

GLORY JUNKIES

KEY TEXT

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 (NKJV)

2 I said ^ain my heart, “Come now, I will test you with mirth; ^btherefore enjoy pleasure”; but surely, ^cthis also *was* vanity. **2** I said of laughter—“Madness!”; and of mirth, “What does it accomplish?” **3** ^dI searched in my heart *how* ^eto gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* ^fgood for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.

4 I made my works great, I built myself ^ghouses, and planted myself vineyards. **5** I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. **6** I made myself water pools from which to ^hwater the growing trees of the grove. **7** I acquired male and female servants, and had ⁱservants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. **8** ^jI also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* ^kmusical instruments of all kinds.

9 ^lSo I became great and ^mexcelled ⁿmore than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.

I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,

For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;

And this was my reward from all my labor.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done

And on the labor in which I had toiled;

And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind.

There was no profit under the sun.

Life really is all about what glory attracts your eyes and captures your heart.

Our Key text records the experiment conducted by King Solomon about pursuing all the horizontal glories (earthbound glories) of this world without a care about the vertical glory which is God and His Kingdom.

In **verses 3-8**, we see Solomon letting the glory of the 4 Ps captivate his heart:

1 -PLEASURE – He tries alcohol, not in wild drunkenness but with “guiding wisdom” a controlled pursuit of *sensual satisfaction*.



3^d I searched in my heart *how*^z to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom....

He also enjoys the glory of “the delights of the sons of men” (verse 8),-erotic *pleasures*, perhaps a harem culture [700 wives and 300 concubines].

Solomon also indulges in the *pleasures of entertainment*-
“Iacquired male and female singers, *and*^s musical instruments of all kinds (verse 8).



#2 – PROJECTS – A catalog of monumental achievements: palaces, gardens, labor system

4 I made my works great, I built myself houses [architecture], and planted myself vineyards [viticulture]. 5 I made myself gardens [landscaping] and

orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them [horticulture]. 6 I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove [hydrologist]. 7 I acquired male and female servants, and had ^aservants born in my house [human resource manager].

3- POSSESSIONS – Wealth accumulation

“Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. 8 ^aI also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces” (verses 7-8)

4 – POWER

9 ^bSo I became great and ^cexcelled ^dmore than all who were before me in Jerusalem.

Solomon pursues all these 4 Ps without withholding anything back:

10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.

I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,

For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;

And ^ethis was my ^freward from all my labor.

He was after the glory of comfort, power, productivity, experiences, pleasures and legacy.

But what was the crushing conclusion?



**11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done
And on the labor in which I had toiled;
And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind.
*There was no profit under the sun.***

After everything – pleasure, accomplishment, luxury – he looks back and realizes it was like chasing the wind. Nothing lasting, eternal or satisfying could be found in any of the glory of earthly pursuit.

Looking at how the glory of earthly things captivated Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes, I can safely conclude that Solomon in his backslidden state, has become a GLORY JUNKIE. And that is the title of my sermon this morning – **GLORY JUNKIES**.

The outline of my sermon will be as follows:

1. THE DEFINITION OF “JUNKIES”, “GLORY” AND “GLORY JUNKIES”
2. THE PLAGUE OF GLORY ADDICTION
3. THE SIGNS OF GLORY JUNKIES
4. THE SOURCE AND THE ANTIDOTE FOR GLORY JUNKIES
5. THE ULTIMATE TRUE GLORY

(I) THE DEFINITIONS

What is the meaning of the word “**junkies**”?

It has a few related meanings, depending on context.

Slang

A junkie is someone who is addicted to drugs, especially heroin or other narcotics.



Figuratively

A junkie is one who is obsessively or excessively enthusiastic about something.



E.g. He is a **FITNESS JUNKIE** [he is obsessed with working out].
He is a **NEWS JUNKIE**; **ADRENALINE JUNKIE**; **TV JUNKIE**;
VAPING JUNKIE.

What is the meaning of the word “glory”?

Noun

- Very great praise, honor or distinction by common consent; renown
- Something that is a source of honor, fame or admiration
- Adoring praise or worshipful thanksgiving [Give glory to God]
- Resplendent beauty or magnificence [the glory of autumn]

Verb

- To exult in triumph; rejoice proudly
- To boast

Hebrew

- The Hebrew word “**kavod**” comes from the root word meaning “**weight**” or heaviness”
- It conveys the idea of **IMPORTANCE, HONOR AND MAJESTY** – something that carries great weight of value.
E.g. I love the glory of standing on the stage → I love the **weight** of importance, honor and majesty of standing on the stage.

