

## Westminster Shorter Catechism Study

### Session 1

#### **Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**

**A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.**

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*Psalm 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.  
26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

“Q. 1. What is meant by *man's chief end*?

A. That which ought to be man's chief aim and design; and that which he should seek after as his chief happiness.

Q. 5. Does the chief end exclude subordinate (lesser) ends?

A. No; for, in aiming principally at the glory of God, men may use the supports of natural life for refreshing their bodies. 1 Cor. 10:31; and be diligent in their particular callings, that they may provide for themselves and their families, 1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 1 Tim. 5:8.” – James Fisher

**God is Worthy to Receive Glory:** Rev. 4:11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

**We ought to aim at the glory of God in everything we do:** 1 Cor. 10:31 "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

**The End of Christ's Work is the Glory of God:** John 17:4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

**Our Work is to Glorify God and to Cause OTHERS to Glorify Him:** Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

How Does this Set a FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE between the Christian and the Non-Christian?

*As we recognize the design of the universe and of ourselves to be for the glory of God, we see everything in a different way from the non-Christian. All that we are and do is to be governed by the fact that man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. This is the basis for a Christian Weltanschauung, or world and life view. – Morton Smith*

## **GLORIFY**

“QUESTION 3: What is it to glorify God?

ANSWER: 1. Negatively, to glorify God, **is not** to give any additional glory to God: it is not to make God more glorious than he is; for God is incapable of receiving the least addition to his essential glory, he being eternally and infinitely perfect and glorious. “Your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). “Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not unto thee” (Ps. 16:2).

2. Affirmatively, to glorify God, **is** to manifest God’s glory: not only passively, as all creatures do, which have neither religion nor reason, but also actively, men glorify God, when the design of their life and actions is the glory and honor of God. “That ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you,” (1 Pet. 2:9).

(1.) When inwardly they have the highest estimation of him, the greatest confidence in him, and the strongest affections to him, this is glorifying of God in spirit. “Glorify God in your spirit, which is God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20).

(2.) When outwardly they acknowledge God according to the revelations he has made of himself, when with their lips they show forth God’s praise. “He that offereth praise, glorifieth me” (Ps. 50:23). When they sincerely endeavor, in their actions, the exalting of God’s name, the promotion of the interest of his kingdom in the world, and to yield that worship and obedience to him which he has prescribed in his Word. “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together” (Ps. 34:3). “Fear God, and give glory to him; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:7).” – Thomas Vincent

## **ENJOY**

“QUESTION 4: What is it to enjoy God?

ANSWER: To enjoy God, is to acquiesce or rest in God as the chief good, with complacency and delight. “Return unto thy rest, O my soul” (Ps. 116:7).

QUESTION 5: How is God enjoyed here?

ANSWER: 1. God is enjoyed here, when people settle themselves upon and cleave to the Lord by faith. “But cleave unto the Lord your God” (Josh. 23:8). 2. When they taste the Lord’s goodness, and delight themselves in the gracious presence and sensible manifestations of God’s special love for them. “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8). “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 5:5).

QUESTION 6: How will God be enjoyed by his people hereafter?

ANSWER: God will be enjoyed hereafter by his people, when they shall be admitted into his glorious presence, have an immediate sight of his face, and full sense of his love in heaven, and there fully and eternally acquiesce and rest in him with perfect and inconceivable delight and joy. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). "In thy presence there is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

QUESTION 7: Why is the glorifying of God and the enjoyment of God joined together as one chief end of man?

ANSWER: Because God has inseparably joined them together, so that men cannot truly design and seek the one without the other. They who enjoy God most in his house on earth, do most glorify and enjoy him. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee" (Ps. 84:4). And when God shall be most fully enjoyed by the saints in heaven, he will be most highly glorified. "He shall come to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:10)." – Thomas Vincent

**What is Joy?** "Joy is the purest, deepest, and most satisfying delight that can possess the heart of man; and the Scriptures continually set forth God as man's chiefest joy. As thus: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy. . . .Then will I go to God, my exceeding joy. . . Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord . . . before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." " – Alexander Whyte

*Will we ever find True Joy Outside of God?*

"In his Confessions, Augustine states, "O God, thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Augustine gets to the heart of the matter. The murderer Cain was condemned to wander in lostness. We are all under that sentence of restlessness unless our root relationship to our Creator is restored. The Christian vision is that humanity has a reason to be, a "chief end" in the terminology of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. What is that ultimate, satisfying purpose? The Catechism answers: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The connection is between glorifying God and joy. Conversely, when we dishonor God and fall short of his glory, we experience restlessness. Only obedience brings joy. The pursuit of happiness, beyond momentary pleasure, is impossible in the humanist scheme, because the humanist philosophy retreats from obedience to God.

The great human folly is to imagine that satisfaction can be found outside paradise. The wisdom of Jesus was in understanding the purpose of creation. Jesus fulfilled the image of God. As a human being, Christ had a single-hearted focus: to do the will of the Father. He commanded: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33)." – RC Sproul

**Remember, NO ONE can Glorify God outside of Christ -**

“Q. 16. Was ever God glorified by a perfect obedience since Adam's fall?

A. Never, until CHRIST, the second Adam, appeared as a new covenant head, Isa. 42:21, and 49:3.

Q. 17. How did Christ, the second Adam, glorify God, as our surety and representative on earth?

A. By finishing the work the Father gave him to do. John 17:4.

Q. 18. What was the work the Father gave him to do?

A. It was to assume a holy human nature, Luke 1:35; to yield a perfect sinless obedience to the whole law, Mat. 3:15; and to give a complete satisfaction to justice, for man's sin, by his meritorious sufferings and death, Luke 24:26.

Q. 19. How does Christ glorify God in heaven?

A. By appearing in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9:24, and applying, by the power of his Spirit, that redemption which he purchased by the price of his blood on earth, Tit. 3:5, 6.

Q. 20. When is it that a sinner begins uprightly to aim at the glory of God?

A. When, through a faith of God's operation, he believes in Christ: Acts 8:37, 39. -- "The eunuch answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. -- And he went on his way rejoicing."

Q. 21. Can no man glorify God acceptably, unless he first believe in Christ?

A. No; for, "Without faith it is impossible to please him." Heb. 11:6; and, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. 14:23.

Q. 22. How is it that faith in Christ glorifies God?

A. As it sets its seal to the record of God, John 3:33; and unites us to Christ, from whom only our fruit is found, Hos. 14:8.

Q. 23. Is not God glorified by the good works of believers?

A. Yes; "herein," says Christ, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," John 15:8.

Q. 24. What are these fruits brought forth by believers, by which God is glorified?

A. They may be summed up in faith working by love, Gal. 5:6; or, their aiming, in the strength of Christ, at universal obedience to the law, as the rule of duty. Phil. 4:13 -- "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." -- James Fisher

“Lady Glenorchy, in her diary, relates how she was seized with a fever which threatened her life, 'during the course of which,' she says, 'the first question of the Assembly's Catechism was brought to my mind— "What is the chief end of man?" as if some one had asked it. When I considered the answer to it—"To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever"—I was struck with shame and confusion. I found I had never sought to glorify God in my life, nor had I any idea of what was meant by enjoying Him for ever. Death and judgment were set before me; my past sins came to my remembrance; I saw no way to escape the punishment due unto them, nor had I the least glimmering hope of obtaining the pardon of them through the righteousness of another.' From this unhappy state she was shortly after delivered, by believing on the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour of the guilty.” – John Whitecross