

MADE FOR HIS GLORY

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

God's Glory—His matchless beauty, goodness, and majesty—is revealed through the worship of His people, the wonder of His creation, and ultimately through the revelation of His Son.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGES:**

Psalm 96; 2 Corinthians 3–4

+ **SETTING:**

Before God created the heavens and the earth, God's glory was manifested and praised without measure and without end. Through His creation, God made a stage and an audience for His glory to fill. Giving God glory is our highest purpose as human beings. We were made for this—to witness God's glory and testify to it! The entire Bible, and notably the Psalms, helps us to direct our attention and our praises to our Creator God, especially as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

DAY 1

READ:

Psalm 96

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Psalm 96:1-10

NOTES

It's often said that worship is more than singing, which is true. To worship, after all, means to ascribe worth—and in the Christian faith, to declare the greatness of God over all others. Correctly understood, worship is the defining posture of our lives, shaping the way we live moment to moment. By definition, then, worship has to be about more than singing. But even against the backdrop of a comprehensive view of worship, it needs to be said: Worship is more than singing, but it is not less.

God's people are expected to sing praises to the Lord. We sing as a confession and declaration, as a reminder and affirmation, of God's greatness, splendor, and majesty (Ps. 96:6). We sing to one another of His wondrous works and to proclaim His salvation for all to hear (Ps. 96:2-3). Of course, we know the fullest depiction of His salvation came when Christ entered our world, died for our sins, and rose again for our eternal life and victory, which He will come again to bestow upon all who believe in Him.

In this, our singing isn't meant simply for our benefit. We don't sing only for ourselves. And although He is the object of our worship, we don't sing only for God. We also sing for the good of the whole world (Col. 3:16). Our singing to the Lord is a powerful way for the story of God's plan of redemption to be told throughout the earth. Through our worship, we declare the greatness of the God who is greater than all others. Our singing should be an invitation to people from every people, language, tribe, and nation to join in celebrating God's wondrous works and His splendor and majesty. We worship as a way to fulfill the mission Christ gave us—to go into all the world and make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). We worship so that through our worship more worshipers will emerge.

How can your worship reflect a desire to see more people worship Christ?

DAY 2

READ:

Psalm 19

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Psalm 19:1-4

NOTES



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #27: GOD'S GLORY

The glory of God is His manifest work, the way He represents His perfect character through His activity. It also refers to His excellent reputation and is given as one of the reasons we are to praise His name. Another sense of the word is the inherent beauty of God, the unbearable brightness and beauty of His being as He radiates His own attributes and characteristics for all to witness. The Scriptures speak of humanity as having “fallen short” of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23) because we have rejected the purpose for which God created us—to glorify Him.

The Bible’s narrative can seem so far away from our experiences today. In the Scriptures, we read of God acting in ways we don’t immediately recognize in our own lives or speaking to specific people directly in ways that we don’t see today. This can create a disconnect for us: Does God still speak? Is He really present? Does He have any interest in us and this world at all? When left to linger, this disconnect can grow to undermine our desire to worship God at all.

The truth is God is not silent. He is always speaking, always revealing His nature, character, power, and will, even if we don’t hear, see, or understand clearly. The psalmist recognized this truth and saw it as cause for celebration. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” he wrote (Ps. 19:1). Everything, from the human body in all its complexity to the intricate design of the natural world to the unfathomable beauty of distant galaxies, tells us something about God. God’s “invisible attributes ... his eternal power and divine nature” are manifested everywhere in His creation because God wanted all people to perceive something of who He is, even if He is beyond our comprehension (Rom. 1:19-20).

When we wonder if God is speaking, all we need to do is look at the world around us. Through creation we can see that God is communicating His existence to us. His creativity is on display. His love of beauty is plain to us. His orderly nature and power are there for us to see. Every moment, everything in this world speaks of His existence and His care for this world, even if only in a whisper. And our natural response as one of God’s created beings, not to mention His special image-bearers, ought to be to join the heavens in declaring the glory of the Creator God.

How will knowing that God always makes Himself known change how you worship?

DAY 3

READ:

Psalm 96

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Psalm 96:11-13

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From Genesis 3 forward, the Bible's narrative is marked by a sense of anticipation. God makes promises to people throughout history, promises that all build toward one shared fulfillment in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. But the anticipation doesn't stop there. It keeps building toward another promise, the promise of the final restoration of all things and the final establishment of God's kingdom in all of its fullness (see Matt. 6:10).

So what does that have to do with praise or worship? Wherever we see this sense of anticipation spring forward in the Bible, as it often does in the Psalms, it frequently turns to praise. Psalm 96, with its call to declare the splendor and majesty of God, starts by looking at the present moment, looking at who God is and what He has already done for His people. This is right and fitting. When we have experienced the grace of God in our lives, when we have seen and experienced His work in saving and sustaining us day by day, how can we not praise Him? Yet the psalmist's praise didn't stop with what God had already done. His praise pointed forward, anticipating something greater from the God who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Creation declares God's glory right now (Ps. 19:1) but does not do so as fully as it was meant to because of the curse of sin. Creation was meant to be filled to the brim with the celebration of God, but its praise is muted to a whisper. Yet we also worship looking forward, as the psalmist anticipated, waiting for the day when those whispers transform to shouts of joy (Ps. 96:12). That day is not here yet. But we can praise God now full of anticipation for the day it arrives, when Christ returns and makes all things new.

What should it look like for you to live and worship with this sense of anticipation for Christ's second coming?

