



LifeStone

# AMPLIFY CHRIST

VOLUME 5

## God's Holy Presence

*God Desires to Dwell with  
His People*

## God's Holy Sanctuary

*God Wants His People to Worship  
Him in Purity*

## God's Holy Expectations

*God Expects His People to Reflect  
His Holy Character*

# Our Holy God





# AMPLIFY CHRIST

VOLUME 5

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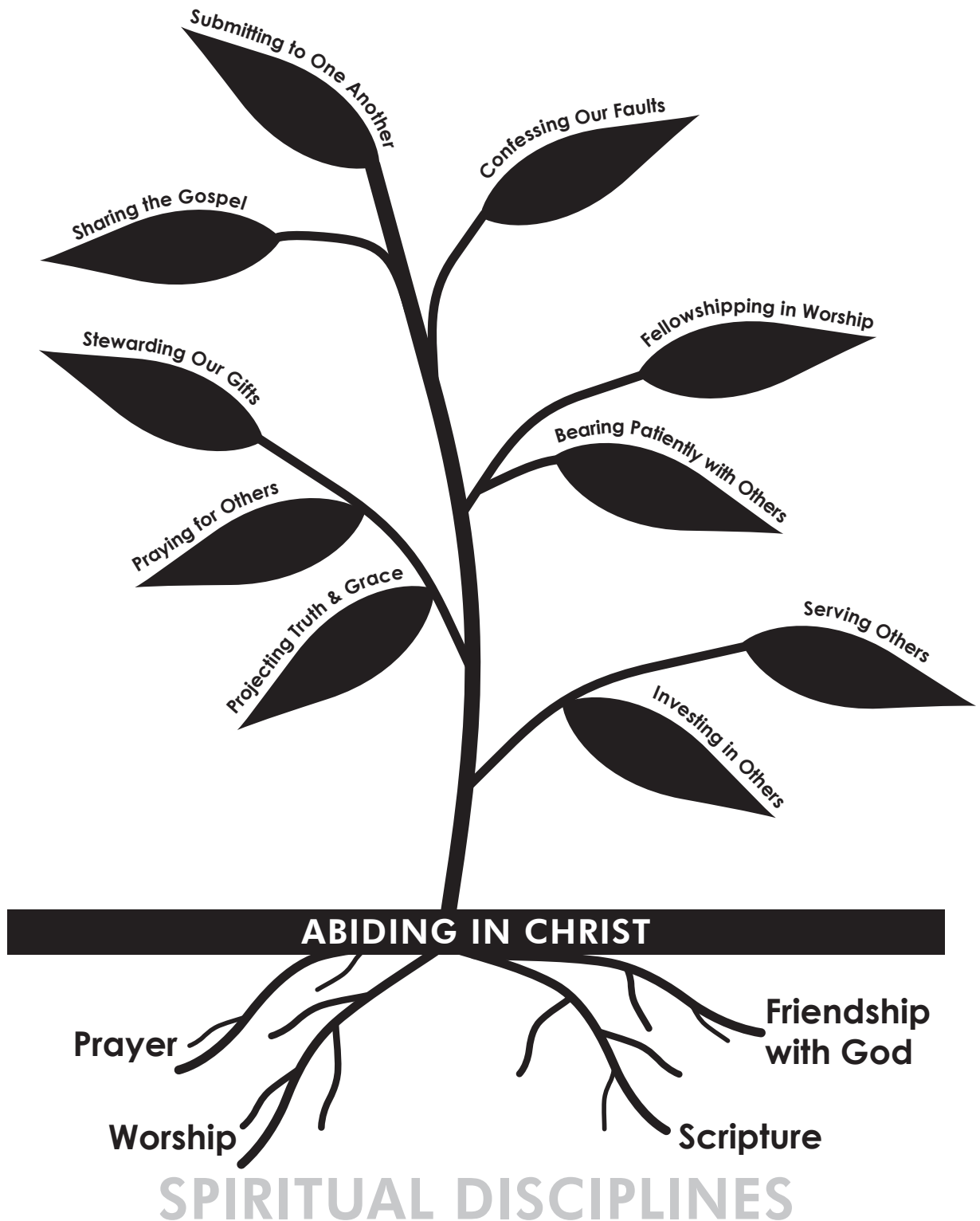
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## OUR MISSION

LifeStone exists to empower **DISCIPLES** to make **DISCIPLES**. We seek to fulfill our mission by publishing Bible study and **DISCIPLESHIP** curriculum as well as offering real-life application training. We equip **DISCIPLES** as they journey through the various stages of life. As **DISCIPLES** grow in Christ, we continue to partner with them and their churches through training and other resources to empower **DISCIPLES** to make **DISCIPLES**.

