

Main Idea: In Acts 12:19b-25 we see a powerful illustration of what God thinks of people who try to steal His glory. We also discover two guarantees that will motivate us to live for the glory of God.

- I. God will humble the proud (19b-23).
  - A. We see Herod’s politics (19b-20).
  - B. We see Herod’s power (21).
  - C. We see Herod’s praise (22).
  - D. We see Herod’s pride crumble (23).
    1. God is serious about His glory.
    2. God deals severely with those who steal His glory.
    3. God determines the timing.
- II. God will promote the humble (24-25).
  - A. God’s Word spread (24).
    1. Man’s word may sound impressive.
    2. God’s Word is impressive.
  - B. God’s servants kept fulfilling the mission (25).
    1. At the beginning of Acts 12, James died.
    2. At the end of Acts 12, Mark stepped forward.
    3. The lessons are clear...
      - ⇒No one is indispensable.
      - ⇒God’s work will go on!

Make It Personal: How can I tell if my life is bringing glory to God?

1. Am I trusting in His Son?
2. Am I living for the things that matter to Him?
3. Am I using my time in a way that will matter 100 years from now?
4. Am I giving Him the credit for what He does in my life?

*Scripture Reading: Romans 11:33-36*

“All things are from Him, through Him, and to Him. To Him be the glory forever.”

Glory. It’s what the almighty and gracious Creator God deserves. To Him be the honor, the recognition, the praise, the adoration, the glory.

It’s a serious thing to steal God’s glory. In essence, that’s what sin is. Falling short of the glory of God. Instead of giving glory to God, we steal it from Him.

Voltaire did. The French agnostic philosopher predicted that within fifty years people would have forgotten who Jesus Christ was. Just five years after Voltaire made his ignorant prediction, the Geneva Bible society was running off thousands of Bibles on presses that had been set up in Voltaire’s former home in Geneva.<sup>2</sup>

Novelist Sinclair Lewis was a glory stealer. He won the 1930 Nobel Prize for literature with his novel *Elmer Gantry*...in which he mocked Christianity. Its leading character was an evangelist who was also an alcoholic and a fornicator. Lewis’s fight against God cost him his sobriety, and he died a hopeless slave to drink in a clinic near Rome.

Friedrich Nietzsche, the nineteenth century German philosopher, assaulted Christianity as the religion of weaklings. Yet his fight against God eventually pushed him over the brink, and he spent the last several years of his life insane.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier development of this text, see the Acts series preached at WBC in 2001.

<sup>2</sup> As told by James Boice, *Acts*, p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> I’m indebted to John MacArthur for this biographical information; *Acts*, p. 319.

Listen to what God has said, “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols (Isaiah 42:8).” “I will not yield my glory to another (Isaiah 48:11).”

But it’s not just the atheist who steals His glory. Any person, whether religious or not, who soaks up the blessings of this life while ignoring the Giver of the blessings is on the verge of glory-stealing. And which of us hasn’t done that?

Failing to give thanks is glory-stealing. So is failing to participate in corporate worship according to Psalm 96. “Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering and come into His courts. Worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness (7-8).”

In Acts 12:19b-25 we see a powerful illustration of what God thinks of people who try to steal His glory. We also discover there two guarantees that will motivate us to live for the glory of God.

### I. Guarantee #1: God will humble the proud (19b-23).

The fact is, there are powerful people in the world who, from our perspective, seem to get in the way of God’s righteous plan. But know this. No one frustrates God. No one gets in His way. The story before us should both warn and encourage us. The warning? Don’t mistake God’s patience for frustration or apathy. The encouragement? God sees and will take action in His time.

He certainly did with Herod Agrippa. In our last study we met Herod. We saw Herod arrest and kill the apostle James at the beginning of chapter 12. Then we saw Herod attempt to do the same to Peter. But God intervened. While the church prayed, God sent an angel to set Peter free from his chains in prison. Furious Herod ordered the execution of the guards who let Peter escape.

David said this about God in 2 Samuel 22:28, “You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low. That’s exactly what God did with Herod.

