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PO Box 3572 * Oldtown, ID 83822 * www.gentleshepherd.com * September 2018

GOD'S GLORIOUS ATTRIBUTES—Part 2 HIS GLORY By Rayola Kelley



In this series of articles I will be considering who God is. As many know, I was saved out of a cult over 40 years ago. There were a lot of good and decent things about my former religious affiliation, but the one question that people of my cult failed to answer, explain, or were not forthcoming about was, "Who do you say Jesus is?" Simple enough question, but when I came face to face with my own perception about who I perceived Jesus to be after all my religious influences, I had a vague notion at best.

Some people could say my vague notion about God rested with me and not my former religious affiliation. It is true that we each have to personally seek out and answer this question for ourselves, but what is the greatest responsibility of any religion: to point its followers to the true God, and teach them about who He is and what our relationship must be to Him to ensure salvation.

Granted, I had a sense about religion and piousness, but I had no reality about God. I was sentimental to the babe in the manger but mystified by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. I may have had the beginning part of the story as to the manger scene, but I did not have the end right as to His work of redemption. As far as the middle of the story was concerned it was nothing but white, blank pages that had a few facts and Bible stories written here and there, revealing that the reality of God was clearly missing

from all of it where I was concerned.

The problem with being affiliated and involved with man's religion is that for the most part that is what we allow to define our spiritual life; yet we are to reflect the Jesus of the Bible and not our human best, our religious piousness, or our self-righteousness (*Isaiah 64:6; Romans 7:18*). We are not here to advance theologies, doctrines, or beliefs but to advance the knowledge and reality of the Jesus of the Bible.

So many times religion puts the best foot forward, but fails to put the right presentation of God and Jesus forth. Many people have bits and pieces of the Bible they use to confirm their own understanding, but when you put up their understanding to the light of the full counsel of God, it falls apart. The reality is if we don't get God right, we will be wrong about everything that has to do with religion and our understanding of the Lord. If we don't get Jesus right, we will be standing on a faulty foundation that will collapse once tested, and those standing on it will taste judgment (*1 Corinthians 3:11; Matthew 7:24-27*).

The question is what distinguishes the real God from the false gods that have been presented through the years? We are given various insights about the matter of possessing the right God. First we are told there will be no excuse for us not to know the true God when we encounter the right teachings. *Romans 1:20* states, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

What does creation declare about God: that He exists, and only a fool would declare in his or her heart that God does not exist (*Psalms 14:1; 53:1*)? In fact, such fools are gambling their souls on this great lie. *Psalms 97:6* declares, "The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people

see his glory." What do the heavens reveal when it comes to God: His glory?

It is important to point out what *Romans 1:21-23* states about the glory of God, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." The Apostle Paul clearly states that man's understanding of God can become corrupt, stripping Him of His true glory in their minds or perception of Him. Although God does not change, man can change God in his mind and render Him into a mere image while surrounding Him in superstition.

This brings us back to the word, "glory." What is "glory?" It has to do with the nature and character of someone or something. "Glory" points to that which would bring distinction to someone or something. If something stands out to you about someone, then that is a point that brings some type of recognition to that person. Such a point of recognition shines a light on the person, but the question is, is that particular quality deserving of bringing a certain type of recognition to that individual?

We see this type of glory given when it comes to actors and athletes. A spotlight is put on them as to their abilities and the money they may earn. The problem with this type of glory is that it is all outward and in many cases the person has no real substance or character to back it up. To put a spotlight on ability and talent when there is no character to back it up will prove to be vainglory in the end, empty and quickly passing when the person's character is tested. The Bible speaks of vainglory in reference to man's glory. After all, man is in a fallen state

and has no substance that can truly warrant such consideration. In fact, to give man glory for surface abilities is like substituting bronze shields in place of the gold shields that have been taken by an opposing army as in the case of Solomon's son, Rehoboam (*1 Kings 14:22-28*). The bronze shields not only represented the lame glory that Rehoboam presented, but the past glory of national Israel.

The next word that glory is associated with is the word, "honor." What does it mean to truly honor someone? Consider what the voices were saying around the throne in John's vision in *Revelation 5:12*, "*Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings.*" Honor cannot be afforded one who is not worthy of such consideration. To be honorable means doing right and choosing the morally excellent way of going beyond the call of duty. Such honor will be willing to make the necessary sacrifice to ensure the integrity of a matter. There are many people who claim they deserve honor. In fact, people in high positions of authority will often claim or demand honor from everyone. Allow me state, we must respect the title, office, or position a person may hold, but honor has to do with personal integrity and those who are honorable never have to demand it because others will naturally give it.

