

Foreword by  
**MATT CHANDLER**

*GLORY*  
  
*HUNGER*

God, the Gospel, and  
Our Quest for Something More

*JR Vassar*

**STUDY GUIDE**

*Study Guide For*

*GLORY*  
  
*HUNGER*

God, the Gospel, and  
Our Quest for Something More

*JR Vassar*

*Glory Hunger: God, the Gospel, and Our Quest for Something More*

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# Introduction

## *Built for Glory*

### **Overview**

The desire for glory is a universal one deeply embedded in the human heart. We see it in children who long for the approval of their parents and peers and in adults who exhaust themselves to gain status and recognition or avoid embarrassment and shame.

### **Key Statement**

*A passion for praise or a fear of humiliation—it's all glory hunger. As we grow out of our childhood dreams, our glory hunger only intensifies and moves into more mature domains: social status, academic exploits, career advancement, wealth, marriage, and family. These all become means of "making it," and making it is an effort to satiate our glory hunger.*

### **Questions**

1. How does Vassar define glory? What does it mean to be glory hungry?

2. In what ways does glory hunger manifests itself in the culture in which you live? In what ways does glory hunger manifests itself in your own personal life?

3. As you begin this study, how can you perceive a personal hunger for glory impacting a person's life and relationships?

### *Prayer*

Take a moment to reflect on your heart's longings. How would God have you pray as you begin this study? What things would he have you pray to emerge in your life over this study? What things in your heart would he have you pray to wither and die? Go to the Lord with these things, asking him to work in you "that which is pleasing in his sight" (Heb. 13:21).



3. Read Psalm 8. How is our glory hunger inextricably bound to the creation account? What did it mean for Adam to be “crowned with glory and honor?” Is glory hunger a legitimate human desire?

4. In Romans 3:23, the apostle Paul tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” We are cut off from the glory that God intends for us, which deep down we want restored to us. What are ways in which we reach to regain this lost glory?

### *Prayer*

Genesis 3 includes a great promise that God will provide a savior who will crush the head of the Serpent and reverse the tragic effects of human sin, restoring to us the glory for which God made us. As the following chapters will show, that savior is Jesus. Spend a moment asking God to use this study to give you a deeper understanding of Jesus and a deeper experience of the freedom that is found in him.

# Broken Buddhas

## *Overview*

As fallen people living in a fallen world, it is futile to look to anyone or anything in creation to satiate our hunger for glory. Yet our ingrained response to our longing for acceptance and approval is to seek it from other people through performance. We are prone to the fear of man, and we live in the bondage of unrelenting effort to please others and avoid their disappointment. In the end we discover that people cannot heal us, because they are just as broken as we are.

## *Key Statement*

*Loving the glory that comes from man creates a life of bondage lived under the approving or disapproving gaze of people. It is as if we can feel the stares of others bearing down on us, forcing us to perform in hopes of their applause. Life feels like one big audition with the world as our audience and judge, and we just want to be liked.*

## *Questions*

1. Read the C.S. Lewis quote on page 27 from “The Inner Ring.” What “inner rings” do you come up against and find desirable?

2. Read John 12:41–43. Where do you see this playing out in the church and in the culture today?

3. What is the link between glory hunger and the fear of man? How have you experienced the fear of man creating bondage in your life?

4. Read Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18. How have you seen glory hunger and the fear of man taint even the virtuous endeavors of your life?

5. As you reflect on Vassar’s account of people’s prayers to a broken Buddha, what images come to your mind that vividly capture the futility of seeking the glory that comes from men?

### *Prayer*

Spend some time reflecting on the “broken buddhas” in your own life. Ask God to give you the grace to turn away from those things and seek your life and joy in him and the glory that comes from him in the gospel of his Son.



3. In this chapter, Vassar states, “Until the opinion of the one who matters most actually matters most to you, you will never be free from your unrelenting glory hunger.” Objectively, God and his opinion of us matter most. Subjectively, other people and their opinions of us often matter most to us. How can we practically experience God’s opinion of us bearing more weight and consequence in our lives than anyone else’s opinion?

4. As those who belong to a fallen race, sin taints our lives and produces shameful behavior and an inglorious lack of virtue. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18. How is our hunger for glory addressed in this passage, and how does this passage say our hunger for glory can be increasingly satisfied?

5. When you consider the ultimate destiny for the Christian, how is Jesus truly the end of our glory hunger?

### *Prayer*

Take a moment to reflect on the gospel and all that Jesus has won for those who believe in him. Pray prayers of praise and thanks as you reflect on his saving and glory-restoring work.



3. According to Vassar, what is the greatest danger of narcissism?

4. How does the life and way of Jesus stand in stark contrast to the culture's obsession with its own glory?

5. What does the cross say about Jesus's passion for the Father's glory?

*Prayer*

Read and reflect on John 12:27–28. Spend some time in silent confession, seeking the Father's forgiveness over any narcissism that resides in your heart. Pray that God would help you walk in the way of Jesus, seeking to “glorify most what is most glorious.”

# Ordering Glory

## **Overview**

Joy comes from having rightly ordered loves. When we love the glory of God more than our own glory, we find freedom from our over-attentiveness to self. Only a clear vision of the greatness, grace, and dominion of God revealed in creation and in his Son will reorient our lives away from ourselves and liberate us from narcissistic living.

