



Man's Chief End:

GOD'S
glory



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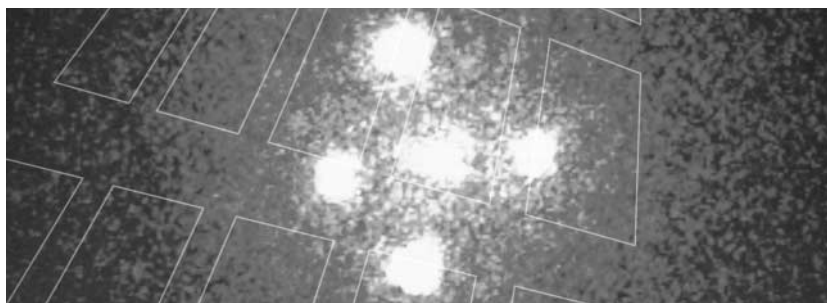
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MAN'S CHIEF END: GOD'S GLORY

The Apostle Peter wrote, “So that in all things *God may be glorified*” (I Peter 4:11). The glory of God is a silver thread that ought to run through all of our actions. “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God*” (I Cor. 10:31). Every natural and manmade substance has some established purpose. So, as rational creatures, men and women must ascribe some purpose to themselves, and that should be to lift up God in the world. It would be better for a man to lose his life than lose the reason for which he lives. Let us assert this great truth: **the purpose of every man's life should be to glorify God.** When we glorify God, we show respect to all the persons in the Trinity. We respect God the Father who gave us life; God the Son who gave his life for us; and God the Holy Spirit who produces a new life in us. We must bring glory to the whole Trinity.

WHAT IS GOD'S GLORY?

The word *glory* is used in two ways. *First*, it is used of the glory that God has in himself. We call this his *intrinsic* glory. Glory is essential to the Godhead, just as light is essential to the sun. He is called the “God of glory” (Acts 7:2). Glory is the sparkling of the Deity. It is so natural to the Godhead that God cannot be God without it. Our honor is not essential to our existence. A king is a mere man when his crown and royal robes are removed. God's glory, however, is such an essential part of his being, that he cannot be God without it. God's very being lies in




his glory. This glory cannot be added to, because it is infinite. It is so special to God that he will not part with it: “I will not yield my glory to another” (Is. 48:11). God will give temporal blessings to his children, such as wisdom, riches, and honor. He will give them spiritual blessings such as grace, love, and heaven. But his essential glory he will not give to another. Pharaoh gave a ring and a gold chain to Joseph, but he would not part with his throne: “Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you” (Gen. 41:40). So, God will do many things for his people. He will give them an inheritance, and he will put some of Christ’s glory as mediator upon them. But he will not part with his essential glory. In the throne, he will be greater.

Second, it is used of the glory which is ascribed to God, or which his creatures strive to bring to him. “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name” (I Chron. 16:29). “Glorify God in your body” (I Cor. 6:20). The glory we give to God is nothing else but our commitment to lift up his name in the world and magnify him in the eyes of others. “Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body” (Phil. 1:20).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GLORIFY GOD?

Glorifying God consists of four things: appreciation, adoration, affection, and subjection. This is the yearly rent we pay to the crown of heaven.


1. **Appreciation.** To glorify God is to place God at the highest level in our thoughts and to reverently esteem him. “But you, O Lord, are exalted forever” (Ps. 92:8). “For you, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods” (Ps. 97:9). In God exists everything necessary to bring forth both wonder and delight, a constellation of everything that is beautiful. He is *prima causa*, the original and fountainhead of being who sheds his glory on his creatures. We glorify God when we are God-admirers. We glorify God when we admire his attributes, which are the brilliant rays of the divine nature. We glorify God when we admire his promises, which are the charter of free grace and the spiritual cabinet where the pearl of great price is hidden. We glorify God when we admire his power and



wisdom that created the world, which is called “the work of your fingers” (Ps. 8:3). To glorify God is to have God-admiring thoughts, to consider him most excellent, and to search for diamonds only in this rock.

2. **Adoration.** To glorify God means to worship and adore him. “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (Ps. 29:2). There are two kinds of worship. *First*, there is a social reverence that we give to honorable people. “Then Abraham rose and bowed down before the people of the land, the Hittites” (Gen. 23:7). Piety is not an enemy to courtesy. *Second*, we worship God because it is his royal prerogative. “Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, ‘Amen! Amen!’ Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground” (Neh. 8:6). God is very jealous of this kind of worship. It is the apple of his eye, the pearl of his crown. He guards it as he did the tree of life, with cherubims and a flaming sword, so that no one is able to come near and violate it. Divine worship has to be conducted just as God has determined, or else it is offering strange fire: “Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, *contrary to his command*” (Lev. 10:1). The Lord had Moses make the tabernacle “according to the pattern shown you on the mountain” (Ex. 25:40). He was not to leave anything out of the pattern, nor add to it. If God was so exacting and careful about the place of worship, how exacting is he about how we worship him! All worship must be according to the pattern prescribed in his Word.

