing it out to the glory of God. We do it with earnestness because we understand that this is an act which glorifies God and we want to give him our best as we do. If you've ever been in churches overseas in different parts of the world, sometimes the singing is just so resounding that it's stunning to hear the enthusiasm with which the people of God sing.

Over in 1 Peter 4:10-11, kind of in the context of a broader context of exercising our spiritual gifts but applying to this element of corporate worship, 1 Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another," corporate aspect. You can't serve Christ and glorify Christ strictly alone. He gave us the church for a reason. We gather together for a reason. "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that," unto this ultimate purpose, "in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." This is all over the New Testament, this theme and this importance of glorifying God.

And so to conclude point #6, my friends, as you joyfully attend to and as you are joyfully faithful to public worship, gathering together with other believers, you are glorifying God and so the simplicity of coming together here is not simply a matter of routine for us, it's not simply – watch this, this is very important – it's not simply for the social dimension that we get out of gathering together in fellowship although we get that and we enjoy that and we treasure it and that's good that we do, understand that as we come together corporately, this is an act that glorifies God. It brings honor to him. And so in your quiet faithfulness of being with the people of God as they gather together, I want to encourage you from the word of God that what you do in an unassuming way is something that brings glory to God as you do it, and what we find as we explore all of these things is this, is that glorifying God for the Spirit-filled believer is not something that is too high and lofty and impossible for us to attain to. Glorifying God is right within the grasp of what you do on a day-to-day life.

Now one final point here, point #7 for tonight is this, it's to nurture godly relationships. Nurture godly relationships and I'm just going to pass over this with almost with a wave of the hand, far less than what it deserves. Chapter 5, verse 22, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is

the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." Wives, the way that you respond to your husbands is one of the key ways that the Lord, one of the key realms that God has given you to glorify him. "Husbands," verse 25, "love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." So as Paul is talking about in the whole context of the book Christian salvation is unto the glory of God, that's, you know, an overarching theme of it, he applies it in a lot of different ways and he goes to our home lives and speaks about the marriage relationship.

In chapter 6, verse 1, he talks about the relationship between parents and their children. Verse 1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This is how you glorify God as a young person, you do so in the context of the way that you respond to your parents. Verse 4, parents, it goes both directions, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." And he goes on and godly relationships in the workplace, "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters." Can we still say slaves and masters from the Bible in the day and age in which we live? Well, we do here. But slaves, employees, obey your masters. Verse 9, "masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him." So we nurture these godly relationships, we realize that the closest relationships to us are the realms in which God intends for us to glorify him.

And so what have we seen about a life for God's glory? Salvation in Christ. Church unity. Spiritual maturity. Personal purity. Forgiveness. Corporate worship. Godly relationships. It's not in the great magnificent public deeds that we glorify our God, we glorify God in the realm of private life, personal interactions that are your platform. The life that God has given you is the life upon which he intends you to glorify him.

Now that is all from God's word and in one sense it sounds simple, it's multi-faceted but we realize that it's not something that God has placed beyond our realm, and yet, and yet, and yet isn't it true that you find in these realms of life of which we've talked and spoken this evening, haven't you found that it's a battle sometimes? That this is sometimes difficult to live out? Why is that the case? Well, that's what we want to explore in weeks to come because Paul says in verse 12 our struggle is not against flesh and blood. He acknowledges a struggle after all of this. There's a struggle against rulers and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. And so, beloved, as we see the preeminent priority of the glory of God, we see the realm in which it is to be lived out, we realize that we need spiritual help, spiritual assistance, supernatural ability imparted to us by the God of our salvation if we are to succeed in the task which he has given us. It's beyond the power of human flesh to do this and you see why we wanted to lay this foundation before we went into our discussion of Ephesians 6.

So I trust that you'll continue to be with us. These are critical matters. I look forward to bringing it to you in the weeks to come.

Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we pray that You would strengthen each believer here to live to the glory of God. We see how important it is to You, therefore it's important to us. Help us to live it out as we should. Father, I pray for those who are not in Christ that they would confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father as Your Spirit works in their heart to lead them to that saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus. We pray in His name. Amen.

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