

Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

Sanctifying God's Name

—by Kevin Little

How can we sanctify God's Name? How can we reveal to the world God's glory? Marc made it clear in today's video: We glorify God by obeying, by our good deeds. For me, this raises the next question: So why do I falter in my obedience, in my good deeds?

John Piper said something amazing about this: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." My obedience slows whenever I cannot meet all my needs in all that God is. Paul figured out how to do this in a famous verse that is usually stripped of all its context: "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me," (Philippians 4:13). But take a look at the passage in its entirety:

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.—*Philippians 4:10-13*

The Book of Philippians finds Paul in jail. After months of being alone, unsupported, surrounded by Roman guards, a messenger from the Philippian church brings a gift and greetings. This letter is Paul's thank you note and perspective on his imprisonment. Even as he thanks them for the gift, he ensures that their perspective grows, seeing that Paul's

confidence and passion do not come from a full belly, but instead, through the strength of Christ. Jesus gives him all he needs in the moment, whether well-fed or hungry, and this propels him into his good deeds that make God's name great among those outside the family of God.

Paul could have easily allowed the "little g" god of comfort to rule his life, and he would have shown grumbling over good deeds. Paul could have easily allowed the "little g" god of productivity to set his identity, and despair would have marked his life, rather than victory. Paul could have easily let the "little g" god of acceptance creep in, and he would have walked with the timidity of a bunny, rather than the boldness of a lion.

A "little g" god is anything we let far enough into our hearts that it declares identity over us. If comfort or entitlement, then my identity centers on what I deserve. If productivity, then my worth hinges on my accomplishments and contributions. If acceptance, then the way people see me determines how I see me. Any "little g" god short circuits this process of glorifying and sanctifying God's Name among those outside of the family of God.

So search yourself as you look to lift God high by your good deeds today. Is there any "little g" god that could trip you up as you run this race?

Question: What areas of your life do you tend to look like the world? How can you obey God in this area, and how might that display His goodness, mercy, and glory?

Prayer Starter: Jesus, I take responsibility for not showing the world Your goodness and mercy. I confess that as sin and repent of it. Throughout my day today, help me notice the opportunities in each moment to practice demonstrating Your goodness and compassion.

Family Chat: When you interact with people at your school or play with kids in your neighborhood, can they tell that you are different and that Jesus lives in you?

Take Action: Whatever the Holy Spirit revealed as you pondered the question above, go and do it. He may invite you to be encouraging on social media rather than tear down; He may call you to integrity: to be the same person, no matter which group of friends you're with. Or, He may give you opportunities to build your identity on what He says about you rather than on how people see you. Whatever He reveals, go and obey.