

# THE GLORY OF GOD

## THE LOSS OF GOD'S GLORY

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- The glory of God is the sum of who he is...the sum of his attributes and divine nature
- The Hebrew word for glory is *kabod* which means weight or weightiness
- It refers to the fact that God's substance and value, like gold's weightiness
- Every aspect of God's character is immeasurably heavy and incomparably great...he is a true heavyweight in every one of his divine attributes
- The Greek word for glory is *doxa* which refers to the shining revelation of God's greatness...the emanation of his divine attributes
- It is the visible revelation of God's awesome presence, most often represented by blinding light
- It is what the shepherds saw when the angels announced Christ's birth (Luke 2:9)
- It is what blinded Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3)
- Everything we have studied about God in this course represents an expression of the glory of God
- God's goal or aim in the history of mankind from its beginning at creation to its climax in the new heavens and new earth is to glorify himself
- The glory of God is the final goal of all things...it's why he does all that he does
- The ultimate goal of God in human history is not the salvation of people but the exaltation of his glory
- "Not all men will be saved, but all will reflect the glory of God. Sinners now steal God's glory but must return it in Hell...The final goal is theocentric, not anthropocentric."<sup>1</sup>

**Romans 11:36** ~ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

**Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14** ~ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved...12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory...14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

- Because the glory of God is the goal of all of human history, then our response should be the same
- God's own greatest passion is for his own glory, so our passion must be for his glory as well
- Westminster Shorter Catechism: Question: What is the chief end of man? Answer: To glorify God and enjoy Him forever

**1 Corinthians 10:31** ~ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

- God's desire is for people who are absorbed in his surpassing glory, not who are seeking their own glory
- "The supreme goal of God in history from beginning to end is the manifestation of his great glory. Accordingly our duty is to bring our thoughts, affections, and actions into line with this goal. It should become our own goal. To join God in this goal is called glorifying God. The way we glorify God is first to delight in his glory more than in anything else and be grateful for it. Then as a natural result of this joy in God we experience freedom from selfishness and are moved to seek the good of others. Thus love becomes the chief means by which we join God in the open display of his glory, and accomplish his goal in history."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Curt Daniel, *The History and Theology of Calvinism*, 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-glory-of-god-as-the-goal-of-history>

- “This day, I saw clearly that I should never be happy, yeah, that God Himself could not make me happy, unless I could be in a capacity to ‘please and glorify Him forever.’ Take away this and admit me into all the fine havens that can be conceived of by men or angels, and I should still be miserable forever...Oh, to love and praise God more, to please Him forever! This my soul panted after and even now pants for while I write. Oh, that God might be glorified in the whole earth...Was still in a sweet and comfortable frame; and was again melted with desires that God might be glorified, and with longings to love and live to Him...And oh, I longed to be with God, to behold His glory and to bow in His presence!”<sup>3</sup>
- Sadly, however, the glory of God has fallen on hard times
- Many, even those in evangelical circles, have adopted a man-centered message and a low view of God
- Most churches fail to display the majesty and supremacy of God that their people so desperately need
- This loss of God’s glory can be seen in multiple ways:
  - Preaching that focuses on felt needs, political issues, and cultural fads, all of which fails to unveil the supremacy of God
  - A proliferation of feelings-oriented, me-focused songs that bypass the weighty content of God’s nature and works
  - Ungodly living on the part of many in the church such that it is increasingly difficult to tell the difference between the world and the church
  - A church that is largely indifferent to the weighty issue of God’s glory
- “The art of preaching, once reserved for men who were courageous couriers of God’s Word and whose highest aim was to uphold God’s greatness, has become in too many circles nothing more than the dispensing of a man-centered message intended to pamper a worldly congregation. Preaching that attempts to unveil the supremacy of God is rare. Seldom is His majesty presented as the deepest need of the human heart. As John Piper has observed, preachers no longer believe that people are starving for the greatness of God. God-centered preaching has been replaced with user-friendly rhetoric that veils His glory.”<sup>4</sup>
- “The most dishonoring and degrading conceptions of the rule and reign of the Almighty are now held almost everywhere. To countless thousands, even among those professing to be Christians, the God of the Scriptures is quite unknown...The ‘god’ of this twentieth century no more resembles the Supreme Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle of the midday sun. The ‘god’ who is now talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday School, mentioned in much of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so-called Bible Conferences is the figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin sentimentality. The heathen outside of the pale of Christendom form ‘gods’ out of wood and stone, while the millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a ‘god’ out of their own carnal mind. In reality, they are but atheists, for there is no other possible alternative between and absolutely supreme God, and no God at all. A ‘god’ whose will is resisted, whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity, and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits nought but contempt.”<sup>5</sup>

