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## **The Effects of Seeing The Glory of God!**

***By David Wilkerson***

June 21, 1999 Scripture makes clear that it's possible for every true follower of Jesus to see and understand the glory of God. Indeed, our Lord reveals his glory to all who ask and seek for it diligently. Moreover, I believe the revelation of God's glory will equip his people for the perilous days ahead. Paul states that this revelation "...is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Contrary to some Christians' thinking, the glory of God is not a physical manifestation of some kind. It's not an ecstatic feeling that overcomes you. Nor is it a kind of supernatural aura or angelic light that bursts forth. Simply put, God's glory is a revelation of his nature and attributes!

The Lord himself defines his glory this way in scripture. Therefore, when we pray, "Lord, show me your glory," we're actually praying, "Father, reveal to me who you are." And if the Lord does give us a revelation of his glory, it's a revelation of how he wants to be known by us.

Moses' experience with the glory of God demonstrates this truth. The Lord sent Moses to deliver Israel without giving him a full revelation of who the God of Israel was. The Lord merely told him, "Go, and say I AM sent you." But he gave no explanation of who "I AM" was.

I believe this is why Moses cried, "[Lord]...I beseech thee, shew me thy glory" (Exodus 33:18). Moses had a gnawing hunger and thirst to know who the great I AM was -- to know what his nature and character were all about.

And the Lord answered Moses' prayer. First, he instructed Moses to hide himself in the cleft of a rock. Yet, as Moses waited for the glory of God to appear, he saw no thunder, no lightning, no shaking of the earth. Rather, God's glory came to him in a simple revelation:

"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..." (Exodus 34:6-7).

Now, God only reveals his power or glory with a purpose in mind. So, what was his purpose here? It certainly wasn't to give Moses a moment of ecstasy. And it wasn't to give him a legacy, something he could tell his children and grandchildren about.

No -- God allowed Moses to see his glory so that he might be changed by the sight of it! And the same is true for us today. God reveals his glory to us so that, by seeing it, we might be changed into his very own image!

Today, Jesus Christ is the express image of who God is. When our Lord became flesh, it was as a full revelation of the heavenly father's mercy, grace, goodness and readiness to forgive. God wrapped up everything of his nature and character in Jesus. And any revelation of his glory to us now is meant to change us into an expression of Christ!

The apostle Paul understood well the purpose and effect of seeing the glory of God. He saw it as power to change the beholder -- to revolutionize the life of every follower of Christ. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

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Paul is telling us, "Once you get this revelation of God's glory -- of his love, mercy, grace, long-suffering and readiness to forgive -- the Holy Spirit will continually open your eyes to more of these aspects of his nature and character. You'll have an ever-increasing revelation of God, in the way he wants to be known to you!"

Paul then says in an even stronger tone: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:17-18).

Beloved, God wants to tell us, "Moses understood my glory, and now I want you to understand it. I want to open your eyes by my Spirit to show you who I am. I'm not just a God of wrath and judgment. My nature is love!"

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (3:17-19).

Paul is telling us, "Let this revelation of God's glory become so real to you that you become rooted and grounded in it. Keep seeking it, studying it, claiming it, appropriating it in your life -- until the vision of Christ's glory bursts forth in you! As you remain in the word, seeking the revelation of his glory, you'll be changed. And you'll keep changing, from glory to glory!"

1. The First and Foremost Effect of the Glory Is a Change in Our Relationship With the Lord! When Moses saw this revelation of God's glory -- that he is good, loving, caring, gracious, forgiving -- he quickly fell to his knees and worshipped. "Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" (Exodus 34:8).

The revelation of God's nature overwhelmed this man. He saw how merciful, long-suffering and patient God is with his children -- including stiff-necked people, idolaters and those who grieve him. Moses was so stirred by this revelation, he ran out from behind the rock, fell down and worshipped!

