

A Christian's Most Important Priority

In the 1970s, I remember a teacher who emphasized the priorities of every Christian. He had created a chart that listed a believer's most important priority, the next important priority, the third one, fourth one, and so on. The concept of a Christian's priorities was sweeping the church like a wave because believers and churches had ignored that truth, and it was needed. For married couples, the relationship with one's spouse is more important than that with their children, and the children come before activities at their church. Then comes the extended family followed by, neighbors, work, and the community.

So, let me ask a question, "What is your most important priority as a Christian?" As I was preparing this message, I read 1 Corinthians 7:32-35. It hints at the answer. The passage is a very seriously challenging one for every Christian, whether we are married or single. In this passage, Paul tells us that it is better to be a single Christian because then we are freer to be more concerned about the things of the Lord. In sharp contrast, Paul says that married couples because their interests are divided tend to be less committed to the things of the Lord. They not only have their commitment to the Lord; they are also striving to please their spouse. So, what is a Christian's most important priority?"

The answer is not our spouse, our children, the church, our extended family, the neighbors, work, or the community. Our most important priority is our God. Therefore, I want to share a few verses about the glory of God.

The first passage is Revelation 4:2-11. It gives us a glimpse into the throne room in heaven. The apostle John writes,

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third

creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."



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, 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,

“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.”

Revelation 4:2-11 (NASB)

We are told that God the Father is seated on a throne. Twenty-four elders and four living beings surround His throne. We are told the four living beings are repeatedly saying, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME,” all day and night. They never stop giving glory to God. Now it is important to realize that when these angels announce that God is holy, they are not making God more holy or more glorified. They are not increasing God’s glory. No one can add glory to God. God is already intrinsically holy. God is already intrinsically love, intrinsically good, and intrinsically merciful. That is His character. God is already completely and perfectly glorious. We cannot add or take away from His glory.

Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 6:3 teaches us that the inanimate creation already reflects His glory! Psalm 19:1 states,

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

The design and grandeur of the universe screams of God’s incomprehensible, creative intellect, magnificent power, and unexplainable majesty. The universe reveals His glory. Isaiah 6:3 adds this,

And one called out to another and said,
“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory.”

Isaiah 6:3 (NASB)

Isaiah says the whole earth is full of His glory. The message of Scripture is that all of the invisible and inanimate creation reflects God’s intrinsic glory!

So, why are we told that the angels give God glory if they cannot add to His glory? There are four reasons. The first reason is given to us in the Revelation passage that we just read. Revelation 4:11 says that God is worthy to receive glory. The angels say, “Worthy are You!” Acts 7:2 says Yahweh is the “God of glory.” So, God deserves to receive our praises because He is the only God of all creation and He is full of glory. So, the first reason we are to give praises to God is that He is the God of glory!

The second reason we are to give God praise is that we are commanded to do it. Psalm 148:13 encourages us to praise our God.

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For His name alone is exalted;
His glory is above earth and heaven.
Psalm 148:13 (NASB)

This verse packs everything together. It commands us to praise God. It tells us that He alone is to be exalted. It also tells us that His glory is so great that it is above the earth and heaven. He has intrinsic glory. A third reason to acknowledge His glory is that it is a sin to not give Him glory, since He is the most glorious being that exists. Satan does not want God’s glory to be recognized. A fourth reason to give God praises is that we love Him and want to do it. So, we are to give glory to God because He is worthy, because we are commanded to do this, because we should praise Him, and because we love Him.

So, in what sense do we give Him glory? We give glory to God in the sense that we recognize and praise Him for His glorious attributes. Notice the twenty-four elders worship God saying, “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.” He is worthy of our recognition and praises for His intrinsic glory.

Do All To The Glory of God. So, what is the priority of all the invisible and visible living creation? To give God glory! What is your most important priority? What is my most important priority? It is not my spouse, my children, my church, my extended family, my neighbors, my work, or my community. My highest priority is given to us in 1 Corinthians 10:31. It says,

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

Paul urges every believer to do all to the glory of God. The Greek word for “all” is *pas*. It means, “all, each, every, or whole.” It includes everything and leaves out nothing! In everything we do, we are to do it so that God is glorified. The Greek word *poieo* for “do” is an action word. It refers to something we do internally and externally. The goal is to give God glory. We do this as we recognize His glory and reflect it to others. But how can we do this? That is the purpose of this study! I am going to give you ten things you can “do” that gives God glory!

1) Believe or Trust in God. The first thing we can “do” to give glory to God is to believe in Jesus Christ. Every true believer has already done this. Every true Christian has already given God the Father glory at the moment of saving faith. The Father planned our salvation before the foundation of the world. Christ volunteered to be the vicarious atonement for our sins (Hebrews 10:8-10). God the Father planned the time of His arrival and eventual death according to Daniel 9:24-26. God the Father planned that He would be virgin born according to Isaiah 7:14 and be born in Bethlehem according to Micah 5:2. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 prophesied of His life and sacrifice for our sins. God the Father had that prophecy written for us. That was part of His plan. Ephesians 1:3-14 reveals that God the Father predestined the elect to be saved. He planned that we would become like Christ. He planned to adopt us as sons and daughters and give us an inheritance in heaven, and shower us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. So, when someone responds to the gospel and believes in Christ, they give glory to the Father because He is completely trustworthy. That is a glori-

ous attribute of God.

