

Small Group Guide: Soli Deo Gloria - To the Glory of God Alone



Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to help you understand His glory more deeply and to remove any obstacles that keep you from worshipping Him alone.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you experienced the glory of God in creation (nature, stars, beauty of the world, etc.). What did it reveal to you about God?

Key Takeaways

1. **God's Glory is Central to Scripture** - From Genesis to Revelation, God's glory is the primary theme and purpose of all creation.
2. **Our Salvation Glorifies God** - We are created for God's glory, and when He saves us, it further magnifies His goodness and mercy.
3. **The Reformation Principle** - Soli Deo Gloria means that glory belongs to God alone, not to human institutions or achievements.

4. **Justification Formula:** We are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, according to Scripture alone.
 5. **Church Authority vs. God's Authority** - Human institutions can err and create obstacles to God's grace, but God's truth remains unchanged and accessible.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding God's Glory

1. **Read Psalm 19:1-14 together.** How does the psalm connect God's glory in creation to God's glory in salvation? What does this tell us about the scope of God's glory?
2. **The sermon stated: "If the universe was only about us, it is way too big. But if this is what the universe is about—that the heavens declare the glory of God—then they're just about the right size."** How does this perspective change the way you view creation and your place in it?
3. **In what ways have you seen God's glory draw people to faith?** Share personal examples or observations.

The Reformation Issue

4. **Why do you think the concept "to God alone be the glory" became controversial enough to be central to the Reformation?** What was really at stake?
5. **The sermon discussed the Second Council of Nicaea (787 AD) and its requirements about venerating images.** How does requiring specific practices for salvation contradict the principle of Soli Deo Gloria?
6. **Read Isaiah 43:7, 11.** How does this passage connect our creation, our salvation, and God's glory? What does it mean that we were "created for His glory"?

Church Authority and Obstacles to Grace

7. **The sermon stated: "The church itself created obstacles for people to achieve God's grace."** What are some ways (historical or contemporary) that religious institutions might create obstacles between people and God's grace?
8. **How do we balance respecting church tradition and leadership while maintaining that ultimate authority belongs to God and His Word?**

9. **The early church fathers opposed the practices that later councils made mandatory.** What does this teach us about the difference between unchanging truth and changing traditions?

Personal Application

10. **In what areas of your life might you be tempted to give glory to something or someone other than God?** (Consider: religious achievements, church attendance, good works, knowledge, etc.)
11. **How does understanding that salvation is "to the glory of God alone" free you from performance-based religion?**
12. **Read Romans 15:5-7.** How should the truth that Christ received us "to the glory of God" affect the way we receive and treat one another in the church?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

1. **Glory Journal:** Each day, write down one way you saw God's glory displayed (in creation, in answered prayer, in His Word, in His people, etc.). Thank Him specifically for revealing Himself to you.
2. **Examine Your Heart:** Identify one area where you've been seeking glory for yourself (in ministry, work, relationships, etc.). Consciously redirect that glory to God through prayer and changed perspective.
3. **Scripture Meditation:** Memorize Romans 15:6-7. Reflect on how your unity with other believers brings glory to God.
4. **Worship Audit:** Evaluate your worship practices (personal and corporate). Ask yourself:
 - Am I worshipping God alone, or have I placed other things/people between me and Him?
 - Are there "traditions" I follow that might actually be obstacles rather than aids to worship?
 - How can I make my worship more focused on God's glory?

