

The Ephesians Series
SOVEREIGN SELECTION (Part 6)
Ephesians 1:3-14
September 9, 2007
Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church

I encourage you to turn again to Ephesians 1 as we continue our study of this great letter of Paul to the church in Ephesus and to the surrounding churches there in that region. I was reminded again this week that the pursuit of glory is endemic to the human race. I did an Internet search, just out of curiosity, on the phrases “quest for glory,” “road to glory,” and “desire for glory.” Just those three phrases, and the results, were frankly astounding. The results crossed every spectrum of life, and showed that this quest is at the heart of every human being. It was in the realm of politics, there is that quest for glory. I found it in various sports, from the UK to Australia, to the US: in games that are played, in careers that are pursued. There was literally no part of life that wasn't characterized as a pursuit of, or a quest for, glory. Perhaps Machiavelli put it best when he wrote in his famous work *The Prince*, “A prince ought, above all things, always to endeavor in every action to gain for himself the reputation of being a great and remarkable man.” That is really the manifesto of the human race. Do whatever you do, in every action, to gain for yourself the reputation of being a great and remarkable person.

Martin Luther, commenting on this common human problem that rises in every human heart without exception, writes,

Glory belongs to no one but God alone. It is impossible for God to share it with anyone and to make it common property. Through the evil spirit [referring to Satan] Adam stole the glory and appropriated it for himself. In consequence no vice has sunk its roots so deeply into all men as has the vicious passion for glory. No one wants to be nothing, or to be able to do nothing. Everyone is well pleased with himself. From this come all the trouble, unrest, and war on earth.

Luther is absolutely right. There is no vice that has sunk its roots so deeply into all men as has the vicious passion for our own glory. If you're honest with your own heart this morning, you know that that has, at many points in life, been a constant temptation, and is to this day and to this hour. But that spirit, while it may be common to all of us, is completely contrary to God's original design for all men. God did not make us to pursue our own glory. It also runs contrary to God's purpose for us as His people, for the salvation that He's given us in Christ. We do not exist to promote our own glory, but to promote God's glory. God didn't choose us to make much of us. God chose us so that we could make much of Him. That's the message that we come to this morning in our study of Ephesians 1.

Available online at: www.countrysidebible.org
Copyright © 2013 Tom Pennington. All rights reserved.
Unedited transcript for personal use only.

Paul begins his letter to the church there in Ephesus with praise of God. Praise of God for the great salvation that He has provided for us. Over the last number of weeks we have been studying verses 4 through 6 together. And in verses 4 through 6 Paul highlights for us the Father's primary role in the eternal plan of redemption. And that role is election. We have studied this in great detail because this is a topic that is very frequently misunderstood, and is caricatured by many in the Christian church. We've discovered that buried in these rich verses are five features of election. Let me just review them with you one last time, because we will move on from this next time.

We discovered first of all that election is sovereign. Verse 4 says God chose us. God chose. There's no question but that this is an activity of divine choice. Secondly, we discovered that election is individual. God chose us. Paul was referring to the Ephesians who had come to faith in Christ, to himself, and, of course by extension, to all of us as well who are in Christ, who've repented and come to embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That God's choice was individual. It included specific persons. The third feature we discovered of election is that election is in Christ. God chose us in Him. It has reference to our connection to Jesus Christ. The fourth feature of election that Paul unpacks here in this package is election is unconditional. That is, it's not conditioned on anything true about us. God did not choose us because He saw something we were or something we would do. It was unconditional. He chose us before the foundation of the world, before we had done anything bad or good, before there was anything that would be a basis on which for Him to choose. The fifth feature of election that we began to see is that election is intentional. From the middle of verse 4 and running through the end of verse 6 Paul identifies three intentions, or three purposes or goals, that lie behind God's choice of Christians--God's choice of you if you're in Christ. The first purpose that Paul mentions is personal holiness. God chose us--notice verse 4--in order that we would be holy and blameless before Him. The second purpose that God had in mind when He elected is found in verse 5. It's legal adoption. Notice the end of verse 4, "In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." What a miracle of God's grace. God chose us in order to make us truly, really, His adopted sons and daughters, and we looked at that in great detail.

