

Empty Glory

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4, NIV)

The original word translated above as "vain conceit" literally means "empty glory." It contrasts with God's glory, which is the glow of His presence--God showing himself in all of His beauty, power, and goodness. The Scriptures teach that we share in His glory through His Spirit in us.

We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV)

This is our true glory: Christ living in us, showing the glow of His presence, His beauty, power, and goodness through us.

But Satan will tempt us to settle for "empty glory." According to the Greek lexicon, it is "empty" in the sense of being "without content, without basis, without truth; without profit; foolish, senseless." That's an accurate description of the self-centered glory we tend to seek. It's an accurate description of selfish pride.

Pride comes in a variety of styles and colors; you can find one to fit your own personality. My personal choice is humble pride. It is soft-spoken, tastefully adorned in understatement. It does not boast or even posture. It just meditates on self. It dreams about self. Like all forms of pride, the inner vision that drives it is not God or truth, but self-glorification.

Selfish pride is like lust: in the dark privacy of our hearts, it can stimulate and energize. But when it is brought to the light and exposed in public, it is easily seen as a ridiculous lie. What had puffed us up now makes us hide and choke in shame. Its glory is empty glory--without content, without basis in truth, foolish, senseless.

When Satan tempts you to savor this empty glory, see it as the cheap imitation it is. Turn away from it and embrace your true glory, the presence of God himself with you and in you.

When I turn away from myself and look to God, it's as if someone has opened the windows of my mind and heart. Now the sun is shining, and the air is fresh. Other people float into my heart on the breeze. I pray for them and love them, and in the process I love and worship Christ all the more.

Prayer and praise shed the light of truth on who we are. They keep life in perspective. They liberate us from the smallness of pride into the wide-open wonder of God's love.

He is with you now and always. Don't let Satan distract you from Him. Discover and enjoy the wonder of the Living Christ.

Hymn: [O Living God](#)

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