

Vanity of Human Glory

The phrase "human glory" is miscellany of contradictions. Glory in real sense does not belong to man but to God alone. Misapplied to human beings, glory refers to opinion (what one thinks for himself) and reputation (what others think about him).

In biblical viewpoint, one possessing glory is laden with riches, power, and position of authority, wisdom, beauty, and admirable character. Glory carried the notion of reputation, honor and majesty. Applied to man, glory carried the nuance of characteristic that it may not in reality possess. In a corrupted world, we ascribe corrupted glory to corrupted people.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the effulgence of the divine glory (Hebrews 1:3) and through Him the perfection of the nature of God is made known to men. The glory of Christ as the visible image of God the Father was veiled from the eyes of those who rejected Him and His Word but was apparent to those who have positive volition (John 1:14).

Satan on the other hand is the effulgence of the "demonic glory" of the world. Satan is willing to give this "worldly glory" to anyone who will serve his purpose and fulfilled his plan. Anyone can become an effulgence of satanic glory when his soul is filled with man-made honor, pride and boasting.

Arrogance in most cases does not depend on reality. Arrogance is an illusion apart from reality. "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8-9)

Honor is the respect and esteem enjoyed by someone or something. In Scripture man is usually the subject, although honor is frequently applied to God. Man's honor is often associated with his rank in the community (Psalm 45:9) and his authority (Esther 10:2). Honor is given to God because of who and what He is (Lev. 10:3; 1 Chron. 29:12) and what he has done (Daniel 4:37), while honor is given to man because of what he gained, earned, or possessed.

Both the Hebrew and Greek terms for honor mean "to be heavy or weighty". For a man to be "weighty" in society is understood figuratively as his being important, respected, and honored.

Honor also includes the idea of value. Some of the other translations of the Greek words are splendor, majesty, beauty, respect, and glory, the latter being the most common.

Honor is legitimately given when ascribed to parents (Matthew 19:19), widows (1 Timothy 5:3), the emperor (1 Peter 2:17), elders (1 Timothy 5:17), the elderly (Leviticus 19:32), masters (1 Timothy 6:1), the good slave (Proverbs 27:18), wives (1 Peter 3:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:4), one another (Romans 12:10), all men (1 Peter 2:17), Contrary to secular custom, honor is to be given even to those of lower rank (1 Corinthians 12:23-24).

Honor is one of the distinctive which is to characterize the relationships between men and God. Every believer is to honor Christ (John 5:23; Philippians 1:20), and God (Proverbs 14:31) as Christ honors God the Father (John 8:49), and as God honors man (John 12:26) and Christ (Hebrews 2:9). Likewise, we are to give honor to God (Revelation 4:11).

Honor is illegitimately given when ascribed to any person unworthy of respect and honor. In the world's point of view, a person is honorable because of his wealth, power, and authority and not necessarily because of his moral and spiritual virtues.

Human glory maintains pride which usually carries a negative connotation. The term pride has been defined as inordinate and unreasonable self-esteem, attended with insolence and rude treatment of others. Pride is an attempt to appear in a superior light to what we are, with "anxiety to gain applause, and distress and rage when slighted.

Pride is the high opinion that a poor, little, contracted soul entertains of itself. The pride of Lucifer might have been the first sin to enter God's universe, and will be one of the last to be conquered.

The Bible teaches that pride deceives the heart (Jeremiah 49:16), hardens the mind (Daniel 5:20), brings contention (Proverbs 13:10), compasses about like a chain (Psalm 73:6), and brings men to destruction (Proverbs 16:18).

A proud heart stirs up strife (Proverbs 28:25) and is an abomination unto the Lord (Proverbs 16:5). A proud look God hates (Proverbs 6:17), and those who engage therein shall stumble and fall (Jeremiah 50:32).

Pride is the parent of discontent, ingratitude, presumption, passion, extravagance, and bigotry. There is hardly an evil committed without pride being connected in some sense. God resists the proud (James 4:6), the believer therefore must learn to hate pride and to clothe himself with genuine humility.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 epitomizes the biblical perspective on boasting: "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts, boast of this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth." This passage, as do the entire Bible, repudiates boasting oriented to man as misplaced praise and enjoins boasting in God, which is appropriately directed praise offered to one worthy of praise.