**Psalm 50:21** ~ These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes.

- Unfortunately, this complaint by God about an apostate Israel is now largely true for much of what takes place under the banner of Christianity
- What is needed today is a revived passion for God’s glory such that it is primary in all things
- We must have a high view of who he is and must be jealous for the honor of his name
- “God is looking for men in whose hands His glory is safe.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> David Brainerd, *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd*, ed. by Jonathan Edwards, 357-367.

<sup>4</sup> <https://onepassion.org/2015-4-21-show-me-your-glory/>

<sup>5</sup> A. W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 28-29.

<sup>6</sup> A. W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous*

- God is searching for those who will lay down their glory before his throne and give him the glory he alone deserves...in the end, all that matters is the glory of God
- He is looking for people who are absorbed in his surpassing glory and who are zealous for his fame
- If we fail to live for and put God's glory on display, we will experience empty, hollow lives and ministries
- But if we seek God's glory alone, our lives will be full and abundant, counting for time and eternity
- The great need of the hour is a robust understanding that our chief end, driving passion, and highest purpose is to display the glory of God!
- How do we recover what has been lost? How can we renew our fervor for the supremacy and majesty of God?

## THE FEATURES OF GOD'S GLORY

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### Intrinsic Glory/Glory Shown

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- God's intrinsic glory is the glory he possesses...the glory that is his simply because of who he is
- It includes all the divine characteristics that are innately his and all the divine perfections that are inherently his
- God and his glory cannot be separated...because his glory is who he is
- It is the whole of all his attributes, the sum total of the greatness of his divine being
- He is the only being who possesses intrinsic glory
- "For an example of what I mean by intrinsic, look around you at the created world. All the things that you see have characteristics that tell you what they are. The sun is bright, the sky is blue, and water is wet. We do not make them that way; that is what they are. One does not make the sun bright – it is bright. One does not make the sky blue – it is blue. One does not make water wet – it is wet. In all of these cases, the attribute is intrinsic to the object, inseparably bound to the essential nature of the thing."<sup>7</sup>
- This is the way it is with God's glory...it is essential to his being and cannot be disconnected from who he is
- His intrinsic glory cannot change...it cannot increase or decrease
- For this reason, we cannot give God more glory than he already possesses...we cannot add to or subtract from his intrinsic glory at all
- He is already, by his own nature, glorious!

**Psalm 29:3** ~ The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, The LORD is over many waters.

**Isaiah 33:21** ~ But there the majestic One, the LORD, will be for us A place of rivers and wide canals On which no boat with oars will go, And on which no mighty ship will pass—

**Acts 7:2** ~ And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran

**Ephesians 1:17** ~ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

- Jesus reveals that the members of the Trinity beheld each other's glory from all eternity

**John 17:5** ~ Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

**John 17:24** ~ Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

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<sup>7</sup> Steven Lawson, *Made in Our Image*, 155.

## *In Creation*

- God created the universe to externally reveal his internal glory
- All of creation serves as a theater upon which God's infinite glory can be displayed for all to see and contemplate
- "God erected the visible world as a monument of His glory, a theatre for the display of his adorable perfections."<sup>8</sup>

**Psalm 19:1** ~ The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

**Psalm 104** (especially v. 31)

**Isaiah 43:7** ~ Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

**Romans 1:19-20** ~ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

**Revelation 4:9-11** ~ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

- "Consider the size of [the world], the variety and complexity of it; think of the nearly five thousand millions who populate it, and of the vast sky above it. What puny figures you and I are, by comparison with the whole planet on which we live! Yet what is this entire mighty planet by comparison with God? 'He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Is 40:22). The world dwarfs us all, but God dwarfs the world. The world is his footstool, above which he sits secure. He is greater than the world and all that is in it, so that all the feverish activity of its bustling millions does not more to affect him than the chirping and jumping of grasshoppers in the summer sun does to affect us. Behold your God!"<sup>9</sup>

