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## **Walking in The Glory**

**By David Wilkerson**

March 8, 1999 I believe there is only one thing that can keep us going in the coming hard times and that is an understanding of God's glory. Now, this may sound like a high, lofty concept to you, one that's best left to theologians. But I'm convinced the subject of God's glory has very real, practical value for every true believer. By grasping it, we unlock the door to an overcoming life!

I've already discovered two important truths in my study of this subject:

1. The glory of God is a revelation of our Lord's nature and being.

You may recall from the Old Testament that Moses got a literal glimpse of God's glory. Before then, the Lord had sent out Moses with no explanation of himself other than the words, "I AM." But Moses wanted to know something more of God. So he pleaded with him, "Lord, show me your glory."

God responded by taking Moses aside and putting him in the cleft of a rock. Then, scripture says, he revealed himself to Moses in all his glory: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6-7).

I believe this passage is absolutely essential to our understanding of who our Lord is. Often when we think about the glory of God, we think of his majesty and splendor, his power and dominion, or some manifestation in his people, such as boisterous worship. All such things can be a result of seeing God's glory. But this isn't the glory he wants us to know him by.

The way God wants us to know his glory is through the revelation of his great love toward humankind. And that's just what he revealed to Moses: "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6-7).

The Lord is forever waiting to show us his love to forgive us, shower us with his mercy and restore us to himself!

2. The revelation of God's glory has powerful effects on those who receive it and pray for an understanding of it.

Up to this point, Moses had viewed the Lord as a God of law and wrath. He trembled with terror in the Lord's presence petitioning him, crying out to him, pleading with him on behalf of Israel. This had been the basis of his face-to-face relationship with the Lord.

Yet now, at the first sight of God's glory, Moses was no longer fearful of the Lord. Instead, he was moved to worship: "Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" (verse 8). He saw that God wasn't just the thunder, lightning and piercing trumpet that had made him shrivel in fear. On the contrary, God was love and his nature was one of kindness and tender mercy!

Do you see the incredible truth scripture is showing us here? True worship arises from hearts that are overcome by a vision of God's unmerited love for us. It's based on the revelation that God gives us of himself, of his goodness, his mercy, his readiness to forgive. So, if we're to praise God both in spirit and in truth, our worship must be based on this awesome truth about him.

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Indeed, once we receive a revelation of God's glory, our worship can't help but change. Why? Seeing his glory changes the way we live! It affects our countenance and behavior changing us from "glory to glory," making us more like him. Each new revelation of his love and mercy brings supernatural change.

I'm convinced this is the only way lasting change occurs. It comes not from attending how-to seminars, or hearing famous speakers, or absorbing self-improvement messages from books or tapes. No it comes from having a revelation of God, period! And God has already given us that revelation of himself, in Exodus 34.

Seeing God's glory also changes our relationships with others. Paul tells the Ephesian church, "You've seen and tasted the glory of God. Now, be a reflection of that glory to others!" "Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Now let me speak to you about walking in the glory of God.

1. The Revelation of God's Glory to Us Has Everything To Do With Our Communion With Him. Many Christians talk about intimacy with the Lord, walking with him, knowing him, having fellowship with him. But we can't have true communion with God unless we receive into our hearts the full revelation of his love, grace and mercy.

Communion with God consists of two things: 1. Receiving the love of the father, and 2. loving him in return. You can spend hours each day in prayer, telling the Lord how much you love him but that isn't communion. If you haven't received his love, you haven't had communion with him. You simply can't share intimacy with the Lord unless you're secure in his love for you.

The psalmist encourages us to "enter into (God's) gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise" (Psalm 100:4). What's the reason for such praise and thanksgiving? And why are we given such a bold invitation? It's because we're shown the kind of God we're to come to: "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (verse 5).

I know when I come to my Lord, I'm not coming to a hard, fierce, demanding father. He doesn't wait for me with an angry countenance, anxious to put a rod to my back. He doesn't trail me, waiting for me to fail so he can say, "I caught you!"

No I'm coming to a father who has revealed himself to me as pure, unconditional love. He's kind and tenderhearted, full of grace and mercy, anxious to lift all my cares and burdens. And I know he'll never turn me down when I call on him.

That's why I'm to come into his courts with praise and thanksgiving because I'm thankful for who my God is. He cares about everything concerning me!

Few believers, however, have laid hold of God's love for them by faith. They live in fear and despair, with little or no hope, always facing a storm. They can't understand why their lives aren't fulfilled, why they're full of such turmoil and confusion. They often think, "I pray daily, and I read my Bible. I constantly show God how much I love him. So why don't I have rest and peace?"