# DISCIPLE MAKING



## FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND EDITOR IN CHIEF

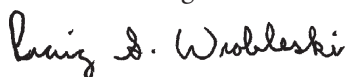
Dear Almighty Father,

Thank You for Your unconditional grace and mercy bestowed on LifeStone Ministries for 120 years. We are humbled by Your Son, the Master-Servant, who became the Living Stone rejected by men. You love us and build us up to be spiritual storehouses. We pray for Your strength and courage to be the living stones in our culture. We pray for perseverance to sacrifice ourselves to live wholly in subjection to Jesus Christ. May we glorify You in all our words and deeds as we strive to grow Your flock to spiritual maturity. We pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit as we engage Your flock.

Lord, we pray that this exposition of Your Word meets 2 Timothy 3:16. May the lessons contained in this labor of love emulate profitable teaching, graceful correction, and righteous training. We pray for all those who will be receiving instruction from these lessons. We pray for the teachers to approach this inspirational work with humility and meekness. May Your holy character and love for us leap from the pages and bring us all to our knees in thanksgiving.

Our glorious King, may we build the confidence and convictions of Christian leaders in our homes, churches, and missional fields to fulfill the Great Commission. Let us be renewed with strength and peace to empower Christian disciples to make disciples.

Under truth and grace,



**Craig S. Wroblewski**, M. Div., D. Min.  
President & CEO  
LifeStone Ministries

Dear Christ follower,

Our mission at LifeStone Ministries is to empower Christians to make disciples. We desire to partner with churches in this discipleship process. We have created a discipleship tool to help churches fulfill their calling. This new publication—*Amplify Christ*, as we call it—features a simple yet comprehensive five-step Bible study method that focuses on robust Bible learning and biblical application in a world that is often hostile to Christ's teaching.

*Amplify Christ* is not just another Bible curriculum. Discipleship requires a significant level of commitment from both teacher and student. Our discipleship tool likewise requires serious commitment. Leaders will need to inspire a group of people—maybe as few as one or two—to commit to spiritual formation and discipleship by investing their time and being willing to share their successes and failures. Group members can expect to read the lesson each week for an hour. Above all, group members will need to be honest with and encourage one another every week.

We have published this new discipleship tool and now prayerfully entrust it to you. We pray with all our hearts that the Holy Spirit will use it mightily to transform your lives and the lives of your group members, churches, and communities.

Sincerely,



**James M. Leonard**, Ph.D.  
Editor in Chief  
LifeStone Ministries

# HOW TO USE AMPLIFY CHRIST

Christian discipleship is a matter of following the Master's footprints. The first disciples did just that—they followed Jesus from place to place, shared the same meals, slept at the same campsites, celebrated the same special occasions, and met the same people. In all these experiences, Jesus taught them verbally and through His actions. The disciples saw Jesus react to different people in different situations. They examined His work habits, observed His demeanor, and scrutinized how He practiced what He preached.

Even though we moderns can't follow Jesus physically, we are nonetheless called to be like Him in word and deed, conformed to His image. This is our calling, and we dare not ignore it. The only way we can know how to follow in Jesus' footprints is to learn about Him in the Bible. In the New Testament, eyewitnesses and other early disciples detail Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching. Similarly, the Old Testament helps us understand God's intentions for us through stories, worship materials, prophetic messages, and the Mosaic Law. God has given us His precious Scriptures to know how we should live. For this reason, disciples should have an intense thirst and hunger for God's Word.

Modern-day disciples, however, sometimes get discouraged about reading the Bible because of its antiquity and foreign culture. Sometimes they get so enthralled by the Bible's antiquity and alien culture that they fail to apply its teaching. Modern-day disciples may segment a familiar verse from its context and fail to understand its intended meaning, and sometimes they fail to integrate Scripture into theology.

For all these reasons, our new discipleship tool emphasizes five key elements for Scripture study. We hope *Amplify Christ* helps you become more like Christ.

