

Anthropology (The Study of Humanity) - Part 1

The Purpose for Which We Were Created

The Westminster Shorter Catechism - Question 1

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

To glorify God...

- "All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name." - Psalm 86:9
- "For my name's sake I defer my anger; for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.... For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another."
- Isaiah 48:9, 11
- "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." - Romans 11:36
- "for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." - 1 Cor. 6:20
- "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
- 1 Cor. 10:31
- "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."
- Revelation 4:11

To enjoy Him forever...

- "The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot." - Psalm 16:5
- "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." - Psalm 16:11
- "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."
- Psalm 37:4
- "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." - Isaiah 12:2
- "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." - Philippians 4:4
- "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'" - Revelation 21:3-4

These are not two separate ends, but the same end.

- “Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.” - Psalm 43:4
- “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.” - John Piper
- “God is glorified not only by His glory’s being seen, but by its being rejoiced in.” - Jonathan Edwards

We don’t glorify God by forsaking our own joy. We glorify God by finding that He is our true joy.

- “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” - Hebrews 11:6
- “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” - Augustine

Let’s worship and serve God out of delight and desire, not out of duty.

- “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” - Matthew 6:3-4
- “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” - Matthew 13:44
- “The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. 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 the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” - C. S. Lewis

Discussion Questions

- Why is considering the purpose for which God created us an important place to start when studying the doctrine of humanity? How have you experienced joy in God?