

1. Self-Glory is the Root of Dissension
  - a. Dispute: **word means “love of quarrel” and is related to a “love of victory”**
    - i. **This type of dispute is rooted in “self-glory”, that desire to declare the greatness of oneself, and to prove it to others**
    - ii. This is not merely a dispute, but rather a dissension caused by self-aggrandizement and competition for honor
  - b. **“Self-glory” busies itself trying to make one’s self *feel* important by (1) comparing and (2) defending.**
    - i. We lack gentleness because are comparing our greatness as superior to another. We look down on them and treat them as lesser than us (Galatians 6:1, 14-15).
      1. This competition and comparison only yields empty disputes
      2. Being Christ-adequate **rejoices in other people’s successes because you have pleasure in the success itself. Gospel adequacy never says “I told you so,” or “I thought of that first.” It simply rejoices in the success. It’s not about the competition. It’s about the success itself, the other person herself.**
    - ii. We lack patience with each other because our recognized greatness has been hurt and we must defend it. **We don’t forgive each other because we must defend our image as great.**
      1. We are presumptuous and assume that we are great, not merely great but that we are greater, **that we are more important than another. That we are right and we’re going to let the person who has sinned against us, or provoked us, know that we are right!**
      2. **We’re still trying to present evidence** to everyone (including ourselves) to defend that ultimate assessment that we are great, good enough, honorable so that we are somebody. We operate out of an innate desire to be recognized as greater.
      3. Humble love is unconcerned about itself, its recognition and glory. It is only concerned about the glory and honor of God and the well-being of others
  - c. **“Which one of them *seemed* or *was recognized* as greatest”**
    - i. The word seems to imply a discerning conclusion, a judgment, or a recognition of consistency with the assumed qualification (i.e. neighbor, greatest, etc.)
      1. same word in Luke 8:18 - “what *he thinks* he has will be taken away”
      2. see also Luke 10:36 - “Which of these *do you perceive or recognize* to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”
      3. This is self-glory, the desire to be honored *by others*, i.e. glorified, as “great”
    - ii. Pride is not about actually being greater, but as being *perceived* as greater
      1. This is why pretense is so closely associated with pride and self-glory
        - a. The Flesh, opposed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture, is that part of us that works for its own interests and bases its success upon its perceived performance (determined in different ways for different people).
          - i. For example:
            1. Self-glory: “I am great because I am more attractive”
              - a. So I’m going to seize my beauty and attractiveness
              - b. I’m going to belittle your beauty
            2. Self-glory: “I am great for I am more wise, wealthy, or strong”
              - a. So I’m going to seize my wisdom, wealth, and strength
              - b. I’m going to belittle your wisdom, wealth, or strength

- ii. Self-glory lives and breathes on pride, presumptuously expecting to be served, to be honored, to be given good things, because it thinks that its success deserves them
- iii. We are presumptuous and assume that we are great, not merely great but that we are better, that we are more important than another.

1. Tests:

- a. Irritability – “I deserve comfort because I am great”
- b. Complaining – “I am great but nobody sees it”
- c. Gossip – “They aren’t great because...”
- d. Critical Spirit – “I am more great, but they get the good things”
- e. Unforgiveness – “I am great and they must pay for taking my good things away.”
- f. Fear – “I need to be great, but I’m not...and *they* know it.”

- iv. We’re still trying to present evidence to everyone (including ourselves) to defend that ultimate verdict that we are great because we have done what is good.

- 2. Integrity and truth, consistency with reality, are not as important to the self-glorifying as the perception of greatness in the eyes of others, both those whom he sees as “above” him and those whom he sees as “below” him
  - a. To those “above” him, he must impress, scurrying to hide his faults, full of fear and anxiety and worry about being perceived as “lesser” – he sucks up to these or *subversively* works to tear them down
  - b. To those “below” him, he must denigrate, push them down by any means necessary to prove his superiority, full of disdain, hatred, apathy – he is harsh to these
  - c. Neither of these attitudes is loving, and surely not full of truth and grace

2. Comparison of Two Types of Greatness

- a. Unholy greatness is a “greatness” comes from being superior to other people

- i. The Gentiles “exercise lordship” over them
- ii. Self-love is always looking down, and when a man is always looking down, they are never looking up, and thus cannot know God, who is over him
  - 1. By nature, we would all be kings over others, constantly comparing ourselves to others.

- iii. The nature of this self-love is to be *named* “Good worker” - benefactor

1. Note how this “greatness” is tied to performance

- a. If I perform good works, then I am somebody great
- 2. Self-love is all about being noticed and named, i.e. glorified
  - a. Noticed as being good
  - b. Named as a good person

3. Pride is essentially competitive, (C.S. Lewis quote)

- iv. Self-glory says, “I am great because I have power over other people. People listen to me. I can be followed. I can be trusted. I can move them, motivate them, and influence them.”

