

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER What do you think of Daylight Savings Time? Do you love Ben Franklin the more? ...or the less?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Bill's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Pastor Bill's opening: "You were made to live in the Glory of God. To shine in it. To reflect it." **How does that work? Have you seen the Glory of God in some way this week? Do you have a testimony?**

Imagine the schedule of the twelve during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. No room at any inn. Traveling a land for three years that stretches almost three hundred miles, north to south. Are you much of a camper? Do you like it?

Look up Luke 9: 28 About eight days after Jesus had said these things, He took with Him Peter, John, and James, and went up on a mountain to pray. **29** And as He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became radiantly white. **30** Suddenly two men, Moses and Elijah, began talking with Jesus. **31** They appeared in glory and spoke about His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **Don't peek ahead: While Jesus is praying and being transfigured and visited, what are the three disciples doing? Does that make sense? Do you fall asleep in church?**

Can you think of another time where these same three were taken aside to pray with Jesus, and again fell asleep...three times? What does this tell you?

32Meanwhile Peter and his companions were overcome by sleep, but when they awoke, they saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with Him. **33**As Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) **Why do you think they are sleeping? If Jesus was praying, what do you think they were doing? Why weren't they praying too? When he wakes up, what is Peter offering as the others are leaving? Why three separate tents? (Do you like to share tents with strangers?) What will Peter make the shelters from? How did they know who was who? How did they identify Moses and Elijah? What do Moses and Elijah have in common? (Bill says, "Moses, the Law. Elijah, the prophet of prophets." Does Elijah have special significance? Look up Malachi 4:5-6.** **5**Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome Day of the LORD. **6**And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse. **What is significant here in this promise? Why do Jews set a place for Elijah at the Passover seder? Does it connect to Jesus' encounter on the mountaintop? How badly do we need this promise today? Does it help us pray for our own children?**

34While Peter was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. **Where in the Old Testament do we see a cloud like this, terrifying and awesome? Why is it terrifying?** **35**And a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to Him!"

36After the voice had spoken, only Jesus was present with them. The disciples kept this to themselves, and in those days they did not tell anyone what they had seen. **Why would this be kept silent? In Matthew's and Mark's accounts, Jesus tells the three not to tell anyone. Why would He do that? Explain the difference between "transformation" and "transfiguration". What exactly did the disciples see?**

Bill says, we see the Glory of God described throughout scripture. The Old Testament talks about it. The wisdom books relate to it. The psalms sing of it. **Why do we not know it? What do we learn of the glory of God in the description of the transfiguration?** Bill defines "glory" as something that is praiseworthy. Something that is outstanding, amazing...an accomplishment whose renown spreads. **Can you define glory?** Bill continues, "Spring is coming...we're going to have glorious days. We have sports heroes we admire." **How does this help with the definition? Name someone from history whose glory we still admire today. What put that glory on that person? How is the glory of God separate and apart and greater still than this definition? Compared to the glory of Tom Brady, what has Tom gained that cannot be lost? What has he not gained? How has Moses achieved a greater glory, even for those who do not believe in God? What is the difference between Moses and Jesus? (Did Moses part the sea? What did part the sea?)**

Look up 2 Chronicles 5: ¹¹Now all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves regardless of their divisions. And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, ¹²all the Levitical singers—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps, and lyres, accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. ¹³The trumpeters and singers joined together to praise and thank the LORD with one voice. They lifted up their voices, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise to the LORD:

“For He is good;
His loving devotion endures forever.”

And the temple, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud ¹⁴so that the priests could not stand there to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

Explain what happened. Why could not the priests stand? Compare this cloud to the cloud that came on the three disciples on the mountaintop. Have you ever experienced a time in worship where everything stops for the glory that comes down? Have you heard testimonies of such a phenomenon?

Look up 2 Peter 1: ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹We also have the word of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt. And you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Did the memory of Peter’s encounter on the mountaintop ever fade? How does our own experience and our own memory buttress faith? How does our own experience “confirm the word of the prophets beyond doubt? Why is it so important to pay attention, even if we sometimes fall asleep?” Bill says, “I work in a very dark place (the state penitentiary), but do you know where the darkest place is? It’s the human heart.” **Do you agree? Why is it so dark? Why is it so important for the Glory of God to shine in our own hearts? What could make this happen? How do we make this happen?**

Why do you think Peter, in his letter to the persecuted church, points to the Glory he saw in Jesus, rather than to the miracles he saw and participated in? Which must come first? Glory or miracles? Can they be simultaneous when the glory is given first place? Bill says, “Pray for miracles. Call on God for miracles. But when you’re in a dark place, look first for the Glory of God. That is what will get you through dark times.” **Do you agree? What does this tell you? What does it even mean? Why do we sing, “Your presence is an open door?”**

Look up John 1: [14](#)The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[15](#)John testified concerning Him. He cried out, saying, "This is He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.'"