The biblical premise for the impropriety of man's boasting in himself and the propriety of his boasting in God is the creature-Creator distinction and the assumption that what man is and does is a gift from God (1 Cor. 4:7) and what God is and does is intrinsic to him. For man to boast in himself is to claim the praise and glory that belongs to God; it is arrogance (James 4:16).

For a believer to boast in God is to give God the praise and glory that are rightfully his. Man-oriented boasting is forbidden (1 Kings 20:11; Psalms 10:3; 49:6; 52:1; 97:7; Proverbs 20:14; 25:24; 27:1) while God-oriented boasting which is encouraged (Psalms 34:2; 44:8).

The apostle Paul has the most to say about boasting. In 63 occurrences, he repudiates all boasting in one's righteousness, wisdom, or status before God (Romans 2:23; 3:27; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:29; Ephesians 2:8-9).

For Apostle Paul the only appropriate form of boasting is, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (quoting Jeremiah 9:24 cited in I Corinthians. 1:31).

Boasting in God which is "through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14) encompasses all the aspects of God's work in one's life. Some misapply this by boasting of their work for Christ which is not different from boasting in the flesh.

Carnal believers can boast only in the flesh as motivated by the old sin nature in them. Only the believers with Bible doctrine can boast in the Lord through the blessings they received. The believer is saved by the grace of God and will continue to live by the grace of God. Everything he has now and for the future is by the grace of God. An arrogant person has no perception, understanding or knowledge of the grace of God (Proverbs 1:7).

God will give greater honor to believers who have walked and lived according to His plan, purpose and will (1 Peter 5:5-6). God left the believers on earth to receive tremendous blessings of spiritual maturity that will glorify God in time and in eternity. Our task is to reach spiritual maturity because such blessings are available only there.

Christians must learn from Solomon who had everything that the world can offer and yet was disgusted because everything was futility (Ecclesiastes 1:14). The glory of the world is not for the Christians, and do not attempt to be partakers with them (Ephesians 5:7).

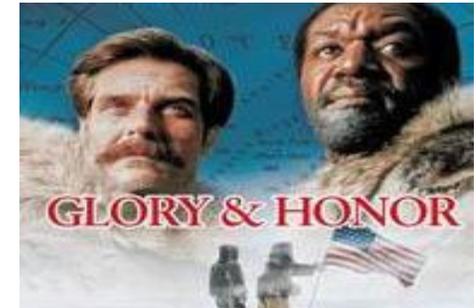
As Christians, our priority is different from the priority of the unbelievers. Solomon realized this truth after he wasted his life in the world. His

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

Nominal Christianity is illusion without reality. To be become a real Christian before the eyes of God demands reality. Nominal Christianity is generally thought as being mostly events and gathering replacing the smaller ones with a real big one. It seems that gathering develops an outward dynamic support for dynamic and "relevant" worship experience instead of dynamic spiritual lifestyle.

The nest of nominal Christianity is its comfort zone anchored within the four walls of the church building protecting them from the fire of adversity of the real world. Nominal Christians are suckers for worldly fame, glory, honor, wealth and reputation. They will abandon the reality of spiritual life for the honor and glory of the world. Here are some principles related to facing the reality of spiritual life:

- Reality will not allow you to substitute anything to replace spiritual life.
- Reality demands that when we encounter spiritual dryness that we let spiritual hunger push us to seek the Lord (and not to grab the rituals of religions).
- Reality will not allow you to make the distance between you and God far enough to lose your connection with him.
- Reality demands effectiveness of our spiritual life from the point divine power and resources.
- Reality cannot accept misapplication of truth by slipping into the comfort of religious rituals.
- Reality is always painful to pursue because Satan cannot tolerate the operating divine power. Going back to reality is costly and the price is very high.
- Reality will not allow us to substitute (some commitment confusion of nominal Christians):
 - Saying for doing
 - Confessing for being
 - Professing for acting
 - Promising for coming
 - Willingness for doing
- Reality is finding our all in God and leaving our all in His grace to fulfill.
- Reality is dealing with the disconnection that keeps us far from God.
- WE – if we are faithful with the process of connecting to God all the time.
- GOD – is faithful with fulfilling us in His time –in His way



THE VANITY OF HUMAN GLORY

Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries

www.dikaosune.com

Tract No. 89

Vanity of Human Glory