Now those are important purposes that God had in mind in election, but they are, as theologians would say, immediate purposes. Neither of those, as wonderful as they are, is the ultimate purpose. You understand the difference between immediate and ultimate purposes? For example, in my parenting I have an immediate purpose that I want my children to get a good education. I want them to learn a skill. Those are important goals that I have in my parenting, but they are not the ultimate goals that I have in parenting. The ultimate goal for my children is that they would grow up to love and to follow Jesus Christ. So there's a difference. These two that we have already covered are immediate purposes.

Today we finish our study of election by discovering the third purpose, or goal, that lies behind God's electing love, and it is the ultimate purpose that lies behind election. It is God's glory. Look at verse 6. "He chose us to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the beloved." You see, God has chosen us to make us holy, and God has chosen us to make us His adopted sons and daughters, but the ultimate purpose behind sovereign election is the glory of God. That first phrase, to the praise of His glory, is a crucial one to Paul. It's a

recurring theme in this first chapter. In fact, the same basic expression occurs two other times in this one long Greek sentence. It's repeated three times in order to drive home the point that lying behind the entire plan of redemption is this ultimate purpose of God. You see it in verse 6, "to the praise of the glory." You see it in verse 12, "to the praise of His glory," and you see it again in verse 14, "to the praise of His glory." So when you look at the three occurrences together--when this refrain occurs three different times, and you consider each of them individually and bring them together--it's clear that the focus here each time is on the glory of God. So what is Paul saying back in verse 6? He's saying that the Father acted in election ultimately for this one great purpose, His own glory. But this concept of God's acting for His own glory is much greater than simply His purpose in election. It goes much further. You see it is the ultimate end of the entire eternal plan of redemption, not just election. In verses 4 through 6, we learn, it's why the Father chose us. In verses 7 through 12, it's why the Son redeemed us, and in verses 13 and 14, it's why the Spirit sealed us and secured us for eternity. It's the end. It's the reason. It's the ultimate purpose.

Paul makes the same point in Romans 11. Turn there for a moment. Romans 11:33. Let me remind you of the context. Paul has laid out for the Roman church the plan of God's redemption, their sin, and God's plan of redemption and sanctification. In chapters 9 through 11 Paul has talked about this very issue of election, Israel's election and ours, and at the conclusion of that great section on election this is what he writes. Verse 33,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? [Now watch verse 36, this is a monumental verse] For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

You know what Paul is saying? Paul is saying that when it comes to our salvation, or specifically when it comes to election, it is from God--that is, He is the source of it. It is through God--He is the One who accomplishes it, who sustains it. And it is to God--that is, He is the ultimate end for which it occurs. God is the source, sustainer, and end of all things, especially of our salvation, and especially of our election.

God's glory is the ultimate end. But God's glory is more than the ultimate end behind election, and the ultimate end even behind the entire plan of redemption. God's glory is the ultimate end God had for creating everything. Psalm 19:1 tells us that the heavens are declaring the glory of God and His creation is declaring His praise. In Romans 1 we find that God has put Himself on display in His creation. In the anthem the choir sang for us this morning based on Psalm 8 it begins by saying, "How majestic is Your name in all the earth." You have displayed Your splendor above the heavens. You have put Yourself on display in the world You have made.