If a person in a high position lacks personal uprightness, there are a couple of legitimate conclusions you can immediately draw: 1) they will make a mockery out of their office, 2) they will abuse the authority of their office, and 3) they will prove to be a fool and counterfeit, ending up by becoming a byword in people's mouths and a footnote in history. A leader cannot expect to be honored when that individual is not honorable towards others, including those he or she disagrees with. As believers the only way we can honor those we disagree with is by becoming an avenue of God's grace towards them.

Being honorable will have different meanings to different people. That is why in *Ecclesiastes 10:7*, Solomon makes reference to a servant riding a horse of honor while the prince is walking like a lowly servant. The world

is upside down. In many cases the world prefers and exalts those who are fools to places of honor, while reducing honorable people into places of servitude and oppression. However, you can't keep honorable people down. They will grow where they are planted. Therefore, what distinguishes the honorable from the dishonorable who have been unjustly and unfairly exalted? The answer is simple. True honor is morally upright in action, pure in service, and just in judgment. It is not self-serving but seeks opportunities to be honorable in matters regardless of what is going on, chooses to do right when it is inconvenient, and will be sacrificial when necessary.

The next word that has to do with glory is "weight." Now this word may seem a bit unusual, but when we consider God's glory, it can be weighed in a sense, because it carries a certain weight with it. Call it authority that is credible, power that is properly channeled and fair justice, all of which can be identified. For Christians it means God's glory can be discerned. Discernment is a matter of properly classifying something such as an apple from an orange. They are both fruit, but they are not the same fruit.

As already stated, there are different types of glory. There is the glory of man which is vainglory because there is no lasting substance behind who he is and what he does. There is also the fading glory of the world. It glitters and can almost blind you to the fact that its glory is temporary. There is the false glory of man-made religion, which gives off a false light, but properly apply the sword of truth to it and it will quickly part revealing the darkness that hides an empty tomb (*Philippians 2:-5; 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 23:24-29*).

God's glory can be weighed in the balances and not be found wanting like the foolish glory that was displayed by the arrogance of King Belshazzar when his kingdom was weighed in the balance and found inadequate (*Daniel 5:22-28*). It was once explained that in the times of Daniel, the king of Babylon would set up all the idols of the people his army conquered as a sign of power and domination, but we know there are no images where the Lord is concerned; therefore, the pagan king demanded

that they bring him the utensils seized from the temple in Jerusalem. It is important to point out that God's balance has the Law on one side. If you know Christ, it will be Jesus who will be weighed in your place. He fulfilled the Law and is the end of it, meaning He satisfied it. He also is the end of the Law for every believer who receives Him by faith (*Romans 8:9-11; 10:4*). As believers we are hid in Christ; therefore, when we are weighed, it is Christ who will balance out the Law, but if a person is weighed without Jesus, like the foolish king in Daniel 5, he or she will be found wanting, guilty of breaking the Law, and will taste the wrath of God (*Romans 3:19-20*).

Another word associated with glory is "splendor." Splendor points to God's majesty. When we consider the word "splendor," we are reminded of the brilliance that shines forth through God's glory. *Hebrews 1:3* gives us this insight about Jesus, "*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*"

The splendor of God was clearly manifested in Jesus. The brightness it speaks of is the Shekinah glory of God and it was seen in the countenance and ways of Jesus. The three disciples witnessed it on the Mount of Transfiguration in *Matthew 17:1-9* (refer also to *John 1:14*), when Jesus' flesh parted to allow that heavenly glory to shine forth. Likewise, we are to reflect that heavenly glory in this world according to 2 Corinthians 3:7-18. As the Apostle Paul explained, there was the first glory of the administration that was ministered by Moses through the Law. Moses' face had to be covered by a veil, for man could not stand to look at the light of it for it would reveal his sorry state. The second administration was redemption secured by Jesus. Man could look on God's glory because it was veiled in Christ. We are told that when man receives Jesus the veil put on his heart by the first administration is taken away so that he can see Christ. It is from that point on man is to take on the likeness of Christ in order to shine forth His glory. The Apostle Paul

makes this declaration, *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 3:18). The idea of being changed into the same image from glory to glory, points to the ongoing work of grace. It is grace that takes us from one aspect of the Spirit's work to a greater revelation of it through Christ. This is brought out in *John 1:16, "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."*

The next word we are going to consider is "majesty." Splendor points to the brightness of something, but majesty is in reference to the grandeur of something. Grandeur often refers to the vastness of the beauty of something. For God His majesty is impressive, beyond description. Oftentimes the words, "majesty" and "grandeur" are words used to express the concept of God, but they never can describe the splendor of His creation, the majesty of His design, and the grandeur of His work.