Greek

- The Greek word “*doxa*” means “**brightness, splendor or honor.**”
- It can refer to **FAME, RECOGNITION, OR DIVINE RADIANCE**



So, when I say Solomon loves the **GLORY** of building monumental **PROJECTS**, I am implying that Solomon enjoys:

- The **RECOGNITION OR ADMIRATION** he gets from others when he succeeds in building big
- The **PRIDE OR SATISFACTION** he feels personally for the achievement

- Possibly the **STORYTELLING**, the boasting and bragging rights or the moment of triumph that comes with completing a big building project.

In this context, “glory” refers to that **EMOTIONAL HIGH OR REWARDING FEELING** – whether it is **EXTERNAL** (like praise from friends) or **INTERNAL** (like feeling proud of your skill or success).

What then is a **“GLORY JUNKIE”**?

A glory junkie is someone who:

- Craves approval, applause, attention or recognition.
- Feels insecure or empty without constant affirmation
- Seeks to glorify self rather than God
- Addicted to the emotional high or rewarding feeling from created things

Simply put – **He is an addict to human praise, attention, achievement, approval and pleasures from created things.**

It is not just a personality trait – **IT IS A HEART ISSUE.**



(II) THE PLAGUES OF GLORY ADDICTION

We all live for the glory in some way.



Examples

- We love the glory of that trophy fish attacking the lure.
- We love the glory of those stunning Nike sports shoes.
- We love the glory of a brand-new house.
- We love the glory of slimming down.
- We love the glory of the sunset at Sunset Boulevard.
- We love the glory of taking that one bite of chocolate.
- We love the glory of travels.
- We love the glory of promotion.
- We love the glory of performing on stage.
- We love the glory of that beautiful watch, the cool car, the nice haircut.
- We love the glory of the perfectly appointed kitchen.
- We love the glory of that stunning piece of music.

- We love the glory of being in the top 10 honor roll.
- We love the glory of being parents to kids who are intelligent and always coming in top 3 in the class.
- We love the glory of tertiary learning and credentials.
- We love the glory of being respected and feared.
- We love the glory of being the most fashionable.
- We love the glory of being handsome or pretty.
- We love the glory of being accepted in a group.
- We love the glory of being trendy.
- We love the glory of being a mega-church.
- We love the glory of being loved and feeling belonged.
- We love the glory of getting high through porn, drugs alcoholism or vaping.

On the topic of vaping, may I digress a bit to give warnings to the young people of our church. Cigarettes are getting out of fad and the trendy vice now is **vaping**. While vaping and smoking are harmful, many assume vaping is “safer” option. However, vaping can be worse than smoking in certain ways, especially for younger users with long-term health outcomes. Many vape devices, especially popular ones like JUUL, deliver **EXTREMELY HIGH DOSES OF NICOTINE**. One single vape pod can equal an **ENTIRE PACK OF CIGARETTES** in nicotine. Vaping also makes the **“HIT” STRONGER AND MORE ADDICTIVE** and the worst of all, there is harmful chemical added into those liquid vaporizers. It was manufactured by China in 2023 and then produced in Thailand in 2024 to be smuggled to South East Asia and East Asia. Lately there was a big crackdown of this **ETOMIDATE**, street name **“space oil”** in Hong Kong and **“k-**

pod” in Singapore; **“zombie vapes”** or **“zombie spice”**, that is destroying the next generation of vape user, as young as 13 years old that end in fatality. Etomidate is a powerful, short acting **INTRAVENOUS ANESTHETIC** used primarily in hospital settings. It is used to induce **GENERAL ANESTHESIA** or sedation, especially during emergency intubation or short procedures. When used in vaping pods, especially for teenagers, it will cause persistent tremors, hemoptysis (coughing blood), confusion, staggering like a zombie, hallucinations, severe agitation, collapsing and even death.

Video on Vaping with K-Pod

Follow the Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19i31W34yp/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Young people – do you still want to want to try the “glory” of this K-pod in vaping?

