

Rescuing Ambition

A Summary of Chapter 3 (Ambition Converted) with Discussion Questions

Ambition is a drive toward glory and greatness. Ambition also implies a standard. We succeed if we reach it and fail if we don't.

- Give some examples of your ambitions and the standard you set to determine your success or failure.

Christ's righteousness was needed to open a way for a holy God to accept us. Christ took our punishment and gave us his righteousness.

- What does God see when He looks at us?

"Apart from God, our quest for greatness is often a search for approval. I want to be applauded and esteemed. The Gospel ends my search for approval. In Christ I already have all the approval I need."

- Give an example of when you looked somewhere else for approval.
- How would your situation have been different if you have acted upon Christ's approval?

"God's acceptance is spontaneous, instantaneous, enthusiastic, and permanent. His pleasure and approval surges toward us, carrying all the spiritual blessings deserved by Christ."

- How does this truth impact your motivations?

Instead of trying to be great in the eyes of man, we can be ambitious for God.

- "Do you struggle with the paralysis of analysis, unable to act boldly because you're wondering what people will think?"
- "Do you fear falling short of your goals?"
- Do you fear "that God will somehow be displeased with you for not doing what he really wanted you to do?"

Christ's one act of obedience makes our obedience possible, even if no one else notices.

- "Has there ever been a time when you didn't get the glory you thought you deserved?"
- "Did you feel a sense of injustice, anger, [or] the desire to set things right by wrenching heads in the direction of your sacrifice?"
- Have you ever been rejected, opposed, misunderstood or mistreated because of your association with Jesus?
- Did you obey God by imitating Jesus and responding in kindness, love and patience?

Christ did not get the glory and honor he deserved. But he died anyway.

- How does understanding and remembering Christ's sacrificial love for us help you to respond rightly when you do right and aren't given the respect and recognition that you think you deserve?
- How does it change your motivations? Does this give joy where you had none before?
- What sense of purpose does this give your life? How does it impact your desire for comfort and convenience? How does this change your willingness to sacrifice?

Christ's finished work on the cross clears the way for us to experience true joy in God. We no longer live ambitious for approval, but we act ambitious because we have approval.

- How has corrupted ambition ever driven or disillusioned you?
- Does God's approval inspire ambition in you? Is there joy and delight in your ambition? Do you know any exemplary Christians who act ambitious with joy and delight? What have you learned from them?
- Similar to William Carey, do you expect great things from God? Do you desire to attempt great things for God?