

**Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer**  
**1 Samuel 2:11-36**  
**Godly Character**

**Introduction:** Have you ever made excuses in your life about something you knew to be wrong? You convinced yourself it wasn't causing that much trouble, so you justified it, that is until you saw it on display in somebody else and realized how ugly it really was? The Old Testament presents us with all kinds of stories that give us the opportunity to come face to face with the ugly reality of the sin we justify in our life, and today we arrive at one of those stories. This is one of those stories where we see who NOT to be and what NOT to do, and sadly, it's not the pagan Philistines or Egyptians we are going to learn it from, but rather the men entrusted with the spiritual leadership of Israel; the men who literally represented Israel before the Lord! H. A. Hoffner noted,

**“Considering the prominent role that warfare with the Philistines plays in 1 Samuel, one might have expected the opening chapters to focus on that threat to Israel. Instead our text reveals a more sinister and deadly enemy to God’s people—a cancer at the very spiritual heart of the people—in her priests, who were responsible for teaching the people and mediating their prayers and sacrifices to God.”<sup>1</sup>**

**Proposition: There are three contrasts in 1 Samuel 2:11-36 that exemplify the ugly difference between godly and ungodly character.**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> contrast that exemplifies the difference between godly and ungodly character is seen in young Samuel and the priests he served.**

**(1) While Samuel faithfully served the Lord, the other priests openly disobeyed the law and acted with arrogance and greed. (2:11-17)**

**A. 11 Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy ministered to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.**

1. To be spectacular means to stand out from the norm with such obviousness that it can't be missed. For instance, when a person lives a Biblically moral life without looking down on those who don't, it looks spectacular! When a person is committed to living a life of sexual purity, integrity, honesty, forgiveness, excellence, and genuine kindness towards others; a life that makes no room for bitterness, jealousy and gossip, and does so without acting like they are better than those who don't live that way, then that person shines as warm and as bright as the sun in a dark world that generally only chooses morality when it benefits it to do so.
2. As you will see in a second, the priests had established completely unlawful traditions in the handling of the daily sacrifices, the most important duty of

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<sup>1</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [\*1 & 2 Samuel\*](#) (1 Sa 2:11b-36). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

the priesthood! Meanwhile, the text states quite plainly that Samuel served the Lord. There is nothing spectacular about his ministry other than the fact he's doing what he's supposed to be doing while everybody around him isn't; which is in and of itself spectacular. Samuel is not even an adult, nor is he a priest. His job is to serve the Lord by assisting the priests in their jobs.

3. So, Samuel, even though he's not performing any particular job in the tabernacle in a spectacular way, is however doing his job with faithful excellence to the Lord rather than himself. It's a spectacular testimony that a young preteen would be willing to do the right thing the right way, while everybody around him, including the very men he would have looked up to as mentors, are doing the wrong things! What we learn about Samuel's service in the temple in verse eleven is immediately and drastically contrasted with the sons of Eli and the other priests of Israel.

**B. 12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD.**

1. R.D. Philipps notes, **"This is about as condemning an introduction as anyone could receive, especially if one is a minister. To say that they were "worthless men" is to say that they were agents of destruction. To then say that they "did not know the Lord" is to say that for all their access to divine religion and their knowledge of theology and the rituals of worship, these were unconverted men, spiritually ignorant of God's saving grace, and caring nothing for the demands of his holiness. What a crisis it was for Israel that such men were its spiritual leaders."**<sup>2</sup>
2. Now, to be honest, Samuel doesn't know the Lord yet either. He knows enough about the Lord that he knows doing what God commands and serving Him is a good and worthy thing, however, 1 Samuel 3:7 tells us Samuel didn't yet know the Lord, that is, Samuel didn't have a personal relationship with Him yet. You can serve the Lord and obey His commandments without knowing Him. That's not what Jesus died to give us, nor is it faith, but it's nonetheless totally different than what's going on with Eli's sons and the rest of the priests.
3. To add insult to injury, because Eli is the High Priest and Judge of Israel, his two sons would be viewed as his right and left hand. Next to Eli himself, these are the two most powerful and influential people in all of Israel, and they are worthless men! What a mess!!
4. But it wasn't just Eli's sons. The problem was truly systemic through the entire priesthood.