Our Human Nature

When I say, **“we all live for glory in some way”**, I am making a broad, reflective statement about **HUMAN NATURE**. It means:

- Most people, in some form or another, are driven by the **DESIRE TO FEEL IMPORTANT, ADMIRER, SUCCESSFUL OR MEANINGFUL.**
- **“Glory”** in this sense doesn’t always mean fame or public recognition – it can be:

- **External validation** – wanting to be admired, respected or praised (e.g. for career success, talent, beauty, achievements)
- **Internal pride**- wanting to feel like you've done something worthwhile or left a mark
- **Legacy** – hoping to be remembered or make an impact
- **Spiritual or moral glory** – living for a higher purpose, divine approval or a sense of eternal meaning.

In simpler terms:

WE ALL WANT TO MATTER – TO FEEL SIGNIFICANT, SEEN OR VALUED – AND THAT DESIRE SHOWS UP DIFFERENTLY IN EACH OF US.

Some live for glory in their career, some through parenting, art, athletics, religion, activism or even social media likes. The expression highlights **how deep the drive or the addiction for meaning, affirmation or purpose is in human life.**

Created Glory

All these glories that I have just mentioned to you were **CREATED** and placed in our lives for a **PURPOSE**. All of the glories of the physical creation would serve this **ONE PURPOSE – TO REMIND US OF AND POINT US TO THE GLORY OF GOD**. We were never meant to live for **EARTHBOUND GLORY**. We were never meant to seek **PEACE AND SATISFACTION OF HEART** here. We were never meant to offer the desires and allegiance of our hearts to what God made. The **PHYSICAL WORLD IS WONDERFULLY GLORIOUS**, but it was never meant

to be our **STOPPING POINT** any more than the **SIGN** that points to something that is meant to be the end of the journey.



Here's what you and I need to remember about **SIGNS**. **THE SIGN IS NOT THE THING**; the sign points you to **THE THING**.

The same can be said of the **PHYSICAL CREATION**. It is **NOT THE THING** that you were made to live for. It was made to **POINT YOU TO THE THING YOU WERE MADE TO LIVE FOR** and **THAT THING IS GOD AND GOD ALONE**.

How sad it is when a person looks for what can't be found in something that cannot deliver! But many, many people do this every day. **THEY LOOK TO CREATED GLORY TO FIND WHAT CANNOT BE FOUND THERE.**

Yes, God has filled your life with glories of many kinds. There is never a day when you aren't greeted by those glories. But it is vital to remember that **the glories that surround you every day in the world that God made are not meant to be your STOPPING POINT, because you were CREATED TO LIVE FOR A GREATER MORE GLORIOUS GLORY – THE GLORY OF GOD.**

(III) SIGNS OF GLORY ADDICTION

- ***Parading Righteousness***

When we share spiritual stories to highlight ourselves, not Christ – like the Pharisees in **Luke 18.**

- ***Talking Too Much About Ourselves***

We dominate conversations, making our anecdotes, achievements, and families the center, rather than God's grace.

- ***Feeling Self-Important***

We avoid community, dismiss others' insights, and rely only on our own ideas.

- ***Caring Too Much***

Our decisions are shaped by how others will view us rather than serving others humbly.

- ***Caring Too Little***

We exclude or dismiss others, thinking we need no help or correction.

- ***Being Defensive***

We resist correction, deflecting or fighting when confronted spiritually.

- ***Envy***

Bitterness arises when we don't receive what we think we deserve.

- ***Control***

We hoard tasks and leadership, reluctant to share responsibility or empower others.

(IV) THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM AND THE ANTIDOTE

The Source of the Problem in A Nutshell

Self-Glory over God's Glory – **A MISPLACED IDENTITY AND DISORDERED WORSHIP**

Root Causes

- ***Idolatry of Self***

Putting self at the center instead of God.



- We were created to glorify God (**Isaiah 43:7**) but sin turns us inward.
- When we worship our own image, achievements, or reputation, we become obsessed with getting glory rather than giving it.
- **“They exchanged the glory of God for images....” (Romans 1:23)**

• *Insecurity and Identity Crisis*

Looking for **WORTH** and **VALIDATION** in the opinions of others.

- Without anchoring our identity in Christ, we try to earn love through **PERFORMANCE AND STATUS**.
- This leads to burnout, pride, comparison or despair.
- **“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (John 12:43)**

• *Pride and the Fear of Being “Small”*

A refusal to be unknown, overlooked, or humble

- Glory junkies often fear **OBSCURITY**. They want to be **SIGNIFICANT** – but seek it in worldly ways or in the created things.
- Pride says, *“I must be seen, applauded, remembered.”*
- **“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)**

• *Misunderstanding of Glory*

Seeing glory as personal achievement instead of God's character revealed.