Let me take one step further. God not only created the universe for His own glory, but God created man for His own glory. You remember those of you who learned the catechism when you were younger, and even if you didn't learn all of the catechism, you probably heard the first question to the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The question is, "What is the chief end of

man?" What is the main purpose we're here? What's the answer? "To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Now, how do we know that? How do we know that the reason we're here is to glorify God? Well, our Lord Jesus, of course, was the perfect example of what we should be. He lived the life we should have lived. And how did He live? For what end did He live? Well, when you come to the very end of His life, on the night before His crucifixion, you remember that He prays what we call the High Priestly Prayer of Christ in John 17. And in John 17:4 He says to the Father, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work that You have given Me to do." Jesus summed up His entire life, his entire reason for existence while He was here, by giving glory to God. You see, when He lived among us for 33 years, the ultimate aim of His life was the glory of God. That's why He lived, and He set an example as to the reason we should live as well. You and I exist for the same great purpose. God's glory is the ultimate reason that all human beings exist. That's true for those who will never believe in Jesus Christ, and that's true for those who will. Certainly, we understand that it's true of those who will believe. In a number of places throughout the scripture that's stated. Jeremiah, the prophet Jeremiah, speaks in Jeremiah 13:11, "'For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so [God says] I have made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to Me,' declares the Lord, [in order] 'that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise and for glory.'" God says I chose Israel for my glory.

But when you come to the New Testament the same thing is true of us, the church. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." We exist to bring glory to God. You can see this very clearly in Romans 9. Turn back there with me. I won't take a lot of time here because we looked at this passage in great detail a few weeks ago, but as Paul unpacks the issue of election, and he makes the point that God makes that decision, he anticipates an objection. Verse 19. He says some of you are going to say to me, wait a minute, what about human responsibility? I mean, what if God finds fault still? Who resists His will? Why would God find fault? We do what we're supposed to do, what He's told us to do. Those who believe believe, and those who don't believe, don't believe. How do you respond to that? Verse 20,

On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

There is God's glory shown in the non-elect. Verse 23. Here's God's glory shown in the elect. "And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory." Here's what I want you to see. God's goal in electing some, and God's goal in passing by others, was exactly the same--His own glory. On the one hand, the glory of His wrath, and His power, and His holiness, and His justice; and on the other hand, the glory of His mercy, and His grace. You and I exist for God's glory.

But is that why you live? Is that why most people live? Of course the obvious answer is no. Most people don't live for God's glory. So why, if you were to ask--or better yet, not ask--if you were to watch and evaluate the lives of the people around you, why do they live? To what end do they live if not to the glory of God? Well, the scripture is pretty clear. They live for personal peace, that is, for comfort. I just want to have a comfortable life and be left alone. Others live for personal prosperity, for success, status, money, and all that comes with it. Others live for personal pleasure. They simply want to satisfy some appetite, whatever that appetite may be. But all of us, apart from Christ, would live as most people of our world do, for our own glory. I was reminded this week as I studied this, that there really are only two options. People in this world are either living for God's glory, or they're living for their own. That's it. And the same is true for you, and the same is true for me. We're either living for our own glory or we're living for God's glory. Or to put it differently, as the apostle John puts it, most people in our world worship a different trinity. They worship the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. How great a sin it is for us to do anything for our own glory, for the pride of life, because it puts us in conflict with God and His greatest purpose in the universe, His own glory.

Now, if we exist to bring God glory, and we do, then we need to ask and answer two very crucial questions. We need to ask, what exactly is God's glory? What do we mean? We've talked about it now for a few minutes, but what does that mean? What is God's glory, this thing we're to live for? And secondly, how can I bring this glory to God? What is God's glory, and how can I bring it to Him? Let's consider those questions together. Nothing could be more important. If this is why God made you, if this is why you exist, if this is why He made the universe, then we better understand what it is, and how we can promote it. So let's consider first of all, what do we mean when we speak of God's glory? What exactly does it mean? Now this is a basic question, but it's important for us to consider because it's so often misunderstood. The New Testament concept is built entirely on the Old Testament concept, so all we have to do is go back into the Old Testament and look at the Hebrew word that is translated glory in our English text. And when you do that, you find that almost every time the word glory appears in our English text in the Old Testament, it translates a Hebrew word "kavothe," is how it's pronounced. It's spelled k a b o d when it's transliterated into English, but it's pronounced "kavothe." The word *kabod*, or glory, literally means heavy or weighty. That's what it means. Heavy or weighty. When scripture uses the word glory to refer to God it always, without exception, has this idea that God is heavy or weighty. Now that's a little strange to us, but you have to understand that in Hebrew thinking, something that is light is worthless. Think "chaff." You throw up the grain into the air and what's light, what has no value, just blows away. On the other hand in the Hebrew mind, what's heavy has value, like the grain that falls back to the earth. So if it's heavy, it has value. That means, when we talk about people being heavy or weighty, if a person has glory, or *kabod*, we are talking about a person whose character is weighty or heavy or excellent or great. Who they are inside is weighty. An English equivalent might be impressive.

