

Lesson 9**GLORIFYING GOD IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE**

Working for the church and operating my own business has given me a unique perspective, for which I am grateful. I was unbalanced. I am becoming more balanced and as a result more scriptural. Work is good.

As a business owner, I have also learned that when you work well and offer a helpful product or service, you are contributing to the greater good of the larger community. Every business needs a lot of different folks to make it go. In that sense, we are part of a team. We have excellent people that help our company: from the printers, box manufacturers, and plastic injection molders on the production side; to the office staff, sales reps, and customer service folks on the marketing side; and to UPS, FedEx, and United States Postal Service on the shipping side. We have been blessed by the talent and dedication of the people around us. We are glad they are working well to the best of their abilities and not wishing they were doing something more “spiritual.” Their contributions have contributed to our success.

Occupations of the People of God

Abraham had a large herding operation. Today we might call him a rancher or cattleman. He employed hundreds of people and had thousands of animals. Boaz, who married Ruth, is described as a “wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem.” (Ruth 2:1, NLT). Moses was raised in the courts of Pharaoh, and then was a shepherd for forty years in the wilderness before God called him to be a prophet. Daniel was in politics, eventually rising to the equivalent office of a prime minister. Amos said, “I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs.” (Amos 7:14). Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla were tentmakers and Esther was a queen. The Bible is full of people who faithfully followed God yet had a variety of occupations. They were just as spiritual and committed as Ezra and Isaiah.

In Exodus 35:30–33, Moses spoke about a man who was anointed by the Holy Spirit to work with his hands. “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft.”

In any occupation which God leads us to, it is not what we do, but whom we do it for! When we love and serve the King of Kings, whether we eat, write math books, seek to raise godly children, or teach God’s Word, we are laboring for the glory of God.

Citizens of Heaven

“Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.”
(Philippians 1:27, NLT)

This concept of glorifying God is a little vague and hard for me to grasp. I have trouble thinking about what it looks like to glorify God when I eat and drink. I like this verse in Philippians because it helps me to have a concrete goal. As a citizen of heaven, I want my behavior and lifestyle to make my friends and neighbors know that I love God first and foremost. I believe citizens of heaven are honest in how they conduct themselves in business. When we are heavenly-minded, we treat everyone with compassion and respect, and love our neighbors as well as our enemies. We pray for everyone and are careful about the use of our tongue. We attend church regularly. I think you get the picture. These characteristics describe heavenly citizens regardless of where we work or minister.

I am reminded of the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

As a citizen of heaven and committed follower of Jesus, I want to conduct myself in word and deed to let my light shine and bring glory to God.

Prayer

Help us to have the mind of Christ as we view our labor and our ministry. Enable us to live and work unto the Lord as citizens of heaven. Help our conduct point people to Jesus and bring glory to God. Amen.

Lesson 9

FELLOWSHIP

When I first heard the gospel at age 14 at a Christian camp, I returned home and attempted to follow Jesus by myself, but I did not do well. My faith was not strong enough to withstand temptations and seasons of discouragement. When I recommitted my life to Jesus several years later in college, God brought four other guys into my life who became my spiritual brothers and best friends. We helped each other in our walks with God and encouraged each other to grow in our faith. We are still good friends to this day.

As we have seen in previous studies, when we embrace God's Son to take away our sins and give us eternal life, we become adopted children of God and a part of His family. We are born again and become members of the body of Christ. We are now related to each other in Christ, and are part of His team, the church. I hope you each have close friends who love God with all their hearts. If not, ask God to lead you to other committed believers, so that you can pray for each other and seek first the kingdom together.

Godly Friends

This idea of following Jesus together is mentioned throughout the Bible. Here are few verses which I think of as I contemplate the concept of fellowship.

"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 NLT)

"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."
(Proverbs 27:17 NLT)

"Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble." (Proverbs 13:20 NLT)

"Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for 'bad company corrupts good character.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33)

One Another

If you want to read several encouraging verses, do a search on your computer for all the passages that mention "one another."

"Encourage one another and build one another up."
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

“Keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (1 Peter 4:8–10)

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.” (Hebrews 10:24 NLT)

Two by Two

By nature, I am a loner, but I have a wonderful group of encouraging friends. As I said in the beginning of this study, I wouldn’t be where I am today without their support and encouragement.

Jesus sent out His disciples in pairs. “The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit.” (Luke 10:1, NLT) In the Old Testament, men of God are seen working together, like Elijah and Elisha, and Moses and Joshua.

In the book of Acts, Paul takes many missionary journeys. Notice the two words which appear frequently in these adventures: “Paul and.” He was always with a companion.

“It seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.” (Acts 15:22)

“Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia.” (Acts 13:13)

“The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.” (Acts 17:10)

The Body of Christ

As members of His body, when we suffer, we have brothers and sisters to bear our burdens with us and encourage us when we are most needy. When we have reasons to rejoice, we also have a group of kindred spirits to share our joy. This is called a party :-)

“Speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (Ephesians 4:15–16, NLT)

“We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” (Romans 12:5)

“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Power in His Presence

Where two or three agree, there is power in united prayer and God is present in a special way. I have probably been to over one thousand worship services, Bible studies, and prayer

meetings. When I have the right attitude, I have connected with the living God in every meeting. I like being with God's people, for God Himself is in our midst!

"If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, My Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as My followers, I am there among them."
(Matthew 18:19–20, NLT)

"Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near." (Hebrews 10:25 NLT)

Perfect Harmony Modeled

The Father, the Spirit, and the Son are in complete unity. I hear the heart of God in this prayer by Jesus for us. God's desire is for His followers to experience the unity which the Father, the Son, and the Spirit share.

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as You and I are one—as You are in Me, Father, and I am in You. And may they be in Us so that the world will believe You sent Me."
(John 17:20–21, NLT)

Prayer

Help us to find other believers to walk with us on our journey. Lead us to kindred spirits and people of like precious faith so we can grow together. Amen.