[16](#)From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. [17](#)For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. [18](#)No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is Himself God and is at the Father's side, has made Him known.

Read this again, and talk about what John means when he says, "we have seen His glory." What exactly has he seen? How has his experience buttressed his own faith and inspired what he writes? Have we been left out?

Look up Leviticus 10. [3](#)Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD meant when He said:

'To those who come near Me
I will show My holiness,
and in the sight of all the people
I will reveal My glory.'

Have we been left out? What does God say He intends to do? What is our part and obligation in this promise? Look up Psalm 19: [1](#) [The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.](#) [2](#)Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge....**See how Paul backs up David in Romans**
[19](#)For what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. [20](#)[For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from His workmanship, so that men are without excuse.](#) **Do you agree? Or has God kept His glory hidden? What are we missing? Bill asks, "Do you see it? Do you see it every day? God has not kept His glory hidden. Do you agree?**

So, answer his question. Why don't we see it? Why don't we witness His glory every day? What does it take to see it? Why does Paul say above that we are "without excuse"? Bill quotes Tony Evans and says, "If you are not hungry for God, you will never get fed. God only feeds those who are hungry for God." **What do you think? Do you agree? Do you have a testimony to share? Why have you come to Grace? In what way is "the god of this world blinding us to the glory of God"?** How does he do that? Quoting Romans, Bill says, **"We refuse see the glory of God. We do not want to see it." Is what we want a contributing factor?**

Bill relates a time where he had a problem with God always seeking glory. **How do you relate to that? What's up with that? Isn't that selfish? Is that all He wants?**

Can you see why the question itself is nonsensical? How often do you seek your skin? If God is clothed in glory, does He have to seek it? If we do not recognize what He is wrapped in, who has the problem? Look up Colossians 1: 15

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **18**And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence.

How much of all this does God have to look for? How much of it is true? How does acknowledging this benefit us? Does it benefit Him at all? Whose benefit is God seeking? Explain. What happens if, even for a moment, God stops being any of all of what Paul describes? What happens to our existence, if, as Bill points out, "He holds all things together by the Word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3)?

Bill says, when I wake up in the morning, it's because God has new things for me. Every memory comes from God. ***Why is it so vital to acknowledge this? What are the benefits?***

Are there consequences to not acknowledging this? Continue in Romans 1: 21For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and darkened in their foolish hearts. **22**Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools, **23**and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

24Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity for the dishonoring of their bodies with one another. **25**They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise! Amen.

26For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. ***Are there consequences more dire? How many ways have you seen this scripture fulfilled in this day and in this country? How many different manifestations can you name without being too precise in your descriptions?***

How do you pray when you read or hear the news? Can you help us pray?

Bill says, "It is our nature to 'worship' only those things we can control. We become bored with the Glory of God. Think of the Exodus. They were rescued from brutal slavery, and became quickly bored, even with God's visible, daily presence. All they do is complain." ***Have you seen that? What does that make you think? Have you longed for the days before you knew Christ?***

Look up Revelation 16: 8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was given power to scorch the people with fire. 9 And the people were scorched by intense heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues; yet they did not repent and give Him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness, and men began to gnaw their tongues in anguish 11 and curse the God of heaven for their pains and sores; yet they did not repent of their deeds.

What is the people's response to their plight? How telling is it that, given a chance to repent, they do not repent? Bill says, "We must do what we were designed to do. Otherwise, we become what we were never designed to be." **Explain. Why is this not just a bad thing, but the worst?**

Answer Bill's questions: How do you respond to the Glory of God? Are you running to it? Are you embracing it? Share with the group? What have you learned?

Bill says, "We are made for it. And when you fall from the Glory of God, you fall into other things. The world will fill you with its things, a counterfeit glory." **What have you learned?**

Bill says, "If we're not following something bigger than ourselves, we're going to get lost in it. The glory of God is our guide. The glory of God is what we were designed to be." **How do we actually become the Glory of God? Look up 2 Corinthians 3:** 3 It is clear that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. **How does that work? How did the Corinthians themselves become a letter written by Paul?**

What do you know of Christians who by what He did through them became the glory and honor of their age? Begin with Paul...or the Wesley brothers. Explain where God's reputation is clarified and made known today? Is it in a book on a shelf? ...or in a band of His followers who walk in obedience to Him? What would happen to God's reputation if Christians walked today in oneness of Spirit with the Holy Spirit?

Look again at 1 Corinthians 3: 15 And even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. **Does this clarify what happens when we turn to the Lord? Why is the veil taken away? Does this explain why some even close to us are still struggling? Are you still struggling? Can we pray for each other? Bill says, "When we see the glory of God it reflects our future." How? How is it the glory of God and not the story of God that keeps the fire burning?**

Look up Philippians 2:9-11: 9 Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above all names, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.... **How many atheists and agnostics remain after this day? How does this help put things and choices into perspective?**

Have you learned something today of glory? Can you share?