## THE METHOD

### FIVE KEY ELEMENTS

- 1. Amplify the Background.** Because the Bible was written long ago in a culture different from ours, we investigate rigorously to bridge the gap separating us moderns from the biblical writers. We present to our readers those backgrounds that help them understand the biblical passage.
- 2. Amplify the Text.** One of the legacy features of our publications is the exposition of the text. We focus on the original author's intended message to his original audience, addressing the question, What was the author conveying to them back then? We hone in on the verse-by-verse details to explain the passage's big picture.
- 3. Amplify the Context.** Many Christians see Scripture as piecemeal. We want disciples to see how individual stories and texts are connected to the whole biblical story. We read the text as sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs within a larger text unit. This is basic exegesis. But our readers should also understand how the entirety of a book fits into the whole of Scripture and the larger biblical history. We write to show how each text interconnects to form a majestic and awe-inspiring picture of God's plan.
- 4. Amplify the Faith.** Christians need to allow Scripture to inform their thinking and basic Christian doctrine. We believe that God inspired His Word and that we should accept it as the rule of our lives as we seek to follow the Spirit's guidance. To this end, we spell out how the biblical text informs Bible doctrines and how we should think.
- 5. Amplify Your Life.** Our goal is not to create a bunch of smart, brainiac Christians. Yes, we want Christians to be competent readers of the Bible, but this is not enough. We do everything we can to help disciples apply the text to their lives so that they grow in Christ's likeness. We think deeply about the text, explicitly seeking ways to articulate the principles of the ancient text to us today and to the specific individual. We are most urgent about the Christian formation of Christ followers.

## TIMELINE

Unknown	Adam and Eve
Unknown	Noah
Unknown	Tower of Babel
2166-1991 B.C.	Life of Abraham
1916-1806 B.C.	Life of Joseph
1876-1446 B.C.	Israelites in Egypt
1446 B.C.	Exodus
1446 B.C.	Law at Sinai
1446-1406 B.C.	Wilderness wandering
1406-1399 B.C.	Joshua leads the conquest
1360-1075 B.C.	Judges Period
1051-931 B.C.	United monarchy
1011-971 B.C.	David reigns
959 B.C.	Solomon builds the temple
931-586 B.C.	Divided monarchy
722 B.C.	Assyria conquers Israel
605 B.C.	Babylon conquers Assyria
586 B.C.	Babylon conquers Judah/temple destroyed
539 B.C.	Persia conquers Babylon
538 B.C.	Exiles return to Judah
515 B.C.	Temple rebuilt
458 B.C.	Ezra returns to Israel from Babylon
445 B.C.	Nehemiah rebuilds the wall
331 B.C.	Greece conquers Persia
175-164 B.C.	Seleucid rule over Israel by Antiochus IV Epiphanes
63 B.C.	Rome captures Jerusalem
7 to 4 B.C.	Birth of Jesus
A.D. 26-30	Jesus' ministry
A.D. 30	Jesus' death and resurrection
A.D. 45-56	Paul's missionary journeys
A.D. 70	Rome destroys the temple

# IMPORTANT DATES

# God's Glory Seen by Moses

Written by Jerod Gilcher

## READ AND TAKE NOTE

**Read Exodus 33:12-23.** Look for:

- the significance of God's presence (vss. 12-16)
- the way God defined and described His own essence (vs. 19)
- the motif of seeing as a metaphor for comprehending the depths of God's nature (vss. 20, 23)