Now it always means that, but while it always has that basic meaning of weighty or heavy, it has three distinct uses when it's used of God, and it's important for you to understand this because when you encounter this word glory, it will be used in one of these three ways when it's in reference to God. The first usage of the word glory, or *kabod*, refers to the inherent, internal, intrinsic, weightiness, or majesty, or honor of God. This is who God is. It would be true even if God had never demonstrated it by acting it out. Even if God had never created another

intelligent being to observe it or to praise Him for it, God would be inherently, intrinsically, internally weighty or heavy in His character. Jesus, in John 17:5--the verse that follows the one I quoted for you just a moment ago--he prays, "Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was." In other words, before there was anything created, God had glory. It's who He was. It's who He is. He is heavy, and internally, intrinsically of weight, of character, whether anyone's there to see it or not.

A second use of the word glory is to speak not of who God is internally and intrinsically and inherently, but a second use of it is to speak of the external manifestation of the weightiness or glory of God. This is what is seen when God does something, when God puts who He is internally on display. You remember Isaiah 6:3, the mighty creatures that are listed there cry out holy, holy, holy; and they say the whole earth, the created earth is full of Your glory. Now they're talking about not who God is intrinsically, but they're talking about the display of who He is. Look around you as Paul said in Romans 1. You can see the eternal power and the deity of God in what He's made. He put Himself on display. He does this in various ways throughout the scripture. One of the most common in the Old Testament, when God externally manifests His glory, is what?--the *shekinah*, as it's sometimes called--the glory cloud as some translations have it. God manifested who He was. But it was in Jesus Christ that God most clearly manifested Himself. You remember in John 1:14 we read the Word became flesh and He dwelt among us, and what? We beheld His glory. We saw God in His greatness displayed before our eyes, as it were--those who saw Him walk around the earth there in the land of Israel.

Now those are two usages. The third usage of this word glory, or *kabod*, is not the inherent, internal weightiness of God. It's not the external manifestation of God, but it refers to the honor and praise that intelligent beings ascribe to God because of who He is, and because of how He's put Himself on display. In light of who He is and what He's done, we ascribe honor and praise and weight to Him. It's this third usage that is what we mean when we speak of giving glory to God or bringing glory to God or glorifying God. Listen carefully. To give glory to God or to glorify God does not imply adding something to God that is not already present. You don't give anything to God. Instead, when we speak like that, we're referring to acknowledging and extolling who God intrinsically, inherently, is and how He has manifested that glory around us. We are merely turning around and reflecting back to God the glory of whom He is.

