

## Giving Glory to God

By Steve Schmutzer

[Steve's Website](#)

[Contact Steve](#)

[Steve's Article Podcast](#)

[Steve's Daniel Class Podcast](#)

Sometimes my focus just gets away from me.

I prepared scrambled eggs for my family early this morning. I cracked the egg against the counter and carefully dropped the yolk and white into the trash can while I tossed the empty shells into the bowl to whisk. I stared at it for a moment or two thinking, "Something's not quite right here."

Most days this week I've thought it was a day it wasn't. I showed up at the school one afternoon to pick up my son. "Where is he?" It took me 15 minutes to recall it was a day our neighbor routinely picks him up. Yesterday I had it in my head it was Thursday. It wasn't. Traveling on all the red-eye flights for business lately doesn't help either. My schedule's been a blur of little sleep and a lot of commitments.

I'm not complaining here, but the frantic pace and myriad duties of my life have made it challenging to keep up the basics. I'm tired, and I'm probably more stressed right now than I realize. I'm thankful this is just a phase.

But it's even harder for me to preserve the most important routines. For the past several years, I've tried to commit myself to thoughtful prayer before I get out of bed each day. I try to do the same thing each night once I am in bed and before I fall asleep. Putting those bookends around each day is a discipline that helps me keep my heart in the right place.

In the spirit of fuller confession here, I've been listening to a sermon series by Dr. Erwin Lutzer of Chicago's Moody Church and it's ripping me apart. The series, "Nothing Else Matters," is about giving the full glory to God in every facet of one's life. Here's the kicker: Lutzer lays out the compelling argument that I should pray at the start of each day, "*Lord, glorify Yourself today at my expense!*"

"At my expense?!? What does that mean? What else do I need to give up and let go of? Things are hard enough as is! Should I just cower right here right now and expect the divine axe to fall?" I'm only being honest when I tell you that it was tempting for me to feel this way at first. In my sin, I want what I want when and how I want it.

The truth is, it's nothing like that. The best way for me to simplify my life - to unclutter it from all its distractions, and to give it clarity instead of clouds - is to place one unifying, one all-important purpose and passion in the center of my life. And that is the full glory of God. We exist for His purposes and not our own (1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 5:16). When we actually live like we believe that, we are never happier.

If everything I do and say each day comes from a heart that diligently seeks and genuinely desires the total glory of God, then that smoothes out a lot of the bumps in the road. It keeps my eyes and my dreams on eternal objectives, it sobers my inclinations to willfully sin, and it welcomes the opportunities to lift God up when I feel overwhelmed or squashed by life.

John the Baptist said in John 3:30, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" This was his focus. I think he understood the fundamental concept of glorifying God at his own personal expense. Then there is the familiar story of Jesus who allowed his good friend Lazarus to die before raising him from the dead. The

challenging message for everyone directly involved in that event is the same: “...it happened for the glory of God!” (John 11:4).

In reflecting on this, it’s been reinforced to me that our cluttered and chaotic lives are inclined against a deep and meaningful relationship with God. I see this dynamic in my own life, and my opening paragraphs here are a partial indicator of that.

All the good things we do can easily become the enemy of the best thing we have. It’s claimed that Socrates said, “Beware the barrenness of a busy life,” and while I doubt he had the issue of giving glory to God in view, he’s correct in a basic principle. A so-called successful and busy existence on earth means absolutely nothing in terms of the issues that really count - both in this life and the one to come.

In closing, the Bible lauds a specific group of believers that got it right. They figured out what it really means to glorify God at their own expense. This group is defined as one that will suffer and die “...for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 12:17, et al).

This group will miss the Rapture but they will find Jesus all the same, even though it will cost them a great deal. On earth they will speak the truth and they will live it too. In death, they will remain committed to a proper eternal perspective. In all aspects, God will be glorified at their expense.

My new prayer for myself is that God will glorify Himself at my expense. I pray for His mercy and grace to be upon my life as I do, but I am convinced it’s the only way to find real purpose, real centeredness, and real joy.