

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD!

STUDY ONE

The Glory of God

2 Chronicles 26; Isaiah 42:5–8

To God alone belongs the glory—all the credit, all the attention, all the applause, all the honor, all the praise.

—Charles R. Swindoll

OCCASIONALLY, God interrupts this fallen world to reveal the weight of His glory, leaving observers jaw-dropped and jelly-legged. He did so to Uzziah, who puffed up his chest and swept aside God's rules for burning incense in the temple. God did not tolerate such high-handed impudence, as you will see, and unleashed His might before all bystanders in His response to Uzziah.

From this stark account, Uzziah has become a cautionary byword, exhorting us all to acknowledge *and* respect God for His glory, which He gives to no one else. In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we examine 2 Chronicles 26 as Chuck Swindoll teaches us what it means to live practically in light of God's glory.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

If blindness struck every eye on earth, the sun would continue radiating its brilliant rays though we could not see them. If deafness plugged every ear on this planet, birds would continue chirping and waves lapping though we could not hear them. Likewise, if self-conceit enthroned itself in the human heart—darkening and distorting each person's knowledge of the Creator—the Lord would continue reigning in splendor, clothed with majesty.

Read Paul's statement about God's glory:



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If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:3–6)

The last verse highlights our goal for this study: to gain a deeper understanding of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore, take a moment to pray for the Spirit to illumine your mind as you dig deep in the Scriptures.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Take a few moments to read [2 Chronicles 26](#). Do so slowly. The more read-throughs, the better. Using multiple translations? Perfect! Tune in to the characters, their motivations, the authorial commentary, and any statements about God.¹



Observation: Uzziah's Rise and Fall

Observation requires only your eager desire, focus, and a Bible. After all, God “rewards those who sincerely seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). So at this point, we simply read what the passage says, answering basic questions about its content in order to avoid making it say what it does not say. We'll see what happens as the enthroned king, adored and honored, allows power to skew his judgment, leaving him marred in form and reputation.



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The King Everybody Admired

In what ways did the author describe Uzziah's rise to power and fame in 2 Chronicles 26:1–15?

Describe Uzziah's relationship to God according to 2 Chronicles 26:4–5, 7, and 15.

The Man Nobody Respected

How did the author signal a transition in Uzziah's relationship with God in 2 Chronicles 26:15–16?



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How does 2 Chronicles 26:16 literarily relate to 26:17–23?

How did the Lord respond to Uzziah's fury against the priests in 26:19?

What lasting consequence did Uzziah receive after exalting himself over God (2 Chronicles 26:21)?

Being chosen by the God of glory is a result of His grace, not a cause for conceit.
—Chuck Swindoll

As Uzziah obeyed God, armies fought and won at the command of his voice, buildings arose at the wave of his hand, and foreigners paid tribute at the power of his presence. Then, as the success inflated Uzziah's ego, he walked where he should not have walked. For the rest of his days, the mirrors in his palace reflected the scars of his pride.



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God, the LORD, created the heavens and stretched them out.

He created the earth and everything in it.

He gives breath to everyone,

life to everyone who walks the earth. . . .

“I am the LORD; that is my name!

I will not give my glory to anyone else,

nor share my praise with carved idols. (Isaiah 42:5, 8)



Interpretation: An Example We Should Always Remember

During interpretation, we want to discern the author’s meaning and intention for writing so we can determine timeless theological truths about ourselves and about our God. Consult your Bible study resources for this step. If you don’t have a Bible dictionary, we recommend *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*. It’s Chuck’s favorite.

Since we are focusing on glory, look up the *term* in your Bible dictionary and note points of interest you find.

Why did Uzziah immediately contract leprosy, and how did Uzziah’s leprosy glorify God?



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In what way did God extend mercy to Uzziah even while making him a leper?

Regarding the Old Testament, Paul wrote, “These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age” (1 Corinthians 10:11). How did God make Uzziah an example for us today?

After Uzziah’s brazen defiance, he then endured the rest of his life as an outcast, a king with a crooked crown who learned that God will not share His glory with another. Graciously, we have been clued in to the divine secret that:

*at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow . . .
and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:10–11)*

Those who humble themselves now will enjoy the glory of His presence and His love for eternity.