DAY 4

READ:

Isaiah 40

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Isaiah 40:18-31

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The Bible talks frequently about why we should worship God and that we should praise Him only. But why? Why Him and no one else? In pluralistic societies, the exclusivity that the Bible presents seems outdated, if not offensive. After all, shouldn't people be free to worship whomever and whatever they want? But this question, as posed, is often the wrong one. The issue is less a question of freedom and more a recognition of worthiness.

Human beings can and do worship many different things, even apart from their religious beliefs, including money, sex, power, and pleasure. But these gods, like the idols of wood, gold, and silver the Israelites pursued for generations—"gods" made in their own image, with no life, power, or voice—are hardly worthy of praise. They cannot compare to the one true God, the God who made everything, who is enthroned above the heavens and the earth (Isa. 40:22). The one God has the power to reduce kings and princes—the powerful—to nothing, and He is the everlasting God who gives strength to the weak and the powerless (40:29).

In Isaiah 40:25, God asks who is His equal? Who could possibly compare to Him? When we look at the world around us, when we see what God has made, when we recognize the creativity and power and beauty before us that only comes from Him, the answer is clear:

No one! There is no one like our God.

There is nothing like Him, and no one is worthy of comparison. No one and nothing else is worthy to be praised. Only God, the maker of all things, whose work can be seen all around us, the only one to give His Son to rescue us from our sins—only He is worthy.

What in your life draws your attention away from God as the only one worthy of worship?

DAY 5

READ:

2 Corinthians 3–4

FOCAL PASSAGE:

2 Corinthian 4:1-6

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There's no question the world today doesn't look the way it should. It doesn't fit the "very good"-ness of God's creative design. It doesn't fully glorify Him the way it was intended, and neither do we. When we look at the world, when we look at the actions of the people God made—including, sadly, many Christians—it's easy to lose heart as darkness threatens to overcome us.

But even when we're seeing things at their worst, we need not lose hope. The proclamation of God's glory in the world might be barely a whisper, but creation still proclaims it (Ps. 19:1). Professing Christians may act deceitfully and distort the Word of God (2 Cor. 4:2), but God's Word stands true, even if the people who come in His name do not. People may be blind to the truth, blinded by the "god" of this world (4:4). But Christ is able to shine light into the darkness, just as He did in the beginning, and give sight to those whose minds have been blinded to the truth of the gospel—the light that saves sinners from the pervasive darkness of sin and death (4:6).

Darkness can never overcome this light. Jesus—the light of the world (John 8:12)—is always able to cast out the darkness, even in the darkest of hearts and circumstances. So we can continue to do what God has called us to as people created in God's image and by faith made part of God's new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). We go into the world and share the good news of the gospel, full of confidence that God will do what only He can.

Let us believe God's Word is true and that He still does miracles. Let us look for and respond to the evidence in people's hearts and actions that God has said, "Let light shine out of darkness," just as He did in the beginning (2 Cor. 4:6; Gen. 1:3).

Who are you praying will come to faith in Jesus as the light of the world?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Since the divine nature is invisible and always remains so, it is seen for what it is in the humanity of Jesus Christ which shines with divine light and sends out its rays."¹

—Theodoret of Cyr (c. 393-457)

GROUP

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INTRODUCTION

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #27: GOD'S GLORY

The glory of God is His manifest work, the way He represents His _____ character through His activity. It also refers to His excellent reputation and is given as one of the reasons we are to praise His name. Another sense of the word is the inherent beauty of God, the unbearable brightness and beauty of His being as He radiates His own _____ and characteristics for all to witness. The Scriptures speak of humanity as having “fallen short” of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23) because we have rejected the purpose for which God created us—_____ .

POINT 1: God’s glory is revealed through the worship of His people (Ps. 96:1-10).

We are to declare God’s glory as the most excellent _____ who is greater than all other gods. Compared to Yahweh, who made the heavens, all other “gods” should be regarded as _____ .



What are some ways our worship of God matters in this world?

In our leading all of creation in worship, we should confess _____ who God is by celebrating His _____ .

POINT 2: God’s glory is revealed through the testimony of His creation (Ps. 96:11-13).

_____ revelation helps us understand the purpose and proclamation of _____ revelation.

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“Let ev’ry kindred, ev’ry tribe
On this terrestrial ball, To
Him all majesty ascribe, And
crown Him Lord of all; To
Him all majesty ascribe, And
crown Him Lord of all.”²

—John Rippon (1751-1836)



What does it say about God that He reveals Himself in different ways, such as in nature and in literature like the psalms?

God's creation points to the glory of the Creator, though its message is muffled due to the _____ of humanity. But one day the praises of creation will ring loud and clear when the Lord comes again to _____ the earth and set everything _____ .

POINT 3: God's glory is revealed through the proclamation of His Son (2 Cor. 4:1-6).

The gospel radiates more clearly when believers _____ and _____ the truth.



What are some ways we can detract from God's glory in the gospel?

The proclamation of the gospel, coupled with God's _____ of calling _____ out of the darkness of our hearts, helps us to see our salvation is all about God's glory in Jesus Christ, God's Son.

MY RESPONSE

Because the Son of God came to earth so that we might come to know and experience the glory of God, we live as a sent people, telling others about our glorious Savior, Jesus Christ.

- **HEAD:** How will the knowledge of God's glory in Christ shape your outlook on life in this world?
- **HEART:** What earthly delights and desires do you need to repent of so you can worship the Lord?
- **HANDS:** How will you proclaim Jesus as Lord through your words and actions this week?

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VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"God ... did not leave us in absolute ignorance. For the knowledge of God's existence has been implanted by Him in all by nature. This creation, too, and its maintenance, and its government, proclaim the majesty of the Divine nature."³

-John of Damascus (c. 675-749)