



Our Chief End:
To Glorify and Enjoy God

Outline

1. One chief end or two?
2. What does this imply about the source of our joy?
3. What does it imply about God's heart toward us?
4. Isn't it selfish of us to seek our own joy?
5. Isn't this just another version of the prosperity gospel?
6. How does the cross of Christ fit into all this?
7. What are some practical steps we can take to fuel our passion for God and his glory?

I. One chief end or two?

The WSC uses the singular “chief end”. What does this imply?

- That glorifying God and enjoying God go hand in hand – they are inseparable
- That glorifying God is to enjoy him, and enjoying God is to glorify him
- That our quest for joy and God’s zeal for his glory are not in competition but one
- That God made us for joy and our joy is found only in him

I. One chief end or two?

- “God’s purpose for my life was that I have a passion for God’s glory and that I have a passion for my joy in that glory, and that these two are one passion.” Jonathan Edwards
- “The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is ‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.’ But we shall know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.” CS Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*.

I. One chief end or two?

- “Glorifying and enjoying God are inseparably joined together; there can’t be one without the other. We must be holy or we can’t be happy; but those who are holy shall be happy.” Benjamin Wadsworth, *A Help to Get Knowledge*, p. 3 (1714).
- “No man is truly Reformed in his thought, then, unless he conceives of man not merely as destined to be the instrument of the Divine Glory, but also as destined to reflect the glory of God in his own consciousness, to exult in God: nay, unless he himself delights in God as the all-glorious One. [F]or how can He whose glory is His perfections be glorified if He be not also enjoyed?” Benjamin B. Warfield, *The First Question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism*, pp. 396-97, 400 (1908).

I. One chief end or two?

“God made a world in which our supreme jubilation and his supreme glorification happen in the same experience. They are one. They are not separate. They are not in competition. God did not make a world in which we must choose between our supreme happiness and his supreme glory. In fact, he made a world in which we dare not choose between them. Choosing between them is blasphemy. Trying to choose my supreme happiness over God’s supreme glory is a blasphemous denial that only in him is my supreme joy found. And trying to glorify him without the pursuit of supreme pleasure in him is a blasphemous denial that my heart’s affections are essential to worship — a denial that my affections for God are essential in making much of God.”

John Piper, *Scripture: The Kindling of Christian Hedonism* (2014).

I. One chief end or two?

- In short, glorifying God means to enjoy him. When our hearts and affections are on fire for God, we show him to be supremely glorious, precious and valuable. This is the very essence of glorifying God – treasuring, delighting in, magnifying, praising and exalting him above all else. Nothing glorifies God more than that - and nothing glorifies God apart from it.
 - “Your serving God does not glorify him unless it be with gladness.” Thomas Watson, *Man’s Chief End is to Glorify God* (1692)
 - “The people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.” Matt. 15:8-9; Is. 29:13.

II. What does this imply about the source of our joy?

That it is found in God alone.

- “God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is *infinitely* better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows. But the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.... Why should we labor for, or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness.” Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 17, p. 255 (1730-1733).
- “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.” Augustine, *Confessions* (Book I).
- “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Ps. 16:11

III. What does this imply about God's heart toward us?

That he loves us and desires our joy.

- “It means that God is love. It means that when he created us for his glory, he also created us for our joy. How so? Because the way he seeks to be glorified in us is by making us satisfied in him. The good news of Christianity is that God is the kind of God who is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.... God is a God of infinite love because he wills to share all that he is with us for our enjoyment and his glory.” John Piper, *The Joyful Duty of Man* (1989).
- “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” Jn. 15:11

IV. Isn't it selfish of us to pursue our own joy?

No, the desire for joy is universal and God-given. The problem is not the desire itself but our sinful and futile pursuits to satisfy it. God uses our desire for joy to drive us to him as he opens our eyes to see the vanity of our idols and the beauty of his glory.

- “Without exception we all long for happiness... [We] may all search for it in different ways, but all try their hardest to reach the same goal, that is joy.” St. Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 21
- “If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” CS Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (1942).

IV. Isn't it selfish of us to pursue our own joy?

- “Nowhere in the Bible does God condemn people for longing to be happy. People are condemned for forsaking God and seeking their happiness elsewhere ([Jeremiah 2:13](#)). This is the essence of sin. The Bible actually commands us to delight in the Lord ([Psalm 37:4](#)). Jesus teaches us to love God more than money because our heart is where our treasure is ([Matt. 6:21](#)). Paul wants us to believe that gaining Christ is worth the loss of everything else ([Phil 3:8](#)) and the author of Hebrews exhorts us to endure suffering, like Jesus, for the joy set before us ([Heb. 12: 1-2](#)). Examine the Scriptures and you'll see this over and over again.”

John Piper, *We Want You to Be a Christian Hedonist* (August 31, 2006).

V. Isn't this just another version of the prosperity gospel?

No! The call to pursue joy is a call to pursue God. Everything else, including earthly blessings and prosperity, must be banished from the throne of our hearts. The prosperity gospel teaches precisely the opposite, elevating material prosperity to our chief end and reducing God to just another means to this end. This is idolatry, pure and simple.

- What are our idols? What do we treasure above God? What good gifts do we enjoy more than him? Reputation, acceptance, freedom, spouses, children, grandchildren, convenience, leisure, entertainment, success, financial security, health, safety, life? This is no less idolatry, robbing God of his glory and us of our joy.
- “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.” Luke 14:26
- “Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Matt. 16:25

VI. How does the cross of Christ fit into all this?

The cross of Christ is the ultimate display of the glory of God in redemption and the glorious means by which we are reconciled to him so that we may glorify and enjoy him forever.

- “When we come to worship God at the cross, what we are doing is seeing his righteousness on display, his grace on display..., his holiness on display. God is fully glorified in the death of His Son.” John MacArthur, *God's Glory Displayed in Christ's Cross* (March 20, 2005)
- Before his crucifixion, “Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.’” Jn. 13:31-32
- “God...has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6
- This is why we will forever proclaim “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” Rev. 5:12

VII. What are some practical steps we can take to fuel our passion for God and his glory?

We need to continually behold his glory - who he is, what he has done, and what he promises to do - and rejoice in that. Only then will our hearts and affections be truly transformed and ignited to glorify and enjoy God in newness of life.

- “Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” 2 Cor. 3:18.
- “One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.” Ps. 27:4

VII. What are some practical steps we can take to fuel our passion for God and his glory?

- So let's make it our joyful passion to:
 - Behold God in his glorious Word and creation
 - Look through creation to him
 - Relate everything to him
 - Meditate on him
 - Delight in him
 - Fight the fleeting pleasures of sin with the superior pleasures of God
 - Thank him always!
 - Serve him with gladness!
 - Worship him with a whole heart!

“I never made a sacrifice”

David Livingstone (Dec. 4, 1857)