"Dignity" is another word that is used in reference to glory. Dignity has to do with respect. The Lord does not need to earn our respect; rather, He deserves it because of who He is. The manifestations of disrespect are insolence and rebellion. One of the important lessons I have learned in ministry is that no matter what, you must maintain the dignity of a person if you are ever going to minister to him or her.

We are clearly living in a perverse time where the truth of God is becoming a rare, ignored, and rejected gem, and civility has become a lost art as rudeness takes center stage in many arenas. Today in the present environment where name-calling and crude labeling is an acceptable practice, and at times worn like some sick badge of courage used for bragging rights, it has made society to appear as if it is going mad with its own vitriol. You watch people take on a thug stance in order to try to strip certain people of their dignity who don't agree with them to justify destroying that person. Reputations are put on the public block and auctioned off to the one who can embellish the lie with greater lies because there are no consequences. This is the lowest way

man can take and as Christians we must choose the excellent way and avoid getting into peoples' cesspool.

I have learned if I am to minister to a person I must ensure his or her dignity remains intact. I must not hit below the belt with false accusations to knock any resistance out of them because I do not agree with them, as a means to put them in their place or silence them altogether with intimidation. I also must not put them down with slander so I can step on top of them to declare some type of sick victory.

When people strip others of their dignity, they themselves become the worst type of casualty. They become a hollow voice in the wind, a captive to personal prejudices, a blind follower of their folly, and clueless to the precipice of arrogance they are standing on as their house of cards collapses all around them and from under them. Because of the toxic environment, man has no problem in trying to discredit God, His existence and character. The present environment is not new but it seems to be consuming the whole world with a fanaticism that is threatening to devour everyone who dares to stand in its path, but eventually it will be consumed by its own devices.

We live in precarious times, but the Lord still reigns and one day He will cause all to stand silent before Him as every person declares what we as believers know, that "Jesus is Lord," and they will do it to the glory of the Father (*Philippians 2:9-11*). His glory will consume the vainglory of man, judge the temporary glory of the world, and reveal the darkness behind the false glory of man-made religion.

The final aspect of God's glory is that the ultimate response to it will be worship. God alone deserves worship. His attributes will reveal His eternal glory. Its brightness will produce repentance and humility, while His splendor awe and worship, His majesty submission, and His dignity honor. It is the God of heaven and earth that deserves worship, and in the end He will receive the worship He rightly deserves because He is God, the great I AM that I AM. There is nothing before, after, or beside Him. He alone stands in the place of majesty, honor, and glory. †

FROM JONI & FRIENDS

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." 2 Corinthians 4:7

Author Robert Jewitt imagines a dialogue between the apostle Paul and our popular culture. He talks about 2 Corinthians 4, where Paul compares our earthly bodies to common earthenware jars. Back in the first century, these pots were just ordinary containers. Nothing special, nothing spectacular. After all, you had to carry your belongings in something, and back then, it was a clay pot.

What is it in our culture, the author asks, that would carry the same common insignificance? How about a cardboard box? Our bodies, to paraphrase 2 Corinthians, are like the box your new shoes came in. Like the box they use at the department store to wrap your new sweater. But *within* that box, as with Paul's jars of clay, we hold a priceless treasure.

Several years ago, my own dear mother, Lindy Eareckson, left this earth for heaven. In that moment, she had no more need of the box that had wrapped her life for eighty-seven years. It was empty, with worn-out corners, bends and wrinkles. And yet... it had been the vessel in which the treasure of the Spirit of Christ had dwelt. And He shone all the more brightly through the edges and thin places of that box as it began to collapse with age. He was radiant in her, shining mightily, as she served our family, as she stuck by my side all the years I was in the hospital, and as she gave, gave, and gave. But now, praise God, the treasure is safely home.

Just think, the circumstances that crush you, wear you down, or stretch you at the seams are the very forces that release God's beautiful light, pouring out from within you.