### FIND IT

Genesis  
**Exodus**  
Leviticus  
Numbers

**Who:** Moses  
the Lord

**What:** Moses interceding for the people

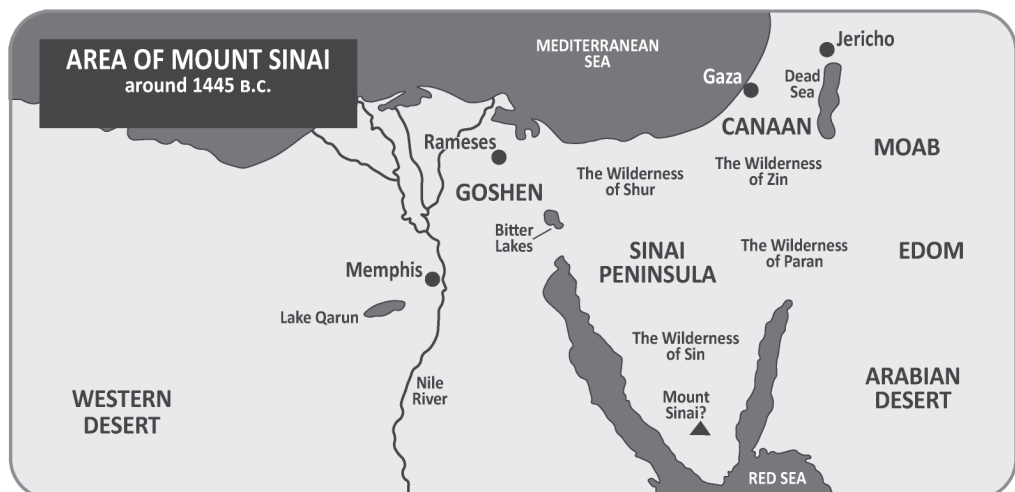
**When:** around 1445 B.C.

**Where:** near Mount Sinai

**Why:** to give Israel confidence in God's character and His essential goodness and glory

**How:** through Moses' bold requests and God's revelation of Himself to Moses

**Spiritual Formation:** Disciples have unwavering assurance and comfort that God can forgive sinners and dwell among them, because that forgiveness is based not on their merit or good works but on His own gracious will.







## AMPLIFY THE BACKGROUND

The book of Exodus details a crucial time in God's plan for the nation of Israel. Having selected them out of all the nations on the earth (Deuteronomy 7:6), God envisioned Israel as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) and as a great and wise nation (cf. Deuteronomy 4:6) that He redeemed for the fame of His name (cf. 2 Samuel 7:23). He desired to use Israel to be a blessing to the other nations of the earth (cf. Genesis 12:3).

Having been powerfully delivered after four hundred years of captivity in Egypt through staggering plagues and signs, the nation proceeded to form their new identity in the Sinai desert as the chosen people of the Lord. In order to do so, they needed a renovation of their approach to life and theology. They needed God's laws to teach them how to live.

In Exodus 20 through 31, the Lord instructed His people—first through the Ten Commandments (20:1-17) and then through copious regulations that taught them how to reflect the Lord's glory in every area of life in their particular context. That included issues like enslavement (cf. 21:1-11), personal injuries (cf. vss. 12-32), property rights (cf. 21:33—22:15), the national feasts (cf. 23:14-19), and instructions for the tabernacle (chaps. 25—31).

God delivered all those laws, decrees, and commandments directly to Moses on Mount Sinai. Meanwhile, the people grew impatient and concerned. The nation of Israel began to believe they would never see Moses again. They naturally went to Aaron, the designated leader in Moses' absence (cf. 24:14). They told him they wanted

## NOTES



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an idol constructed, apparently fearing that without a visible deity, they had no supernatural protection. After making a molten calf, Aaron proclaimed a feast for the next day, during which the people brought offerings and ate and drank. Then they began to “laugh,” or “play,” possibly a reference to immoral activity (32:6). The people had broken God’s law before Moses even had the chance to give it to them.

That act of corporate idolatry in the camp of Israel led to the Lord’s announcement that He would destroy the entire nation and begin again through Moses (vss. 9-10). Moses then quickly appealed to the Lord to stay His hand, not on the basis of Israel’s worth but on the basis of God’s worth and the covenant He made. Moses reasoned that God’s name would be profaned among the Egyptians if He abandoned His redeemed people so quickly after miraculously delivering them (vss. 12-13). The Lord agreed to spare His obstinate people but refused to dwell in their midst. In His place He would send an angel (33:2-3). Why? If the Lord went into the midst of such a sinful people, they would be destroyed (vs. 5).

## THOUGHTS

**The Lord’s presence with His people is what made Israel distinct from the other nations.**

The situation created a very real dilemma that Moses could see. The Lord’s refusal to dwell among His people obscured His purpose to distinguish them from all the nations of the earth (cf. vs. 16). That is what drove Moses to make his astonishing requests in chapter 33, which are the focus of our text.