It's important to note that this is the first mention ever of Moses worshipping. Prior to this revelation of God's glory, we find Moses praying and interceding, weeping and pleading with God for Israel, talking with him face to face. We hear him singing the Lord's praises on the victory side of the Red Sea. We hear him calling on the Lord at the bitter waters of Marah. And we hear his desperate cry to God at Rephidim, when the people were ready to stone him for not providing water. But this is the first time we read the words, "Moses worshipped."

I believe this one verse tells us much about the church today. It says a Christian can pray diligently without ever really worshipping. Indeed, it's possible to be a prayer warrior and intercessor and still not be a worshipper of God. You can plead for your unsaved children, pray for the needs of an entire church, be holy and meek in seeking God's burden -- and yet never truly worship him!

Now, I don't want to add to the multitude of definitions of what it means to worship. There are already too many books published on the various techniques of worship. But, in short, I will say this: worship cannot be learned! It's a spontaneous outbreak -- the act of a heart that's been overwhelmed by a revelation of God's glory and his incredible love for us.

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Worship is a response of gratitude. It recognizes how we should have been destroyed by our sin long ago, incurring the full wrath of God for all our failures and faults -- but instead, God came to us with the powerful revelation, "I still love you!"

At this point, Moses was no longer pleading for sinful Israel. And he wasn't asking the Lord for guidance. He wasn't crying out for a miracle of deliverance, or for power, or for wisdom. He was marveling at the revelation of the glory of God!

Moses could worship even though he wasn't full of hope for Israel. He knew the people were bent on backsliding -- that they were hiding the golden idols they'd brought from Israel. Even though Moses had persuaded God to spare them after their idolatry of the golden calf, now he must have thought, "How will I ever be able to hold this people together? How much longer will God put up with their secret lust and murmuring? When is his patience going to run out?"

It could seem here that Moses' pleading on Israel's behalf was more compassionate than God's feeling for the people. But the truth is, God had no intention of destroying these people. He already had all his promises for them in his mind.

No, this was a "mercy test" for Moses. The Lord was asking his servant, "How are you going to represent me to the people? Will it be as a vengeful God who's full of judgment only? No -- I am merciful, long-suffering, always ready to forgive my people!"

Here was the revelation! And it set Moses' heart at ease. Indeed, while he was still worshipping, he began claiming and appropriating the glory God had revealed to him: "God's mercy will see us through! He is long-suffering, and he will forgive us. What a glory this is! What comfort, what hope!"

Immediately, Moses began praying, "Lord, you said you would forgive the iniquity and transgression of thousands. Well, here are those thousands before you. We're all stiff-necked and in need of mercy. So, Lord, grant your mercy to us. Pardon our many sins!" (see Exodus 34:9).

This passage proves unmistakably that the revelation of God's glory is an integral part of worship!

God Is Worshipped When He Sees His People Laying Hold Of the Rights He Has Given Them by His Word. The revelation of God's glory should be the wellspring of all our worship. We ought to regularly lay claim to his glory, testifying, "Lord, I know you're holy and just, and you won't wink at sin. But I've also seen your glory. And I know you're not out to destroy me.

"You don't condemn me in my struggles. On the contrary, you show me how loving and long-suffering you are toward me. I know I deserve rejection. I've failed so often, I should be cast aside completely. But you reveal to me that you're merciful, gracious, tenderhearted!"

At times during my years in ministry, I've been overwhelmed by enemies who have risen up against me. In those times, I felt the discipline of the Lord like a rod on my back. I remember one period in particular, when I was being slandered on all sides. Other ministers asked me, "David, I'm hearing questionable things about you. Are they true? Is all this stuff about you coming from the devil, or is God trying to speak to you?"

Even that question offended me! After a while I became totally overwhelmed by the emotional pain of it all. I grew physically exhausted from the ongoing battle. At one point, I could barely face going to

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church to preach.

One morning my wife literally had to lift me up from my chair in my study. About halfway to church, I told her I couldn't go on. I couldn't face another person in our services wondering if I was a phony. Finally I cried out, "Lord, what have I done to deserve this? Where is my sin?"

Then, one day, God directed me to this prayer of Jeremiah: "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jeremiah 10:24).

