

Glorifying God Through Service

And through Loving Concern for Others

“Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name” (Psalm 29:2)

God’s holiness compels His people to be holy. The apostle Peter writes, “But as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.’” (1 Peter 1:15-16). And if we are God’s holy people, we exist to praise and glorify Him (1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 1:12). God’s perfect holiness calls us to be utterly devoted to His glorification!

Under the Law of Moses, when the High Priest entered the presence of God on the Day of Atonement, he would go from the “holy place” into the “most holy place,” or the “holy of holies.” In Hebrew grammar, superlatives are expressed by the repetition of a word. The “most holy place” is literally the “holy, holy place.” To enter the presence of God is “most holy.” But God Himself is even holier! Only He is magnified with *three* successive uses of the term “holy.” “And so, before His throne, seraphim declare, ‘Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; the whole earth *is* full of His glory!’” (Isaiah 6:3). And the living creatures in John’s vision of the throne of God, “do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’” (Revelation 4:8). God’s ultimate holiness evokes everlasting glorification from those who dwell eternally in His presence. Therefore, an overwhelming desire to honor and glorify God should characterize all who desire to live with Him forever.

GLORIFYING GOD WITH GOOD WORKS

It has been said that, “Holiness has love for its essence, humility for its clothing, the good of others as its employment, and the honor of God as its end.”¹ God is honored and glorified by the good things His children do for others! Jesus commands us to let others see our good works so that God will be glorified (Matthew 5:16). Our good works have the power to change the hearts and minds of those in the world, influencing them to seize opportunities provided by God to be saved by hearing and obeying the gospel (1 Peter 2:12).

Lackadaisical and half-hearted effort never leaves a positive impression. God’s holy people are to be “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). If our works are to glorify God, we must perform them with zeal. Enthusiasm in our labors conveys our love and devotion for the One who employs us. For this reason, we should cheer on one another to do all the good works that we can possibly accomplish in His name (Hebrews 10:24).

PRACTICAL WAYS TO GLORIFY GOD THROUGH WORK & SERVICE

- **Giving of our wealth to meet the needs of others** bears fruit to our God and causes Him to be glorified (Titus 3:14; Proverbs 19:17). We have been blessed to bless others!! God does not bestow on us the blessings of wealth or strength solely for our own benefit, but to be used for His glory! He gives more to givers so givers can give more! (2 Corinthians 9:8-13). Early Christians had a beautiful understanding of this truth! (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). When it comes to material wealth or possessions, if you have it, and a brother needs it, you should share it; this is the true expression of love (1 John 3:16-18).

¹ Nathanael Emmons, 18th century theologian

Most young people do not consider themselves wealthy or abundantly blessed with material things. But in comparison to most people in the world, the average American teen or young adult is well off. Helping the helpless in other regions of the world, and even here at home, is within the power of most of us. Consider how you spend your money and ask yourself if you couldn't do more to glorify God with it.

- **Visiting widows and caring for the fatherless.** The Scripture states that, "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). The widowed and the elderly often have unmet needs that will remain unmet and unknown unless someone cares enough to check in on them. Showing real concern for widows glorifies God because He Himself is concerned about them (Psalm 68:5; 146:9). Our willingness to align our interests with His reveals the exalted position He has in our lives.
- **Physical service.** Diligence in serving others is a hallmark of many great servants of God who lived to His glory. Consider Abraham, whose life of faith and service is a monument to God's trustworthiness as a promise keeper. Our "labor of love" in serving others must have the same kind of diligence in humble service that characterized Abraham (Hebrews 6:10-15; Genesis 18:1-8). If a wealthy, elderly man of faith like Abraham was willing to serve as a waiter, what should be the attitude of the young and strong? Surely the young who wish to glorify God can *at least* use their strength to do physical tasks that need doing, even if the tasks are menial and unappealing (e.g., carrying out the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:6, 10). But simple acts of physical service like mowing lawns, cleaning house, and baby-sitting can be a great blessing in the lives of others and bring glory to God.

GOD EMPOWERS YOU TO ENABLE YOU TO GLORIFY HIM

Picture two people this afternoon pondering whether to come help clean the church building Monday night. One is young and healthy and says, "O, I suppose I'll go. It might be fun to be with some of the other young people, and it'll be worth a few brownie points with the elders. Besides, I'm pretty good at that sort of thing; maybe I can give the rest a few pointers." So he comes. He mentions that he is there even though it meant having to miss his favorite TV show. He complains about the quality of the tools, and he criticizes the way things are planned. He talks on and on about his abilities and his experience, and in general exudes a spirit of vanity. But he works. He may even get more done than some others. Some employers may want such a man if they judge him solely by his efficiency or productivity. But God looks on the heart and takes the whole man into account. And his assessment is: *I have received no glory from this supposedly good deed of service, for it was not done in reliance on my power.*

But there is another person this afternoon who is planning his Monday night. He is older and has been quite ill lately—a good deal of pain and stiffness in the knees. There was a time when he worked hard in the church and loved every minute of it and never made a big to-do about inconvenience or sacrifice. "O," he thought to himself, "how I would love to help out on Monday night." So he prayed. And lo and behold, Monday morning there was no pain and no stiffness. So he came. With bells on. He did what he could with a rag and broom, and he did it well. But above all he exuded a joy and a sense of gratitude for life and strength that cheered everyone and pointed them to God. He knew that what strength he had was a precious gift of God, and his whole bearing and demeanor gave God the credit. That's what it means to let your light shine. (Adapted).

“God gets glory not from our heroic exertion but from our reliance upon his strength—when we serve as one who serves with the strength which God supplies” (John Piper). “If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:11b).

FINAL MOTIVATION

In Matthew 25, as Jesus spoke to those who would inherit eternal life of the good works they had done, He said, “inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40). When we do good for others, we are doing it for Jesus. Comprehending that one fact can change the most self-serving and self-absorbed of us into a living instrument dedicated to glorifying Almighty God through good works.