## AMPLIFY THE TEXT

### ASTONISHING REQUEST #1 (Exodus 33:12-13)

Moses was about to probe into the very heart of who God is. He needed the assurance that the Lord was truly the kind of God who could pardon sin and take Israel as His inheritance, even though Israel was a stiff-necked and idolatrous nation (cf. 34:9). Everything was riding on God’s character, so he prayed that the Lord would make His ways known to him if he had really found favor in His sight (33:13).

Moses was pleading to know the hidden intents and purposes of the Lord for His people. It was unclear to Moses how God’s glorious plan for His people could come to fruition if their sin would only provoke His wrath and judgment upon them. The Lord had indeed bound Himself to His people, but Moses did not see how that would end in anything but disaster in light of Israel’s sin. Thus, Moses sought deeper knowledge of God’s character and ways.

### ASTONISHING REQUEST #2 (Exodus 33:14-16)

Moses knew there was no point in Israel going anywhere if the Lord did not go up with them. Although the Lord agreed to accompany Moses on the journey (vs. 14), Moses pressed Him to make the same promise for *all* the people of Israel, not just for him personally. Moses understood that if God’s presence did not go with them, Israel would be just like any other nation, and their entire mission would be futile. Thus, he prayed that the Lord would not send the people forward if He was unwilling to go with them (vs. 15).

Moses was holding out for something unspeakable. This was his second astonishing request: that a holy God would have so much mercy upon a stiff-necked people that He would go up with them to the Promised Land and thereby make them distinct among all the peoples of the earth (vs. 16).

### ASTONISHING REQUEST #3 (Exodus 33:17-19)

The only thing left for Moses was to rely on God's goodness for assurance that His promise could be fulfilled for such a wicked people. In other words, he needed to know what about God's own nature made His promise possible.

Moses was on the brink of asking the unthinkable. Like a person who stares into the heart of the sun or gets security clearance to a top-secret meeting, Moses desired the loftiest thing of all—to see the glory of the Lord Himself!

In response to Moses' request to accompany His people, the Lord had answered in the affirmative (vs. 17). God would go up with this stiff-necked people. He would extend His grace not just to Moses but also to the rebellious people for whom Moses interceded. He went on to tell Moses that he had found favor in His sight and that the Lord knew him by name. That drove Moses to inquire ever more deeply into the nature of such a God who is lofty and exalted but also willing to show favor to undeserving sinners. Finally, in verse 18, Moses made his most astonishing request, saying, "Show me Your glory!"

## THOUGHTS

When Moses asked to see God's glory, he wanted to understand God better.

What did Moses mean by that request? What, exactly, did He want to see? What is the "glory" of God? Certainly, he was not merely asking for a special, mystical experience. He was not asking to see a physical manifestation because that would not be God's essence. Rather, what Moses sought was a deeper understanding of the nature and essence of God. In asking to see the Lord's glory, he meant something like: "Let me have a glimpse into Your divine nature. Let me see the meaning of Your great name. Show me the foundation of this amazing promise. Give me some assurance that You will indeed grant Your saving presence to this stiff-necked people!"

Thus, out of Moses' need for reassurance that God would not abandon him or Israel, he asked for a God-given security clearance to understand the depths of the Almighty. Moses' daring request, in other words, was nothing less than a desire to have God confirm His stunning willingness to show such favor to an often rebellious and defiant people.

Next, however, we must understand another level of Moses' appeal, namely, the meaning of "glory." What is the "glory of God" that Moses desired to see? Many may be aware that the Hebrew word "glory" carries the idea of weightiness. When applied to a person, it describes a person of gravity, weight, and significance. When applied to God, however, glory describes all that He is that makes Him infinitely significant. In other words, God's glory is nothing less than a summary way to describe the infinite worth and beauty of God because of the innumerable attributes that make Him who He is.

That is precisely what we see in Exodus 34. When the Lord showed Moses His glory, He proclaimed His attributes, describing Himself as compassionate, gracious,

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slow to become angry, and full of faithfulness (vs. 6). That is the glory of God—His supreme worth because of His cumulative perfections that eternally define who He is.

Thus, the plea of Moses to see the glory of God was a daring (but right!) request to see the essence of His nature and gain a deeper understanding of His perfections as God. That, in turn, led to God's affirmation of Moses' appeal, as well as God's own definition of His name.

