

To God be the Glory in the Church

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Introduction: The Self-Glorification of Churches.

- A. Too often, churches seek to glorify themselves instead of God.
 - 1. Name recognition, popularity, power, prestige, etc. is often sought (e.g., **Rev. 3:1-2**).
 - 2. Ironically, some brethren have “left the Lord out” in their pursuit of knowledge and have become “puffed up” (**John 5:39-40; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1**).
 - 3. In the church, the Lord ought to be given first place in honor, recognition, and glory (**Col. 1:18**).
- B. Whenever a church takes their eyes off of the Lord, they have forgotten the very purpose for their existence (**Eph. 3:11-12, 20-21**).
 - 1. Without our focus of God and the exaltation of His name, the church will become something other than it was originally intended.
- C. God is rightly displeased when He is not given the glory (e.g., **Acts 12:22-23**).
 - 1. Honor and praise that is due to God alone is often stolen by men today who crave the glory and adoration of men.
 - 2. As a congregation of God’s people, we should make every effort to give God the glory that is due is great and Almighty name! (**Rev. 4:11**).

I. Is Our Number One Goal to Glorify God?

- A. *“To Him be the glory in the church”* (**Eph. 3:20-21**)
 - 1. Whatever we accomplish as a church, we should give God the recognition, praise, and glory for enabling us by His power to do it!
 - 2. The church is to put forth a *united* effort to glorify God (**Rom. 15:5-6**).
- B. To God be the glory forever and ever (e.g., **Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:3-5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18**).
 - 1. Always we are to give God the glory – honoring Him by our worship and giving Him the praise for all our accomplishments and blessings.
 - 2. Giving thanks to the Lord is a major way we glorify Him (**Ps. 86:12**).

II. The Failure to Glorify God Leads to Many Problems.

- A. Pride and boasting
 - 1. Many rely on the glory or praise of men to boost their fragile ego or strengthen their self-esteem and confidence.
 - 2. We can crave this recognition from men too much and lose our desire to glorify God and this leads to sinful pride (**Mt. 6:1, 5; 23:5-7; cf. Jas. 4:6**).
 - 3. Pride and boasting develops with the false belief that it was our own labor, skill, and effort that brought our success (**1 Cor. 4:6-7; Rom. 12:3**).
 - 4. This can be a big turn off to non-Christians seeking the true and living God when we fail to give God the glory (e.g., **Rom. 2:17-24**)
- B. The exaltation of preachers.
 - 1. Some brethren boast of who baptized them (**1 Cor 1:11-17**).
 - 2. Too often, preachers are exalted when church growth occurs.
 - 3. Preachers are sometimes exalted in gospel meetings or lectureships.
 - 4. When preachers or certain brethren are exalted and glorified, their praise will mean more to you than God’s! (**John 12:42-43**).

- C. Competition among brethren (**Mark 9:33-35; 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27**).
1. Every Christian ought to be content with being “last of all and servant of all” as long as he is being used to accomplish God’s will to *His* glory.
 2. Some want “greatness” in the eyes of their brethren instead of greatness before God and a spirit of competition develops.
 3. Preachers ought to be able to relate to one another and help each other out and lift each other up, but too often are in competition (**Phil. 1:15-17**).
 4. This desire for vain glory leads to jealousy and strife (**Gal. 5:15, 26**).
- D. “Power struggles”
1. Failure to give God the glory leads to competition which leads to power struggles concerning who is “in charge” or “number one” (**3 John 9-10**).
 2. Power struggles occur when Christians become proud; forgetting who exactly is the “Chief Shepherd” to be glorified in the church (**1 Pet. 5:4-5**).

III. How is it Possible for a Church to Give God the Glory?

- A. By remembering that glorifying the greatness of God is more important than the particular role that each member fulfills (**1 Pet. 4:10-11**).
1. It is God’s grace, wisdom, strength, etc. that enables each one of us to do what we do, accomplish what we accomplish for the Lord.
 2. The goal of *every* member should be to glorify God in *all* things.
 3. How can I use my talent to glorify *God* or what can I do to bring glory to *His* name? (**Mat. 5:16**)
- B. By rejoicing in the talents *God* has given to each one by His grace to His glory.
1. When a member is honored or appreciated by the body, instead of envy or jealousy there should be great joy of his spiritual success (**1 Cor 12:26**).
 2. We can rejoice because we know that it is God’s grace at work in us!
 3. No one has room to boast, for it is by God’s grace we have the gifts or talents that we do (**Rom. 12:3-8**).
- C. By speaking more about what *God has done* than what man has done.
1. At Jerusalem, Paul emphasized what God had done through his ministry and the brethren gave glory to God, not Paul! (**Acts 21:19-20a**).
 2. To God be the glory great things *He* has done! (**cf. Heb. 13:20-21**).
 3. Let us dare not boast of anything else, but what the Lord has done through us (**Rom. 15:17-18; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10; Ps. 115:1**).
- D. Recognizing that it is God who increases our numbers as a church, not men.
1. Remember, elevating a preacher or someone else for “increasing the numbers” is a very carnal or unspiritual thing to do! (**1 Cor. 3:1-4, 21-23**).
 2. Faith, trust, and dependency on God are essential for genuine growth in the church (**1 Cor. 3:5-7; cf. Acts 11:21**).
- E. Believing that true glory is found only in the Lord.
1. Pride, boasting, competition, and vain glory will stop when we learn to concern ourselves only with God’s approval of us (**2 Cor 10:12-18**).
 2. Ultimately, no one can glory in himself (**Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 1:26-31**).
 3. Only through the cross of Christ can we glory, for it is the source of our forgiveness, righteousness before God, and our salvation (**Gal. 6:14**).

Conclusion: May we as the Lord’s Church Glorify God in Everything We Do.