Correlation: Shekinah Glory

God’s glory remains the same from eternity past to eternity future. But He has manifested that glory in various ways throughout salvation history—Jesus being the climax. Centuries before Christ, after the Israelites departed Egypt and constructed the tabernacle, God revealed His glory unlike He ever had up to that point. Exodus 40:34–38 recounts the story.



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Read *Exodus 40:34–38*, and summarize how God glorified Himself in the presence of the redeemed Israelites.

How does 40:36–38 reflect God’s grace and illustrate how God wanted His people to humbly respond to His glory?

God dwelled with His people. They saw the light of His presence beam from the face of Moses and then shine out of the tabernacle. A foretaste of the glory to come: “So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son” (John 1:14).



Application: Warnings to Keep Us from Stealing God’s Glory

After reflecting on 2 Chronicles 26, Chuck provides five warnings to help us guard our hearts and avoid any attempts to steal God’s glory. Reflect on each of them. If you find one especially pertinent to your season of life, record how you can apply it and continue walking humbly with your God.



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First, beware when battles develop within rather than without. Combat internal battles like pride and vanity. Or, defend against battles within ministries like fighting over the budget or use of space.

Second, beware when more attention falls on one who is building his or her own kingdom instead of the Lord's. No one's agenda should take the driver's seat. The Lord holds the wheel.

Third, beware when the Lord's help is no longer considered essential. Watch out for the one who's always talking about best business practices, rarely opening a Bible, and praying as a last resort, if at all.



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Fourth, beware when reproofs and warnings are resisted instead of respected. Those who reject godly counselors will inevitably shipwreck their life and ministry.

Fifth, beware when the consequences of sin no longer bring fear. Uzziah knew to refrain from the sanctuary of the Lord's temple, but he didn't fear God. God seemed small, distant, and inconsequential. A healthy respect for God's power and commands accompanies humility.

The Lord fashioned us not for our own glory but for His. Vainglory has proven an ugly vice, destroying those intoxicated by it. But reflected glory—one that shines a divine and supernatural light—holds promise for this life and for the life to come. Thanks to the lessons learned through Uzziah's downfall, we can avoid pride's traps and live with a higher calling.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, You are my Creator who sent Your Son as Lord of the church, Head of the body. The preeminent One—the first and the last, who opens and no one shuts and who shuts and no one opens. I lower myself before You, confess how prone I am to pride, and ask You to stop me short when vanity creeps in to replace humility. Guide me as I shine Your glory to those who desperately need to see it. In Christ’s name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Chuck teaches us his Bible study method in his book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*. If you do not have a copy, we recommend you grab [one](#) for your library. Chuck details how to perform four steps for learning and applying God’s Word. **Observation:** We read what the text says, perceiving how each word fits in sentences, how each sentence fits in paragraphs, and how each paragraph fits in the book. **Interpretation:** We understand what the text means, delving into word studies, ancient culture, history, and theology. **Correlation:** We compare the passage with other biblical passages that address similar topics whether they be historical, theological, or applicational. **Application:** We integrate into our lives biblical truths and principles, obeying Jesus’ commands, believing Jesus’ promises, and walking with Jesus always. We help you practice this process in each study. As you repeat the method from study to study, the steps will become second nature so you learn where to start, what questions to ask, which resources to use, and how you can implement what you learned.



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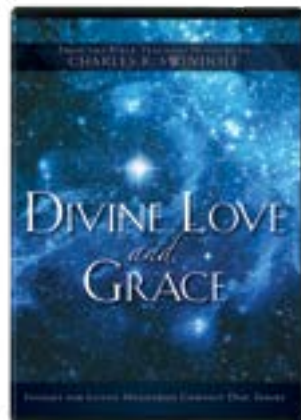
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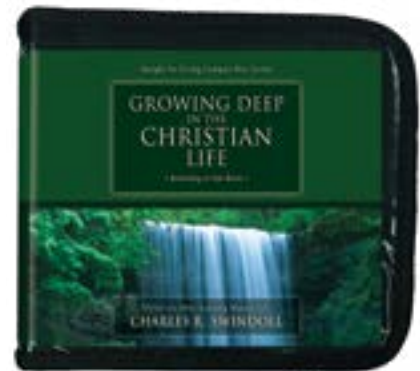
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2019 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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