The Lord affirmed Moses' request by promising to cause all His goodness to pass before Moses and to proclaim His name as He did so. Here it is important to see the theology unfolding in God's reply. Moses asked to see the Lord's glory, and in response, the Lord affirmed that He would show His goodness and proclaim His name. Thus, God's glory, goodness, and name are parallel and complementary (cf. Isaiah 48:9-11). That tells us two things.

First, the parallel between God's glory and goodness tells us that at the heart of God's essence is His moral beauty and perfection that always and only does what is best for His creatures. That inherent truth about God would provide Moses the assurance and hope that He sought.

Second, in ancient Israel's context, someone's name was more than a self-designation. It was seen as something that revealed who that person was. Therefore, the parallel between God's glory and name indicates that God was going to reveal to Moses something essential to who He is. That brings us, then, to the definition of God's name and glory.

Upon Moses' request, the Lord proclaimed, in concentrated form, His glory, goodness, and name, telling Moses that He would be gracious to whom He would be gracious and show compassion on whom He would show compassion (Exodus 33:19). Although God would add more detail in chapter 34, this statement *is* the glory of the Lord. It is who He is and the summary of His essential glory that Moses desired to see. What the Lord revealed here about Himself explains how and why God could dwell among such sinful, rebellious people without resulting in their extermination. Thus, such a profound theological statement from the Lord deserves a careful and thoughtful explanation.

Clearly the Lord desired to make known to Moses that His bestowal of grace and compassion on unworthy sinners proceeds from the very nature of His glory. As God's expanded statement in 34:6-7 indicates, God is also glorified by His wrath upon the unrepentant, but even there the emphasis is on God's proclivity toward grace and compassion. His wrath only lasts a few generations, but His mercy lasts for a thousand generations. God is unapologetically just and willing to judge the wicked, but He is not a God who takes pleasure in the death of the wicked. Rather, He is pleased when they turn from their evil ways and live (cf. Ezekiel 33:11).

## THOUGHTS

Other ancient Near Eastern documents often listed qualities to describe the essence of their deities as the Lord did for Himself in Exodus 34:6-7. Those lists, however, typically emphasized qualities like the deity's war skills or benevolence toward the nation's king, not the kind of grace and compassion toward an entire nation that defined the Lord in relation to His people (Wells, "Exodus,"

*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, vol. 1, Zondervan, 262).



Why did God so closely identify His glory with His grace and compassion? Three components of the Lord's compassion on sinners can help us understand how it brings glory to His name.

First, God's extension of grace and compassion to sinners is unconditional. That is, no inherent merit or worth in the sinner is required to earn God's bestowal of grace and compassion. There are no previous conditions that unworthy sinners have to meet to somehow merit the mercy, compassion, or grace they so badly need from God. That was clearly the case for Israel. By Moses' own admission, they were a stubborn and stiff-necked people (Exodus 34:9). They met no conditions that could in any way force God's hand to bestow His favor, love, compassion, or grace. And yet God still offered it to them. What divine compassion!

Second, God's bestowal of grace and compassion upon sinners is freely given. That is, God's compassion and grace is always a free gift; He has the right to dispense grace as He sees fit. God's grace toward sinners is not the result of a bargain or negotiation between two parties; rather, God offers it of His own free will. That is God's prerogative. As He explained to Moses, He has grace and compassion on whomever He wills (33:19).

Third, God's lavish bestowal of grace and compassion is relational. The Lord clearly revealed to Moses that He desires a people for Himself. The Lord does not merely wish for earthly agents to do His bidding. He wants people to love Him and delight in His ways. In other words, the Lord's compassion comes from His desire to supply a remedy for sin so that He may delight in His people. His compassion and mercy are a means to bring reconciliation between Him and a sinful people so that He may dwell among them and they may find in Him their deepest delight.

### INHERENT LIMITATIONS FOR MOSES (Exodus 33:20-23)

God used anthropomorphic language in verses 20-23 to describe how He would reveal Himself to Moses. We know that God is spirit and thus does not have a physical body (cf. John 4:24), so He was obviously not talking about a physical face, hand, or back. These are metaphorical expressions that describe what Moses saw.

## THOUGHTS

Because of humans' limited capacity to understand who God is, God accommodates His revelation to us in a way we can understand. One way He does so in Scripture is through anthropomorphic language—applying human descriptions (including physical characteristics like “hand” or “face”) to explain part of God's character.