5. **Share the Glory:** Have a conversation with someone this week about what makes God glorious. Use Psalm 19 or Psalm 29 as a starting point.
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Digging Deeper (Optional Study)

For those who want to explore further:

- Read about the other four Solas and how they connect to Soli Deo Gloria
 - Study the biblical passages about idolatry (Exodus 20:4-6, 1 John 5:21) and consider how subtle modern idolatry can be
 - Research the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and compare it to later church councils—what principles did the apostles use for decision-making?
 - Read Augustine's arguments against Pelagianism to understand the early church's position on grace and human effort
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Closing Reflection

Read together: 1 Corinthians 10:31 *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

Reflection Questions:

- How does this verse expand the concept of Soli Deo Gloria beyond just "religious" activities?
 - What would change in your daily life if everything you did was consciously done for God's glory?
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Closing Prayer

Pray together, focusing on:

- Praising God for His glory revealed in creation and salvation
- Thanking Him that salvation is His work alone, not dependent on our achievements
- Asking for help to remove any obstacles between you and God
- Committing to live for His glory alone in all areas of life

End with a corporate declaration: "Soli Deo Gloria - To God alone be the glory!"

For Next Week

Prepare for the final message in the Five Solas series: **Sola Scriptura** (Scripture Alone).
Consider reading 2 Timothy 3:14-17 in advance.

5-Day Devotional: To the Glory of God Alone



Day 1: The Heavens Declare His Glory

Reading: Psalm 19:1-14

Devotional: Creation itself is God's first sermon. Every star, every sunrise, every breath of wind proclaims the majesty of our Creator. The vastness of the universe isn't excessive—it's exactly the right size to display God's infinite glory. Just as the psalmist recognized, the same God who set the cosmos in motion also gave us His perfect law to convert our souls. Today, look around you. What aspects of creation are speaking to you about God's character? Let the beauty you see drive you to worship the One who made it all. Remember, if the universe declares His glory, how much more should our lives? Let your words and meditations be acceptable to your Redeemer today.

Day 2: The Voice of the Lord

Reading: Psalm 29:1-11

Devotional: God's voice is not a whisper we strain to hear—it thunders with power and majesty. It breaks cedars, shakes wilderness, and commands creation itself. Yet this same powerful God offers His people strength and peace. The contrast is stunning: the God mighty enough to splinter trees chooses to bless us with tranquility. In your life today, recognize that the same voice that commands the storm also speaks tenderly to your heart. When you face chaos, remember that the Lord sits enthroned above the flood. His power is not distant or detached—it's actively working for your good. Give Him the glory due His name, and worship Him in the beauty of His holiness.

Day 3: Created for His Glory

Reading: Isaiah 43:1-13

Devotional: You were created for God's glory—this is your purpose, your identity, your calling. Before any god was formed, He existed. After all things pass away, He remains. And in this eternal, unchanging God, you find your only Savior. The beauty of this truth is that your salvation itself brings Him glory. You don't earn it; you receive it as His gracious gift. When you feel inadequate or wonder about your worth, return to this: God created you specifically to display His glory. Your very existence, your redemption, your faith—all of it points to His goodness and mercy. Today, live intentionally as one called by His name, knowing there is no Savior besides Him.

Day 4: Not By Our Own Strength

Reading: Romans 15:1-13

Devotional: Paul reminds us that even Christ did not please Himself. If the Son of God lived for the Father's glory and others' good, how much more should we? Our salvation isn't about us—it's about God's mercy extending to all nations, fulfilling His ancient promises, demonstrating His faithfulness. When we gather as believers, we glorify God with one mind and one mouth. Cursed is everyone who puts hope in man, including themselves. Today, examine where you're trying to earn God's favor through your own efforts. Confess any pride that says, "I contributed to my salvation." Instead, receive one another as Christ received you—freely, graciously, completely—and let that unity bring glory to God alone.

Day 5: No Obstacles Between

Reading: Acts 15:1-11; Galatians 2:15-21

Devotional: The early church faced a critical question: What must people do to be saved? The answer was revolutionary then and remains so today: nothing but faith in Christ. No additional rules, no human traditions, no institutional requirements. Peter declared, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved." Any system that adds obstacles between sinners and the Savior diminishes God's glory and magnifies human achievement. Today, rest in the finished work of Christ. You are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, according to Scripture alone. Let this truth free you from performance and fill you with gratitude. Your salvation glorifies God precisely because you didn't earn it.