## **Key Statement**

*When our glory and reputation and name are of greater concern to us than God's, we are loving ourselves more than God. We are centering our joy on ourselves. It's no wonder that we end up miserable, unable to bear up under the rank and responsibilities of being God. We are pathetic at being God. We are not built to bear the weight of being worshiped, by ourselves or by anyone else. It corrupts and crushes us. The life and joy that God intends for us is found only in a rightly ordered love for God and a rightly ordered love of self. This is what the gospel is designed to do—free us from the worship of self and bring us into the joy of worshiping God. The great aim of the gospel is not to redefine us to feel wonderful about ourselves but to reorient us to God so that we lose our attentiveness to self altogether and give our attention to the most worthy object.*

## **Questions**

1. Read the quote by David Naugle on page 66. Vassar states, “The joy you get from loving an object is directly proportional to the glory of that object.” If that is true, how does a human-centered, narcissistic emphasis on self-esteem work against our joy?

2. According to Romans 15:8–9 what is the primary purpose for Christ's coming? How should this truth impact our prayers and our worship?

3. What stood out to you in this chapter about the character of God?

4. According to Vassar, what is at the heart of “name dropping,” and how does a vision of God’s greatness address this human tendency?

5. Vassar makes the argument that we must worship our way out of narcissism. Why is that the case?

### *Prayer*

Psalm 145 gives us a beautiful look at the greatness, grace, and dominion of God. On this side of the cross, we have a vantage point that the psalmist did not have. We have seen the greatness, grace, and dominion of God most clearly in Jesus. Take a few minutes to reflect on the life, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Pray prayers of adoration of Jesus, worshiping your way out of self-focus, giving glory where glory is really due.



3. The cross forces a self-awareness upon us. What does the cross say about us and to us that can free us from enslaving pride?

4. We can declare war against ourselves in our glory war against God by embracing intentional obscurity and secrecy. How can you practically practice the discipline of obscurity in your fight against glory hunger?

### *Prayer*

Read Colossians 1:15–18. Take a moment to reflect on the preeminence of Jesus and on the promise of his glorious return. As you pray, praise the Son and ask the Father for the humility to give Jesus center stage in your life, just as he will one day visibly take the center stage of this universe.

# Losing Glory to Gain It

## **Overview**

In an increasingly post-Christian context, followers of Jesus must be willing to experience the loss of cultural approval and face the very real prospect of rejection and social shame for the sake of faithfulness to Jesus. As we grow content in being recipients of God's electing love and rest in his acceptance of us, we will unflinchingly face the rejection of others. We won't hesitate to suffer loss for Jesus if we value his reputation over our own. And as we keep our minds set on the unfading glory and reward that God will bestow on us in the end, we will not fear the temporary loss of glory that we must endure here and now.

## **Key Statement**

*In a world that laughs at the church's convictions and values, it becomes socially safer to hide in the shadows and distance ourselves from the church. We face the constant pressure to compromise convictions in order to stay in the good graces of friends and strangers who reject our faith and our understanding of reality. We don't want to be excluded or rejected; it hurts. It is normal to avoid pain, so we lean toward guarding ourselves against criticism. If we speak our convictions regarding areas that are culturally off-limits, we face being denounced as unloving, bigoted, narrow-minded, or judgmental. We find ourselves in a situation similar to the men in John 12:42–43, who would not confess Jesus for fear of social consequences. There are people who once walked with Jesus who today no longer openly confess him because the glory that comes from people means too much to them. It cannot be risked.*

## **Questions**

1. Where do you see evidences of the increasing marginalization of followers of Jesus in our culture? How is this similar to the world of the first-century Christians?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What does the apostle Peter mean in the opening of his first letter when he refers to his readers as "the elect exiles of the Dispersion?" If you are a follower of Jesus, how have you personally experienced the sociological status of being an exile?

3. Vassar writes, “When our glory hunger tempts us to privatize our faith in order to preserve our honor before people, we have lost sight of the worth and preeminence of Jesus and have valued our reputation above his.” How can you preserve the worth and preeminence of Jesus as a settled reality in your own heart?

4. Read Luke 6:22–23. What words in this passage describe the treatment that most people fear? How does Jesus’s promise of future reward motivate us to endure that treatment?

5. See the definition of “despise” on page 116. How does hope fuel endurance and help us to “despise” our present sufferings and inglorious treatment from people? How can you keep this hope constantly set before you?

### *Prayer*

Using 1 Peter 1:3–9 as a guide for your prayer, ask God to give you greater anticipation for what awaits those who faithfully follow Jesus. Rejoice in the hope of the gospel. Confess your fears and failures and rehearse the hope that is yours in Jesus. Ask for the strength to endure the testing of your faith, a strength that comes from rejoicing in Jesus.



3. Read the C.S. Lewis quote from *The Weight of Glory* on page 124. How does this challenge your view of “ordinary people?”

4. Describe the difference between the outcomes of a life that wants glory from others and a life that wants glory for others.

5. As you completed the section “A Final Appeal,” did God stir your heart about anything in particular?

### **Prayer**

Use this concluding benediction of *Glory Hunger* to guide your time of prayer:

*May we who have come to live under the affirmation of our God and Father, and who are zealous for his honor among all peoples, gladly give ourselves to his mission, risking the status of outcast so that others might be brought into the enjoyment of his grace and glory now and forevermore. And as we ready ourselves to lose the glory that comes from men, may we love and eagerly anticipate the glory that comes from God. Amen.*

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