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<sup>2</sup> Newheiser, J. (2011). [\*Opening Up 1 Samuel\*](#) (pp. 26–27). Leominster: Day One.

C. **13 The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, 14 and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." 17 Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.**

1. The Old Testament sacrificial system was a very specific, and personally somewhat confusing system of precise detailed instructions written out in the Book of Leviticus. However, what is not confusing is the straightforward instructions on what was to be given to the priests and when it was to be given to them. There was no mistaking it, yet the priests at Shiloh had developed a tradition that stood in direct opposition to the sacrificial laws they were responsible to carry out on behalf of the people of Israel.
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel tells us that the priests would go to the tents of those who traveled to Shiloh to make an offering and stick a fork in their meat pots and take some of their meat. In the book of Leviticus, priests were to be given specific portions, of specific offerings, at specific times, during the specific process for that specific type of sacrifice. However, greed among the priests had led them to justify taking advantage of those who had traveled to Shiloh. The priest would send one of his servants to a family's tent that had made a sacrifice that day and take some of the meat that the Law specifically said belonged to the family as a part of their celebration and worship of the Lord.
3. In addition, the priests, not wanting to even have to leave the temple to steal from people, began holding their sacrifice hostage until they were given the option to take as much meat as they wanted. They would refuse to burn the fat of the persons sacrifice on the altar unless they were given their choice of meat from the animal first. They were so aggressive in this demand that the text tells us they threatened to take it by force if the person didn't comply!
4. Now, some commentators suggest that this was only the practice of Eli's sons, but I completely disagree with that assessment. Verse thirteen introduces us to this contrast by saying this was the custom of the priests. At no point in the text is there any hint that the context shifted to focus exclusively on Eli's sons. It will do that in a minute when it specifically points out the sexual abuse being committed by his sons, but at this stage there is nothing in the text that indicates a change of the subject—the

actions of the priests that were so normal it's called a custom! The priesthood in Shiloh had become completely corrupt!

5. Talk about a toxic spiritual environment! The priest they trusted to represent them before the Lord are using their position to subjugate them for personal gain. They were knowingly not only disobeying God's Law, but taking that which was intended to bring glory to God and using it for their own glory.
6. Furthermore, Samuel himself is in an incredibly toxic work environment! This is why his service to the Lord was so spectacular. He was working in a den of thieves, but he wasn't a thief! And listen, Samuel had no real relationship with his parents. Since being old enough to be weaned from his mother, Samuel has been living away from home in the temple under the supervision and influence of Eli, his sons, and the rest of the priests, yet Samuel is continuing to do what he's supposed to do for the reasons he's supposed to do it.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> contrast that exemplifies the difference between godly and ungodly character is seen in verses 18 through 25.**

**(2) While Hannah and Elkanah encouraged their son's seemingly unnoticed faithful service to the Lord, Eli allowed his two sons to openly rebel against God and abuse the people! (2:18-25)**

**A. 18 Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. 19 And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD." So then they would return to their home. 21 Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the young man Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.**

1. If you were with us when we studied chapter one, we saw that Elkanah was a Godly man who took his entire family to Shiloh every year to participate in the annual sacrifice and feast to the Lord. For Hannah and Elkanah this annual pilgrimage had to be an extremely exciting event. They were not only going to worship the Lord, but now they were also going to visit their son Samuel and watch him serve the Lord! It's not hard to imagine the excitement both of them must have had, but for Hannah, who had gone through a massive trial of faith prior to Samuel's birth, it was even more special.
2. Now the ephod that the text says Samuel wore was the outer garment worn by priests and people in religious service (i.e. Samuel). There were a variety

of ephods, for instance, what Samuel wore would not be the same as what the High Priest wore. However, no matter which type of ephod it was, the best way to visualize them all would be to picture an apron that you would wear on top of your robe while performing official religious duties.