By declaring that His “face” is a deadly sight to humans, God emphasized the vast difference between His holiness and human frailty. He did not say merely that *sinners* cannot see Him and live, but that the *human race* cannot see Him and live.

## NOTES

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Confusingly to modern readers, just a few verses earlier, Moses is said to have spoken with God “face to face” (vs. 11). There is no contradiction, though, because as the rest of the verse indicates, the phrase “face to face” was an idiom meaning that Moses spoke with God as one would speak with a friend—not at a distance but up close and unhindered. The anthropomorphic reference to God’s “face” is simply used in two different ways in chapter 33.

In summary, we see in this intense episode that Moses needed assurance. Knowing the people of Israel’s propensity to provoke God and rebel against His ways, Moses feared that the future of the nation was in jeopardy.

Although the Lord did promise to accompany the people in response to Moses’ appeal, Moses needed the deepest assurance that all of God’s promises would remain fully intact. So Moses pleaded to see God’s very glory. That is, he desired to see and understand what makes God who He is. Moses understood that any rock-solid assurance of Israel’s great future must come from God and His own incomparable nature and not from the shaky nature of a sinful people.

The Lord revealed to Moses (and reveals to us) that God’s very nature leads Him to have compassion and grace on whom He will. That, God says, is His very glory and name. In other words, it is the glory of God to grant His grace and compassion to sinners. That is what it means for God to be God, and that was Moses’ deepest confidence that God could and would dwell among an undeserving people, for His essential glory, goodness, and name means that He grants compassion and grace upon the undeserving. That remains the great hope of undeserving sinners to this day.

## AMPLIFY THE CONTEXT

### PLACE IN THE BIBLE

Exodus is not merely an exciting tale of liberation from a hostile enemy but the dramatic forming of a nation for God’s glory. God promised to make Abraham a great nation (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6), and the miraculous deliverance out of Egypt was God making good on that promise. That salvation act set the people apart as the special possession of Yahweh, and the covenant given through Moses after that solidified and made explicit the relationship between God and Israel (cf. Exodus 19:5-6). Thus, Exodus is the historical record of God making good on His covenantal promises to make Israel a kingdom of priests, a prized possession, and the nation that would serve as His representatives on earth.

### PLACE IN THE STORY OF SALVATION

The book of Exodus is so many things all at the same time. It is historical and describes real events, but it also sets the theological trajectory for the rest of redemptive history. One part of that trajectory is the introduction of the personal, covenantal name of the Lord—Yahweh—in Exodus 3:14. The name essentially means “I AM” and signifies that God is self-existent. That is the name He spoke again in response to Moses’ request to see His glory (cf. 34:6). In John 8:58, Jesus told the religious leaders, “Before Abraham was born, I AM.” Thus, Christ took the most sacred name of God and applied it to Himself.

God's response to Moses' request also set the groundwork for the mysterious truth that even though God is perfectly righteous, He also has compassion on unworthy sinners and declares them righteous in His sight. Paul grappled with how those things could both be true and concluded that Christ's substitutionary death on the cross is the only answer (Romans 3:21-26). The reason God could graciously pass over Israel's sins in Moses' day while still remaining in their presence was that their sins would be paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (vs. 25).

## PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Since humans cannot see God's face (His full glory) and live, how can God fulfill His purpose of dwelling in intimate relationship among His people? The answer to that question came in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. When the Son of God became a man, people were finally able to behold the invisible God, and His radiant glory was on full display for all who had faith to see (cf. John 1:14, 18). But that was not just for those who saw Jesus during His earthly ministry. As Paul joyously exclaimed in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Christ's new covenant has unveiled our faces so that we too can behold the Lord's glory in a way even Moses never could.

## AMPLIFY THE FAITH

The prominent theological lesson in Exodus 33:12-23 is the glory of God and all that makes God glorious. We often speak of the glory of God without a deep and clear sense of what it is and what it means for our lives. We know the glory of God is something to appreciate and live for, but we often do not take the time to understand it more deeply.

The glory of God is His intrinsic worth that makes Him worthy of all our worship and allegiance. To put it another way, the glory of God is a succinct phrase referring to the infinite number of reasons why God should and must be the highest treasure of our souls.

It is important to remember, therefore, that when we give glory to God, we add nothing to His worth but simply declare the worth that is inherently His. When we live for the glory of God, it simply means that our lives reflect His supreme value and worth. Living for the glory of God means that the choices, priorities, direction, and holiness of our lives reveal that God is the most precious reality in the universe to us.

