

**TITLE: YOUR FAVORITE ATTRIBUTE**

**TEXT: JEREMIAH 9:23-24**

**INTRO:** God, through Jeremiah, rebuked Judah for their sin (idolatry; continual rejection of God), warned them of the coming punishment (by Babylon), and encouraged them to repent of their sins and alter their course before it was too late. In 9:23-24, He provides an interesting warning, one that applies just as much today as it did then. He warns them about what not to glory in. “Glory” here means to **boast** or **celebrate**, and even carries the idea of being **foolish** as a result.  
\*In what do we boast? When you look at yourself, what is your favorite attribute?

## **I. WHAT NOT TO GLORY IN:**

- A. Earthly wisdom – don’t glory in your knowledge (or someone else’s)!
1. Knowledge & higher learning are celebrated in the world today (especially in the U.S.). Why? It’s good to use your brain (instead of just the old 10% rule)! Knowledge is power, and we definitely boast about and celebrate power. This is a fact that has always been and always will be. Wisdom is the ability to use that knowledge. The Hebrew word can mean “craftiness, prudence, skill (as in war).” But Jeremiah warns us against it.
  2. Knowledge puffs up (**1 Cor 8:1**). Many people, even in the church, have Ph.D. syndrome. If I think I know more than you, then why should I ever listen to you? And why should I ever consider you my equal, much less put you above me?!
  3. For the average person, are the things learned in most Masters and Doctorate programs necessary in order to lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty (**1 Tim 2:2**)?
  4. **1 Tim 6:20** – Paul told Timothy to avoid “*oppositions of science (knowledge) falsely so called.*” Science is knowledge obtained from the universe. Unfortunately, many who excel in this area refuse to look outside the universe for their understanding of things such as our origins. Paul warns Timothy about this type of person.
  5. But knowledge & wisdom are not evil things. The warning is about *glorying* in wisdom, not about having it! Be **wise** as serpents, and harmless as doves (**Mt 10:16**).
- B. Might – power, physical strength, accomplishments
1. Maybe he’s referring to a soldier and his physical might. He shouldn’t boast in this; it is God who fought their battles!
  2. Today we might think of those whose lives revolve around their own bodies (professional athletes, bodybuilders, or others who are obsessed with exercise and looking good). They’re proud of their bodies; this is their #1 priority. Their incomes may be based on their athletic abilities or looks.
  3. There’s nothing wrong with exercise and proper fitness. But do you celebrate (glory/boast in) this? Does it take priority?
  4. **1 Tim 4:8** – *bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*”
- C. Material riches – these mental and physical abilities can very often bring about material blessings.
1. Don’t **glory** in these riches. This is an OT parallel to **1 Tim 6:10** – “*the love of money is the root of all evil,*” not the money itself. It’s not wrong to be rich, but Jeremiah warns not to glory in it. In much the same way, Paul would tell Timothy to “*charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy...that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*” (\***1 Tim 6:17**).
  2. Don’t **trust** in your own money (cf. the fool who tore down his barns & built bigger ones (**Lk 12:16-21**). Your money will do nothing for you in eternity.
  3. Recognize God as the giver of all good things (**James 1:17**). If we do this, then we’ll glory in the right things.

## **II. WHAT TO GLORY IN:**

- A. Glory in knowing and understanding God – truly knowing God is to be known by God, and recognized by Him as one of His.
1. We have to know God before we can glory in it! We know God through studying and understanding his Word. In the context, the Israelites to whom God is speaking could’ve, should’ve, and would’ve known God through the Law!
  2. Spend time in prayer. Let God speak to you through His Word, but speak to Him too (**1 Tim 2:1-2**).
- B. Glory in what He glories in (“delights in”) – Know His characteristics. In what does God delight?
1. Lovingkindness (goodness, kindness, mercy, pity) – God exercises this characteristic on us, and delights in it! He expects us to have the same attitude toward others (and also to glory in it – not like a child being told to say “I’m sorry,” but may not really mean it). Get along peaceably with others. **Rom 12:18**–“*...live peaceably with all men.*” **Mt 7:12**–“*do unto others....*” **Gal 5:13**–“*by love, serve one another.*” **Phil 2:3**–*esteem others better than yourselves.* Have true ‘agape’ love for one another (cf. claiming to love someone, but never teaching him/her the truth).
  2. Judgment (justice; a decision based on the facts) – this is God’s judgment *after* His mercy. Justice/judgment would always result in punishment otherwise. But if God’s people are obedient to His plan (i.e., accepting His mercy), then this judgment will not be negative. (He exercises first lovingkindness/mercy, then judgment.)
  3. Righteousness – God is always righteous; He is always right. He never says, does, or thinks anything wrong. He wants us to *strive* for the same perfection (**Mt 5:48**). “*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*” (**Mt 5:6**). If you’re going to boast, boast that you are right in God’s sight – that you are well pleasing to Him.

**CONCLUSION:** Man has always been very proud of his own accomplishments. We glorify the one who has the letters “Ph. D” after his name. We pay good money to see the ones whose physical strength/talents exceed our own. We stand in line to catch a glimpse of rich and famous. Yet God says that this is not true glory at all. True glory and accomplishment comes in recognizing God as the giver of all these things, in knowing God and His ways, and being obedient to them.