

Q1. What is the chief end (or ultimate purpose) of man?

A1. **Man's chief end (or ultimate purpose) is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.**

Scripture References: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 11:36; Psalm 9:2, 67:3-4, 73:24-25, 26, 27, 28; 97:1, 104:34; John 17:22-24

DQ1: A1 gives a two-prong answer. What are the two prongs of such purposes of man?

DQ2: What does it mean "to glorify" God?

DQ3: How do you glorify God?

DQ4: When are we to glorify God?

DQ5: What is the difference between ***to enjoy God*** and ***to please God***?

DQ6: Why did God give man this purpose? (Isaiah 43:7)

DQ7: Could you separately glorify God and not enjoy Him? If not, why not?

DQ8: By what would you be able to determine whether or not you are glorifying God?

DQ9: How could you become a person who truly enjoys God?

DQ10: Does the answer really give us two different purposes or one purpose? Explain.

Notes:

Perhaps, the first question of the Shorter Catechism is the most important question one could ask. And, the answer to the first question provides us with the ultimate purpose in life. The first question challenges all believers to aspire to the highest goal of glorifying God and to thoroughly enjoy Him by deeply being immersed in God's glory.

What is the origin of the ultimate purpose of man? It does not come from within man. It does not come from any other creature. By necessity, the ultimate purpose of man must come from the Creator Himself. The Creator created man and the universe with a well-expressed and defined purpose. No creator creates anything without a purpose. Not only did God create man with a purpose but God also revealed His purpose for which man must live. For man not to know the ultimate purpose is not to know himself or his true value.

"Glory of God" is the "created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of himself. In another sense of the term, it refers to God's honor." (Grudem, *Systematic Theology* at 1243) Glory is what emanates from God's personality but is not in itself God's personality. It is like the glow of a light bulb, not the bulb itself. The word glory also means "honor or excellent reputation."

The answer subsumes that God is and exists. And, because God exists, we it is appropriate to ask the question: "What is the chief end of man?" It should be noted that none of the questions in the Shorter Catechism or the Bible is concerned with proving the existence of God. Therefore, it is entirely inappropriate to question of whether or not God exists during these studies. If we do not believe in God or His real existence, then the whole system of learning based upon the Shorter Catechism would be completely flawed.

"To glorify God" does not suggest that man can add or subtract from God's glory. God is glorious regardless of man or any other creatures and whatever they may be able or unable to do. Man can neither add to nor subtract from God's glory. God is already fully glorious regardless of what man does. So, how does man glorify God? Man glorifies God by reflecting His glory, much like the moon reflecting the light of the sun. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." (Psalm 19:1) When man glorifies God, man is reflecting the glory of God. But, not all man can glorify God. (Romans 1:21)

Just as God is and his existence is assumed, God's glory is also assumed. A true God simply declares Himself in revealing Himself. God's glory is also "seen" because of these declarations. Read the following passages and see if you can learn different aspects of God's glory: Isaiah 43:7, John 17:5, Romans 3:23, Hebrews 1:3, Psalm 24:10, Psalm 104:1-2 "honor and majesty", Luke 2:9, and Revelations 21:23.

John Piper said of God's glory: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." (*Let the Nations Be Glad, at 31*) What do you believe Pastor Piper saying?

Being most satisfied in God is to enjoy God. The way to glorify God is to enjoy Him, i.e., to be most satisfied in Him. In essence, glorifying and enjoying God are inseparable since we could not possibly glorify God or reflect His glory without enjoying Him.

Thus, the wonderful exultation of Paul: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) This passage makes a lot more sense in light of Pastor Piper's statement, doesn't it? We cannot glorify God without being joyful, praying or giving thanks, which are all signs of enjoying God. Are you doing these things?

The form of the question really suggests that there is but one purpose of man. The two-prong answer, however, provides two different perspectives of the one purpose. One "to glorify God" is to acknowledge the very person and work of God. Two, "to enjoy him" is to acknowledge his special and proper relationship with God. God is the great "I AM." (Exodus 3:14) To glorify God and to enjoy Him means that God is known to man and what man knows of God is completely satisfactory to him so that he cannot help himself but to shout the ecstasy of the pleasure of knowing God. When God originally created man, this harmony was put in place whereby man glorified and enjoyed Him. Even though man destroyed this harmony, it is still God's desire for us to glorify and enjoy Him. It is for this purpose that the Father has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem sinners so that they will be able to reflect the glory of God and to bask in His glory.

So, Christian, is God your ultimate enjoyment? If God is not your enjoyment, then what is?

There are numerous Biblical accounts of ultimate enjoyment of God by God's people. Can you name a few of these examples?

When Abraham did not hesitate to give Isaac as sacrifice to God, he enjoyed God above all things including his "only" son. That is how Abraham glorified God. (Genesis 22)

When King David danced naked before the crowd of people out of joy of bringing back the Ark of Covenant which belonged to God, he enjoyed God above all things despite the ridicules of his wife, Michal. That is how David glorified God. (2 Samuel 6)

When Jesus Christ willingly went to Calvary, he enjoyed God above all things. That is how Jesus glorified God.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-10) describes a person who enjoys God above all things. That is how Christians glorify God.

In fact, you can get a pretty good glimpse of a solid list of people who glorified God and enjoyed Him in Hebrews 11. They serve as examples and reminders of how Christians must live.

Do you enjoy sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with Christians and non-Christians alike? That is how Christians glorify God.

Do you enjoy rejecting and defeating sin in your Life? That is how Christians glorify God.

Do you enjoy worshipping God? That is how Christians glorify God.

Do you enjoy the reading and meditating upon the Word of God? That is how Christians glorify God.

Do you enjoy the fellowship within the church? That is how Christians glorify God.

Do you remember God in all things? That is how Christians glorify God.

Do you anxiously await the return of Jesus Christ? That is how Christians glorify God.

This is the chief end of man!