- True glory is not found in fame or platform but in **REFLECTING GOD'S HOLINESS, LOVE AND TRUTH.**
- Jesus showed the greatest glory through humility and sacrifice, not applause.

The Antidote

Self-Glory to God-Glory



• *Death to Self-Glory*

Jesus calls us to “**deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me**” (**Mark 8:34-38**) – including surrendering the desire for human praise.

• *Repentance and Reorientation*

Recognize the “puddles” we’ve mistaken for the **OCEAN OF GLORY** – success, applause, recognition – and confess that they fall short.



- ***Boast only in the Lord***

Paul reminds us we are “nobodies” – but God, like a master “junk artist,” transforms us into something beautiful by His grace.

“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:13)

- ***Be Glory Reflectors, Not Manufacturers***

We aren’t here to create glory ourselves. Like the moon reflects the sun, our lives are to reflect God’s glory – especially through humility and community.

- ***Trust in Christ Alone for Lasting Glory***

Approval from others is fleeting, but the Cross points us to the infinite, eternal glory found only in Christ.

As John Piper emphasizes: *Craving human praise and seeking God’s glory in Jesus cannot coexist – faith in Christ alonesatisfies our glory hunger.*

Application: Celebrate what He has done in your life, not what you have done.

- ***Corporate Worship***

Corporate worship every Sunday reminds us that we were created to live for the glory of God. Corporate worship helps you see once more that it is only when you live for God that your heart finds the **peace, satisfaction, and security** that it

seeks. And it is only God's glory that has the power to rescue you from all the earth-bound glories that so easily capture your heart.

Application: Do you believe in the indispensability of corporate worship every Sunday? Can you safely testify to the glory of God that you've never missed a single Sunday in a month or are you a regular absentee in the corporate Sunday worship service? A weekly worshipper, a bi-weekly worshipper or a monthly worshipper? Or are you a CEO Christian - Christian who only attends Christmas and Easter only? Corporate worship recalibrates our hearts and reorient it to live only for one true glory – **GOD**. Why is Etan so anti congregants browsing their cell phone during service? Because it shows that you are stuck to the glory of cell phone more than to the glory of God's presence and message. You have allowed the glory of connectivity to supersede your connectivity to God. That is adultery and idolatry. When you forego Sunday Corporate worship for that one thing, it means the glory of that **one thing** has become more prominent and indispensable than the glory of God. That one thing could be your sleep, your homework, your job, your errand, your house-chores, your laundry, your family event or even vacation.

(V) THE ULTIMATE ONE TRUE GLORY

We are all glory junkies – addicted to human praise, attention, achievement, and approval and the thrills of created things. We seek glory from others and from the things of this

world. We gratify our drive for meaning, affirmation or purpose in this human life by chasing glories horizontally from this earth and world. We **reject the glory of the cross, wanting crowns without crucifixion.**