These words from Jeremiah became my daily prayer throughout that severe time of testing: "Lord, chasten me and judge me if you must. But please -- don't do it in anger! If I hear one more wrathful word, it'll destroy me. I'll be brought to nothing. Please don't reduce me to dust, Lord. I'm low enough!"

Whenever I uttered this prayer, the Lord answered me, "David, if I choose to correct you, it's because I love you. This test is not about my judgment at all. I am merciful, gracious, loving, long-suffering toward you. Now, stand still and see my glory!" This knowledge of his glory carried me through to a place of total rest. God vindicated me on all sides.

Beloved, once you have this revelation of God's glory, you need never again fear he'll correct you in anger. He carries his rod in a tender, loving hand. He will discipline us, but only in gracious compassion. He'll never hurt us or cast us aside. Shouldn't this cause our hearts to melt before him in worship, as Moses' did?

Moreover, God reveals his glory in Christ so that we'll claim it! It is our assigned right, and it is meant to be claimed. When Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God..." (Galatians 2:21), he means, "I won't nullify God's offer of mercy by rejecting it!"

Those who truly worship God claim the blessing of his promises. They see the glory of his love in Christ -- and they lay hold of that glory, to heal and settle their troubled souls!

2. The Second Effect of Seeing the Glory of God Is A Change in Countenance!"The children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him" (Exodus 34:35).

A person's countenance is the outward expression of what is in his heart. And Moses' face here simply reflected the glory of God in his soul!

Previously, Moses had been shut in with the Lord for forty days and nights, with no change in his countenance. At that time, he came from God's holy presence to deal with Israel's idolatry of the golden calf. No one then saw a glowing countenance from him. But later, when the revelation of God's glory was made real to him, it changed Moses' very look!

You can bask in God's presence all you want. But it is a different matter entirely for his glory to be revealed in you. Paul testified, "...it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him..." (Galatians 1:15-16).

Paul is saying, "I have within me much more than some doctrine somebody thought up, more than just a head knowledge of Christ. I have a revelation of who Christ is -- a revelation of his grace, mercy

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and love. And this revelation has become the very source of all I am and do. It's the very essence of my life!"

The revelation of God's glory is indeed wondrous. Yet many have turned that very revelation into a license to sin. Jude describes people "...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

According to Paul, such people sin "that grace may abound." They're saying, in essence, "If God loves to express himself through mercy and forgiveness, then I'm going to give him every opportunity. I'm going to sin and let him keep loving me, so the grace will flow. What a testimony to the world that will be. I'll be an object of all that love coming down from heaven!"

Such people are easy to spot. Their countenance gives them away. Isaiah spoke of Israelites who "...provoked the eyes of his glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them..." (Isaiah 3:8-9). The prophet was saying, in other words, "Your sin witnesses against you in your very look. Whatever is in your heart is going to reveal itself in your countenance!"

On the other hand, even the rankest of sinners can tell when you've "been with Jesus." How can they tell? You look like no one else to them! They say, "You're different. You carry yourself with a humble assurance. And nothing about you seems hidden. You've got no dark spot in your eyes, no secretiveness. You don't seem to carry any grudges or bitterness. If you did, I'd know it. Your life is an open book!"

Sin, however, wears a certain look. No smile can cover it up. And its voice has the sound of emptiness -- the echo of a sounding brass, a tinkling cymbal.

But those who have appropriated the glory of God are being changed every day. Their countenance is becoming more and more like that of Jesus!

The Revelation Moses Had Was Glorious -- But It Was Only a Fading Thing. The radiance that emanated from Moses' face and heart was the result of having seen only a little of the fullness of God's nature.

Even so, when the Israelites saw the change in Moses' countenance, they knew he'd had a supernatural experience. His sister, brother and the others exclaimed, "This man has been face to face with God. He has gone beyond!"

Today, we have something far more glorious than even Moses had. We actually touch and handle God's glory. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (1 John 1:1).