3. On that, being a good mom, Hannah would have naturally wanted to make sure her son was dressed in a robe in good condition and one that properly fit, after all, Samuel was a growing boy who would continually outgrow his clothes. Therefore, Hannah needed to make Samuel a new robe each year. It doesn't appear that Elkanah was a particularly wealthy man, but they certainly weren't poor either, not if he could afford to take his entire family to the annual feast every year! The Law only required the men to go. My point is, we don't know if Elkanah could afford to purchase Samuel a robe every year or not, but either way, Hannah wanted to demonstrate her love to her son by personally laboring to make him a robe. Even though she had given Samuel to the Lord, she hadn't given away her motherly affection and love for Samuel.
  4. The passage also lets us peer into the relationship the High Priest Eli had with Elkanah and Hannah. Given Hannah had entrusted Samuel to Eli, it would be no surprise that Eli recognized them upon their arrival each year. In addition, Eli had been inspired by Hannah's gritty faith, so it makes sense that when he saw them, he would pray a prayer of blessing over them that was rooted in the context of the trial he saw Hannah going through! It appears Eli truly admired Hannah and Elkanah alike, and as such, every time he saw them he would pray for God to bless Hannah with children.
  5. Now, of itself, nothing in verses 18-21 should be spectacular at all. This is supposed to be NORMAL! Parents visiting a child they committed to serve the Lord in the temple, the High Priest praying for those parents, and the faithful service of that child to the Lord are the things you should expect to hear, and none of the things you shouldn't! However, this normal scene becomes a spectacular scene when contrasted with what's going on between Eli and his two sons!
- B. 22 Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 23 And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. 25 If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.**

1. The statement that these women were, “serving at the entrance of the tent of meeting” is vague, so we can’t exactly say who these women were and what they were doing, but the text certainly implies that they were there to do things that honored the Lord. Instead, these women were forced, or at minimum manipulated, into having sex with the high priests’ sons.
2. What a contrast! While Samuel is serving the Lord and his parents come to encourage him in that service, both in their love for him and their faithful testimony to worship the Lord themselves, Eli continues to hear about the sexual abuse being committed by his two sons, but never removes them from their position, nor even disciplines them in any way. He finally confronts them, but he doesn’t do anything about it. And remember, Eli isn’t just their father, he’s also the High Priest and Judge of Israel, and they work for him in that effort!!! They were not only bullying people like mafia henchman to take meat that didn’t belong to them, but they were also using their position of power to exploit women at the temple to have sex with them.
3. Eli certainly warns his sons on the danger of blatantly disobeying the Lord, and in doing so he makes it clear to them that they are not only committing sins against people, but they are also most importantly committing sin against GOD!
4. Interestingly, Eli raises a question that neither he, nor anybody else, could truly answer at that time. They all knew that the sacrifices they were performing in the temple, even when done correctly, could not possibly meet the righteous standard of God, and thus why they were always offering sacrifices! Furthermore, as the High Priest, his job was to mediate between man and God, but he knew it was a job he could never truly accomplish because he himself needed a mediator; he himself was a sinner, so who then would properly represent Him? What a great question for Eli to ask! Unfortunately for him however, the answer wouldn’t truly come until the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It’s what led the author of the Book of Hebrews to write,
5. **6 These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, 7 but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. 8 By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing 9 (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, 10 but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. 11 But when Christ**

appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. (Hebrews 9:6-15)

6. The fact that Jesus is our High Priest and that His sacrifice for us is truly sufficient to bring peace between us and the God we have sinned against is by no means an excuse to sin. Those who live that way are not followers of Jesus and thus not living in the sacrifice and application of His death! However, on the other hand, the reality is that we all fall short of the glory of God because we are born into the condemnation of sin, therefore, the fact that God has made a way for us is spectacular! He has done for us in Christ what any truly objective observation of the human condition would have to conclude can never be accomplished by us.
7. The heartbreaking reality of Eli's sons is that God had already judged them for their actions. The end of verse 25 tells us God had already decided their fate. They had exhausted their right to live and were soon going to meet their Maker.

