

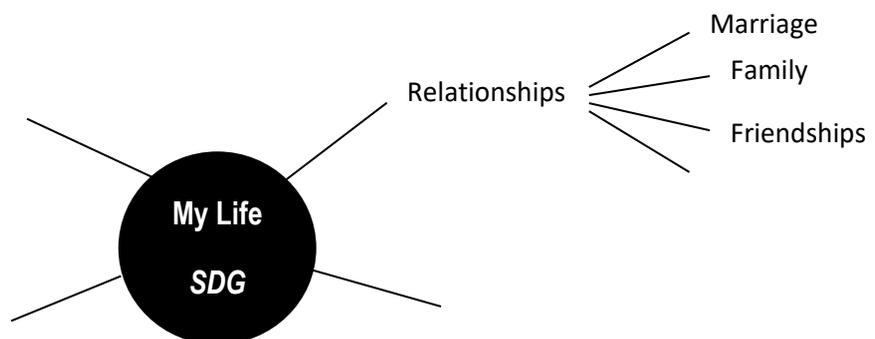
Getting Started

Soli Deo gloria is the motto that grew out of the Protestant Reformation and was used on every composition by Johann Sebastian Bach. He affixed the initials *SDG* at the bottom of each manuscript to communicate the idea that it is God and God alone who is to receive the glory for the wonders of His work of creation and of redemption.

- Some have defined the glory of God as the manifestation of the sum of all the attributes of God. To begin this discussion, identify as many attributes of God you can think of.

Attributes of God:

- Genesis 1:26-27 states that we are created in the image and likeness of God. By God's grace we are created to reflect His glory to the world around us. Some of the attributes of God are reserved for Him alone (i.e., omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence). What are some of God's attributes that are "shared" with us, that we can reflect and experience through our lives?
- In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul writes, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." In His humanity, Jesus brought glory to the Father on earth by completing the work that He was given to do (John 17:4). In Hebrews 1:3 we read that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His being. In this week's message, Pastor Lee focused on just one area of life where we are called to glorify God: through our relationships. Take a few minutes to create a mind map of other areas of your life where you may glorify God. Add as many branches and sub-branches as needed.



- As you desire to reflect the glory of God to the world around you in each of these area, discuss how the various attributes of God may be lived out through you, by God's grace, to shine for Him and bring glory to His name.

Discussion

Pastor Lee discussed Romans 14-15 on Sunday with a focus on glorifying God through our relationships. Romans 15:5-7 is a prayer for unity and harmony in our relationships that will result in glory to God.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- Summarize Pastor Lee's message this week and share what it may look like for you to bear with others, please your neighbors, build them up, live in harmony with, and welcome into your home.
- Read this article by John Piper and discuss what you learned about the *Glory of God* as well the final points stated under the heading *Treasuring the Glory of God*.

Soli Deo Gloria

by John Piper

We use the phrase *glory of God* so often that it tends to lose its biblical force. But this glory, like the sun, is no less blazing—and no less beneficial—because people ignore it. Yet, God hates to be ignored. “Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver!” (Ps. 50:22). So let's focus again on the glory of God. What is God's glory, and how important is it?

What Is the Glory of God?

The glory of God is the holiness of God put on display. That is, it is the infinite worth of God made manifest. Notice how Isaiah shifts from “holy” to “glory”: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isa. 6:3). When the holiness of God fills the earth for people to see, it is called glory. The basic meaning of *holy* is “separated from the common.” Thus, the holiness of God is His infinite “separation” from all that is common. It is what makes Him the infinite “one of a kind”—like the rarest and most perfect diamond in the world—only there are no other diamond-gods. God's uniqueness as the only God—His “Godness”—makes Him infinitely valuable, or holy.

In speaking of God's glory, the Bible assumes that this infinite value has entered creation. It has, as it were, shined. God's glory is the radiance of His holiness, the out-streaming of His infinite value. And when it streams out, it is seen as beautiful and great. It has both infinite quality and magnitude. So, we may define God's glory as the beauty and greatness of His manifold perfections.

I say “manifold perfections” because specific aspects of God's being are said to have glory. For example, we read of “the glory of his grace” (Eph. 1:6) and “the glory of his might” (2 Thess. 1:9). God Himself is glorious because He is the perfect unity of all His manifold and glorious perfections.

But this definition must be qualified. The Bible also speaks of God's glory before it is revealed in creation. For example, Jesus prays, “Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (John 17:5). So I would suggest a definition something like this: God's glory is the outward radiance of the intrinsic beauty and greatness of His manifold perfections.

I am aware that words are poor pointers here. I have replaced one inadequate word—*glory*—with two inadequate words—*beauty* and *greatness*. But God has revealed Himself to us in words like “the glory of God.” Therefore, they are not meaningless.

We must constantly remind ourselves that we are speaking of a glory that is ultimately beyond any comparison in creation. “The glory of God” is how we designate the infinite beauty and the infinite greatness of the Person who was before anything else. This beauty and greatness exist without origin, without comparison, without analogy, without being judged by any external criterion. God’s glory is the all-defining, absolutely original standard of greatness and beauty. All created greatness and beauty comes from it and points to it, but such things do not comprehensively or adequately reproduce it.

“The glory of God” is a way to say that there is an objective, absolute reality to which all human wonder, awe, veneration, praise, honor, acclaim, and worship is pointing. We were made to find our deepest pleasure in admiring the infinitely admirable—the glory of God. This glory is not the psychological projection of unsatisfied human longing onto reality. On the contrary, inconsolable human longing is evidence that we were made for God’s glory.

How Central Is the Glory of God?

The glory of God is the goal of all things (1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43:6–7). The great mission of the church is to declare God’s glory among the nations. “Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!” (Ps. 96:1–3; Ezek. 39:21; Isa. 66:18–19).

What Is Our Hope?

Our ultimate hope is to see God’s glory. “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2). God will “present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy” (Jude 24). He will “make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory” (Rom. 9:23). Jesus, in all His person and work, is the incarnation and ultimate revelation of the glory of God (John 17:24; Heb. 1:3).

Moreover, we will not only see God’s glory, but we will also, in some sense, share in His glory. “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1). “Those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). Hope that is really known and treasured has a decisive effect on our present values, choices, and actions.

Treasuring the Glory of God

Get to know the glory of God. Study the glory of God, the glory of Christ. Study your soul. Know the glories that you are seduced by and why you treasure glories that are not God’s glory.

Study your own soul to know how to make the glories of the world collapse like Dagon in pitiful pieces on the floor of the world’s temples (1 Sam. 5:4). Hunger to see and share in more of the glory of Christ, the image of God.

Key Thoughts:

Prayer

Make Romans 15:5-7 the focus of your prayer this week. Take time to thank the Lord for what He has revealed to you over the past 5 weeks related to the Scriptures, His grace, faith, Christ and the glory of God. Ask God to open a door for the gospel during the Thanksgiving holiday as we glorify God through relationships with families and friends.