Then as we continue to grow in our faith and trust, we give God the Father more glory. Romans 4:19-20 is about Abraham. Before we read the passage, we should remember that God had given Abraham a promise of a great nation. But he had to wait twenty-five years until he was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety-nine years old before Isaac was born. Now here is the verse,

Without becoming weak in faith he [Abraham] contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, Romans 4:19-20 (NASB)

That is, Abraham never doubted that God would give him a son. He did not doubt God after five years, 10 years, or fifteen years. He did not doubt God at twenty-five years. His trust in God just continued to increase. To believe or trust that God keeps His word gives Him glory.

God has promised to meet our physical needs of food and clothing in Matthew 6:33 and in the Lord’s Prayer. He has promised to forgive our sins in 1 John 1:9. He has told us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He has promised in 1 Peter 5:7 that He cares for us. In Romans 5:8 He has told us that He loves us. He has promised every believer that our salvation is secure (John 6:37, 39, 40, 44, 47, 54). When we believe in Him, we give Him glory. So, let’s give God glory by believing everything He tells us and not worry or doubt Him.

2) Repent of Sin. So, the first thing we can do to give God glory is to believe in Him. The second thing we can do is to repent of our sin. Revelation 16:8-9 states,

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory. Revelation 16:8-9 (NASB)

These two verses describe the fourth bowl of God's wrath that will be poured out during the last half of the tribulation period. The bowl is an act of judgment. God also is trying to motivate people to repent of their sins and believe in Christ. But instead, the prophecy says people will blaspheme the name of God and refuse to repent of their sins and give God glory. That means we give God glory when we confess our sins and turn from them.

Saving faith motivates people to repent of their sins. Faith and repentance go together. Real repentance is an act of humility. Repentance gives God glory. When we repent, we admit we are not holy like God. That is why Romans 3:23 says,

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
Romans 3:23 (NASB)*

Repentance is a humbling experience. When we repent of our sins, we are giving Him glory. Remember 1 John 1:9 says,

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NASB)

So, we give God glory when we admit we are sinners and admit that we have sinned.

3) Bear Much Fruit. So, the first thing we can do to give God glory is to believe Him. The second thing we can do is to repent of our sin. The third we can do is found in John 15:8. This verse is part of the passage in which Jesus gives an illustration of the vine and branches. Jesus is the vine and believers are the branches. The verse says,

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. John 15:8 (NASB)

When Jesus said fruit, He referred to the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 describes this fruit,

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-

control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

Here we are told the fruit of the Spirit is produced by the Holy Spirit. The fruit are signs of righteousness growing in the life of a believer. If you are looking for proof that you are a Christian, look for these signs in your life.

Philippians 1:9-11 also talks about the same fruit. But there it refers to it as the fruit of righteousness. It says,

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11 (NASB)

Notice that Paul says love, excellence, sincerity, and blameless conduct are the result of righteousness. They are the fruit of righteousness in the life of a believer. We cannot produce or generate this fruit. They are produced by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in us. But we can help to increase the production of the fruit by being filled with the Spirit day-by-day. Ephesians 5:17-18 tells us that it is God's will for us to be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit day-by-day is also called walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-23). We do this by confessing our sins, studying Scripture, and asking for the Spirit to take control of us every day. It is an ongoing process. That is how we can help the fruit to grow. That gives God glory. So, when a believer produces much fruit, it gives God the Father glory.

4) Give All Glory to God. So, the first thing we can do to give God glory is to believe Him. The second thing we can do is to repent of our sin. The third we can do is to produce much fruit. The fourth thing we can do is given to us in numerous passages in Scripture. But Acts 12:21-23 is a dramatic example. It says,

On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began deliver-

ing an address to them [that is, the people in Caesarea]. The people kept crying out, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. Acts 12:21-23 (NASB)

Here we learn that people were repeatedly shouting “The voice of a god and not of a man!” Now I suspect the people were flattering him. But what is tragic is that King Herod accepted their praise, and did not redirect their praise to God.

The prophet Daniel is a good example of directing praise to God. Daniel 2:28 says that after King Nebuchadnezzar said he expected Daniel to make known his dream, Daniel quickly informed the king that no one could reveal or interpret the dream. Then he added,

However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. Daniel 2:28 (NASB)

After Daniel finished sharing the king’s dream and interpretation, King Nebuchadnezzar said,

The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.” Daniel 2:47 (NASB)

Daniel recognized that God is the revealer of mysteries and praised Him for it. The result was that Yahweh, Himself, received glory from the king. Yahweh is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. There is none greater. We can only imagine the cheers in heaven and the disappointment in the demonic realm when Yahweh received such praises from this unbelieving king. Yahweh was worthy of His glory being recognized and praised.

