

Crowned with Glory and Honour - Getting Back to Basics

Q. Have you ever experienced a time when you did not feel close to God? If so, can you share why you felt this way and what changed to re-strengthen your relationship with the Lord?

OR

Discuss why you think even Christians sometimes sense there is a distance between themselves and God. What might be the reasons for this and how might that relationship be restored?

1. Many people own a Bible, but not everyone understands why it is so important and so basic to Christianity over other religious books. Why has this book changed lives, shaped civilizations, comforted the broken, warned the proud, and drawn sinners back to God? Why do believers across generations still cling to it in times of joy, confusion, suffering, and victory?

As a believer, how would you respond to these questions?

Created in the likeness of God

2. To understand more fully our relationship with the Lord, it is good to begin at the beginning with the way God has created us. King David expresses this in Psalm 8 as he seeks to express the glory of God

Read Psalm 8:1-9: What is the first question David asks of the Lord about how He created human beings, v.3-5? Why is he asking this and what does this tell us about the relationship God wants with us?

David references God's creative powers in other Psalms. **Read Genesis 1:14-19 and Psalm 19:1-6.** The description of the heavens in these verses inspired David and his relationship with the Lord. How might these verses also inspire us in our understanding of God's majesty?

What does it mean that the heavens declare the glory of God without using words, Psalm 19:3,4? See also Romans 1:20. Paul is echoing David. What does this say about how all human beings can know God?

Compare Psalm 8:6-8 with Genesis 1:26-28. It seemed important for David to refer back to the 6th day of creation after saying God crowned us with glory and honour. What is the primary reason God has done this? (see Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

3. In today's world one's honour or worth is often tied to external achievements and societal standards. However, in God's world, according to the 6th day of creation, how did He show that He created us with great value?

Remembering that this glory and honour is a gift given to us, not something we have achieved ourselves, what, then, is it we are to recognize about ourselves and others?

The words subdue, have dominion over, govern, and others have been used to translate the second of God's commands in Genesis 1:28. How then can we also embody this gift of God in our daily interactions and relationships?

4. Unfortunately, despite the amazing way God originally created human life, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin and disease and death into this world.

As a result of that, how does the Apostle Paul now describe the reality of human life - see Romans 3:9-18; 23

But God has not left us alone in our fallen condition. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15 spends a lot of time explaining how the glory given to us by God can be restored, allowing us to live a truly Godly life.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:45-50**: What is the significance of comparing the first Adam to the second Adam? Why is this comparison being made? What is the key difference between the first Adam and the last Adam?

How then can the glory and honour of God be restored in our lives as Christians?

Read **Ephesians 2:4-10**: The Apostle Paul says, in Ephesians 2:5 that we are dead in our sins. What does this mean for each of us?

How then does Paul say we can be saved from such an end, v.8?

God gave us a gift at the point of our creation, affirmed by David in Psalm 8. What gift has now restored us with God? What does Paul say in v.10 that re-affirms this for us.

Read **Ephesians 4:21-24**: What does Paul say in these verses to encourage us in our new life in Christ? How does this relate to the way God has created us?

Redeemed for Eternal Life

The hope and joy of the Christian life is found in the promise of eternal life. This was part of the original gift of being created with glory and honour. Had Adam and Eve not disobeyed God, they, and we, would be in Paradise right now. That gift has now been returned to us through Jesus' death and resurrection.

A description of eternal life has been more clearly revealed to us through the Revelation to the Apostle John in the last book of the Bible. Paradise lost has now become Paradise found. It is a time of celebration and great glory - now available to every human being who puts their trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. **Read the Gospel of John 14:1-4**: What promise does Jesus make in these verses? To whom is this gift given? What does this promise us about our physical death?

Read Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27. What do these verses reveal about the life to come?

Why is there now no need for the sun or moon in the life to come?

How do these verses affirm that what was lost when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden has now been restored to us?

How does this gift of eternal life in the presence of God help us to fulfill our created purpose and thus affect our attitudes, our daily lives and relationships with others?

To Conclude: What are the two gifts God has given, at the beginning and at the end of our earthly lives. How are these gifts meant to govern our lives as Christians?

Closing Prayer time