Let me see if I can bring these three usages together by giving you an illustration of it. I love art. I've done some oil painting in the past, and even over my few days away I had the opportunity to do some pencil sketchings and enjoyed that very much. And because of that, I greatly appreciate those who are true masters at it. Michelangelo was one of the greatest of the Renaissance master painters. He was impressive and weighty because of his inherent talent and skill as a painter. And that would have been true even if no one had ever seen his work. But when I walked into the Sistine Chapel, as some of you have done, and I looked up at that magnificent external display of the intrinsic greatness of that artist, I saw him on display. And let me take it a step further. If, after seeing that, if after seeing that magnificent ceiling, and seeing the work that he rendered there in the Sistine Chapel, if I decided that I was going to devote my life to studying his works, to enjoying them, to telling others about them, if I tried to copy his methods, and if I did everything I could to try to bring others to appreciate the greatness of Michelangelo, then I would be glorifying Michelangelo. That's what it means to glorify God. It means to respond to

His inherent weightiness and majesty, to who He is, to His attributes. And it means to respond, as well, to the external manifestations of His inherent glory that are seen in all of His works, works like creation and providence and redemption. It means that I respond to Him by studying Him, by thinking about Him, by enjoying Him, by praising Him and telling others about His greatness, and attempting to copy those virtues of His that I can copy--virtues like love and joy and peace and holiness and righteousness and justice--all of those communicable attributes, as the theologians call them. That's what it means to glorify God. To recognize who He is, and how He's displayed Himself, and to ascribe to Him the weight of whom He is.

Now that brings us to our second important question. How do I do that? How can I glorify God? There really is no more important question than this. You know I grew up in the church, and all of my life, again and again I remember hearing verses like 1 Corinthians 10:31 quoted. "Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." And I remember being told to do it. I remember as a new Christian having a desire to do it, but I don't remember ever being told how. How do I do that? So I think it's important for us to consider how it is that you and I can glorify God. If this is what we were made for, if this is why God chose us, this is why He redeemed us, then we need to know how to do it. Now there are a number of passages in scripture that tell us specific ways we can glorify God. The English Puritan Thomas Watson lists seventeen different ways in his work *The Body of Divinity*; a book, by the way, I highly recommend to you--it's an exposition of the shorter catechism and a good introduction to the Puritans if you've never read any of them before. I also recommend to you Jonathan Edwards work entitled *The End For Which God Created the World*. And, by the way, that rather obscure work can--has been printed in full in a work by John Piper called *God's Passion For His Glory*. Both of those are helpful. But for our sake this morning, and for my own sake, I stepped back after reading all of that material and digesting it, and said, I really want to condense. I want to condense what I've read. I want to condense what the scriptures teach down to what seemed to me to be the six primary ways that you and I can glorify God. Let me just give them to you briefly.

If you want to glorify God, the Bible says, God says, this is how you do it. Number one: Live to exalt Jesus Christ. Live to exalt Jesus Christ. If you want to live for God's glory, it starts by submitting to His Son. Christ made this very clear in John 5:23. He says whoever does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent Me. You see it's impossible to honor God if you don't start by honoring the Son. Believing in His Son, embracing His Son as Lord and Savior. Until you have embraced Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior it is absolutely impossible to live for God's glory. It can't happen. Christ is where the journey begins, and for those of us who have already believed in Christ, the New Testament says that for us, living for God's glory means living to exalt Jesus Christ and His church. Turn to Ephesians 3. Paul makes this point in this very same letter. Ephesians 3:20. After a great prayer for the people there in Ephesus, in verse 20 he says, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him [that is, the Father] be the glory." And how does the Father get glory? "In the church and in Christ Jesus, to all generations forever and ever. Amen." You see, you and I bring the greatest glory to God when we exalt His Son, because that's what God the Father is about--exalting His Son. That's why Paul says in Philippians 1:20, "It's my earnest hope that Christ will be exalted in my body whether by life or by death." It's all about Christ. We are to have one all-consuming passion. A passion for the glory of God, and

the New Testament makes it clear that means we must live our lives for the glory of Christ and for the glory of His church. Let me ask you a question this morning. Before God can you honestly say you live to exalt Jesus Christ? If I can say it respectfully, that's why God lives. That's why the Father lives--to exalt His Son. And when you and I exalt His Son, we glorify God.