Who would place treasure in a cardboard box? How amazing, Lord, to think that You would entrust the very wealth of heaven into a common container like me. Shine brightly, I pray, through every gap, joint, seam and crevice! †

APPROVED UNTO GOD
PART 3
DREAMS AND VISIONS
By Jeannette Haley

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” – Matthew 5:8

Anything these days pertaining to the subject of dreams and vision should be accompanied by a huge sign that reads: CAUTION – to proceed any further can be dangerous. I liken it to standing waist deep in the ocean with the drop-off into the dark abyss on one side, and nothing but shallow water on the other. Turn one way and you’re in over your head and will drown; turn the other way and you’re not going to get very far. On top of that, sharks lurk in both extremes. Thus it is with the debate that often rages about whether dreams and visions are for today, or not. Since Satan works in extremes, let us pray that the Holy Spirit will direct our steps towards truth and wisdom, and anchor our thoughts in the immovable Rock of ages.

We know that God used dreams and visions throughout the Bible to communicate to people instruction, warnings, counsel and prophecy. The dreams of several Old Testament people are recorded in Scripture. They include King Abimelech of Gerar (Genesis 20:3), Jacob (Genesis 28:12, 31:10), Laban (Jacob’s uncle, Genesis 31:24), Joseph (Genesis 37:5, 9), an imprisoned butler and baker (Genesis 40), Egypt’s Pharaoh (Genesis 41), Midianites who would soon be conquered by Gideon (Judges 7), King Solomon (1Kings 3:5), King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 2:3, 4) and the prophet Daniel (Daniel 7).

The great divide, as I call it, in the debate concerning dreams and visions is between Genesis and Pentecost. Pre-Pentecost proponents declare that all dreams and visions for God’s people ended at Pentecost, and that is that, with the fulfillment of *Joel 2:28-32a*, “*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heav-*

ens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.” Peter quoted this portion of Scripture on the day of Pentecost (*Acts 2:17, 18*).

On the other side are those who staunchly dig in and maintain that these Scriptures are futuristic and are for the Kingdom Age (Millennium reign of Christ) only. You can stand on your head for a week and still not be able to come up with a contextual biblical explanation for this one.

Since we who are alive on planet earth at this time are clearly between these two points, that is, the historical first outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the future Kingdom age on earth, we have a choice to make. We can either believe that God still can, and does, speak to His people through, not only the indwelling Holy Spirit, but on occasion, and as He sovereignly chooses, through dreams and visions; or, we can decide to believe that, because we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, God never gives His people any dreams or visions, ever. End of discussion.

But, is it? Anyone with even a smidgeon of knowledge about the New Testament knows that many “post-Pentecostal” people were given dreams and visions from God, and these were believers who also operated in the gifts of the Spirit. Consider Ananias. *Acts 9:20* tells us, “*And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*” What if Ananias had come to the conclusion that the days of dreams and visions from the Lord were a thing of the past? Thank God he wasn’t as some today who arrogantly clothe themselves in a type of “church-doctrines, traditions, teachings-of-men, and don’t think outside of the box straight-jacket!”

What about *Acts 10:1-8* which tells us about Cornelius who “*saw in a vision an angel of God coming in to him*” and instructing him what to do? And, what about Peter who “*fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened*”?

(Read *Acts 10:10-20*). How does one explain away the visions that the Apostle Paul had? He had several visions in his missionary career. One vision sent him to preach in Macedonia (*Acts 16:9-10*). Another encouraged him to keep preaching in Corinth (*Acts 18:9-11*). God also gave him visions and revelations of heaven (*2 Corinthians 12:1-6*). Finally, there is the Apostle John who, while exiled on the Island of Patmos received the vision of the Book of Revelation. John’s vision explains in greater detail some of the events that God had shown to Daniel. Therefore, *Joel 2:28-32* was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, is still being fulfilled, and will continue to be fulfilled.

The difference between dreams and visions is that dreams occur when a person is asleep and visions occur when a person is awake. Since Satan is proficient at imitation how does a real Christian know if what he or she dreams or sees in the spirit are of God or not? We need to always discern the source of any dream or vision we may have. First, a dream from God will stand out from any normal dreams a person may have. It will be definite in its impression on your mind and soul; it will be vivid, compelling, and unforgettable. It will move you to press into God in order to understand if it is literal, symbolic or both; and, it will be so deeply embedded into your very being, and impossible to forget as opposed to normal dreams, that you will know it is from God.

Keep in mind, the Holy Spirit does not impart dreams and visions to entertain us on a regular basis; rather, what He imparts into our conscious minds is ordained by the sovereignty of God for His purposes. This means dreams can be a warning, a commission, a revelation, or instruction. It has been my experience that God will confirm a dream He has given to me either through another dream that has the same elements or corresponding symbolism to it, or He will give another person the same dream at the same time. For example, a number of years ago He gave Rayola the same impactful dream three times with the same details of a future event, thus confirming that it was from God.