1. The human heart usually only serves when appreciated, or at least noticed, but Jesus is solely focused upon pleasing His Father and working for the flourishing of those around him.
2. Even when we attempt to serve, we obscure the real worry to be noticed and approved by Man
- v. Self-glory redefines the fruits of the Holy Spirit according to the fear of approval
  1. "Love" - is really codependency, for love will only do what makes you happy with me, not what is best for you if it makes you upset with me
  2. "Peaceful" - is really appeasement, trying to make unity an intrinsic virtue, as if there wasn't bad unity, but that unity in itself was good
  3. "Patience" - really indifference or fear to act boldly because of what people will think of me or because of the cost to myself of making such a stance in the face of wrongdoing
  4. "Goodness" – that which is approvable by the masses, which passes the polling test, and is agreeable to the majority *so that I receive their honor and approval*
    - a. "The best pollster now makes the best leader, for all ideas must find their sanction, even their legitimacy, in the audience, and who knows the audience better than a pollster?" - David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth*
  5. "Joy" – pleasure in the circumstance rather than the objective – God is not sought for Himself, but rather for what He gives, rejoicing in the gift rather than the giver and only accepting from His mouth what makes my circumstance more pleasurable while detesting what He brings (or rather, the idea that He would bring it) which may produce suffering and loss and pain
  6. These are all false fruits of the spirit, which are really concerns for oneself rather than true self-forgetfulness
- b. True greatness, Kingdom greatness, is like Jesus, who had every right to compare Himself favorably to people, instead gave His own life to serve others, even to the point of death.
  - i. It is not that He intrinsically was "lower" than others, for he has been given a kingdom by **the Father and has authority over all things (we've seen over nature, spirits, and history)**
    1. **In fact, Jesus' comments about the apostles eating at His table, His Father's table, in His kingdom, sitting on thrones indicate that they are honored by Him as a gift**
  - ii. Kingdom greatness, therefore, requires an honor given by God that is, then, used for the sake of others and comes from underneath the other
    1. Phil 2:4-11
    2. The nature of God is self-giving: The Father gives Himself to the Son and Spirit, who gives Himself to the Father, who reciprocates in giving Himself to the Son, etc.
      - a. God has been and always will be a lover, a giver, a praiser, and a receiver of love, gift, and praise because He is triune
    3. **Should it surprise us, then, that we who are created in God's image, are also to measure virtue and goodness and greatness by the same standard?**
      - a. This is why husbands are to love their wives, like God, and wives are to honor their husbands, like God, and thus humanity in its two-gendered relationship image God in such a way
  - iii. It is rather, that greatness in His kingdom is the heart that places itself in a lower position than others, which considers others as worthy of service, and giving toward, and dying for, not because they are great, but because God is great and has poured out honor and love.

3. The Gospel of Jesus Christ Humbles Us to Blessed Self-Forgetfulness
  - a. The gospel of grace is our keystone to true serving greatness
    - i. Look at how Jesus distributes honor (thrones) and greatness (ruling) equally and according to His gift
      1. “**You have stayed with me through my trials...**”
      2. Their faith was clinging to Jesus, entrusting themselves to Him and His Word
        - a. God has apportioned to each one of us a measure of faith (Rom 12:3)
    - ii. We cannot become arrogant with each other when even our faith was measured out to us
  - b. The Gospel of JC is That God Counts You Great in Christ Jesus According to His GRACE
    - i. One of the foundational truths of the Gospel is that you cannot, are not able to perform well enough to place yourself in God’s favor. There is no “good work” of such tremendous quality that you can do to make yourself great.
    - ii. So, God had to do it for you (Rom 3:23; 5:6-10; 6:23)
      1. **Romans 5:6-10** For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the **ungodly**...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ **died for us**...For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
      2. **God is the only “Benefactor”**
  - c. In Christ Jesus this honor comes *before* we give any successes or evidence to such greatness:
    - i. Romans 8:1-4
 

“The heart of most religions is good advice, good techniques, good programs, good ideas, and good support systems. These drive us deeper into ourselves, to find our inner light, inner goodness, inner voice, or inner resources.  
 ...But the heart of Christianity is Good *News*. It comes not as a task for us to fulfill, a mission for us to accomplish, a game plan for us to follow with the help of life coaches, but as a report that someone else has already fulfilled, accomplished, followed, and achieved everything for us.”  
 -Michael Horton, *The Gospel Centered Life*
    - ii. Therefore, Jesus *gives* honor to his apostles, it is not based upon their performance, but upon His grace as the King of a Kingdom
      1. Understanding this, at the heart level, is what leads us God-glorying Christ-exalting relationships.
      2. **Just as He received the throne of David (“over Israel”), He distributes His greatness to His people according to the riches of His grace**
      3. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Christ Himself is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption
  - d. The Gospel of Jesus Christ Leads us to Boast of Jesus’ Greatness
    - i. The Gospel: the answer to all of our problems is not higher self-esteem, nor is it insignificance, but it is Christ esteem, which both emboldens and humbles us.
      1. Emboldens me because it shows me that I am more deeply loved than I can even imagine
      2. Humbles me because it shows me that I more deeply sinful than I can even dare to see
    - ii. Galatians 6:14 - “**But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**”
      1. I am not great. I am dead to the world and alive only in Christ Jesus. He is worthy!