We see four steps leading to his downfall in verses 19-23.

**A. We see Herod’s politics (19b-20).** Verse 19 concludes, “Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while.” He left town with a royal headache. “I need a break from this job!” he must have thought. So, with egg on his face, he headed for the Mediterranean coast.

Once there he faced another political challenge. Verse 20, “He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus [probably by paying a sum of money], a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king’s country for their food supply.”

Though brief this verse gives us vivid insight into Herod’s shrewdness in politics. The cities of Tyre and Sidon, located sixty miles north of Caesarea, were not technically under Herod’s jurisdiction. But they depended on Herod for trade. For a reason not given, a feud developed. It’s not hard to imagine someone being upset with Herod! Herod responded with economic sanctions. His strategy worked. The people came to him seeking peace since they depended on him for food imports.

Please note that they didn’t change their tune because of a new liking for Herod. The change was motivated by expedience. You may not like a man, but if he signs your paycheck it’s amazing how motivated you can become to appease him.

This is the picture of Herod in Acts 12. Nobody can get along with the man. He’s a self-centered fool who arrests innocent men, kills his own guards, runs from his

problems, and fights with his constituents. Does God see the wicked Herods in the world? Oh, yes. There will be no question about that fact in just a moment.

**B. We see Herod's power (21).** "On the appointed day [apparently, the day of the peace agreement] Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people."

The Jewish historian Josephus indicates that the occasion was a festival in honor of the Roman Emperor Claudius. They likely met in the amphitheater built by Herod Agrippa's grandfather, Herod the Great.

Luke says Herod wore his "royal robes." Josephus gave this description of his clothing, "[Herod] put on a garment wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner."<sup>4</sup> So there Herod sits in his pompous power, adorned in splendor.

**C. We see Herod's praise (22).** "They shouted, 'This is the voice of a god, not of a man.'" Again, secular history helps us for Josephus records what the crowd said, "Be gracious unto us! Hitherto we have revered thee as a man, but henceforth we acknowledge thee to be of more than mortal nature."<sup>5</sup>

Either Herod was a brilliant orator, or the people of Tyre and Sidon were great flatterers, or maybe a combination of both. Whatever the motivation, the people attributed to Herod the status of deity.

And he ate it up. Psalm 10:2-6 describes Herod to the tee. "In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises. <sup>3</sup> He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD. <sup>4</sup> In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. <sup>5</sup> His ways are always prosperous; he is haughty and your laws are far from him; he sneers at all his enemies. <sup>6</sup> He says to himself, 'Nothing will shake me; I'll always be happy and never have trouble.'"

So Herod thought. But it's just a matter of time for glory stealers.

**D. We see Herod's pride crumble (23).** "Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died."

*Herod did not give praise to God.* Don't miss that. The problem is what he *didn't* do. He heard the people's flattery, yet refused to stop the blasphemy.<sup>6</sup> According to Josephus, Herod looked up and saw an owl sitting on a rope above his head, immediately recognizing it as a messenger of evil. A pang of grief pierced his heart. At the same time he felt the attack of a severe pain in his abdomen and was carried quickly from the amphitheater to his palace.

Eaten by worms. Luke states an angel struck Herod down and that he was "eaten by worms." Dr. Jean Sloat Morton offers a medical perspective on this:

"The phrase 'eaten of worms,' in Greek is *skolakobrotos*. The root word *skolax* means "a specific head structure of a tapeworm." Since the word *scolex* (plural *scolices*) is applied to the head of tapeworms, Herod's death was almost certainly due to the rupture of a cyst formed by a tapeworm. There are several kinds of tapeworms, but one of the most common ones found in sheep-growing countries is the dog tape,

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<sup>4</sup> *Antiquities XIX, vii, 2*

<sup>5</sup> *Antiquities XIX.8.2*

<sup>6</sup> *Antiquities XIX.8.2* Josephus says, "He did not rebuke them, nor did he repudiate their impious flattery."

*Echinococcus granulosus*. The heaviest infections come from areas where sheep and cattle are raised...