It's because they've never grasped the truth that God loves them! They haven't comprehended that,

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in spite of all their weaknesses and failures, their heavenly father cares about everything they're going through!

True Love Is Manifested in Two Things: Rest and Rejoicing. The prophet Zephaniah says something incredible about God's love for us. He writes, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

This verse tells us two important things about how the Lord loves us:

1. God rests in his love for his people.

In Hebrew, the phrase "he will rest in his love" reads, "He shall be silent because of his love." God is saying, in essence, "I've found my true love, and I'm totally satisfied! I don't need to look elsewhere, because I have no complaint. I'm completely fulfilled in this relationship, and I won't take my love back. My love is a settled matter!"

Zephaniah is telling us, "This is God's love for you! He wants you to know, I've found what I'm looking for and it's you! You bring great joy to me!"

2. God gets great pleasure from his people.

Zephaniah testifies, "He rejoices over you with singing" (see same verse). He's saying, in other words, "God's love for you is so great, it puts a song on his lips!"

To "rejoice" means to have joy and delight. It's an outward expression of internal delight. It's also the highest expression of love. The Hebrew word Zephaniah uses for "rejoice" here is "tripudiare" meaning, "to leap, as one overcome with joyful ecstasy."

Can you conceive of your heavenly father being so in love with you that he leaps with joy at the very thought of you? Can you receive his word that he loved you before the world was created, before humankind existed, before you were even born? Can you accept that he loved you even after you fell into Adam's sinful ways and became an enemy to him?

That's right God foresaw all your sins and failures, yet he still loved you with the same tender love. In fact, he sent his Spirit to awaken you to your lost condition and your need for him. He drew you to himself, enfolding you in his arms. Then, when you came to the cross in repentance, you entered into his gift of love to you. He promised you, "I loved you then, I love you now, and I'll love you to the end!"

If God so loved you when you were deep in sin caring enough to give his own son to die for you why would he remove his love whenever you stumble or fail? In such times, we're to remember who he says he is to us - love, mercy, longsuffering. That is his glory and we're to return to his glory always!

Why Don't More Christians Commune With the Lord and Have Intimacy With Him? Multitudes of God's offspring know little or nothing of a life of communion with him. Why is this so?

I believe such Christians have a sad, twisted concept of the heavenly father. I recall Jesus parable about the servant who hid his talent because he had a twisted image of his master. That servant said,

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" I knew thee that thou art an hard man " (Matthew 25:24).

Likewise, many believers today think, "There's no way God could ever dance over me, rejoicing and singing in love. I've failed him so miserably at times, bringing reproach on his name. How could he possibly love me especially in the struggle I'm facing now?"

I've known families in which the children cowered in the presence of a hard, mean father. They played happily before their dad came home. But when they saw him come through the door, they ran straight to their mother and clutched her apron. I never saw them go near their father, except when he demanded something of them. They never crawled into his lap or ask to be hugged. They dreaded being in his presence.

I believe this is one powerful reason why so many Christians don't want to get close to their heavenly father. They dread drawing near to him because they sense they've failed him somehow. They have a nagging feeling they've neglected their duties, been lazy spiritually, done things wrong. All they can conceive of him is that he's full of consuming fire, ready to judge and condemn them.

Such Christians think, "God has forgiven me so many times before, I can't go to him now. He'll reject me. I've got to be past the point of being forgiven." No! God never rejects anyone who turns to him in repentance. That's not his nature! We can't judge our heavenly father by the measure of our human fathers. That's not who he is.

The question for all of us today is, how can we not want to be near a father who writes love letters to us who tells us he yearns to be with us who's always ready to embrace us who says he has nothing but good thoughts about us, in spite of our foolishness who assures us, "Satan may tell you you're useless. But I say you're my joy!"

It's our unwillingness to believe his word to accept and lay hold of the marvelous revelation of his glory that keeps us from communing with him!

It's Not Possible to Have Communion or Intimacy With the Lord Until We Believe and Receive Him as Being Full of Love, Tenderness and Kindness Toward Us! At this point, you may be thinking, "Surely the Lord doesn't rejoice over someone who's still in sin. I can't expect him to love me if I continue my sinning ways. That sort of thinking borders on blasphemy."

Yes, God does love his people but he doesn't love their sin. The Bible says he reproveth every child who continues in iniquity, but he always does it with longsuffering. And after he reproveth us, his Spirit fills us with a sense of his indignation over our sin.

Through all of this, God's love for us remains unchanged. His word says, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). "the Father with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). "I am God, and not man" (Hosea 11:9).