A second way we can glorify God is to constantly offer praise, adoration, and thanks to God. There're so many passages in scripture that make this point. Let me give you a couple of my favorites. Second Chronicles 5:13. At the temple worship we read, "When the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice." Now, why were these musicians--what were they doing? They were going to praise and to glorify the Lord. And they did it by lifting up their voices accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music. "They praised the Lord saying He indeed is good for His loving-kindness is everlasting. Then the house, the house of the Lord was filled with [that great glory] cloud," that visible manifestation of the glory of God. Listen, we glorify God when we praise Him. When we adore Him for whom He is, when we thank Him for what he's done. Psalm 22:23, "You who fear the Lord, praise Him; All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him." Now because of the nature of Hebrew parallelism, Hebrew poetry, which is parallelism, what he's equating here is praising God and glorifying God. To praise God is to glorify God. To glorify God is to praise Him. You see every time you and I truly lift our hearts and our voices in praise and adoration and thanksgiving, we are glorifying God.

A third way we can glorify God is determine to live your life not for your own glory, but for God's. I'm talking about a decision. There comes a moment in life when you make a decision to live this way. And you affirm that decision day after day. That's what 1 Corinthians 10:31 means. Whether therefore you eat or drink--he's talking about, in context, he's talking about doubtful things, issues of conscience. If you decide to eat or not eat, if you decide to drink or not drink based on the principles of conscience that are laid down there. And whatever you do, make a decision to act and live to the glory of God. Do what you do so that it brings God glory. Thomas Watson puts it like this. "Aim at the glory of God by preferring His glory to all other things." Stephen Charnock in his *Existence and Attributes of God* writes, "We cannot actually glorify God without direct aims at the promoting of His honor." You know what Charnock was saying? You don't accidentally glorify God. It doesn't happen accidentally. You have to make a decision that that's how you're going to live and that's how you're going to act. David had. David had determined to live for God's glory. In fact, that's what distinguished him as a man after God's own heart, by the way. You want to know why God called him that? Because David lived for God's glory. That's what God lives for. And David got in line with the heart of God, and lived for the glory of God. So when the time of testing, when the moment of testing came, David acted for God's glory. You remember the story of David and Goliath, 1 Samuel 17? By the way, which has nothing to do with facing the giants in your life. It is, instead, about what it means to be a man after God's own heart, and why did David act? Why was David there facing Goliath? What motivated him? Well, listen to his own words. First Samuel 17:46, he says this to Goliath.

This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down, remove your head from you. I will give the dead bodies of the armies of the

Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth [why? in order that--here's why I'm acting] that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly [everybody here] may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's. He will give you into our hands.

David says listen, you can kill me, that will be okay, but the reason I'm here and the reason I believe I'm going to defeat you is because there is a God in Israel, and I live to make His name known. I live to defend His glory, and you have attacked it. Like David, by the way, when we have success as David had, we must graciously and sincerely channel that praise back to God. We must, in our thoughts, and in our minds, and in our words to others, always give the glory we receive back to God. It's okay for somebody to acknowledge what you accomplish, what you do, the skills you have, but what do you do with it. You think inside, yeah, that's right, I am something special, I am great. Or do you take a moment, in a moment's time, and turn that back in your mind and heart to God. God, you're the one who's given me this gift. You've given me this opportunity. You've determined the results. You get all the glory for it. And do you express that to others as well? Determine to live for God's glory.

Number four: Pray for God's glory. In every circumstance pray that God will do that which will bring Him the greatest glory. That's how Jesus prayed. In John 12:28, as He had contemplated His coming crucifixion, this is what He prayed, "Father, glorify Your name." Whatever it costs me, glorify Your name. And He taught us to pray the same way, didn't He? Matthew 6:9, "Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, [what?] Hallowed be Your name." It's a prayer for God's glory. And don't just pray it generally. Pray it specifically. Let me give you a couple of examples of what it might sound like, to pray for God's glory. Lord, I want you to do in my life and in my circumstances whatever will bring You the greatest glory. If that means help, then give me help, but God, if it means sickness, if it means cancer, then do whatever will bring You the greatest glory. In my job and in my business, Lord, give me success if that's what will bring You glory, but if what will truly bring You glory is utter failure, and I fall on my face, then Lord, do that. Whatever will bring You the greatest glory. Lord, if it will be to Your greatest glory, send me or my children to serve You in some obscure, remote, and difficult place, if the glory of Your name can be known that way. Lord, do whatever You want with me. Let me live a full long life, or let me live a short difficult one. Whatever will bring You the greatest glory. That's what it means to pray for God's glory.

