

THE REQUIREMENT TO BRING GLORY TO GOD—BUT OUR RELUCTANCE TO DO SO!

INTRODUCTION: I want to start out this morning by asking you a question: **Why** do you exist? In other words, **what is your purpose** in life?

Thought-provoking question, isn't it? If you were to do an on-line search like I did, you would get answers from sources like: "verywellmind.com," "psychologytoday.com," "bigthink.com," and "positivepsychology.com." But hopefully you are more interested in **how God answers** the question than you are about what **philosophers and psychologists** have to say.

So...to tweak the question a little bit: **What does God—in the Bible—say about the purpose of man?** My guess is that **most children**—and many adults—would have **a hard time** answering that question.

And yet, if you were to have asked basically the same question—"What is the chief end of man"—to a school-aged child back in the **mid 1600's**, they would know—from the Westminster Shorter Catechism—that the answer is this: "Man's chief end is to **glorify God**, and enjoy Him for ever."

Amazing—and sad—at the same time, isn't it? For all of our so-called "advances" in education, children that **lived 370 years ago** had more Bible knowledge than most adults do now!

Please know that I'm not endorsing **the entire** Westminster Shorter Catechism. I say that for two reasons: 1) First, I didn't take the time to **read the whole thing** so I'm not going to say I agree with it all if I don't know what it says! **Politicians** may do that, but I don't 😊. 2) Second, I do know it has some leanings toward **"Reformed Theology"**—a system of beliefs that I have some issues with.

But...I do agree with the **first half** of this sentence because it is a **Biblical truth**: The chief end of man—the purpose for which man was created—is to **glorify God!**

But where—in the Bible—does it say that? And what **does it mean** to "glorify" God? **And how** do we go about doing that? We will be looking at the answers to these questions over the course of the next couple of weeks. Today we are going to focus on God's requirement for us to bring glory to Him—but our reluctance to do so.

First, let's consider... **1. The requirement to bring glory to God**

How do we know it is **a requirement**? Because **God says it**—multiple times! And in order to demonstrate that, we are going to be looking at a **number of different verses** instead of staying in one particular passage. Before we do that, though, I want to take a few minutes to define our terms.

A. The definitions of "glory" and "glorify"

1) Glory. The word "glory" appears 375 times in our KJ Bibles—214 in the OT; 161 in the NT. It is **a noun** and is often used to describe the **majesty and magnificence** of God. That's **not the only meaning** it has, though.

Psalm 29:1-2 "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, **give** unto the Lord **glory** and strength. ² **Give** unto the Lord **the glory** due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Do these verses mean that we are "giving"—meaning **"adding"**—to God glory and strength because He **doesn't have enough**? No; that's **not what it means** at all! It means we are **to ascribe** honor...and praise...and worship to God because of His excellence and greatness and majesty.

2) Glorify. The word "glorify" is the **verb** form of the noun "glory." An example some of us may be familiar with is found in the words of Jesus in **Mt 5:16** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and **glorify** your Father which is in heaven." Jesus could just as easily have said "Let your lights so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and **give glory** unto your Father which is in heaven."

Here are some other definitions:

--to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate

--to cause the dignity and worth of God to become manifest and acknowledged

--to ascribe weight to something by recognizing real value and worth of it

Next let's consider... B. The declarations to bring glory to God

Take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah 43, beginning with vs 1. The context is specifically about the nation of Israel. But...did **God only create** the people in the nation of Israel? No; He **created and formed** all of mankind! And those of us who are born again are **redeemed**—we are bought by Christ's blood and freed from the penalty of hell! And when we receive Christ, John 1:12 states that we become the sons of God!

So yes; Israel could say that they were redeemed...and called by God's name...and belonged to Him! **But the same is true of us!** Jump ahead to vs 6. Here God is specifically referring to gathering His people back after the Babylonian captivity. Now vs 7.

--Who is **called** by God's name? The nation of Israel—and those who have trusted Christ as their Saver!

--Who has **God created and formed**? All of us, right? There is Only One person who **wasn't created**—the man Christ Jesus! Otherwise, every one of us has been created and formed by God.

Ps 100:3 "Know ye that the LORD He is God; it is **He that hath made us, and not we ourselves;**"

--**Why**—according to vs 7—were **we created**? "for I have created Him for **my glory**."

We were made—by God—in order for us to **bring glory to God!** That is our purpose for existence; that is the chief duty of man!

--Vs 21 makes a similar statement. God formed us **for Himself**—and **we shall**—not might or should—bring forth praise to Him! And it is not something we should do just once in a while—it is our "Father's business" that we should go about doing all the time!