God forbid that his love for us should ebb and flow as ours does for him. Our love varies almost daily, going from hot and zealous to lukewarm or even cold. Like the disciples, we can be ready to die for Jesus one day and then forsake him and run the next. We can tell the Lord we trust him to supply all our needs and keep us from falling but that isn't true communion. The question is, do we fully trust his love to us? Have we seen his love revealed and laid hold of it? Is his love for us settled in our hearts?

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I must ask you are you able to say, "My heavenly father is in love with me! He says I'm sweet and lovely in his eyes and I believe him. I know no matter what I go through, or how tempted or tried I become, he'll rescue me. He'll hover over me through it all, never allowing me to be crushed. He'll always be kind and tender to me!"

This is when true communion begins. We're to be convinced each day of God's unchanging love for us. And we're to show him we believe his revelation about himself. John writes, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).

This belief alone can heal your soul. It's your only weapon against the devil, who lies that you're too unworthy to pray or draw near to God. Convincing yourself of this truth is the only way to open yourself to true communion!

If you've ever been in love with someone, you know what I'm talking about. Imagine a husband who's away on business much of the time, but who's utterly in love with his wife. He calls his beloved spouse every night he's away. And from time to time he calls home just to leave a message for her on their answering machine. His message to her goes something like this:

"Hi, honey. I m calling to let you know that just the thought you're there, loving me, brings me strength. It's going to be the lift I need for the day. I know I'm going to have a tough time with work today. But I've just read the letter you wrote to me, and oh, what a joy! Just knowing you're thinking of me makes me overflow with ecstasy!"

That's the love the heavenly father has for you. Trust in it!

The Other Side of Communion Is Our Loving God Back! Walking in God's glory means not only that we receive the father's love, but that we love him back as well. It's about mutual affection, both giving and receiving love. The Bible tells us, " thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

God says to us, "My son, give me thine heart " (Proverbs 23:26). His love demands that we reciprocate that we return to him a love that's total, undivided, requiring all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

However, the Lord tells us in no uncertain terms, "You can't earn my love. The love I give to you is unmerited!" John writes, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). "We love him, because he first loved us" (verse 19).

We didn't wake up one day, decide to walk away from our sins, and turn to Jesus. No the Spirit of God reached down into the wilderness of our lives, showed us our lostness and made us miserable in our sin. He sent us his word to show us truth, sent his Spirit to convict us, and then came after us himself. He did it all for us.

And now, just as God's love for us is marked by rest and rejoicing, so our love for him must have these same two elements:

David expresses a rest in his love for God when he writes, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Psalm 73:25). The heart that loves the Lord

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ceases completely from looking elsewhere for comfort. Rather, it finds full contentment in him. To such a lover, God's lovingkindness is better than life itself!

Such a heart also rejoices in its love for God. It sings and dances in joyous ecstasy over the Lord.

When a child of God knows how much his father loves him, it puts a delight in his soul!

The Bible also tells us that our love for the father must be conveyed through his son. Jesus says, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). It's by Christ alone that we're accepted by the father and have access to him.

Moreover, God placed all his goodness, love, mercy and grace that is, his glory in his son. And he sent Jesus to manifest and reveal that glory to us. Thus, Christ comes to us as the express image of our loving father. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John 15:9).

God loves us as we stand in Christ. And, in turn, we show love for God in our love for Jesus. As the head of the church, and as our high priest, Jesus carries our love to the father for us.

Now let me give you one of the most powerful verses in all of scripture. Proverbs give us these prophetic words of Christ: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men" (Proverbs 8:30-31).

Beloved, we're the sons being mentioned here! From the very foundations of the earth, God foresaw a body of believers joined to his son. And even then the father delighted and rejoiced in these sons. Jesus testifies, "I was my father's delight, the joy of his being. And now all who turn to me in faith are his delight as well!"

So, how do we love Jesus in return? John answers, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

And what are his commandments? Jesus says, in essence, there are two and "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40). The first and most important commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind. We're to hold nothing back from him. And the second is that we love our neighbor as ourselves. These two simple, non-grievous commands sum up all of God's law.

Jesus is saying here that we cannot be in communion with God; we can't walk in his glory if we bear a grudge against anyone. Therefore, loving God means loving every brother and sister in the same way we've been loved by the father.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21). "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (verse 8).

All communion and intimacy with the Lord is cut off if we have an unloving or unforgiving attitude toward another person. We can praise God with upraised arms, pray to him every day, spend hours studying his word but if we're bitter and unforgiving toward anyone, it's all in vain. John says, "Such a person is a liar. You don't truly love God, even though he loves you!"

If you're in such a state, don't just say to God, "Lord, I'm sorry, forgive me." Rather, go to that person

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as God's word instructs, and be reconciled with him. "first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:24).

Only then will you find true intimacy with the father. And you'll be able to walk in his glory, all the days of your life!

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