

SOLA DEO GLORIA

"GLORY TO GOD ALONE"

TEXT: ROMANS 11:33 - 36

9 IMPLICATIONS OF A WORLD THAT IS CENTRED AROUND GOD'S GLORY

1. WE MATTER BUT WE ARE NOT THE POINT

The Bible gives humanity great dignity in: *creation, in God's rescue of us, in God pouring out his Holy Spirit on us and in our ultimate resurrection and glorification.* We are given dignity but we are not central to the story. God is. This provides us with the perfection tension of being significant but not important. Some of us feel more important than we are, but if we find ourselves in that mindset at the moment, it won't be long until we are humbled and once again realising how frail we really are. At times, we may be highly successful, and even admired, but it can only ever be for a season. Our bodies do not last forever, and everything is always subject to change. We only have a limited measure of control over life. When we face hardship, suffering, illness or grief, we suddenly realise that we are the created, and not the creator. And we bow our knees to his authority over all things. This humbling is a huge blessing as it levels the playing field and makes us realise that we do not need to get our worth through achievement or performance, because it has already been established by God.

2. EVERY LIFE HAS PURPOSE

All of us have one main purpose to carry out in this life, and that is to glorify God. We will all stand before him and account for what we did with our lives. Giving God glory is not something that needs to be profound or public. Most of the time it is just being faithful and loving with the things and people that he has given us. The problem is that we crave the approval of others and so we naturally fall prey to wanting to perform for others so that they can boost our egos and make us feel like the brilliant people we think we are. The irony is that we get so caught up in chasing affirmation that we forget that we have God's, and we waste so much opportunity to give him glory. We would be a lot happier if we embraced God's love and acceptance of us, and then used our lives to glorify him.

Q. Why is it both humbling and liberating to know that God is the main point of the Bible and not us humans?

Q. Why do you think we get focused on how successful we appear in life rather than focusing on God's glory?

Q. What does it show us about our Christian maturity when we chase other people's approval of us instead of accepting God's approval of us?

Q. Name one person who you seek approval from (i.e. if they think you are doing well, then you will feel extremely chuffed with yourself, but if they do not approve of what you are doing, you will feel devastated). Explain why you have given this person so much power to make you feel this way?

Q. Why do you think we buy into the lie that to have a purposeful life we have to do something profound and public? In what way have you succumbed to this belief?

Q. What one change do you think you should make in your life in order to give God glory?

3. THERE IS MEANING IN ALL WE DO

- Read 1 Corinthians 10:31

There is meaning in everything we do when we do it for the glory of God. Whether the task has a far-reaching impact, or is simply done in secret, what we do and how we do it has meaning because God is watching us. We can do the dishes to the glory of God, or we can moan about them, the choice is ours.

4. SUCCESS NO LONGER DEFINES AND SUFFERING NO LONGER DESTROYS US

When we live for God's glory, we are no longer defined by how the world views us. Though we work hard and excellently in all that we do, we are no longer reliant on the promotion, or the award to give us "proof" of our worth. When we live for God's glory and not our own, we are far more content with our position in life and we like ourselves, because we realise that we were made this way on purpose. Some of us may experience a measure of freedom in this area, and do not seek our identity through external means. However, very few of us are able to handle suffering well, glorifying God through it. Paul was an example of someone who was able to continue to glorify God even though he suffered for him. Prior to meeting Jesus, Paul was a highly esteemed leader in his community. But when he became a Christian, those very people, and many more began to despise him. So much so that some even had him beaten, put in prison and they tried to kill him. But wherever he found himself, he still managed to glorify God.

Q. Why is it encouraging to know that there is meaning in all that we do?

Q. Why is it, that when we live our lives to glorify God, we are actually more content than when we are living for what others think of us?

Q. How do you think we can glorify God in our suffering? Have you ever experienced this in your own life?

5. OUR SALVATION IS SECURE

Our adoption into God's family is for his own glory. He gives us his grace because it shows his kindness, and so we can rest assured that it is not our own merit that saves us, but his alone.

6. OUR SANCTIFICATION IS CERTAIN

- Read Philippians 1:11 & Romans 8:29-30

Our sanctification is not on our shoulders alone. God is working on us and will bring about our change and renewal because it brings him glory to do so. We can then rest knowing that he is busy and will do all that he has promised.

7. THE CHURCH IS POSSIBLE AND INDEED UNSTOPPABLE

- Read Ephesians 3:10

Though the church has messed up time and time again over the ages, it has also continued to grow because it is God's "bride". We are told in scripture that in the end, God will hold up his church to show Satan and his demons, all the people he has saved and brought into his family. He will show Satan how these normal, broken, sinful people were the very vehicle that he chose to change the world and bring about his kingdom. What a glorious day that will be!!!

8. WORSHIP OF GOD BECOMES ABOUT GOD AND NOT ABOUT US

God has given us tools to express our love and worship to him. It is not something we have to do to somehow keep him happy, but rather something we get to do, because he is so glorious. Prayer, praise, generosity, reading the Bible, service, community and evangelism are all things we get to do to glorify him. We have a freedom and a joy in serving him in these ways.

9. CHRISTIANS CAN LIVE HOLY, HUMBLE AND HOPEFUL LIVES

We long to please God with the way in which we live our lives. When our motive is to glorify God, it is much easier to say "no" to sin when it comes knocking at our door. We live humble lives when we realise that it's not all about us, but that it IS all about him. This makes us think about ourselves a whole lot less, and makes us think about and rely on the grace of God a whole lot more. We are able to be hopeful in life because we are not reliant on ourselves to make this life meaningful. We know that what God wills, will happen and so we can rest in his ability to provide and to glorify himself in and through our lives.

Q. Why are our lives more humble and hopeful when we live to glorify God? If you have experienced this as a reality in your life, please share with the group.