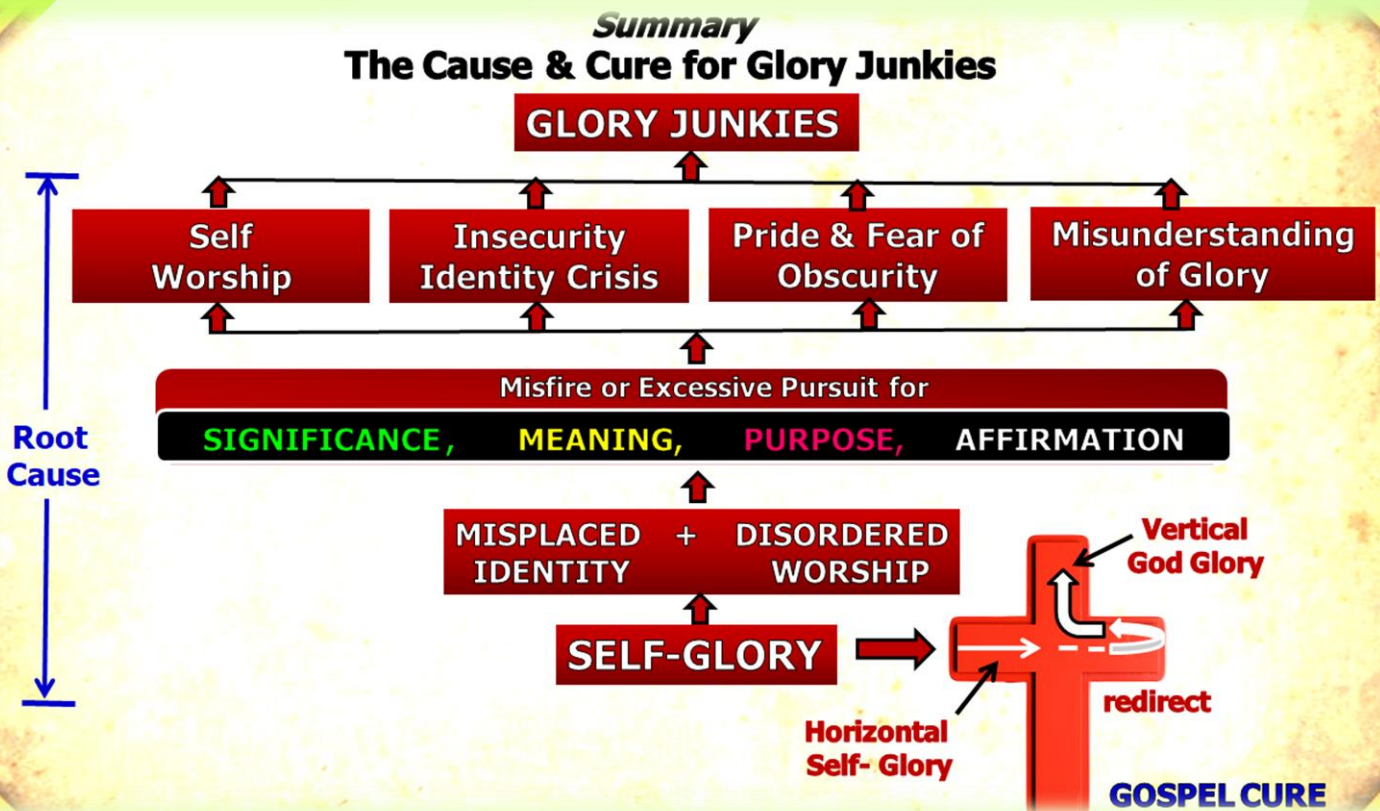
The gospel doesn't eliminate **OUR CRAVING FOR GLORY** – it **REDIRECTS IT TO THE ONE WHO IS WORTHY.**

Jesus didn't chase after any glory from man or from the things of this world. Unlike Solomon, **JESUS, OUR GREATER AND BETTER SOLOMON** denied Himself for the joy set before Him. Where Solomon tried to fill his soul with the glories of earthly things, Christ **EMPTIED** Himself to fill us with what truly satisfies.

At the cross, **TRUE GLORY** was revealed. The world sees weakness but God sees **REDEMPTIVE GLORY** – “Father, glorify your name...” (John 17:1) – Jesus saw the cross as the **MOMENT OF DIVINE GLORY.** In Christ, therefore today, we are freed from self-glory. We are crucified with Him – **OUR OLD GLORY-HUNGRY SELVES DIE (Galatians 2:20).** Our worth is no longer defined by all the created glories of God from this world – like our reputation, applause, achievement – but in **BEING LOVED, CHOSEN, AND SECURED IN CHRIST.**

The gospel cure for glory addiction is to **BE CAPTIVATED BY A GREATER GLORY – THE GLORY OF GOD.**

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 11:36)



When we see Christ as our **ULTIMATE GLORY**, we stop trying to steal glory for ourselves and start living to display His worth. We become **REFLECTORS** of Christ's glory and not manufacturers..... **“We all.... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed.... from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).**

Our aim now – **Let the one who boasts, boasts in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31).**

In Christ, our desire for **greatness** or for **meaning** is satisfied not in being glorified but in **GLORIFYING HIM.**

