

ENTER THE CONFLICT

The battle that we face as Christians is part of a combat that has existed for thousands of years. It is a struggle for glory. Not our glory, but God's. Everything that is created exists with the purpose of pleasing and glorifying God.

➤ **Rom. 11:36**

➤ **Rev. 4:11**

God is radically God-centered. He has no other gods before God. He delights supremely in Himself and the display of His glory. All else in creation must undergird and support this reality. What do each of the following verses teach about God's purpose for Himself?

➤ **Exodus 34:14**

➤ **1 Chronicles 29:11**

➤ **Job 42:2**

➤ **Psalms 24:7-10**

➤ **Psalms 115:1-3**

➤ **Psalms 135:6**

➤ **Isaiah 42:8**

➤ **Isaiah 46:10**

➤ **Isaiah 48:11**

What one thing do all of these verses teach combined? **God is fundamentally committed to one thing – His glory, in which He spends the energy of His sovereign**

power to establish and bring about. In other words, God does all things in the universe for the purpose of displaying His glory.

So what is the glory of God, and why is He so committed to it?

- **In the OT:** (kabod, i.e. *ichabod* = “no glory”) - A Hebrew word which means, “glory.” It comes from the root which means “heaviness, weightiness.” This means that God is weighty, He is of some significance. Who He is in His nature matters greatly.
- **In the NT:** (doxa, i.e. “doxology”) – A Greek word that makes reference to His fame, splendor, name, honor, and recognition. It refers to giving God what is properly due Him, because of who He is.

In other words, when you study God, you see that He has certain characteristics or attributes. This is what gives Him weight. Simply, God has weight because of who He is. He intends for us to respond appropriately to His significance.

Consider Moses’ plea in **Exodus 33:18**, “**I pray Thee, show me Thy glory**” and write down how God responds in **34:1-7**:

In other words, the answer to Moses’ plea to see God in His glory was answered when He proclaimed His attributes. **Simply, the glory of God is the sum of who He is in His nature.**

➤ **1 Samuel 15:29**

Glory sums up God so much that it is a synonym for His name. Names in the Bible are not terms to designate the identity of a person so much as to define their **character**. Thus the glory of God describes the **attributes** of God – the totality of His **Person**.

Each attribute of God upon something weighs it down. Its significance is felt. If He were to expose us to the full blaze of His glory, we would be crushed under the weight of it. The point is that God wants who He is to impact you and I.

Thus we are ready to understand a definition of glorifying God:

**TO GLORIFY GOD MEANS TO APPROPRIATELY RESPOND TO HIS
CHARACTER SO THAT WE LIVE ALL AREAS OF OUR LIVES FOR HIS
PLEASURE.**

To say it another way, we are to think, speak, and act in light of who God is so that His worth is expressed through us. Yet another way, to express the worth of God by living consistent with the character of God for the pleasure of God.

Practically speaking, we should evaluate our lives to see if we are properly responding to God's attributes.

Attribute of God	Proper Response	God glorified as:
Holiness		
Sovereignty		
All-powerful		
All-present		
Wisdom		
Faithfulness		
Grace		
Mercy		
Justice		
Self-sufficiency		
All-knowing		
Unchangeableness		
Goodness		

In addition to this, God never tells men to be silent in their praise, or to focus on someone or something else. He is never shy or bashful with regard to what He has done. Rather He delights in manifesting Himself, and the entire world enjoying Him. He calls us to remember His greatness and His great deeds, and live in the light of them.

For God to not delight supremely in Himself as the greatest source of all delight and worth would be to thwart His own purposes and become the Ultimate Idolater. This is true because God would be admitting that there is something or someone in the universe more worthy of honor and glory in the universe than Himself. It would then be wrong for God to not worship such a One as this. But as it is, there is none.¹

➤ **Isaiah 44:7-8**

As John Piper says,

God must love and delight in His beauty and perfection above all things. For *us* to do this in front of the mirror is the essence of vanity. . . Is not the essence of righteousness to place supreme value on what is supremely valuable, with all of the just actions to follow? And isn't the opposite of righteousness to set our highest affections on the things

¹ At first this might sound hard to accept, because it seems arrogant and proud. Biblically, pride is a sin because it is the attempt of man to usurp a role and honor that he does not deserve, since it is reserved for God alone. Many of the words used in the Bible to speak of the exaltation of God positively are used to also speak of men negatively, who attempt to exalt themselves in God's place. The following examples are words used to refer to men exalting themselves also used by God to refer to Him exalting Himself: - READ Isa. 23:8-9 and COMPARE Exod. 15:7; - READ Ps. 99:2 and COMPARE Deut. 8:11-14.

of little or no worth, with all the unjust actions that follow? Thus the righteousness of God is the infinite zeal and joy and pleasure that He has in what is supremely valuable, namely His own perfection and worth. And if He were to ever act contrary to this eternal passion for His own perfections he would be unrighteous, He would be an idolater.²

In other words, **God has a passion for His own glory**. God's creation is *likewise* to have a passion for God's glory. For man to not make it his ambition to glorify God, but put something in the place of God is idolatry. This is true also for man. God created us for one purpose – His glory.