**This leads us right to the 3<sup>rd</sup> contrast that exemplifies the difference between godly and ungodly character.**

**(3) While God continued to bless and prosper Samuel for his consistent faithfulness, He announced severe consequences to Eli and his sons for their consistent faithlessness. (2:26-26)**

**A. 26 Now the young man Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.**

1. Verse 26 is short sweet and to the point. Samuel is not just growing up physically, but as he does, he is living faithfully to the Lord and serving others with integrity. As such, God is blessing him and so are those around him! Godly character is reaping the blessing of favor with God and man. It's that simple.

2. However, in comparison, Eli continues his leadership of Israel not only by passively allowing his sons and the rest of the priests under him to disobey the Law they are supposed to be modeling, but apparently, justifying his own sin as well. This too will reap a harvest, but it's a very different harvest from what we see with Samuel.

**B. 27 And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus the LORD has said, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? 28 Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.**

1. "This rebuke was based on a history lesson. During the time of the exodus, Aaron and his sons were ordained as a perpetual priesthood (Ex. 29:9), consisting of three tasks: "to go up to my altar," that is, to bring the people's sacrifices before the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins; "to burn incense," which speaks of the priest's ministry of intercessory prayer; and "to wear an ephod before me," referring to the vestment on which the twelve stones represented Israel before the Lord. These were the very ministries so desecrated by Eli's sons."<sup>3</sup>
2. "The available evidence indicates that Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son. One of the small puzzles of Biblical history (simply because we lack complete information) is how Eli came to be Israel's leading priest. Although he is never called "chief" or "high" priest, it seems clear that he was in charge at Shiloh. Aaron was the first "chief priest" (Ezra 7:5), and the priesthood was given by God to his sons "forever" (Exodus 29:9). The role of chief priest passed to Aaron's third son, Eleazar (Numbers 3:32; 20:24-29; Deuteronomy 10:6; cf. Numbers 4:16), the first two sons of Aaron having died in rather unfortunate circumstances (Leviticus 10:1, 2). From Eleazar the chief priesthood passed to his son Phinehas (who was a far cry from his later namesake at Shiloh!) and his descendants, who were given by God "the covenant of a perpetual priesthood" (Numbers 25:13; cf. Judges 20:27, 28; 1 Chronicles 9:20). While the role of chief priest appears to have been passed on from father to eldest living son for several generations, there is no clear indication that this was a divine requirement. We do not know how the responsibility for the tabernacle/temple at Shiloh came to be in the hands of Eli, who was not a descendant of Eleazar but of Aaron's fourth son, Ithamar. It is possible that a chief priest in Eleazar's line may have died without leaving a son old enough to take on the role. In addition to his credentials as a descendant of Aaron, Eli may have been related to the Eleazar family by marriage. He may, therefore, have been the best available

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<sup>3</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#). (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 58-59). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

person to take over the responsibility. The point made in verse 27, however, is that the Lord had revealed himself to Aaron's family in the days before the exodus. Indeed, God spoke directly to Aaron in Egypt and told him to go out to the wilderness and meet with his brother Moses (Exodus 4:14)."<sup>4</sup>

- C. **29 Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?**
1. Later in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel we will see that Eli had become massively obese, which was only possible in that day and age for a person of great wealth, or a priest who was stealing meat and grain offerings from people. This unnamed prophet who was confronting Eli not only called out Eli's sons, and the other priests who were getting fat off of their greedy, sinful, practices, but he also accused Eli of doing the same thing! There is nothing in the text that tells us this man's accusation was misguided.
  2. This shocking twist in the narrative shows us that even though Eli performed a noble priestly service in his encouragement and prayers for Hannah and Elkanah, he was nonetheless the reason the priests and his sons could justify their own behavior! You say, well Eli wasn't sleeping with the female servants in the temple. He wasn't, but his open rebellion against God in one area didn't justify disobeying God in that one area, it justified disobeying GOD! Our lack of character in something doesn't justify a lack of character in that area, it justifies a lack of character—period!
- D. **30 Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever, 'but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.**  
**31 Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. 33 The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. 34 And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. 35 And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. 36 And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall**

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<sup>4</sup> Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (pp. 63–67). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."""