“The disease is characterized by the formation of cysts, generally on the right lobe of the liver; these may extend down into the abdominal cavity. The rupture of such a cyst may release as many as two million scolices. The developing worms inside of the cysts are called scolices, because the anterior region constitutes the major part of the development at this stage. When the cyst ruptures, the entrance of cellular debris along with the scolices may cause sudden death.

“The use of the word *scolex* is not limited to this reference about Herod; the term also appears in Mark 9:44. A literal translation of the phrase in Mark 9:44 would read, ‘where their scolex dieth not.’ This usage is very interesting because the tapeworm keeps propagating itself. Each section of the worm is a self-contained unit which has both male and female parts. The posterior part matures and forms hundreds of worm eggs. The word *scolex* in this text portrays a biological description of permanence which the text demands for the comparison.”<sup>7</sup>

Eaten by worms. Josephus says that Herod Agrippa lingered five days with severe abdominal pain, then he died at the age of 54 during the seventh year of his rule. Let’s put this into perspective, Herod executed the apostle James on May 1, AD 44, just prior to Passover, and intended to do the same with Peter. But Herod himself died just three months later, on or near August 1.

What’s the point of this story? Why did the Holy Spirit guide Luke to include it in the account of the Acts of the apostles? He wanted us to know something about God, didn’t He? Three lessons.

1. *God is serious about His glory.* The text says the angel struck Herod down “immediately.” There was no delay. When Herod accepted praise that only God deserves, God took action. Granted, God doesn’t always take immediate action, but He does so often enough to remind all of us how serious He is about His glory.

Remember Nebuchadnezzar? He learned the hard way. He was one of the great rulers of ancient world history. He is the powerful Babylonian king who in the sixth century BC conquered the Middle East. But he let his power go to his head so that one day God took away his sanity and for seven years he lived like a wild animal. His hair grew like the feathers of an eagle, his nails became like the claws of a bird, and he ate grass like a cow.

In the end he humbled himself and God restored him. He said this about the lesson he learned in Daniel 4:37, “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.”

2. *God deals severely with those who steal His glory.* A predominant theme of the Old Testament prophets was their condemnation of *pride*. God sees pride. God hates pride. God promises to deal severely with pride.

Listen to Obadiah’s message about the nation of Edom (verses 3-4), “The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’<sup>4</sup> Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the LORD.”

And He did. He brought proud Edom down. And He did the same with Herod. Why? For refusing to give Him the glory.

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<sup>7</sup> *Science in the Bible*, pp. 261-2 (in MacArthur, p. 327)

But Herod is not alone. Indeed, this is the crime for which all unregenerate people are condemned in Romans 1:21, “For although they knew God, *they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him...*” The refusal to glorify God is a serious thing, and it doesn’t stop there. According to verse 25, “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.”

It’s amazing that the Almighty puts up with a lot. He’s patient and longsuffering with His creatures. But when His image-bearers ignore Him, when they take credit for what He has made possible, the plagiarism offends Him greatly. When someone steals *His* glory, which is the key to the joy of all His creatures, He is justly incensed.

Do we ever commit the sin of glory-stealing? Every time we fail to give God what He deserves. When an athlete wins the contest, or the businessman closes the big deal, yet refuses to give God the honor, the person is a glory-stealer. When a student acs a test, when a parent sees her child win an award, these are all occasions either to give God glory or to take His glory.

How do we respond to the successes of life? Do we give the credit to God? It’s a serious thing to fail to give God the praise He deserves. If we fail to do so, we are either slighting Him, or worse, taking credit for something He accomplished.

We can steal His glory in other ways. When we refuse to give the Lord the first-fruits of our income, we’re robbing Him of what He deserves. That was Malachi’s message, for who gave us our health, our jobs, our ability to work and make money, our families, indeed all we possess? He did. When we stop working one day a week and bring to Him the offering of our praise and money, we are acknowledging that He gave it all to us and that He means more to us than the health, the job, the money, and even the family He’s put on loan to us.

