



## ***From the Morass of Mediocrity through Defining Disciplines to Seeking an Equilibrium of Excellence by Going Green for God's Glory and Grace.***

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Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.

The Westminster Confession of Faith – The Larger Catechism Question 1

- Inertia (inactivity) or conflicting activity (trying to do too much) leads us inevitably to M<sup>2</sup> – the Morass of Mediocrity.
- Only through D<sup>2</sup>, Defining Disciplines, can we swim against the tide, leading us to
- E<sup>2</sup>, Seeking an Equilibrium of Excellence, finding hope for radical change and improvements in key areas of our lives.
- But not only is the normal tide of life pulling us away from this excellence, “things” are pulling us under, drowning us. G<sup>2</sup>, **Going Green**, is the focus that can only come when we concentrate on what is most important by “throwing off” and discarding the sin and junk that hinders us from our goals – purposeful simplifying!

Sounds inspiring, but . . . the obvious (not good, but realistic) reason many people have for not attempting to move *From the Morass of Mediocrity through Defining Disciplines to Seeking an Equilibrium of Excellence by Going Green* is because consciously or, more likely, subconsciously they have no (in the words of Charles Dickens) *Great Expectations* for the far future, for eternity; thus the timeless saying:

“Let us eat and drink [shop, watch TV, ‘have fun . . .’] for tomorrow we die.” <sup>1Co 15:32</sup>

Or as some would wisely ask – “What’s the point?” Why try too hard when we are only going to die and all will be for lost and for naught? If we are going to die into a state far worse than M<sup>2</sup> what is the point? Wish as we may, try as hard as we might, we cannot **hope** (there is that word again – music to the one with it while a curse to the one without) – we have no hope to get any higher than our expectations, be they little or great. It is irrational (even perverse) to expect people to strive for excellence when all they see, at the end of the tunnel, is eternal and greater darkness – wouldn’t the one best able to “tune out” be the wisest?

It is appropriate *Ecclesiastes* best states the case for the hopeless:

Pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! <sup>Ecc 4:10</sup>

Contrast this, however, with the Christian’s hope:

God will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. <sup>Ps 72:13</sup>

. . . the word of God in its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>Col 1:25 - 27</sup>

Hope is the easily predict will get – if focused on retirement their



this term must have done so tongue-in-cheek – NOBODY could believe people 65+ are golden in any way!). Just as it is not reasonable to expect a discipline (or set of disciplines) to have any greater value than the objective or goal to which we aspire, it is not realistic that we will somehow reach a point of success beyond our hope. Hope is the engine of life that drives, motivates, inspires, focuses . . . us to it. Is there hope for and in glory? If so, what does it mean?

## Glory

Many people know the following verses about glory:

I am the LORD; that is my name!  
I will not give my glory to another  
or my praise to idols. *Isa 42:8*

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this.  
How can I let myself be defamed?  
I will not yield my glory to another. *Isa 48:11*

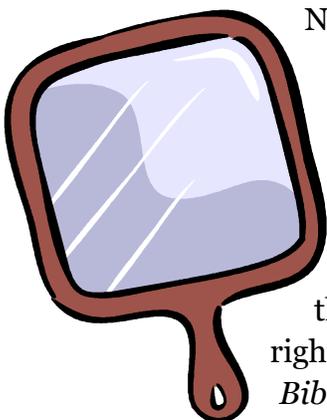
We know glory as “giving great honor or praise; adoration and thanksgiving offered; the splendor and bliss of heaven;” but it is also “to give evidence of the quality of” someone or something – to reflect.

In light of this last meaning, it should not be surprising or shocking, when reading the many “glory” *Bible* verses, that God actually shares His glory with us – which is the key Christian hope! Those without Jesus Christ would be wise to look full in the face of the future, recognize their utter hopelessness, humble themselves in the truth of this reality and as Jesus offers: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (*Mt 7:7 – 8*) because “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (*James 4:6*) and only to the humble! Nothing should humble a person more than having no hope. And no one can reasonably have any hope who only sees eternal darkness (or possibly worse!) after their few years here.

