

Lesson 3: Core Values – Glorify God

Opening: Did you know that you share 99% of the exact same DNA sequences as the people around you? DNA is a long molecule that contains each person's unique genetic code. It carries the instructions that make up everything from our eye color to why we are susceptible to certain diseases. That 1% difference is what makes us genetically unique.

When it comes to the church, every church should focus on the things that we see in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). So, were all New Testament churches the same? The answer is “yes” and “no.”

Yes, all New Testament churches were to be like the church in Acts 2:42-47. Read Acts 2:42-47 and make a list of all the characteristics that every church should practice.

The answer is also, “no” in the sense that every church is not to be exactly the same. Just like every individual has personal values that shape the way they live life and make decisions, the church has values that speak to what is most important in the life of the church. These values are part of the DNA of First Baptist Church Enid.

Core values explain who we are and help us to understand why we do what we do. They tell us how we are to live out the mission of the church both today and in the future. Core values serve as markers to help us determine our priorities as a church. These core values answer the question: what is most important in the life of this church?

Central Truths:

- Our core values determine the focus of our church, what we do and don't do.
- Glorifying God is our chief goal because it is what we are designed and created for.

Core Values: Glorifying God

The first core value that gives direction to our church is: We exist to glorify God. Glorifying God was something that Jesus did. (Read John 17:1-5) How did Jesus glorify God in the text?

What does it mean to “glorify God?” It means feeling and thinking and acting in ways that reflect God’s greatness and make much of Him. It is pointing all our attention and affections to God. Glorifying God means that we make it our priority to know God and to walk with Him. When we make God the priority rather than ourselves, we give our attentions to accomplishing His mission as a church.

The result of glorifying God is transformation into Christ likeness. (Read 2 Corinthians 3:18) Notice the words “we all” at the beginning of that verse. Here Paul is writing about the church. He notes that when we desire to meet God and see His glory revealed (“unveiled face”) we are transformed by the glory of God.

List some ways that God has transformed your life?

Do we continue to give Him the glory for the transformation? Do we want others to experience that same transforming power that only God can supply?

Examine the Text:

Reading the Biblical Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that

we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Look at V. 14 Notice the position of Paul when he prays for the church in Ephesus. He is on his knees before God. The point that Paul is making is that glorifying God begins with humility. We should come to God as a church and in humility say, “God we are in awe of who You are.” Glorifying God happens when we are amazed in the fact that the God of all creation wants to be the center of our church, wants to meet us in worship, and wants to speak to us through His word.

Look at VV. 15-16 Paul prays that the church would be “strengthened with power.” The word “strengthened” carries the tone of “undergoing renovation.” Paul is pointing out that the church is not stagnant but is always to be undergoing renovations on the inside so that they might be empowered to live for Christ on the outside. Seeing the glory of God is first of all seeing the work of God within the body – seeing the wonder of who God is and being grateful for what He has done.

Look at VV. 17-19 Here Paul points out that when we focus on the glory of God, we become “grounded in love.” That phrase means that we operate from a foundation of love in all things. A church that focuses on glorifying God doesn’t belittle the church, it seeks to find answers to problems through love. This is what separates the church’s response to struggles from that of the world. Do we respond to concerns with an attitude of love? In order to respond from a foundation of love, we have to hear the heart of God – we have to listen for His voice above the noise in our lives.

Look at VV. 20-21 A church that makes God’s glory a priority passes along this selfless behavior to the next generation. Who are we an example to? Are we pointing them to the glory of God.

Applying the Text:

How can we glorify God as a church body? (Read the following list and the scriptures that go with them)

- Verbally praise God [Revelation 4:8-9] Do our words about God and His church give glory to Him?

- Live a life where people notice your good works point to God [Matthew 5:16] What are some ways we can glorify God through good works as a group?
- Ask God to help us as a church and as individual believers be aligned with His will. [John 14:13] What areas do we find difficult to give up control of in our lives that weigh on us and keep us from passionately pursuing His will above all else? Why do we keep holding on to these things if it doesn't do us or anyone around us any good?
- Ask God to help you bear fruit (point other people to the Kingdom of God) [John 15:8] Do my conversations point to the fact that I am passionate about God even when my circumstances are different than I want them to be?
- Be generous and kindhearted. [2 Corinthians 9:13] What does generosity look like?
- Use the gifts God has given you to point others to Christ. [1 Peter 4:11] What do I try and do in my own strength? What does it mean to use my gifts in God's strength rather than my own?
- In matters of liberty, seek the good of others. [1 Corinthians 10:31] What can we do to help reach the next generation for Christ even if it means giving up something we prefer?