We all steal His glory. We all fall short of the glory of God, says Romans 3:23. And this is why we need a Savior. Friends, God must deal severely with those who steal His glory. He must judge glory-stealers. The wages of glory-stealing is death, says Romans 6:23. The glory-stealer must die an eternal death.

Or...come to know the One who died in His place. That’s what happened on a cross two thousand years ago outside of Jerusalem. By God’s design, His own Son, who had glorified Him with a perfect life, took the penalty for glory-stealers. He died in their place, exhausting the just punishment their treason deserves. And it pleased God, so much so that He raised His Son from the dead, and now offers a full pardon to glory-stealers like us, if we will but repent and believe in His Son.

This brings us to a third lesson. One, God is serious about His glory. Two, God deals severely with those who steal His glory.

3. *God determines the timing.* An atheist once said, “If there is a God, may he prove himself by striking me dead right now.” Nothing happened. “You see, there is no God,” he touted. At that point someone wisely responded, “You haven’t disproved God. You’ve only proved that He is a gracious God.”

God will deal with glory-stealers. The only question is *when*. If we refuse to believe in the Substitute who died for glory stealers, we will face the divine judgment ourselves. It’s only a matter of time, and the One whose glory has been stolen determines when.

What happened to Herod foreshadows what will happen to the world’s ultimate glory-stealer. The Bible calls him the Antichrist, and says that he, like Herod, will persecute God’s people. He also will set himself up as God and demand the worship of the world. And he will have his moment of applause. But it will end suddenly when Jesus returns and cuts him down along with all who follow him (Rev 19:11-21).

God will humble the proud. That's guarantee #1. But that's not where Acts 12 ends.

## II. Guarantee #2: God will promote the humble (24-25).

James 4:10 declares, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." That's a promise. In fact, the truth that God will humble the proud and promote the humble appears throughout the Bible.

*Psalm 18:27* "You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty."

*Psalm 147:6* "The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground."

*Proverbs 3:34* declares, "He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble."<sup>8</sup>

God will promote the humble. He promises He will, and that's what we see Him doing in verses 24-25. Luke records two evidences of this guarantee.

**A. God's Word spread (24).** "But the word of God continued to increase and spread." There's a powerful contrast in Acts 12, as John Stott observes, "At the beginning of the chapter Herod is on the rampage—arresting and persecuting church leaders; at the end he is himself struck down and dies. The chapter opens with James dead, Peter in prison, and Herod triumphing; it closes with Herod dead, Peter free and the Word of God triumphing."<sup>9</sup>

The clout of the world's most powerful people pales when compared to the Word of God. You can be sure of this...

1. *Man's word may sound impressive.* But...

2. *God's Word is impressive.* Herod died. God's Word kept going. Powerful people come and go and their ideas die with them. But God's Word remains forever.

We see this throughout the book of Acts. We see *opposition*—Herod wasn't the last person to attack God's church. But we also see *advance*. Verse 24 is one of six "progress reports" Luke puts into the story of the early church:

6:7 "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly."

9:31 "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace...It grew in numbers."

16:5 "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers."

19:20 "In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."

28:31 "Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God..."

Time and time again the early church took it on the chin. But when the dust settled, the evidence was clear. *God's Word spread.*

In verse 25 Luke mentions a second evidence that God will promote the humble.

**B. God's servants kept fulfilling the mission (25).** "When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark."

Verse 25 is Luke's bridge that connects the end of chapter 11 with the beginning of chapter 13. From this point on in the book of Acts, the focus will be on the final phase of the church's mission, *reaching the Gentiles*. Even as chapter 12 comes to a close, God is

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<sup>8</sup> Both James and Peter quote this verse in the New Testament. *James 4:6* "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." *1 Peter 5:5* "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

<sup>9</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, p. 213.

putting His people in place to launch the most aggressive, far-reaching segment of the church's mission. It's time to reach the world!<sup>10</sup>

And He does it through people.

1. *At the beginning of Acts 12, James died.* And it was a sad day. Yet...

2. *At the end of Acts 12, Mark stepped forward.* This is God's way.