Born again believers who are grounded in the whole counsel of God's Word have no problem in discerning if a dream or a vision is of God or if it's an attack from the enemy. Everything has to be tested by the Word of God and the spirit behind it must be discerned. I have to state that warning and/or prophetic dreams, and visions, from God can bring an element of awesome fear to them because the content of such revelations is always sobering, and often shocking to our soul and spirit. But, when Satan intrudes with his version of a "dream" or "vision" the entire content is energized by an actual spirit of fear, which can result in sheer terror and even panic. God's warning dreams are undergirded by His Spirit and Truth which, while sobering, are orderly and infused with His peace *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."* (2 Timothy 1:7.) We must always test dreams or visions (or "voices") by the Word of God. Anything or anybody that does not agree with God's Word should be automatically dismissed as false. Again, the spirit behind it must be discerned, you need to pray about it, and then "put it on the shelf" and wait on God concerning it, to either bring understanding to you, or bring about its fulfillment.

Today there are more false prophets cluttering the landscape than there are protesting libs and liars on the fake news channels. And, that makes up quite a multitude! False prophets, like noxious weeds, range from the obscure foxes that creep into churches, to the bolder wolves in sheep's clothing that are looking for an opportunity to "share" their "dreams" and "visions", complete with their own private interpretation to innocent sheep. This usually results in confusion and untold damage to souls. Sometimes "seeds of discord" are sown among the brethren (which God hates) that cause division in churches. God told the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 13:1-4, *"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not*

hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him."

The "false gods" of today that such dreamers and visionaries lead people to follow after is usually themselves. Instead of pointing people to the Word of God as their final authority, and instead of encouraging people to pray and ask the Lord if their purported "dreams" and "visions" are valid, they set themselves up as infallible "God-ordained," "anointed" authorities that everyone must agree with, submit to, and follow. False prophets are always after a following, and therefore there is no end to their "dreams" and "visions" which are usually so lengthy, convoluted and bizarre that they could rival Sci-Fi. They act as if God is pouring out visions day and night into their heads (that only they can "interpret") for them to post on their Facebook pages or Web Sites in order to gain not only followers, but financial support. In reality, real dreams and visions from the Lord are rare, and if and when they do occur, they are usually short and to the point. Sometimes when God's people are going through a particularly difficult or potentially dangerous situation the Lord will give frequent warnings and guidance until the danger or situation is past, but again, the Holy Spirit is more than able to reveal specifically what people need to know or do in very short or limited content, or by a strong impression.

The question is, are there any real prophets in the Body of Christ today? No and yes. Allow me to explain. There are no prophets today comparable to the Old Testament prophets who were called by God and moved upon by His Spirit to speak for God to kings, monarchs and the people of Israel. (See 2 Peter 1:21.) Dennis Bratcher explains in his article about the prophets, "The phenomena of Old Testament prophecy can be traced historically as well as culturally. Setting aside the influences from surrounding cultures (and they were con-

siderable), it is helpful to note the time frame in which Old Testament prophecy flourished. Even though Moses is referred to anachronistically as the paradigm of a prophet (Deut 34:10), Old Testament prophecy arose with Samuel in the eleventh century BC, and all but died out by the sixth century BC in the post-exilic era. There were a few prophets after the exile, but beginning with Ezekiel most were also priests and served a slightly different role in Israel (Haggai, Zechariah). Malachi, around 450 BC, is considered the last of the Old Testament prophets."

False prophets that roam among the flock of God today try to dupe people into believing that they are equal in status, relevance and importance to the Old Testament prophets in that their "prophecies" are supposedly equal to biblical prophecies, and that their words are on a par with the Word of God. This is how cults are formed. Sometimes in Christian groups undiscerning people gravitate to individual "personal prophets" who always seem to be ready to give a personal "word of prophecy." Thus we see that there are false prophets for the masses, and false prophets for individuals, but they all are under the influence of familiar spirits.

In the New Testament *"Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied," Luke 1:67.*

Yet, the question still remains are there any real prophets today, or did they cease after Pentecost? The answer is yes, there are prophets in the Body of Christ according to *Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:4*, but they are not in the same office, position or calling as the Old Testament prophets through whom the Holy Spirit established the Scriptures. New Testament prophecy consists of either forthtelling, which is proclaiming the Word of God in the present, such as in preaching, or foretelling which is future. Some of the other New Testament prophets were John the Baptist, the Apostles Peter, Paul, and John, Agabus (and other prophets from Jerusalem, *Acts 11:27*), plus certain other prophets named in *Acts 13:1*, Judas and Silas (*Acts 15:32*). Concerning prophetesses in the New Testament, Mary prophesied (*Luke 1:46-55*), and Elizabeth (*Luke 1:41-45*) as

well as the prophetess Anna (*Luke 2:36*). Other women who prophesied were Philips four daughters (*Acts 21:9-14*.) Again, God, in *Joel 2:28, 29* said, *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”* [Emphasis added.]