Number five: Live a life of obedience and faithful service. This is throughout the scriptures. Let me just give you a couple of examples. Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." They'll see your works and glorify God, by how you live. John 15:8, Jesus told His disciples, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit." Philippians 1:11 says when we are filled with the fruit of righteousness, it results in the glory of God. Live a life of obedience and faithful service.

Number six: Find your greatest delight and joy in God Himself. You know, sadly, our world is tempted to find its joy everywhere else, in sins of every kind. C S. Lewis wrote, "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine

what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." Sometimes it's not in sin; sometimes it's just in the stuff. In the stuff around us, that's where we find our joy. But listen, folks, true and lasting joy is found only in God. I read it this morning from Psalm 73 where the psalmist says, "Besides You, I desire nothing on earth." Psalm 16:11, "In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." And, "In your presence there is fullness of joy." You see, when you and I realize that God really is the only source of true joy, and when we live like we believe it, it brings glory to God. Jonathan Edwards wrote,

The end of the creation is that the creation might glorify God. Now what is glorifying God but a rejoicing at that glory He has displayed. God is glorified not only by His glories being seen, but by its being rejoiced in. When those that see it delight in it, God is more glorified than when they only see it.

Or as John Piper has paraphrased it, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Do you truly find your joy in God? Is there anything in this world that brings you more delight than God? Is there anything on earth you desire more?

How can we glorify God? Live to exalt Jesus Christ. Offer praise, adoration, and thanks. Determine to live your life for God's glory. Pray for God's glory. Live a life of obedience and faithful service. And find your greatest delight and joy in God Himself. Now look at that list for a moment, and ask yourself honestly if you do those things faithfully. And if not, determine today to change, because the chief end of man, your chief end, is to glorify God, and God Himself has said this is how He's glorified.

Now look at Ephesians 1, one last note. Ephesians 1:6. God chose us to the praise of His glory. That's the thrust of Paul's comment. But notice what he adds, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." You see, God chose us to manifest one aspect of His glory especially, His grace. Nowhere in the universe is the majesty and weightiness of God more powerfully illustrated than in His unmerited favor to unworthy sinners, in choosing us for salvation, and then making those sinners His adopted children. That is God's glory shown in His grace. Notice how Paul finishes verse 6. That grace "He freely bestowed on us." Literally, the grace He graced us with. And notice how we get that grace. It's extended to us "in the Beloved," in the one God loves, that is, Jesus Christ. You remember Jesus, at His baptism, the Lord spoke and said, "This is my beloved Son." You know what Paul is saying? He's bringing us right back to the beginning. Reminding us that the grace of election is ours only because of our connection to the unique Son of His love, and we have become beloved because we're in the beloved. By sheer grace, we have been caught up into the love that exists between the Father and the Son. Christian, don't ever lose the wonder of this reality. The eternal God, in eternity past, chose you. How do you respond to that? Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us."

Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank You for your great grace. We thank You that you have lavished it on us in Christ. And Father, we realize today that You have saved us, You have chosen us, You have done everything for one purpose, one ultimate purpose, and that is Your own glory. Help us to live to that end. Father, help us who are Your children to stop living for ourselves, and our own personal comfort, and our own peace, and our own prosperity, and our

own pleasure, and our own glory, and Father, help us instead to live for Your great glory and the glory of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray, Amen.