

youthESource Bible Study

Alones, but Never Alone

Part Three: To God Alone Be Glory - Leader's Guide

by Sara Borgstede

Overview:

Q: What are the "Alones" of the church?

A: *Sola* is the Latin word for Alone. Five phrases came from writings during the Protestant Reformation (the time during and after Martin Luther), based on teaching throughout Scripture, to explain their beliefs.

The Five Solas (or "Alones") are:

- *Sola Fide*, by faith alone.
- *Sola Scriptura*, by Scripture alone.
- *Solus Christus*, through Christ alone.
- *Sola Gratia*, by grace alone.
- *Soli Deo Gloria*, glory to God alone.

This three-part study (Part One: Scripture & Christ alone, Part Two: Faith & Grace Alone, Part Three: Glory to God alone) will explore each *Sola* and offer a modern-day application for teens.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Introduction:

Who is this famous person?

- Both of his parents died within a year of each other when he was 10 years old, and he went to live with his older brother for the next 7 years.
- He had 20 children, although not all of them lived.
- Born in 1685, he was a Lutheran musician who wrote scores of church worship music throughout his life.
- People complained about his music during his time. It was said about his music, "The music is too showy. Some of our members even think it is sinful. Music should be simple so that it draws attention to God, not to the music or the performers." He got into fights and went through several jobs during his lifetime. His music wasn't famous until after he died.

Do you know who this famous person is?

Answer: He is Johann Sebastian Bach, considered to be one of the most brilliant composers ever to write music.

Here is a link to listen to some of Bach's music:

Leaders, consider bringing in your phone or another way to play some excerpts of Bach's music to go along with this lesson. Here is one source:

The Best of Bach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JQm5aSjX6g>

Leaders: See this article to read more history about Bach and his life:
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/2007/issue95/1.8.html?start=1>)

Discussion Questions

1. Were you surprised to learn Bach's life was difficult? Do you think talented people often live difficult lives? Why or why not? *Answers will vary, but many talented people have difficult lives. We see famous people of our time struggle to balance their money and fame.*
2. Why do you think Bach's music was considered "sinful" and "too showy" during his time? Why is it not considered that way today? How does this influence your thoughts about the music we use in worship now? *Possible answers: The music wasn't what people were used to using for worship, it was different, it was distracting from worship for people at that time. People say similar things about different music styles we use in worship now.*

Digging Deeper

Bach once said, "I play the notes as they are written but it is God who makes the music." He began writing "Soli Deo Gloria" or SDG at the bottom of the scores of his music to show that he wanted to give God full glory for the music that was written.



(Public domain photo. Source: <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Scores/IndexScoresSources.htm>)

Our entire lives are lived before God and are for God. We live with the desire to give God glory. When we worship, we are not seeking to get our own needs met but to worship an amazing God who deserves all our praise. When we accomplish a task, we don't want to make ourselves famous but we want to make God famous. God works through us, but He is the one who deserves all the credit for the good we do.

Soli Deo Gloria becomes our only ambition in life. Think of it as the invisible signature on everything you do in your whole life.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. Everything we do is for the glory of God. How does that play out in your daily life? *Answers will vary. We give glory and honor to God when we do our best, work to our ability, bring Him praise and give Him credit.*

Look up Romans 10:9-10. We want to live lives that bring honor and glory to God. Do these actions give us salvation? What saves us?

Only Christ brings us salvation. When we confess with our mouth that Christ is Lord, we are saved.

What does Matthew 5:16 say about what our lives can do?

When we let our light shine, it brings glory to God in heaven. Lead students in a discussion of what it means to let your "light shine" in your everyday life.

Your Life and Mine

Think back to your day yesterday. Jot down some of your memories from yesterday:

Students will list activities, discussions, media. Encourage them to be as detailed as possible. If the day before was a Saturday and they weren't as interactive, they can choose a previous school day, or vice versa.

What activities did you do? (Consider: Work, school, home, sports, pets, eating, sleeping)

Who did you talk to? Text? Hang out with? Think about adults and teens. What were some of the topics of conversation?

What media did you use – TV, computer, phone, Internet, music?

Discuss:

1. Looking back over your day yesterday, could you write an invisible "SDG" on everything you did? Why or why not?
Yes, for activities that brought God glory, like working hard at school and in sports, obeying parents, etc. Even areas where we "messed up" we know God works all things for good for the Christian (Romans 8:28). Students may say "no" to areas they are not as proud of, like swearing, teasing a fellow classmate, wasting time, not doing homework, talking back to parents, engaging in media that isn't appropriate, etc.
2. Every task we complete is holy when done for God and His glory. It doesn't need to be a "church" activity to be valuable to God and His kingdom. A garbage collector who is doing his job with a great attitude and working for the Lord is just as much working in a holy occupation as a pastor preaching a sermon. How does this idea influence the way you look at your day?
Doing your daily tasks – being a good student, a team player, caring for a younger sibling, etc. are all just as valuable to God's kingdom! Praise and encourage the value of everyday, simple jobs done to God's glory.
3. Is there anything about your day you would like to change and do differently in light of what you have learned? How might your day look tomorrow when you go into it with an invisible "SDG" signature at the bottom of all you are doing?
Encourage discussion about how we can live our lives as Christians to reflect God's love and bring God honor and praise. However, this is not a lesson in condemnation. We live as forgiven children of God

because of what Jesus has done for us. Read together Isaiah 1:18 if applicable, a reminder that though are sins were as scarlet now they are as wool.

Closing Activity (Leaders)

Have students create a signature item with the initials "SDG" that they can carry in a backpack or pocket as a reminder they have the invisible signature of Soli Deo Gloria on their lives. Some possible ideas are a pocket rock, a bracelet or a bandana. Check www.orientaltrading.com or www.michaels.com for inexpensive options.

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