Therefore, in spite of all the false prophets in the world today that our Lord warned us to beware of, there are true prophets of God. They may be far and few between, but, they are not adding to, subtracting from or re-writing the Bible, nor are they seeking for a following. They are not usually well known, nor do they want to be, and they are not especially popular in either the world or in the worldly church because they only speak the truth, not what people with itching ears want to hear.

As for dreams and visions, yes, God still gives dreams and visions for His purposes, such as in the Moslem world. The reason for this is two-fold: 1) Most Muslims do not own a Bible, or have any means to hear the Gospel, and 2) they are very open to dreams and visions in their culture. This may rock some of our “doctrinal boats” but God is not limited by the neat little religious boxes man puts himself, and God, into. The Bible is very clear that where there are two or three witnesses, a thing is established, and there are ample witnesses from around the globe to establish this as being so. Furthermore, these new believers are willing to suffer rejection, persecution, and the loss of all things including family and friends. They are willing to undergo torture, and even death because of their faith in Christ. Their commitment to Jesus and the fruit of their lives bear witness to genuine conversion and salvation.

Finally, in all things we need to keep our priorities in line with God’s Word, knowing that *“though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing”* *1 Corinthians 13:2.* †

RAYOLA’S Q & A CORNER

Q: *What does the Bible mean by “foolish jesting?” Is it telling bad jokes or watching comedy?*

A: God gave us a sense of humor, but foolish jesting has nothing to do with humor. It is wrongly labeled as humor to cover up offensive, embarrassing, coarse language or implications, allowing the perpetrator to get away with making crude statements to avoid rebuke and paying the consequences for it. Foolish jesting is often demeaning in some way to a certain person or group of people and is laced with something that is quite dishonorable such as sexual intonations or prejudicial slants. When confronted for their coarse objective language, these individuals often fall back on the fact that it was normal or humorous to others, implying that the person who is taking offense at it is too prudish, out of touch, or void of any humor.

Let’s just consider the meaning of these two words. The word “foolish,” points to someone being silly, buffoonery, dull, stupid, or absurd. Keep in mind this is in relationship to a person’s conversation or speech. People who are void of respect towards a certain subject will often act silly or disrespectful when talking about it. Those who are indifferent as to how their speech will affect others around them will act like a buffoon, someone who is out of place and has no real credibility. Since these individuals are indifferent about the affect their conversation can have on others, they will appear stupid, and their insistence on sticking with their right to stay the course in their foolish speech will make them look absurd in the end.

Now let us combine the first word “foolish” with the second word, “jesting.” The main word that is associated with jesting in the Strong’s Concordance is vulgar. There are various words associated with the word “vulgar,” such as bad mannered, uncouth, unrefined, rude, ill-mannered, rough, and loutish. Foolish jesting points to someone who is being foolish in his or her speech, shows bad manners in relationship to those present and proves to be uncouth because it is out of order and an embar-

rassment to others. It is unrefined because it lacks purity and rude because it is not honorable and will cause ill feelings in the end. Such language is rough for others to hear and a source of impoliteness.

The Apostle put it in this way, *“That you put off concerning the former conversation of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”* (*Ephesians 4:22, 29*). The Apostle Paul also identified this corrupt speech as being one of the sins that will grieve the Holy Spirit (*Ephesians 4:30*).

Our speech will identify us to whom and what is influencing us the most. As Christians such speech should never come out of our mouths because it identifies us to the corrupt “old man” and “former life” that should have been crucified. It is speech that will cause us to lose all authority and respect from others. It is also what *Matthew 12:36, 37* classify as idle words. We are told that every idle word will be judged and that our words will justify us or condemn us when we give an account on the Day of Judgment.

If people are being honest about matters, they know what will be embarrassing and offensive to others, but sadly people who insist on foolish jesting without consideration of how others may see it or take it couldn’t care less, and have no problem playing a fool when opening their mouths, whether it is to shock others with their crudeness or to get a sick point across. Sadly, some can’t help it because they have given way to it for so long that is who they have become as to their person, corrupt through and through (*Titus 1:15-16*). †

VANCE HAVNER QUOTES

“The church is so subnormal that if it ever got back to the New Testament normal it would seem to people to be abnormal.”