In light of that, the glory of God involves at least three theological implications worthy of our consideration. First, if the glory of God is His infinite worth because of His perfections that make Him who He is, then we should give our lives to study the character of God. And furthermore, we should study His character especially as He has revealed Himself in Christ, because Jesus Christ is the fullness of the glory of God on open, human display (cf. John 1:18; Hebrews 1:3). We must study His eternity, omniscience, sovereignty, love, and even His wrath and justice. These are not separate "bits" that comprise God but eternal attributes with which He rules the universe, governs history, and brings it to its end.

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Second, we should see that we can bring God glory not only by obeying His commands but also by treasuring His beauty. The worth of God is displayed most clearly in our lives when we show by our lives that He is preferred and treasured more than anything else. God is glorified not just when we intellectually understand His worth but when we prize and treasure Him in our hearts.

Third, the glory of God and of Christ is most clearly seen in the Word of God. That means anyone who wants to grow in delighting and prizing the glory of God must simply turn to the treasure vault of Holy Scripture. With Moses, our prayer should be, “Show me Your glory!” And then, without delay, we should open the Bible and begin to read.

## AMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

It is quite easy to read a passage like Exodus 33:12-23 with a sense of distance and detachment. After all, this event occurred over three thousand years ago and concerned the nation of Israel in the desert of Sinai. And yet, when we consider this text carefully, we find that it forces itself upon our lives with surprising relevance and power. At the end of the day, the deepest doctrines of God have to do with everyday life. Theology is the most relevant and practical of all the human disciplines. Although this text is deeply theological, it is also profoundly practical.

### GOD’S CHARACTER

This lesson reminds us never to stop learning about God’s character. We must remember that the Bible never gives us glimpses of God’s nature merely for intellectual discussion. That was certainly not the case for Moses, and it is not the case for readers today either. Rather, this passage opens the name and glory of God to our understanding in order to help us revere, love, trust, and obey God. Moses’ urgent plea, “Show me Your glory,” sets a powerful precedent for our lives to continually explore the endless riches of God’s character and compassion toward us (cf. Psalm 145:3-5).

### HUMAN SIN

The deeper we know and love the glory of God, the more distasteful our sin will become. That is the great secret of sin and the power that it wields in our lives. Sin pretends to possess a pleasure that nothing else can match. It seems to thrill the soul more than anything, and yet sin merely exchanges itself for what truly satisfies the soul, namely, God Himself.

We must understand that the secret to our holiness and to a thriving soul is to push ourselves ever deeper into knowing who God is. Despite modern-day misgivings about the value of theology, the truth is that the more of God’s glory we see, the more liberation we experience from the sins that entangle us. Precise and powerful truths about God (the kind that Moses encountered) are anything but a wet blanket to Christian zeal. Rather, the life-change that we long to see in ourselves and in others is produced precisely by careful meditation and theological reflection on the character of God as depicted in His Word.

## GOD'S PRESENCE

In our gospel proclamation to our children and to the lost, we must never forget that God Himself is the treasure and the prize. In our evangelism, we tend to equate the gospel solely with forgiveness of sins or heaven or eternal life. Those are precious realities worth giving everything up for, and yet they are not good news unless they bring us to God Himself.

## NOTES

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been your understanding of God's glory? How have you previously defined it? How has Exodus 33:12-23 changed your understanding of God's glory? How do you define it now?  

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2. Why is knowing the character of God practical and relevant for daily life? How does knowing God's character fortify our faith and grow us in godliness?  

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3. If you could get to heaven and forever enjoy all of its eternal blessings, but God were not there, could you still be happy? What is wrong about the answer yes?  

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4. Exercise and challenge: To help you meditate on the beauty of God, try to think of an attribute of God for every letter of the alphabet (for example, A = All-Knowing; B = Benevolent; C = Compassionate). Try to recite those attributes at different times throughout your day. This will help you with moments of fear, anxiety, and even temptation.  

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5. Think of the common struggles you regularly face in your life (such as fear, anger, laziness, or lust). For each struggle, which attribute of God acts as the best remedy? For instance, how does the sovereignty of God serve as a cure for fear? How does the love of God serve as a cure for selfishness?  

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