My Testimony

When we were under the employment of the sending church in Singapore, we were allowed to return to Singapore once in every two years. We called that “furlough”. Joy went back for the first time to Singapore when she was 1.5 years old and I was carrying Jan in my last trimester of pregnancy. It was planned that Jan would be delivered in Singapore instead of in Iloilo. When all the relatives saw Joy for the first time, they were thrilled but it also ended with this question – “Are you going to let this child study in the Philippines? Aiyo! The education system there is bad. Singapore is better. Worse, no mandarin and no future.” And since then, this vicious cycle of this negative comment would resound in every furlough we took in Singapore – “No mandarin, no future.” I didn’t want my kids to be despised each time I returned to Singapore. And so, as a strict mum, I pushed my 2 kids to excel in their school. And they both performed very well – always the top 10 in the class. I wasn’t happy still. I pushed for more – I wanted them to be in the top 3, which they both finally fulfilled. You can say, I gloried in my kids’ outstanding academic performance. Why? Because I didn’t want relatives to **invalidate** my kids. So, I kept boasting about them to any one from Singapore who came to visit us. That was my prideful earthbound boast. Even in the high school era, when I sent Jan back to Singapore, there was never a day that went by without me making that phone call back to encourage, motivate and guide her. Jan was the fruit of my encouragement, counsel and motivation – she topped the whole cohort from Singapore High School 1st

year to the 4th and entered a pretty good Junior College that trained her for the scholarship track.

Even Joy, who entered the educational system of Singapore a bit later than Jan - like in Junior College first year - I never failed to boost faith in her towards God and His promises for the impossible to happen for her. When her grades didn't make the cut for medical course, another door opened up that would still keep Joy in the science sector – biomed science – a sector which I didn't see at that time that would become one of the four key pillars of Singapore's manufacturing sector. But looking back, my motive was - I gloried in their educational success. They both did so well and also maintained their walk and commitment to God while in Singapore without us physically supervising them in Singapore, and also without any relatives' supervision that many Singaporeans came to me and remarked – “Wow! Ptr Lily! God really blessed your children. I really wished my kids are like your kids.” Those who mocked the bleak future of my 2 kids now had to concede in defeat that they were wrong and now they were beginning to sing a different tune once they saw Jan get the scholarship for France and once Joy graduated with honors from the Singapore University into A -Star – a bio-medical science brain child project of our ex PM.

You might think – wow now all is in glory land – with both of my kids in good jobs and they both married well too – both of their spouses are as smart as they, if not even smarter. You see, I glory in intelligence. I love people who are intelligent

and who are graduates from tertiary education. Probably because I myself didn't make it to the uni. But you see – these are all glories in the horizontal realm and then now that both of my kids have graduated, gotten good jobs and spouses – it backfired on me. The emotional high like pride that I felt about them and their achievements turned around and bit me. Instead of parenting them for the glory of **who they are**, I parented them for **what they could perform** and such kind of parenting gives rise to adult kids who fluctuate in their identity according to their performance. Also, because both of them were so highly educated and doing so well financially in their career, they turned around and despised me. I had a big fight with Jan during the COVID while I was back and numerous bickering with Joy over differences in our worldviews. It was there and then that God showed me that my glory pursuit for my kids and myself was short-lived and flimsy..... it was all chasing after the wind – a vanity. And God taught me through a book on how to relate to my adult kids and how to reorient my parenting skills, which I am going to practice on my grandkids. Do not glory as parents in your children's **performances** *[like getting a high grade or winning a game]* but in their **efforts** *[I saw how hard you worked on that]*, **attitudes** *[I admire how you stayed positive and focused]*, **persistence** *[You didn't give up even when it was tough – well done!]*, **strategy and problem solving** *[That was a smart way to try it a second time]* and **improvement** *[You've really improved because you kept practicing]*. This is because when you glory in their performance or intelligence, it creates **fear of failure; encourage perfectionism** and promote a **fixed**

mindset (believing abilities are unchangeable). But glorying effort builds a **growth mindset** – the belief that ability grows through hard work, strategies and learning. Above all, train your kids in the **fear of the Lord**.

And today if I want to glory about my kids, I would only glory about **WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN BOTH OF THEIR LIVES** and not what they have done. That is called boasting in the Lord. **I celebrate what Jesus has done for them and not their self-glory.**

REDIRECT YOUR CRAVING FOR GLORY TO THE ONE WHO IS WORTHY.

YOUR WORTH (VALUE) CAN ONLY COME FROM THE OUTSIDE. YOU CANNOT GET IT BY YOURSELF OR WITHIN YOURSELF. SOMEONE FROM THE OUTSIDE MUST GIVE IT.

WE CANNOT GENERATE TRUE, LASTING WORTH FROM WITHIN OURSELVES – IT MUST BE GIVEN TO US BY THE ONE WHO CREATED AND REDEEMED US – JESUS.

END