5) Give Thanks to God. So, we can give God glory by believing or trusting in Him, repenting of our sins, producing much fruit, and giving all glory to God. The fifth thing we can do is to give Him thanks. Psalm 86:12 is won-

derful. It says,

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

Most believers give thanks before they eat a meal. But this is broader than just praying before eating a meal. This includes thanking God for everything He does. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 states,

In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NASB)

When I was a young boy, I remember kneeling by my bed with my Dad. He asked me to pray first. I prayed and prayed. I prayed for and mentioned every little thing my little mind could think of. I do not know how long I prayed, but my Dad became upset. Now, I am sorry I upset my Dad. I do not think that as an adult, I would enjoy listening to a little child praying about his room, his clothes, his food, his toys, and everything else he could think about. But I tell the story to make the point that we are to thank God for more than the food. I do not know if I was trying to obey that verse. But the point is, we are to give glory to God by thanking Him for everything. When we do, we are acknowledging that only He can do this - no one else.

6) Praise God with Our Mouth. We have discovered that we can give God glory by believing or trusting in Him, repenting of our sins, producing much fruit, giving all glory to God, and thanking God for everything. The sixth thing we can do is to praise Him. Psalm 71:8 states,

**My mouth is filled with Your praise
And with Your glory all day long.
Psalm 71:8 (NASB)**

The psalmist is moved with a desire to praise God. He says, “My mouth is filled . . . with Your praise.” Then he adds, “And with Your glory all day long.” The point is that we

give glory to God by praising Him with our lips, or with our words. We can praise Him for being holy. We can praise Him for His love. Psalm 147:1-7 gives us many examples.

7) Bow and Confess Jesus Is Lord. The seventh thing we can do to give God glory is to bow our knees and confess Jesus is Lord. Philippians 2:9-11 speaks of the future, but we can do it today. We can bow and from the depth of our heart tell Jesus Christ that He is Lord and Master. Philippians 2:9-11 says,

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11 (NASB)

Confessing Jesus as Lord of our lives brings glory to God the Father. Is that not an interesting thought? One would think it brings glory to Christ, but the verse says it gives glory to the Father.

1 Corinthians 12:3 also tells us that true believers will confess Jesus as Lord.

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3 (NASB)

This passage is referring to a heart attitude of submission. It means the person who says that Jesus is Lord sincerely means all four words: Jesus is their Lord! 1 Corinthians 12:3 describes a heart attitude. It is internal. It brings God glory by aligning our desire to submit under the only One who deserves to be obeyed because He is our glorious God.

8) Be Willing to Do His Will. Another passage that tells us how we can give God glory is John 12:27-28. Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night He was betrayed and prayed this,

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I

say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." John 12:27-28 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus said He was troubled and struggled with the suffering He was about to endure. Yet, He submitted to the Father's plan for our salvation when He said, "But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." His submission brought the Father glory. This reveals that submission is also external. The last passage and this passage teach that true submission is both an attitude and action. We bring glory to God by being willing to submit and then actually submitting.

9) Share the Gospel. We have discovered that the first thing we can do to give God glory is to believe or trust in Him. Next, we can repent of our sins, produce much fruit, give all glory to God, thank God for everything, praise Him with our mouth, confess Jesus is Lord, and actually do His will. The ninth thing we can do to give God glory is to share the gospel.

We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself. 2 Corinthians 8:18-19 (NASB)

In this passage we discover that Paul is sharing the gospel. He calls it the gracious work. He says that he is spreading the gospel. He is preaching the gospel. He is teaching the Word of God. Then he says it is all for the glory of God Himself, not for the glory of Paul! This means that when we share the gospel with someone, the glory of God Himself is being revealed. The Father designed our salvation. He created the plan. The invisible demonic world and the lost and saved hear it. The truth about all God has done is being repeated again and again. It is for the glory of God.

10) Die for Christ. The ninth thing we can do to give

God glory is revealed in John 21:18-19. In verses 15-17, Jesus has asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” Three times Peter answered, “You know that I love You.” This is a wonderful illustration of Jesus’ love for his disciple. It reveals that God is not eager to punish us when we sin. Then an amazing thing happens. Jesus said this to Peter,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.” Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me!” John 21:18-19 (NASB)

What did Jesus do here? Jesus told Peter that when he was old, he would die with his hands stretched out. We believe Jesus told Peter that he would die a martyr’s death by crucifixion. Then Jesus told him how he would glorify God when he died. The message is that we can glorify God by how we die for Christ.

Conclusion. So, we give glory to God in the sense that we recognize and praise Him for His glorious attributes. We have learned that our most important priority in life is to give God glory. We have learned that we do this by believing or trusting in Him. We give God glory by repenting of our sins, producing much fruit, giving all glory to God, thanking God for everything, praising Him with our mouth, confessing Jesus is Lord, actually doing His will, sharing the gospel to the unsaved, and how we die for Christ. This is how we glorify God in everything we do! That is our most important priority in life!

I pray that you discover new ways to give God glory. I also pray that you will give God more glory. I want God the Father to receive ALL the glory, He deserves it!