“Doing leads more surely to talking than talking to doing.”

“If we don’t come apart, we will come apart.”

Code of Honor

By Skip Moen

"But not so with you. Rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." Luke 22:26 ESV

Not so with you – I recently gave a lecture on Reluctant Leadership. That prompted me to look at some of the material I wrote years ago about leadership fads, especially the idea that everyone can be a leader with the proper training. That leadership fad will run its course. Eventually we will learn that leadership is a verb, not a noun. Then we will realize ubiquitous leadership training is wasted effort. We should be training those who are born to lead and guide others, not expecting everyone born to become a leader. Once we see this distinction, we can concentrate on Yeshua's insight into leadership. Biblical leadership is *servicing*, a verb for everyone. It is the application of each person's unique gift for the benefit of others. Leading is serving someone else according to the way God made you.

Yeshua's disciples thought leadership was a matter of status. The greater the rank, the more important the person. Those who lead are at the top of the pyramid. But Yeshua turns it upside-down. Serving others is God's measure of leading. It's not a position. It's an action - an action that anyone can perform.

Now that we've settled this issue, we should notice one important implication. The phrase "not so with you" (in Greek *humeis ouk outos*) is gender neutral. Oh, it's clear Yeshua is addressing His disciples, but we can hardly justify the claim that His statement applies *only* to them. Yeshua declares that anyone who is a disciple will follow this exhortation. So, every man and every woman who claims Yeshua as Lord will lead by serving another. Seems obvious, doesn't it? If it is so obvious, then how can we justify the claim that husbands are the rulers of their homes and wives are to be subservient to husbands' wishes? Should we ignore Yeshua's declaration? Does serving another apply to everything *except* marriage? Hardly! If a husband is a follower for Yeshua, then he

leads by serving his wife, not by demanding she serve him. His leadership is exhibited in his willingness to give up his agenda and take care of hers. He lives for her. This, by the way, is exactly the behavioral expression of Yeshua's sacrifice for the Body. If leadership is service, then there is no room at all for status or ranked authority in the Christian home.

Most Christians are quick to apply the servant-leader vocabulary to circumstances outside their homes. They try to emulate Yeshua's behavior at work, at school, at church and in social settings among others. But when it comes to marriage, the principle is suddenly abandoned. Suddenly men rule. Now the curse of Eve puts a wife under her husband's authority. Now the man is the "head" of the home by divine proclamation. Now women are to be silent, submissive and subservient. And we call this leadership? Who are we kidding? Oh, yes, before all the women stop cheering, remember that the principle applies to both sexes.

URL to article: <https://www.skipmoen.com/2018/08/code-of-honor-2/>

[Note: God did not curse Eve. He cursed the ground. See Genesis 3:17-19.]

THE VISION BEATIFIC

Because God cannot in His holy heaven have beings who are morally dissimilar to Himself, there has to be a place to put those who refuse to become like God. We must be like Him to enter there; we shall see Him and shall be like Him, says the Holy Spirit in First John 3:2. This—the presence of God—is the bliss of all moral creatures. Our fathers called it the Vision Beatific....

The presence of God is even in hell, the Holy Spirit says in Psalm 139, but His manifest presence is only in heaven and where good souls are. Therefore, we are so close to God that He can hear our slightest whisper—and yet a person can have such a sense of alienation and remoteness that he or she will go to the river and commit suicide thinking there's no God in the universe anywhere.

WISE QUOTES TO PONDER

By Charles Spurgeon

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21

Christian! If you have anything that you prize very highly, hold it very loosely—for you may easily lose it. Hold everything earthly with a loose hand, but grasp eternal things with a deathlike grip. Of everything on earth, it is wise for us to say, "This is not mine to keep!" It is essential to realize that this it is true, for everything here is temporary.

Mind what you are doing--you prosperous people, you who have nice homes, you who are hoarding up money. There is nothing permanent for you here on earth. Your home is in Heaven--your home is not here. If you find your treasure here--your heart will be here also. You must keep all earthly treasures out of your heart. Let Christ be your treasure, and let Him have your heart!

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

- 1 John 2:17

A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble.

When you see a man with a great deal of religion displayed in his shop window, you may depend upon it, he keeps a very small stock of it within.

Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength.

Humility is to make a right estimate of one's self.

A man who does nothing never has time to do anything.

