

The Glory of God and Our Influence

Matthew 5:14-16

Most of us struggle at some level with being self-centered. It is pretty easy to see in little kids, right? And though in many cases as we grow up it becomes much more subtle, we can continue to want to orient our lives around ourselves – what we think, feel and want. But the Bible calls us to live for something greater than ourselves; we are called to live for the glory of God. In fact, Paul tells us that everything we do should be motivated by the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). But what does this mean? What kind of people would be so passionate about the glory of God that it would consciously inform everything we do? These are questions we're going to explore the next six weeks. Today, we begin by looking at a passage that introduces this topic as Jesus challenges us to live in such a way that we move others to glorify God.

Opening Discussion: "Doing what I do for the glory of God is often a motivating thought that I have." Agree/Disagree? Explain.

Read Matthew 5:14-16

1. "You" in verse 14 is plural. What is the significance of this?
2. What is Jesus saying when he says that his disciples are "the light of the world"? What does "light" symbolize?
3. What is the point of the illustrations of a city on a hill and a lamp on a lampstand?
4. Jesus isn't saying that we are to try to be light, but that as followers of Jesus this is our collective identity. How should it affect us to know that we ARE light, not that we need to try to be light?

Steve said:

Jesus says *live out your identity through your good works*. Notice that Jesus doesn't command His disciples to get busy and do a bunch of good works. Rather, for Jesus it was a **given** that His disciples would do good works. You cannot be a genuine disciple of Jesus and not do good works. You can admire Jesus and not do good works. You can "go to church" and not do good works. You can read the Bible and not do good works. But you cannot follow Jesus and not do good works. Why? Because by definition a disciple of Jesus is actually learning from Him how to live as He lived.

5. Do you agree with this idea that you cannot follow Jesus and not do good work? Explain.

6. As you consider the command of verse 16, how is it that our good works can result in the Father receiving glory from others?

Steve said:

If we are going to be the type of people whose lives naturally convince others to glorify God, we will need to be passionate about the glory of God. We will need to be convinced on a heart level that God is infinitely perfect and beautiful in every aspect of His being - so convinced that we are enamored with Him and His ways. When we are that passionate about the glory of God, we take our eyes off of ourselves (what I think, feel, and want) and we become fascinated with Him and what he thinks, feels, and wants. What I'm telling you and what I'm telling myself is that the believer's antidote to being self-absorbed is to become passionate about God's glory.

7. How do we grow in becoming more and more passionate about the glory of God? Practically, what can we do to develop this God-focused motivation?

Practicing the Rhythms of Rooted



Daily Devotion: Consider reading and reflecting on the following passages (Ex. 33:17-23; 1 Chronicles 16:23-27; Psalm 8:1-4; 19:1-6; Isaiah 6:1-4; John 1:14; 1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 3:20-21; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 4:11, 21:21-27)