1. There could be no more obvious criticism of Eli than when the man says God has declared, **"I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind."** In other words, Eli, you haven't been a faithful priest, and you haven't done what is in my heart and mind so I'm going to raise up somebody that will. As we will see later in Samuel, David, who fell into terrible sin, was nonetheless one who not only publicly repented, but continued to strive for what mattered to God. As such, God restored David. Eli and his sons never repent and there is no restoration. Eli's strivings were for himself and as result God was going to bring the influence of the house of Eli over His people to an end.
2. "This promise was fulfilled in the days of David, when Doeg the Edomite slaughtered all of Eli's descendants at the tabernacle, with the sole exception of Abiathar (1 Sam. 22:6–23). Abiathar served David as priest until he supported the usurpation of Adonijah against David's heir, Solomon. When Solomon expelled Abiathar from the priesthood, the Scripture notes that this fulfilled "the word of the Lord that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh" (1 Kings 2:27). Abiathar was replaced by Zadok, who was from a more preeminent family of the line of Aaron, thus restoring an earlier promise that this family would hold the priesthood (cf. Num. 25:6–13). In this way, Eli's descendant was forced to the sidelines during the glories of Solomon's reign, looking with envy on those permitted to the priesthood and surviving off the generosity of the man who supplanted him, as 1 Samuel 2:36 predicted. Zadok would be the faithful priest mentioned in verse 35, "who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind." All this would take place in generations to come, but Eli would see its proof, for God said, "This that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day" (1 Sam. 2:34). It would not be long until Eli's wicked sons would be slain on a single day, certifying to Eli the further judgment yet to come. The principle behind God's rejection of Eli's house is one we should note: "Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30)."<sup>5</sup>

**CHALLENGE: Godly character is a result of submitting to God's influence in our life. What's the greatest influence on your thoughts, feelings and actions—the weight of God's glory or the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life?**

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<sup>5</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#). (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 59–61). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

Godly character is formed by God, not man and that includes ourselves. Godly character is the result of Him pulling us into His orbit and making us like HIM, rather than the sinners we are all born as.

As I stated earlier, Samuel doesn't know the Lord yet (1 Samuel 3:7), but he knows enough about the glory of the Lord to know obeying God is more important than any other desire he may have. Interestingly, the word that means glory also refers to that which is weighty; that which pulls on us and influences us. When we know the glory of God, and submit to it, we can't help but be shaped by it! His glory is too prominent; it is too magnificent; it is too spectacular to ever turn from if you have truly gazed on it.

But how do we get a glimpse of God's glory?

Nature itself is a testimony of God's glory. The Bible says,

**20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. (Romans 1:20)**

But more specifically the Bible says,

**14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)**

**3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3)**

In Christ we have a glimpse of what Moses cried out to see! We get to see the glory of God! We not only see His holiness, His care and even His power over nature, but more importantly, we see the glory of His love that willingly suffered the eternal wrath of God on our sin, and in doing so conquered death for all who are in him! In the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, we get a glimpse of the Glory of God that overcomes what no man can—death! This glory is not a glory that is removed from us, but applied to us! He grants us this glory when He calls us to Himself! Its why the Apostle Paul prayed this,

**16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the**

**one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:16-23)**

Dear church, this is what I pray over myself, over my family and over you! I pray that we would know HIS GLORY and that in knowing it we would be completely overwhelmed with it. That who He is would define us so that we could never imagine a life influenced by anything other than the spectacular identity of God Himself. It is in that influence of Him and that influence alone that who we are can actually be changed; that Godly character can be formed.

However, if you are one who refuses to bow down to the revelation of His glory, if you are one who continues to live as if the glory given to you by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and boastful pride of life is more glorious than the glory of God that He pours out on all who are in Him, then your life, your character, and your destiny will be everything but the glory of God. It's not just that you will live a life without His character and reap the fruits of that life in this life, but more importantly, you will live for eternity without it!

So, let's be honest. Some people are great at putting on a character act in front of people, meanwhile, their lives are anything and everything but a testimony of Godliness because they want the glory of man more than they want the glory of God! Is that you? What's shaping you—the glory of God that produces His character within us, or the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life that forms a very different kind of person?