Who was Mark? He was the cousin of Barnabas according to Colossians 4:10. More importantly, he represents the next link in the chain of God's servants. We'll see him shortly in chapter 13 when the church launches its first missionary journey to the Gentiles.

3. *The lessons are clear...*

⇒No one is indispensable. Not one of us. James died, but God raised up Mark and countless others to carry on the work. Let there be no doubt about this...

⇒God's work will go on! It's a privilege to serve the Lord, but He doesn't need us. He said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." So the outcome of His work is certain, no matter what Herod nor men like Herod may do.

Be encouraged by this, dear friends. If we are in Christ, we are on the winning side. God will promote the humble. That's His guarantee.

Missionary Isobel Kuhn used to pray when in trouble, "If this obstacle is from Thee, Lord, I accept it; but if it is from Satan, I refuse him and all his works in the name of Calvary!" Dr. Alan Redpath gives this word of encouragement, "Let's keep our chins up and our knees down—we're on the victory side!"<sup>11</sup>

One of the most heart-stirring books I've ever read is, *Safely Home*, by Randy Alcorn. Although written as a novel, *Safely Home* offers a well researched account of the persecuted church in China. The story line involves a Chinese house-church pastor by the name of Li Quan who is imprisoned by the Communists for preaching the gospel. While in prison he is visited by an American friend, Ben Fielding, a new Christian who is struggling with the question of why God doesn't *do something* to free Li Quan. Why does God let wicked people hurt His children? Why doesn't He *do something* about it?

That's an important question, one you may be asking. Though lengthy, I'd like to read a portion of the answer Li Quan gave to his American friend as he spoke to him through the prison fence:

"God is accomplishing his purpose. He is above the jailors, the PSB, the mayor, and the Party. He uses them as tools in His hand. Just as he used Mao Zedong."

"Mao? God used *Mao*? Come on, Quan. When people look for evidence that there's no God, they point to Mao, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, all of the mass murderers."

"Yet Mao was a tool in the hands of Yesu [Jesus], to build his church."

Ben stared at Quan, incredulous.

"Mao was a mantis trying to stop a chariot," Quan said. "When the chariot driver decided it was time to move, he ran over Mao. The chairman was disposable. He tried to strangle the church. Mao died, but the church came alive. It rides in the chariot over his grave."

"Look, I'm a Christian now, Quan, and I'm really trying to understand. But...I just don't get what you're saying."

"Think, Ben Fielding. When Mao came to power there were fewer than a million Christians in China, and those were divided. Many leaders were seduced by Western

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<sup>10</sup> This event probably didn't occur until some time after Herod's death. While Herod died in A.D. 44, F. F. Bruce places the date for the famine-relief visit of Barnabas and Saul at A.D. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Both illustrations told by Wiersbe, p. 456.

modernism, no longer believing God's Word. The church needed inside cleansing, and outside there was little interest in Yesu. But then came Mao. My parents told me how they put loudspeakers in the lampposts and trees, and every morning they awoke to 'East is Red,' a song about Mao being 'the great savior of the people.' Mao was a usurper, a pretender, a small man who did a large evil. His broken promises left a huge void. Many now realize Shengking [the Bible] is the truth the red book claimed to be. And Yesu is the Savior Mao claimed to be."

"Still, the tens of millions of people who died..." [Ben objected]

"My own father died under Mao's boot. Yet Li Tong used to say, 'Mao Zedong is China's greatest evangelist.' He created a vacuum only Zhu Yesu could fill. Mao expelled all the missionaries and persecuted the church. But half a million Christians multiplied to perhaps eighty or a hundred million today."

"But at what cost, Quan?"

"Who are we to speak of cost? God hated what Mao did, but he used it. We do not understand providence. But the Chinese say, 'A good fortune may forebode a bad luck, which may in turn disguise a good fortune.' God works beneath the surface and around the corner and above the roof. We have a saying: 'No man should judge a painting when he can only see the back of the canvas.'"

"Isn't it obvious things are out of control when you have madmen and dictators murdering people?"

