



KOINONIA GROUPS

MAKING LIFE-CHANGING CONNECTIONS • BUILDING LIFE-CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

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“Something to Boast About”

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Pastor Gary Hamrick

You’d better get ready for some bragging when someone begins a sentence by saying, “I don’t mean to brag, but....” People often have a tendency to talk about themselves: who they are, what they’ve accomplished, how successful they’ve become, etc. We often forget that the Bible teaches that everything we have, everything we are, and everything we’ve accomplished has come from the gracious hand of the Lord! In today’s study from Jeremiah 9, Pastor Gary reminds us that if we are going to boast, we should boast about the Lord. We should brag about who he is, and the fact that he exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness. We should brag about the ways he is personable and knowable. We should brag about the fact that he’s a good God, who loves us and rescues us from sin and death!

Historical Background

1. **Jeremiah 9:23-24** - *“This is what the LORD says: ‘Let not the wise man boast¹ of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the LORD.”*
 - a. **James 4:16b** - *“All such **boasting** is evil.”* (Emphasis added)
 - b. **1 John 2:16** - *“For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the **boasting** of what he has and does - comes not from the father but from the world.”* (Emphasis added)
 - c. **Ephesians 2:8-9** - *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can **boast**.”* (Emphasis added)

¹ The New King James Version (NKJV) uses the word glory.

- d. **2 Timothy 3:1-2, 5** - *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, **boastful**, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy... Have nothing to do with them.”* (Emphasis added)
2. Pastor Gary said: “[The people of Judah] were all full of themselves, bragging about and boasting about how smart they were, how strong they were, how wealthy they were, [and] all the while rejecting God. Their pride was in themselves. Their confidence was in themselves. Their hope was in themselves. They had no room for God and no regard for God’s commandments.”

Reasons Why Boasting Isn't Good

3. Boasting Exposes Insecurity
 - a. Pastor Gary said: “The reason people want to celebrate themselves, draw attention to themselves, brag about what they’ve done or who they are, is because there’s usually a void in their life that they are hoping others can fill with their praise. [It’s] exhausting trying to fill an emotional hole, [that really] needs to be filled by the Lord. ... [From a biblical perspective, the truth is] that unless a person’s confidence or security comes from the Lord, [people] can complement them all day long, but if they don’t have their confidence and security in the Lord... [that person] will be starving for more affirmation.”
 - b. Everyone needs affirmation and the Bible encourages each of us to be an encourager to others.
 - c. God has “wired” us for relationships and friendships.
 - d. There’s a big difference between receiving affirmation and soliciting affirmation by bragging about oneself.
 - e. **Proverbs 27:2** - *“Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”*
4. Boasting Expresses Pride
 - a. When someone boasts or brags about themselves; it’s the language of pride.
 - b. The person who brags seeks to honor themselves, which is prideful.
 - c. **Philippians 2:3** - *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”*
5. Boasting Exploits The Glory That Belongs Only To God
 - a. The Hebrew word for boast is halal, which is used more than 80 times in the book of Psalms, to describe praise and honor to God.
 - i. Halal can be used for boast, glory, shine, or celebrate.
 - b. **Psalm 18:3** - *“I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise...”*
 - c. **Psalm 34:2** - *“My soul will boast in the LORD...”*

- d. [Psalm 96:4](#) - *“For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise...”*
- e. When a person boasts, celebrates, and relishes in their strength, wisdom, and power, that person is robbing the glory that is due God.

We Should Boast About God

- 6. [Jeremiah 9:24](#) - *“... let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD.”*
- 7. Pastor Gary said: “God reveals himself in Scripture as powerful, awesome, majestic, creator, savior, and, that he is personable and knowable. [We] can know him in a personal, [and] experiential [way]!”
- 8. God has revealed himself in four ways, so that we might know him.
 - a. Through Creation
 - i. Pastor Gary said: “Evolutionary Theory actually contradicts the scientific law of cause and effect, because the scientific law of cause and effect says that no effect can be greater than the cause. And yet, [evolutionary theory] teaches that intelligent life sprang from non-intelligent matter. It’s a violation of the scientific law of cause and effect. The truth is that intelligent life sprang from an even more intelligent designer who has revealed himself in the vast complexity, diversity, and interdependency of our universe. God is the grand designer, and he has revealed himself through creation. If we would simply look at creation, [creation] screams, ‘Creator!’ ”
 - ii. [Romans 1:20](#) - *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*
 - b. Through Conscience
 - i. Pastor Gary said: “[God] is knowable because he has placed within us an intuitive, instinctive understanding that there is a God of this universe. [We] are created in the image and likeness of God, [and] he has planted within us an intuitive realization of his existence. Even among some of the most remote tribal people in the world, [who] haven’t any exposure to the Bible... or any understanding of God... [there is a need] to worship something larger than themselves.”
 - ii. Pastor Gary shared an overview of the people of Vanuatu, who live on the South Pacific island of Tanna, and their worship of John Frum.^{2 3}

² <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/in-john-they-trust-109294882/>

³ <https://www.indy100.com/article/remote-religion-planes-sky-7382991>

- c. Through Commandments
 - i. Pastor Gary said: “The Bible is given to us as the revelation of God. ... The Bible is the most widely read, [circulated, and published] book in human history. It was compiled over a period of 1,600 years, written by more than 40 authors, ... on three continents, in three languages! ⁴ ... All of it fits wonderfully together, without contradiction, all in harmony, and all of it to communicate one fundamental purpose: God has a deep and lasting love for mankind that he has expressed through his son, Jesus Christ, who died on a cross to rescue us from our sins!
- d. Through his son, Jesus Christ
 - i. **Hebrews 1:3** - *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being...”*
 - ii. **John 1:14a** - *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”*
 - iii. Pastor Gary said: “Jesus Christ is God, who came to earth so that we would know him in a real and personal way.”
 - iv. **John 14:9b** - *“[Jesus said,] ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.’ ”*
 - v. Pastor Gary said: “[When we know the Lord personally,] we will realize how often we have believed a false narrative about God [being angry, vindictive, and spiteful].”
 - vi. **Jeremiah 9:24** - *“... let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the LORD.”*
 - 1. God’s Kindness
 - a. **Romans 2:4** - *“... God’s kindness leads you toward repentance...”*
 - 2. God’s Love
 - a. **Romans 5:8** - *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*
 - 3. God’s Justice
 - a. **Isaiah 53:5** - *“But [Jesus] was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”*
 - 4. God’s Righteousness Imputed To Us By Faith
 - a. **2 Corinthians 5:21** - *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

⁴ Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Jeremiah 9:23-24](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. In who or in what have you tried to find satisfaction for your life?
3. Allow the people in your group to share their personal experiences regarding times when they boasted/bragged about themselves.
4. Read and discuss [James 4:16b](#), [1 John 2:16](#), [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), and [2 Timothy. 3:1-2, 5](#). (See #1 and #2 above)
5. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning the way boasting exposes insecurity. (See #3 above)
6. Read and discuss [Philippians 2:3](#). (See #4 above)
7. What are some of the ways people take the glory that belongs to God? (See #5 above)
8. How do you share your personal relationship with the Lord with others? (See #6 through #8 above)
9. Read and discuss [Romans 1:20](#) and Pastor Gary's comments about knowing God through creation. (See #9a above)
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about knowing God through conscience. (See #9b above)
11. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about knowing God through commandments. (See #9c above)
12. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared, plus Pastor Gary's comments about knowing God through Jesus Christ. (See #9d above)
13. Spend time reading and talking about the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared concerning God's kindness, love, justice, and righteousness. (See #9d-vi above)
14. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).