## *In the Garden*

- God's glory was present from the very beginning...he likely manifested himself to Adam and Eve in some visible way
- When God wanted to reveal himself to certain people, he often did so through his Shekinah glory
- God revealed his glory to them so that they might recognize him as the glorious God he is and give him the worship he is due

**Genesis 3:8** ~ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

## *On Mt. Sinai*

**Exodus 33:18** ~ Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

- It is intrinsic glory which Moses had in mind when he asked to see God's glory
- Significantly, the only thing that would ease Moses' burden in leading the people and would give him hope that God would go with them is a deep and robust awareness of God's intrinsic glory

<sup>8</sup> Ebenezer Pemberton, quoted in Curt Daniel, *History and Theology of Calvinism*, 254.

<sup>9</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 87.

- It was an awareness of the whole of His attributes, a glimpse of the greatness of his divine being
- God responded to Moses and promised to do two things for Moses to confirm his willingness to go up with his people (Ex 33:19):

1. “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you” – show Moses a portion of his glory (Ex 33:20-23)
2. “I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you” – to speak to Moses a portion of his glory (Ex 34:1-8)

**Exodus 34:6-7** ~ Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

- What Moses saw was less important than what he heard
  - The second thing God promised to do for him (proclaim the name of the Lord) was far more important than the first thing God promised to do for him (make His glory pass before him)
  - This tells us that God’s name is synonymous with His glory
  - Thus, in Ex 34:6-7, God provided Moses an auditory description of his glory rather than a visual one
  - The Lord showed Moses his glory by giving him a comprehensive description of his nature
  - It was the character and glory of God that would anchor Moses in his responsibilities and the attributes of God that would enable him to carry on
- This shows that it is more important for us to have an understanding of God’s glorious attributes than it is to have an encounter with God’s glorious presence
- The only thing that anchors us in the troubles of life is a right view of the glory of God
  - It is the knowledge of God that keeps us anchored as we minister in his name and live the Christian life
  - That’s why the knowledge of God is not a purely academic or intellectual subject; rather, it is foundational if we desire to know Him, serve Him, and become like Him
  - Although few would list a high view of our glorious God as one of their greatest needs, Moses shows us how fundamental the grandeur of God is to our lives
- “People are starving for the greatness of God. But most of them would not give this diagnosis of their troubled lives. The majesty of God is an unknown cure...The greatness and glory of God are relevant. It does not matter if surveys turn up a list of perceived needs that does not include the supreme greatness of the sovereign God of grace. That is the deepest need. Our people are starving for God.”<sup>10</sup>

### *In the Tabernacle*

**Exodus 40:34-38** ~ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; 37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. 38 For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

- The tabernacle included the holy of holies...which contained the ark of the covenant...on which was the mercy seat, where the high priest sprinkled blood once a year as an atonement for the sins of the people
- It was on the mercy seat that the Shekinah glory of God dwelt with his people
- Thus, God’s presence was manifest by his glory in the tabernacle

<sup>10</sup> John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 9, 11.

## *In the Temple*

- The temple was the permanent structure built to replace the tabernacle
- It was built to glorify God and remind them of his presence with them

**1 Kings 8:10-11** ~ It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

- Sadly, the people did not honor him as God nor did they give him the glory he deserved

**Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19** ~ Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD...18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. 19 When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD'S house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.

- As God's glory departed, it was evident that was abandoning his city because of its sin
- Written over God's people was the word *Ichabod* which means "the glory has departed"

## *In Christ*

- Christ is the incarnate expression of the glory of God

**John 1:14** ~ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**Hebrews 1:3** ~ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

**James 2:1** ~ My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

- The disciples were eyewitnesses to the glory of Christ

**Matthew 17:2** ~ And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

**2 Peter 1:16-18** ~ For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

## *In the Church*

- God's glory is presently seen in his church, the body of believers purchased by Christ

**2 Corinthians 4:6-7** ~ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

**Ephesians 3:21** ~ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

## *In the Future*

- There will be an unparalleled manifestation of the glory of God in the future, when Christ returns and establishes his kingdom