Psalms 102:18 "This shall be written for the generation to come: and **the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.**"

Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, **to receive glory and honour and power**: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure** they are and were created."

We were **created for God's pleasure**—and His pleasure—His will—is that we ascribe glory and honor and power to Him!

Here's another reason: C. The doxologies demonstrate we are to bring glory to God

A "doxology" is an expression of praise to God. I was intrigued by **this definition**: "It is an eruptive statement of praise to God who is worthy of all glory-words, and more." (<https://www.logos.com/grow/hall-doxology/>)

Although I didn't call it a "doxology" last week, we looked at one in the last half of **II Peter 3:18** "**To Him be glory** both now and for ever. Amen."

It is interesting to notice that Peter closed his **first letter** in a similar fashion. **I Peter 5:11** "To Him be **glory** and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Not surprisingly, Paul did the same things in many of his letters—and not always at the end!

--He **closed** the book of Romans with these words: "To God only wise, be **glory** through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." (Romans 16:27)

--His doxology in Ephesians, though, was **in the middle!** Ephesians 3:21 "Unto Him be **glory** in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

--He **closed** the book of Philippians with a doxology: Philippians 4:20 "Now unto God and our Father be **glory** for ever and ever. Amen."

--But **he opened** his first letter to Timothy with these words: I Timothy 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and **glory** for ever and ever. Amen."

The writer of Hebrews closed the book with a doxology. **Hebrews 13:21** "...through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."—And so did **Jude** (vs 25) "To the only wise God our Saviour, be **glory** and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

I know this may have been a bit redundant, but it **is important for us to be convinced** that God created us to ascribe honor to Him...and give praise to Him...and worship Him...and proclaim His goodness and greatness to others! And if we are **not doing that**, we are disobeying God and **failing to do** what God created us to do!

Next, I want us to consider... **2. Our reluctance to give glory to God**

It is proper and right—based on **who God is** and **who we are**—to ascribe greatness to God and to praise Him for it. But...we are so **reluctant** to do it! We **resist doing** what is right to do—and what God created us to do!

Here's some Biblical proof of our reluctance and resistance.

A. God doesn't command us to do what we naturally do

You ever notice that in the Bible? Unless I'm missing something, God **doesn't command us to do** what we **naturally do**. Why? Because **we naturally do it!** But He **does command us** to do things that go **against our nature**. We have an example of that in **Mt 22:37-39** "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment."

--Do we **naturally** do that? No; we don't! That's why God **commands us** to do it!

Mt 22:39 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." We are commanded to love our neighbor the same way we **already love** ourselves.

Here's another example. **Ephesians 5:28-29** "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet **hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it**, even as the Lord the church:" **You see the point, right?** Men are commanded to love their wives the same way **they already love themselves**. Men don't hate themselves—they nourish and cherish themselves!

So...based on the fact that God **has to command us** to give glory unto Him—even though it is good and proper and reasonable and right to do—shows that we are **reluctant to do so!**

B. God commands us not to seek our own glory. We see that truth in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Solomon—whom the Bible refers to as the wisest man who ever lived—wrote in **Proverbs 25:27** "It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to **search their own glory** is not glory."

--Is it a **good thing** to search for our own praise? No; it's not! If it's not good, that means **it's bad**. And since **it's bad**, we shouldn't do it!

Proverbs 27:2 "Let another man **praise thee**, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and **not thine own lips**."

Are we supposed to **praise** ourselves? No; we aren't! Let someone else praise you—not you!

Jeremiah 9:23-24 "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man **glory** in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man **glory** in his might, let not the rich man **glory** in his riches: ²⁴ But let him that **glorieth glory** in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Why are we commanded not to glory in—not to brag about—wisdom...or might...or riches? Because that is what we **naturally tend to do!**

Jeremiah 45:5a "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not:" **Why** are we commanded not to **seek great things** for ourselves? Because that is what we **naturally tend to do!**

We find the same thing in the New Testament.

I Corinthians 4:7 "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, **why dost thou glory**, as if thou hadst not received it?"

--Is Paul **commending them** for their "glorying"—their boasting? No! He is saying, 'God made you the way you are—and has given you everything you have! Don't brag about it like you got it on your own!'

Philippians 2:3 "**Let nothing** be done through strife [selfish ambition] or vainglory [empty pride]; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

--Let's not miss the fact that there are **no exceptions!** Nothing—absolutely nothing—is supposed to be done that is motivated by self-interest or empty pride!

To recap, God requires that we bring glory to Him but—sadly—we are often reluctant to do that. So what happens if we don't seek to bring glory to God? What is God's response to those who seek their own glory?

3. God's response to those who seek their own glory

Two disclaimers as we look at God's response to those who seek their own glory.