ORGANIZED RELIGION VS. THE EKKLESIA By Chip Brogden

The Church, the Lord's Ekklesia, is the synthesis of individuals who have the Revelation of Jesus and have come to Him to receive Him as their Life. Here is where the confusion begins. We glibly use the term "church" to describe things which are not The Lord's Ekklesia. A building devoted to religious meetings is called "the church". Attending a religious meeting is called "going to church." Hearing a good message or good music during the religious meeting is called "having church" (a popular tune says "crank up the music, let's have church!"). Becoming a member of the non-profit organization which owns the building devoted to religious meetings is called "joining the church". Taking responsibility as the founder or being voted in as the director of the non-profit organization which owns the building devoted to religious meetings is called "pastoring the church". Making additions to the building devoted to religious meetings or to the membership list of the non-profit organization which owns the building is called "church growth".

Why are we being so facetious and wordy? Why do we choose our phraseology carefully? For the sake of convenience, or just plain laziness, people have grown accustomed to saying "church" instead of "a non-profit organization that owns a building devoted to religious meetings." Whatever nomenclature you decide upon, we are drawing the line and making a distinction between "The Church" and "church". We hope to impress upon you the difference between what people customarily call "church" and what the Lord considers to be "The Church". As demonstrated above, much of what we call "church" is simply Organized Religion. It is not the Lord's Ekklesia.

To read Chip's entire article, go here: <https://www.chipbrogden.com/escape-from-churchianity/>

Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
- Matthew 18:20

UNPLUGGED By Skip Moen

But I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.
1 Timothy 2:12 NASB

Exercise Authority—You have got to be kidding me! That is probably the immediate contemporary reaction to the face-value interpretation of Paul's remark. If what Paul says is really the biblical model for the proper actions of women, then a whole lot of us stand condemned on this one. Paul seems to be saying (and the Church seems to be endorsing) women are to shut up, be subservient and take care of the home. If this is really the biblical intention, then we sin when women are in authority, teach, direct, manage, preach or speak both *inside* and *outside* the Body. No wonder some women think Paul is a misogynist.

For more than a thousand years, the Church employed a Greek philosophical paradigm when it interpreted this verse. That Greek model comes directly from Plato and Aristotle who taught that women were *defective* men. It isn't too much of an exaggeration to say Greek philosophers despised women, considering them intellectually inferior, emotionally immature and generally incapable of the actions and attitudes of men. The early church fathers were immersed in Greek philosophy so it is not surprising to find their exegesis reflects Plato and the Academy. As a result of this paradigm, the Church and the culture engaged in withholding education, development and leadership from women. Predictably, the result merely confirmed what the paradigm taught: women were inferior.

But Paul is no Platonist. He is a Second Temple rabbi. His approach to the role and status of women is based in Scripture, not philosophy. A thorough analysis of Paul's full understanding of women would reveal exactly what he shares in Galatians 3:28. In the Body, there is no hierarchy! All the world's false distinctions – Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female – are overcome and set aside. So, what do we do with this apparent misogyny?

In the Greek text, Paul deliberately switches from the plural "women" when he talks about godly behavior for the whole congregation to the singular "woman" when he exhorts Timothy in this passage. In other words, Paul has a *particular woman* in mind, someone who is causing plenty of disturbance and distress among the Body. Paul directs *this* woman to be silent. Why? Because she is *usurping* authority, grasping at control that is not properly hers. The Greek verb here, *authentain*, is used only one time in all the New Testament and for good reason. It comes from the word *authentēs* which means "a self-appointed killer with one's own hand." In other words, this verb is about *domination*, not leadership. It is associated with a murderer, an absolute dictator, a tyrant. Paul says this woman seeks to rule with an iron hand. Her actions must not be allowed because in the Body there is no place for an autocrat, whether man or woman. Telling her to be silent employs a Hebrew expression about serious contemplation of humility.

Paul, the apostle of unity in the Body, the messenger of equally distributed grace, the herald of the destruction of all class and gender distinctions, could not possibly instruct the Body to relegate one gender to the corner. This instruction is about an unruly, unrestrained person who wants to run the show. In this case, the subject is a woman, but it could just as well have been a man. In the Body, this sort of action doesn't work.

Oh yes, and Paul is so concerned about the circumstances and the woman involved that he doesn't name her. Even in discipline, he demonstrates consideration.

Now that you are no longer under the false, Greek-based misunderstanding of Paul's concern, don't you think it's time to correct twenty centuries of mistakes?

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[1] Image: <https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/skipmoenvideos/Videos/Italy-Conference-Unplugged.mp4>

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