**Matthew 24:30** ~ And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

- The new heavens and earth will be full of God's glory

**Revelation 21:23** ~ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

## Ascribed Glory/Glory Received

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- Ascribed glory is what we give God in response to a proper understanding of his intrinsic glory
- God reveals his glory externally to us so that we may return it to him in worship
- This is what it means to glorify and give glory to God...we ascribe to God what he reveals to us about himself
- We cannot add to God's intrinsic glory, but we can glorify him by praising him as we live a godly life
- The act of giving glory to God means to ascribe greatness to his name...to honor him for who he is

**Psalm 29:1-2** ~ Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array.

**Psalm 86:12** ~ I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Your name forever.

**Psalm 96:8** ~ Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name; Bring an offering and come into His courts.

**1 Timothy 1:17** ~ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

- “As God's children, it is our calling – and our wonderful privilege – to honor Him who reigns as the King over all, who alone is glorious, and who alone is worthy to receive the glory He alone deserves. We ascribe glory to God by the way we live our lives. The more our lives conform to the image of His Son, the more glory we give to Him. In all that we say and in all that we do, we are to glorify our heavenly Father.”<sup>11</sup>

## The Relationship Between Intrinsic and Ascribed Glory

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- God's greatest passion is for himself and for his own glory
- To say it another way, the chief end of God is to glorify God and enjoy himself forever
- “The ultimate foundation for our passion to see God glorified is his own passion to be glorified. God is central and supreme in his own affections. There are no rivals for the supremacy of God's glory in his own heart. God is not an idolater. He does not disobey the first and great commandment. With all his heart and soul and strength and mind he delights in the glory of his manifold perfections. The most passionate heart for God in all the universe is God's heart.”<sup>12</sup>

**Exodus 14:4, 17-18** ~ Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and **I will be honored** through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.” And they did so...As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; **and I will be honored** through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, **when I am honored** through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen.”

**1 Samuel 12:20-22** ~ Samuel said to the people, “Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the Lord will not abandon His people **on account of His great name**, because the Lord has been pleased to make you **a people for Himself**.”

<sup>11</sup> Lawson, *Made in Our Image*, 161.

<sup>12</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 15.

**2 Samuel 7:23** ~And what one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem **for Himself** as a people **and to make a name for Himself**, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Your land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, from nations and their gods?

**2 Kings 19:34** ~ For I will defend this city to save it **for My own sake** and for My servant David's sake.

**Psalms 106:7-8** ~ Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; They did not remember Your abundant kindnesses, But rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them **for the sake of His name**, That He might make His power known.

**Isaiah 43:6-7** ~ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

**Isaiah 43:25** ~ I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions **for My own sake**, And I will not remember your sins.

**Isaiah 48:9-11** ~ **For the sake of My name** I delay My wrath, And **for My praise** I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off. "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. **"For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.**

**Isaiah 49:3** ~ He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom **I will show My glory.**"

**Jeremiah 13:11** ~ For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me,' declares the Lord, **'that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise and for glory;** but they did not listen.'

**Ezekiel 20:14** ~ But I acted **for the sake of My name**, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had brought them out.

**Ezekiel 36:22-23, 32** ~ Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but **for My holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight... **I am not doing this for your sake,**" declares the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

**Romans 9:17** ~For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, **to demonstrate My power** in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

**Romans 9:22-23** ~ What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so **to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy**, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

**Ephesians 1:4-6, 12, 14** ~ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved...to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be **to the praise of His glory**...who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, **to the praise of His glory.**

- How does this square with 1 Corinthians 13:5 (love does not seek its own)? → It is right for God to seek his own honor and be jealous for his own glory because he is infinitely greater than anything else
- God delights in what is most delightful; thus, his greatest delight is in himself
- "Someone may object: 'Doesn't this make God selfish?' In humans it is selfish to be centered around oneself and one's own glory. But it is not wrong for God, for God is God. It is wrong for us for the simple reason that we are not God. The ultimate purpose of man is God. And the ultimate purpose of God is God."<sup>13</sup>
- Thus, if God's aim is for his own glory, then our greatest aim must also be to make much of him and declare his glory

<sup>13</sup> Daniel, *History and Theology of Calvinism*, 255.