

Week Three: *Tinsel and Lights: Discovering a Brighter Glory*

Luke 1:5-25

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. In non-religious, earthly terms, what does it mean when we talk about people earning "glory"?
2. What do you think "glory" means when we talk about God's glory? How is the meaning similar to or different from a human's glory?
3. The Old Testament uses the word "glory" almost two hundred times. Look up one particular passage, Isaiah 60:1-3. Based on this description, what kind of thing is the glory of God?
4. Now read Psalm 96:1-8. What is our job as people, regarding God's glory?
5. In your relationship with God, how often do you explicitly think of his "glory" as something to talk about and praise?
6. Why might it be important for your faith and for your witness to others to routinely think about God's glory?
7. Close your FIFTEEN by praying Psalm 96 aloud, giving praise as you describe God's glory in the words of the psalm.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Fire and light are double-edged swords. They bring heat and vision, but they can also burn and blind. When have you ever experienced being burned or blind?
9. Briefly look at Exodus 16:7 and Deuteronomy 5:24. In what way is God's glory like fire and light?
10. Now look at a curious moment in Moses' relationship with God: read Exodus 33:12-23. What was Moses asking of God?
11. Why did Moses say he wanted to see God's glory personally?
12. What did God warn Moses would be the consequence of seeing the fullness of God's glory? Think back on Deuteronomy 5:24. Why were the people scared of God's glory?

13. In the tension between desiring more of the presence of God and being scared of the overwhelming power of his glory, where do you tend to land? Why?
14. End your FIFTEEN by asking God to show you his glory, not to overwhelm, but to inspire and connect with you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. When you subconsciously think of God, does it evoke more of a comforting feeling or more of a terrifying feeling? Why?
16. God's glory—seen as fire and light—is a physical, earthly manifestation of his heavenly power. Look at Deuteronomy 5:24 from yesterday. What emotion did it evoke in people to see God's glory?
17. Read Exodus 40:1-3, 34-38. How did God limit and manifest his glory in this passage?
18. From this time on, how did the people know God was with them?
19. How do you think this changed the way the Israelites felt about God's presence? (If you need help with this, skim 1 Samuel 4-6, a story from a few years later.)
20. How do you know that God is with you? What reminds you of his presence in your life?
21. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to make it clear to you how he is with you constantly, moment by moment.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. We've seen this week how God placed his glory in the tabernacle as a comforting presence to his people. But now look at 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. Where did God's glory now reside?
23. Now we get to our nativity story. Read Luke 1:5-12. Where was Zechariah getting to serve?
24. The tabernacle, and then the temple, were the physical places where God voluntarily chose to keep his glory as a comforting presence for his people. But now read Luke 2:25-33. Where was God choosing to manifest his glory now?
25. God's glory reveals his majesty and it reveals his presence among his people. When Jesus walked the earth, how did he perform those same functions?

26. Based on what you've been reading, why was it important to God to routinely manifest his glory for his people and ultimately confine his glory to the person of Christ? (If you need help, check out Hebrews 1:3 and 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.)
27. In what ways have you experienced the glory and presence of Christ as transformative in your life?
28. Close your FIFTEEN by thanking God for sending Jesus Christ to powerfully expose his majesty and presence for you personally.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. This week we've seen how God has continuously revealed his majesty to his people in more and more personal ways—moving from fire and light, to a presence in the tabernacle and temple, to finally coming in the form of a man, Jesus Christ. How does this progression help you understand the intent behind the “glory” of God?
30. Read John 1:14-18. What relationship does Jesus Christ have with God the Father, because he has God's glory?
31. How does Christ's intimacy with God compare to your own evaluation of how connected you are to God?
32. Read John 17:22-24. What is Christ's hope and intention for our relationship with God?
33. What act did Jesus Christ do in order to pass his glory on to us?
34. How can you practically embrace the glory of God that Jesus has now placed in you?
35. End your FIFTEEN by praying and praising God for giving you his glory through Christ so that you can be intimately connected to his presence always.