

Glorious

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What do you think of when you hear the word *glory*? Glory is often ascribed to great battles in history, triumphant moments of good over evil. Imposing structures, such as the Eiffel Tower or Golden Gate Bridge, are often called glorious. We also think of great moments in sports, like the Super Bowl, or inspiring stories of athletes who had to overcome obstacles in order to reach their glory. But glory is most aptly applied to God, the very One who is often forgotten in our conversations about glorious things. Even many Christians seem to have only a vague sense of God's glory, yet it is repeatedly mentioned in the scriptures:

- *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...glory and blessing...To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessings and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever"* (Revelation 5:12-13).
- *"Glory to God in the highest"* (Luke 2:14).
- *"To whom be the glory forevermore"* (Galatians 1:5).
- *"To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever"* (Ephesians 3:21).
- *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever"* (1 Timothy 1:17).

It is both our duty and privilege to glorify God, even in trials and tribulations (1 Peter 4:16). 1 Peter 4:11 says that in everything we do, including our speech and service, we are to glorify God through Jesus Christ. It is easy to forget just how much our examples can glorify God (or not). We do not always realize who is watching us, for better or worse – just as my good speech and humble service can glorify God, my evil speech and arrogance can drive someone away from Him.

Distracted By Lesser Glory

Do you ever get sidetracked in your thinking about glorious things? I will admit that I am often awestruck by nature – canyons, mountains, the ocean, even little things like birds, flowers, and bugs. There are a lot of *glorious* things in this world. There are moments and accomplishments, too, that can seem more glorious than they actually are. We get distracted by a promotion at work, a new toy in the garage, a vacation, or some other diversion. These things are all glorious to a degree, depending on how much we value them. My kids are a good reminder of how fickle (and easily impressed) people can be. Every new thing in life is their "favorite" – three minutes of viewing a new television show and they declare it is their favorite; a toy at the store that they do not even own is their favorite toy; whoever gives them gum at church is their favorite person. Do we see the things in our lives the same way? The most *glorious* battle is the one that was recently won, the most *glorious* sunrise is the one we are currently observing, the most *glorious* achievement is whatever we just accomplished. But do not forget that everything glorious in this world is really only temporary, fleeting, fragile, and small compared to God's glory. *"For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the flower of grass; the grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever"* (1 Peter 1:24).

I think this is what happens when people fall into the trap described in Romans 1:20-25. Even though this world's glory is only a passing reflection of God, many lose sight of that fact and worship and serve the creation rather than the Creator. We

become so enamored with nature, or worldly treasure, or fame, or our image, that we never recognize the infinitely more glorious God behind all of these things!

Raised In Glory

No matter how exciting the glorious things of this world are to us, they pale in comparison to the glory that will be revealed in the resurrection. For as much as we admire the sun, moon, stars, animals, and even our own bodies, they will be done away with at the end of time (2 Peter 3:10-12), and the saints will live for eternity in resurrected bodies that transcend the glories of this world:

“There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory” (1 Corinthians 15:40-43).