



fłĕj: to grow the plummage necessary for flight



Lost Words: Glory Unraveling the Compliment

In our *Lost Words* series, we've covered the words of **SIN**, **FAITH**, and **LOVE**. In this issue, I want to share my journey and understanding of the word **GLORY**.

It's a popular word. In nearly all modern church songs you can find the word embedded. We pray it. We weave into our worship. We shout it to the Almighty as the utmost compliment. And some may quote the Shorter Westminster Catechism, "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever."

John Piper helped revive this word to a modern generation by altering the chief end of humans to, "glorify God by enjoying him forever." And for many, the **GLORY** of God has become synonymous with our enjoying him.

Take a moment and think about what you mean when you say the word, **GLORY**. Put it in a sentence.

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We've heard phrases like "The **GLORY** of Rome!" Jesus said to his Father, "**GLORIFY** me with the glory I had before the world was" (*John 17:5*). Often we'll say things like, "God, I **GLORIFY** you." And we mean, "I praise you." So why not just say "praise"? What more are we saying when we change the word to **GLORIFY**? What does this word mean?

I struggled with this for a long time, especially the more I read the Bible. Sometimes when I would think about the **GLORY** of God, I would think about shining lights, like street lights. Yet **GLORY** pops up in a wild assortment of verses that cause our 21st century understanding to unravel. Savor and ponder the word **GLORY** as you enjoy a sampling:

And I will gain glory [people will know about me] through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.
—*Exodus 14:17*

And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory [honorable presence] of the LORD filled the temple of God. —*2 Chronicles 5:14*

The heavens declare the glory [magnitude] of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. —*Psalms 19:1*

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory [what he's like], the glory of the one and



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only [Son], who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
—John 1:14

For they loved human glory [recognition] more than the glory [recognition] of God. —John 12:43

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory [weighty presence] that far outweighs them all.
—2 Corinthians 4:17

Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory [reputation] is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. —Philippians 3:19

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory [splendor] of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.
—Revelation 21:23

Now you've seen how verses show how **GLORY** is used. But what about a definition we can put in our pocket?

I remember reading Matthew in Bible class in college when my eyes slowed on an often recited verse. It was probably the first time I paid attention to **GLORY** and it has been a favorite word every since. Here's the verse:



Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. —Matthew 5:16

I'd heard the verse a thousand times; yet slid right over **GLORIFY**. I was always more interested in finishing the passage than in seeing what it really meant (a bad habit). But that day I parked on it. I read the context, looked up the Greek word and some other contexts, and began to understand something fresh, new, and meaningful about where God is inviting us.

As with the other verses I listed, I began to see glory as a weighty presence, honor, reputation. In short, when referring to God, **GLORY** is "seeing, understanding, or revealing what God is like." This goes deep and wide and is bound to our purpose in life as humans.

Think about **GLORY** today, tumble it around in your mind. How does God get **GLORY** when we choose the good? How are we a part of God's **GLORY** when we do good? As we sort this out, it will help us more deliberately focus on those elements of human living that increase this **GLORY** that fascinates us.

Got questions/comments? Feel free to email us.
OR
Join us for Ask! LIVE Wednesdays 6-9PM pacific
Bring any question or puzzling life situation