1) There are many more examples than the **four** we are going to look at.

2) Just because God responded this way in the past does not mean He responds that way now. We should be **extremely grateful** for that, and you'll see why in a few minutes. On the flip side, though, please do not think that God **isn't against** "glory-robbing" as much as He was in the past. Malachi 3:6 reminds us "For I am the LORD, I change not!"

A. The pride of Satan

You're still in Isaiah, turn back to chapter 14. Please follow along as I read verse 12-14. What was Lucifer's sin? **Pride!** Five times he said, "I will"—the last one being "I will be like the most High."

Simply put, Satan wanted to take God's place! God's response was to **cast him out** of heaven. **Why?** Because God **will not give His glory** to another! Isaiah 42:8a "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another," Isaiah 48:11 makes a similar statement.

Next, let's turn to the book of Acts, chapter 5. Here we see... B. The praise desired by Ananias and Sapphira
Notice verses 1-5. We looked at this not too long ago so most of you are familiar with it. Their sin was not in **holding back part** of the money—it was "lying" about how much they sold it for and pretending they were giving **the total amount** to the apostles!

Why did they want people to think they had **given all of their proceeds** to the Lord's work? I don't think I'm going out on a limb to suggest it was because they **wanted glory**—the praise of men!

Here's another example, please turn to Acts 12. Here we see... C. The praise accepted by King Herod

Notice what it says in verses 1-2. So we have a wicked king by the name of Herod—Herod Agrippa I—who was the **grandson of Herod the Great** (the ruler at the time of Jesus' birth).

--Now vs 21-22. How did Herod respond to being called a god?

--Notice what it says in vs 23 "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him."

Why? "...because he gave not God the glory..."

Various suggestions are made as to what the disease was—and exactly how he died—but I think it is important to emphasize what God emphasizes: this king was killed—by an angel of God—**for not giving glory to God!** Now you know why I said we can be glad that God doesn't deal this way anymore!

Here's our last example... D. The preeminence desired by Diotrephes

We find this in the book of III John—which is just before the book of Jude—which is just before Revelation. You can turn there if you'd like; otherwise feel free to just listen.

--In vs 1, John says that he—the elder—is writing to "the well-beloved Gaius," whom John loved "in the truth." --In vs 9, it says "I wrote unto the church..." Most commentators believe that there was a letter that was written to the church that was lost—or possibly even destroyed by this man called Diotrephes.

--He loved to have the preeminence, which literally means he "loves to be first."

--He is not accused of teaching any error, but **his arrogance** led him to "not receive us"—a reference to John and those that were close to him.

--Now vs 10. Here we see John describing four negative behaviors and attitudes of Diotrephes:

1) He speaks evil of John and his fellow brethren in the faith

2) He refuses to receive the brethren John sent—or wanted to send—to the church

3) He forbids other people in the church from receiving those that John sent

4) If they did receive these other brethren that John sent, Diotrephes would have them kicked out of the church! That's what you call "loving to be first!"

Imagine the apostle John—the last apostle alive that literally, physically walked and talked with Jesus—being refused—rebuffed, disregarded, counted as irrelevant—by this man Diotrephes!

Barnes writes: This case “furnishes an illustration of the bad influence of one ambitious and arrogant man in a church. It is often in the power of one such man to bring a whole church under his control, and effectually to embarrass all its movements, and to prevent all the good which it would otherwise accomplish.”

(https://biblehub.com/commentaries/3_john/1-9.htm)

This case also serves as an illustration that if a leader in a church like Diotrephes can succumb to a spirit of “loving to be first,” any one of us can!

--Are we trying to bring glory to God if we are trying to bring praise to ourselves?

We can't, can we?

What about you? What drives you? What do you pursue? What do you see as your purpose for living?

So, what is it that God wants **you to do today**?

1. First, God wants us to **glorify** Him. Are you doing that? I'm going to again ask the questions I just asked.

--What drives you?

--What do you pursue?

--What do you see as your purpose for your existence?

If it is not to bring glory to God, then you have it wrong! Too many times we hear these things and think about them for a little while, then go on to the next thing.

I think we need to take some time in this upcoming week and be brutally honest about evaluating what it is we are pursuing in life.

2. Second, I realize this message has been geared toward those who are children of God.

But...I know not all of you are children of God.

What does God want you to do?

--Humble yourself and recognize your sinfulness and need for forgiveness!

I asked this last week, but I'm going to ask it again: Can you glorify God if you reject Jesus?

--On the one hand, NO—you can't! You can't praise and honor God for sending a Savior if you reject the Saver!

--On the other hand, you **will honor** Him some day because “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”