➤ **Isa. 43:7**

➤ **1 Cor. 10:31**

The purpose of your existence is to be fulfilled in glorifying God. If you do not glorify God, then you will suffer immeasurable frustration because your life makes no sense.

We know that all created things initially fulfilled their purpose (Gen. 1:31), and then the conflict began. Satan, the archangel of God, rebelled and sought to have the glory himself (Ezek. 28:11-17; Isa. 14:12-15), for which he was expelled from heaven. Since that very day, he has been engaged in assault on God, His purposes, and Kingdom. That day began the war for glory.

Wanting to pervert God's plan for the rest of His creation, the devil launched a full assault against the head of God's creation – man

➤ **Gen. 1:28**

➤ **Gen. 3:1-7**

➤ **Gen. 3:15**

➤ **Rom. 3:23**

Satan had succeeded in making man an enemy of God, and corrupting the purpose for his existence. This is the condition in which all men find themselves. What do the following verses teach about unbelieving man and the resulting status of his relationship to God?

➤ **Psa. 58:3**

² John Piper, *The Pleasures of God* (Portland: Multnomah, 1991), 39.

- **Psa. 143:2**
- **Prov. 20:9**
- **Ecc. 7:20**
- **Jer. 17:9**
- **Acts 26:16-18**
- **Rom. 3:10-18**
- **Rom. 3:23**
- **Rom. 8:7-8**
- **2 Cor. 4:3-4**
- **Eph. 2:1-3**
- **Eph. 4:17-19**

Not only has man rebelled against God, but also God has declared WAR on man. This is a war that he will not win. He will face the full fury of the wrath of God against him for his sin. Consequently, man needs a Savior, which God provided in Jesus Christ.

- **Isa. 53:10-11**
- **Rom. 3:25-26**
- **Rom. 15:8-9**

Thus, when God saves us, He puts away the enmity against us, having satisfied His wrath on Jesus. As a result, we have peace with God, and are no longer at war with Him:

➤ **Rom. 5:1**

➤ **2 Cor. 5:18-19**

➤ **Col. 1:19-22**

Christ died because we did not glorify God. When He redeems us, it is so that He might get glory once again:

➤ **Eph. 1:3-14**

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with **every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 **He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 **TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

7 In Him **we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

9 **He made known to us the mystery of His will**, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

11 also **we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit** of promise,

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**.

Bold = the spiritual blessings in Christ

Underlined = How the blessings come to us

ALL CAPS = THE PURPOSE FOR IT ALL.

➤ **2 Tim. 2:10**

Now in Christ, the life of the believer is driven by a single purpose, which is also God's purpose: Glorifying God. Salvation is a return to this purpose. The Christian is again in a battle for glory, but this time for God's glory. The conflict is known as sanctification – the striving to conquer those enemies that continue to assault God's glory. This is an ever-maturing process of which the following verses speak:

➤ **2 Cor. 3:18**

➤ **2 Cor. 5:9**

➤ **Gal. 5:16-23**

➤ **Phil. 2:12-13**

➤ **1 Thess. 2:10-12**

This combat will continue until the Lord Himself returns to destroy His enemies and establish His rule:

➤ **Rev. 19:11-16**

➤ **Psalm 7**

At this time He will also remove those remaining corruptions within us that do not please Him. The victory is certain. Then we will perfectly be restored to the purpose for which God made us:

➤ **Phil. 3:20-21**

➤ **1 John 3:1-3**

➤ **Jude 24-25**

Until then, we are engaged in the conflict. If you are not in Christ, then you are not even in the battle, but you are the enemy. If so, you must believe the Gospel and enter into the conflict.

➤ **Rev. 14:6-7**

➤ **Rev. 16:9**

If you are a Christian, how are you doing in the battle? Are you a constant casualty? Are you asleep on the battlefield? Are you fighting the right enemies? Do you know your enemy? Do you understand the strategy? Can you use your weapons correctly? Are you winning the war within? Decide today to declare war against God's enemies and fight for His glory.

For further study

Jay Adams, *Winning the War Within*, Revised ed. (Woodruff: Timeless Texts), 1989.

John MacArthur, *God: Coming Face to Face with His Majesty* (Santa Clarita: Grace to You).

John Piper, *Desiring God* (Portland: Multnomah), 1986.

_____, *God's Passion for His Glory* (Wheaton: Crossway Books), 1998.

_____, *The Pleasures of God* (Portland: Multnomah), 1991.