Not to be too gloomy or graphic, but when a person looks into the mirror of the future there are really only 3 options:

1. The Christian must see a reflection of Jesus Christ; yes, it is dim and poor reflection, but there is hope in even this!

2. The “in name only” professing “Christian” – yes, they go (maybe even “religiously”) to church, but they don’t really know or care about what God says (in the *Bible*), it is apparent to anyone and everyone that they do not think or act significantly different than others, even though they can be very self-righteous . . . this is not a “real” Christian as even a cursory, honest, reading of the *Bible* defines one – they, in truth, have less hope than the worst non-Christian because they are deceived into thinking that everything is and will be OK, but it



won't! When this person looks into the mirror of eternity they see Jesus Christ as a reflection of themselves! Eternity (like today) is the hope that they will be the god that lives forever!

3. The non-Christian (unless relying on the shaky hope of another religion), when they look in the mirror of eternity see a person in a casket rotting; a person “eating and drinking [shopping, watching TV, ‘having fun’ . . .]” in the knowledge that “tomorrow we die” is utter hopeless and foolish; especially in the light, however dim, of the hope of glory they have heard about!

Many think, “Few others (except, maybe **those** fanatics) seem too worried – I will take my chance along with the vast majority!” Thus they look to, emulate and follow those living and wallowing in the Morass of Mediocrity, without help and hope of seeking and finding an Equilibrium of Excellence by God’s Defining Disciplines through **Going Green**. G<sup>2</sup> – focusing on today and eternity in His hope as CLEARLY, for those who humble themselves (which will be extremely easy for anyone who honestly looks at their future and plight of totally helplessness and hopeless apart from Jesus Christ – no, this does not give us, by any means, an immediate or full “revelation” and understanding), “but whoever (everyone who!) lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” <sup>John 3:21</sup> – this is God’s promise, and a test (of both ourselves and the truth and reality of God!) of true Christianity.

Glory and Grace are complementary and inseparable:

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. <sup>1Co 15:42 - 44</sup>

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. <sup>2Co 3:12 - 18</sup>

But even the best hope, way out in the future, must have “legs” from here to there. It is interesting to listen to the typical college student proudly proclaim all they are going to do in the future – and they believe it because they have heard time after time “Be Positive! You can do anything you want if you try hard enough!” It is silly to expect something to happen simply because I want it! In the same way, it is a false and foolish Christian profession that makes claims for eternity without daily, incremental, hopes leading us step-by-step. Jesus was clear in establishing the only catalyst for the day-by-day, often disheartening and mundane, trek to glory and grace:

“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” <sup>Jn 3:21</sup>

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. <sup>Jn 15:5 - 8</sup>

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. <sup>2Co 4:16 - 18</sup>

“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” <sup>Lk 2:14</sup>

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>Ro 5:1 - 2</sup>

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. <sup>Ro 8:12 - 16</sup>

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. <sup>1Co 10:31</sup>

### Now this is a real hope!

It is very good, through G<sup>2</sup> and by D<sup>2</sup>, to move from M<sup>2</sup> to E<sup>2</sup>, but ultimately our hope will be the means to begin this process – G<sup>3</sup> is the real, lasting, powerful, sensible . . . only reasonable catalyst and hope.

Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.

### Why is G<sup>3</sup> so vital?

 By and through Grace, God created everyone and everything.

 By and through Grace, God sustains everyone and everything.

 For Christians, by and through Grace, God will provide, for eternity, everything – always.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. <sup>Gal 1:3 - 5</sup>

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. <sup>1Pe 5:10 - 11</sup>

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession — to the praise of his glory. <sup>Eph 1:3 - 14</sup>

Hope is a great thing – Seek and find it! The alternative is . . .?