"Out of whose control? Ben Fielding's? Li Quan's? Of course. But Yesu does not cower before strutting dictators. He does not bow before petty warlords like Mao and Stalin and Hitler. Mao is responsible for his evil. But Shengjing says, 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.' Mao could not thwart God. In a hundred ways he prepared the way for the spread of the gospel like no missionary could."

"How? What do you mean?" [Ben asked, and Quan answered...]

"When Mao came to power there was no road system. Missionaries who worked inland traveled for seven months. They lived on the backs of mules for the final weeks of their journey. When Mao built the roads, the church could reach to the same countryside in less than a week, and now on trains or buses, not mules."

"He built roads for his purposes, not the church's." [Ben objected]

"That is what he thought. When he assumed power, China was divided by three hundred languages and a thousand dialects. But Mao signed a decree making Mandarin the official language. He required all business and education and public conversation to be in Mandarin. He ordered that the forty-seven thousand pictorial characters be simplified so his red book could be small and easy to carry. They were reduced to fifteen hundred. Suddenly God's Word could be translated much more easily, and the whole nation could be reached with one translation. You have heard of Wycliffe Bible Translators? They could not have done what Mao Zedong did for the church. Only six percent of the nation could read, so he ordered literacy training and now nearly ninety percent can read—nearly all who live in the cities. And are they reading his red book? No—they are reading the words of Yesu! That is, whenever we can get it into their hands."

"You really believe God was behind all this?" [Ben asked]

"Of course. Mao intended it for evil, but God intended it for good. Mao set himself up as a god, but he was but an errand boy for the true God. As surely as God

used Pharaoh to lead his people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, he used Chairman Mao to establish the church in China.”<sup>12</sup>

God’s work will go on. We can be sure of that fact because God is *serious about His glory*. He will humble the proud—that’s a guarantee. And He will promote the humble—that, too, is a fixed guarantee. In His time, *He will*. He will because He is serious about His glory.

The question is, *are we?* Be honest. Are you living for the glory of God or for some lesser pursuit?

Last year I shared with you an acrostic that has helped me understand and rejoice in the significance of the glory of God.

G- God created all things for His glory.

L- Life is meant to be lived, and joy comes, when we live for His glory.

O- Our problem is sin, which is living for something short of His glory.

R- Redemption is what God has provided through Christ to rescue a people for His glorious purposes.

Y- You can now live for the glory of God, by grace alone, through faith alone in the gospel.

### Make It Personal: How can I tell if my life is bringing glory to God?

Let’s ask ourselves four vital questions.

1. *Am I trusting in His Son?* The fact is, we can’t bring glory to God on our own. We are sinners. Sinners don’t want to live for God’s glory. They want to do their *own thing*. But that’s why God sent His Son into the world. Jesus Christ died in our place on the cross and then rose again to set us free from living self-centered lives.

If you want to live for the glory of God, you must start here. You must *trust in His Son*. Not only will He forgive you of your sins, but He will give you a new heart, one that wants to give God glory rather than steal it from Him. Are you trusting in Jesus?

2. *Am I living for the things that matter to Him?* You say, “How can I know what matters to Him?” He tells us. Where? In His Word. “Seek first the kingdom of God,” He said (Matt 6:33). “Set your affection on things above (Col 3:1).” “Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1).”

It’s not complicated. Are you living for God, or for yourself? Be honest. Every day we make choices. Are we consciously choosing the things that please and bring honor to Him, or are we simply doing what we want to do?

3. *Am I using my time in a way that will matter 100 years from now?* Every day we have 24 hours. We can use those 24 hours for God’s agenda or our own. Every day is a fresh slate of hours and a new choice. What have we been choosing? What will we choose this week, this day, this very moment?

4. *Am I giving Him the credit for what He does in my life?* People who are living for God’s glory give Him the credit for everything, big and small. They don’t *have* to but *want* to, because He is so important to them.

Let’s not steal from God this week. Let’s show Him how much He means to us.

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<sup>12</sup> Randy Alcorn, *Safely Home*, pp. 324-6.