John is saying here, "God revealed the fullness of his glory to us in Christ. We saw his glory embodied in a person. And we talked with him. We even touched him!"

Today we not only see the fullness of the glory of God -- but it now abides in us! His glory shines forth in our hearts: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Paul is saying here, "Jesus Christ, God in flesh, embodies all that God is. And since we know God is goodness, love, mercy, grace and long-suffering, we also can be assured this is the nature of Christ.

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Since Jesus lives in our hearts, we know that the glory of God isn't merely out in the cosmos somewhere. No -- the fullness of his glory is in us, through the presence of Christ!"

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). Who is this grace? It is Jesus Christ -- full of mercy, kindness, love!

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (verse 12). Paul is telling us, "This grace that abides in you is the revelation of the goodness of Christ. And if you will abide in him, his revelation will instruct you in holy living! It will teach you mercy, grace, tenderness, forgiveness!"

One of the Most Important Effects of Seeing the Glory Of God Is a Change in Our Relationships With Others. Once we receive this revelation of God's glory, we cannot continue in our old ways of treating others. That must all change!

Paul clearly warns, "If the Lord has shown you how tender, kind and loving he is toward you, then you'd better show this same character of God to others." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

God is telling us through Paul, "You've seen my glory, and you know my nature and character -- that I'm gracious, merciful, long-suffering, ready to forgive. Now, I want you to express to others who I am!"

Even though Moses had this revelation of God's glory, at one point he misrepresented it to the people. He grew impatient with Israel over their disobedience -- and he angrily struck a rock with his staff, as if to say, "You stiff-necked bunch of rebels!"

God didn't take kindly to that at all. Once he reveals to you his glory -- his kindness, goodness, grace and mercy -- his patience will not endure your misrepresenting his glory to others. Now Moses had misrepresented that glory to Israel. And, as a result, Moses -- one of the meekest, godliest figures in the Old Testament -- was kept out of God's fullness. He wasn't allowed to enter the promised land!

We find another illustration of this in one of Jesus' parables. He speaks of a servant who was forgiven a great debt by his master. The master showed this man incredible kindness, grace and forgiveness. Yet no sooner was the servant forgiven than he found a man who owed him a small debt -- and he began choking the debtor until he paid up. The very one who had experienced great love and forgiveness showed no mercy in return!

Jesus is saying in this parable, "You're misrepresenting the love of the father! He has given you a touch of his incredible glory, through his kindness and the forgiveness of your sins. Yet, now that you've seen his glory, you're misrepresenting it to the world!"

This is summed up in Paul's command, "Be merciful to others, even as he has been merciful to you." The word "mercy" here is extracted from the Greek word for "misery" ("misericordia"). The full meaning of this word is, "to take to heart the misery of another, with the intention of giving him comfort and relief." Being merciful means taking on another person's hurt!

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This is just what our Lord does for us. How many times has Jesus taken on your misery and suffering, giving you comfort, rest and forgiveness in return? How often has he wiped away your tears and spoken to you a kind word, when you didn't deserve it? He's done it time after time after time!

I ask you, then -- how can you not find it in your heart to take on the misery and pain of someone you know who's hurting? The Greek word for "kindness" has its roots in two words: "oracle" and "soft touch." Are you an oracle of hope to your brothers and sisters in Christ, offering them a word of hope from the Lord, with the soft touch of comfort? According to scripture, all you have to do to be his oracle of love is to represent to others who Jesus is!

The word "compassion" means "being affected, touched by the misery of others, and determining to do something about it." This doesn't mean approaching someone in sin, and telling him, "I've got a word from heaven for you, brother. You've got sin in your life!"

If that's so, he already knows it anyway. And he would probably answer you with Jeremiah's cry: "Please, don't deal with me in anger, or you'll reduce me to nothing. I'm already down far enough. Don't reduce me any further!"

If you've had a revelation of the Lord's glory, you know what it means to taste his love, mercy and forgiveness. And you're being changed by that glory. Now, Jesus says, take that glory and shine it on the world around you. It's time to act in love, as your Lord has continually done for you!