3. **Affection.** God considers himself glorified when he is loved. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:5). There are two kinds of love. *First*, there is self-love, the kind of love we give to another because he has done something for us. An ungodly man may love God because he has given him a good harvest or filled his cup with wine. But this is nothing more than loving God’s blessings and is not the same thing as loving God. We might call a second kind of love, delight, as when someone delights in a




friend. This is what it means to love God. The heart is set on God in the same way that a man's heart is set on his wealth. This love is full of unrestrained enthusiasm and joy - not a few drops, but a stream. It is a superior love in that we give God the best, the cream, of our love. "I would give you spiced wine to drink, the nectar of my pomegranates" (Song of Solomon 8:2). If the spouse had a better drink to offer, Christ would drink it. This kind of love is intense and passionate. True Christians are seraphim, burning in holy love to God. The spouse in the Song of Solomon was "faint with love" (2:5). So, to love God is to glorify him. He who is the Lord of our happiness must be the Lord of our affections.

4. **Subjection.** This happens when we dedicate ourselves to God and are always ready to serve him. The angels in heaven glorify him in this way. They wait on him before the throne and stand ready to take an assignment from him. Therefore, they are represented by the cherubim whose wings are displayed in order to demonstrate how swift they are in their obedience. We glorify God when we are devoted to his service. Our mind studies about him, our tongue pleads for him, and our hands provide assistance to the members of his body. The wise men who came to Christ not only bowed their knees to him, but also presented him with gold and myrrh (Matt. 2:11). So we must not only worship God, but also bring presents of golden obedience. We glorify God when we never delay to serve him, when we fight under the banner of his gospel against an enemy and say to him as David said to King Saul, "Your servant will go and fight him (Goliath)" (I Sam. 17:32).

A Christian is like the earth that not only receives heat from the sun, but also moves in its orbit around it. So, the one who glorifies God not only has his affections heated with love for God, but moves vigorously in the orbit of obedience.

WHY MUST WE GLORIFY GOD?


1. **Because he gives us our being.** "It is he who made us" (Ps. 100:3). We rejoice when a man spares our life; but how kind it is of God



to give us life! We draw our breath from him. And not only life, but also all the comforts we have in this life are from him. He gives us health, which is the seasoning to sweeten our life. He provides us with food, which is the oil that nourishes the lamp of life. If everything we have is from him, is it not reasonable that we should glorify him? Shouldn't we live for him since we live by him? "For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom. 11:36a). All we have is from his fullness and by his free grace. Therefore, to him should be all glory. "To him be the glory forever" (Rom. 11:36b). God is not only the one who blesses us, but also the one who created us, as rivers that come from the sea empty their silver streams into the sea again.

2. Because God has made all things for his own glory. "The Lord works out everything for his own ends" (Prov. 16:4), that is, for his own glory. As a government receives taxes from commodities, so God will receive glory out of everything. He will receive glory from the wicked. If they will not give him glory, he will get glory from them. "And I will gain glory through Pharaoh" (Ex. 14:17). But he especially made the godly for his glory. They are the instruments of his praise. "The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise" (Is. 43:21). It is true that they cannot add to his glory, but they can exalt it. They cannot improve his status in heaven, but they can impact the way others view him on earth. God has adopted his children into his family and made them a royal priesthood "a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

3. Because the glory of God has intrinsic value and excellence. The glory of God transcends our thoughts and the tongues of angels. His glory is his treasure and all of his riches lie in his glory. After the Danites had taken Micah's carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, Micah cried out, "What else do I have?" (Judges 18:24). So, what else does God have? God's glory is more valuable than heaven and more valuable than the salvation of every soul. It would be better for governments to be overthrown, better for people and angels to be



annihilated, than that God should lose one jewel from his crown, one beam of his glory.

- 4. Because creatures inferior and superior to us bring glory to God.** Do we think we can live rent free? Should everything glorify God except man? If so, it is regrettable that man was ever made. (a) *Creatures inferior to us glorify God, as do inanimate objects and the heavens.* “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1). The skilled workmanship of heaven reveals the glory of its Maker. The firmament has been made beautiful, painted in shades of blue, so that the power and wisdom of God can be clearly seen. “The heavens declare his glory.” We can see the glory of God blazing in the sun and twinkling in the stars. Look up into the sky. The birds with their chirping music sing hymns of praise to God. Every animal glorifies God: “The wild animals honor me” (Is. 43:20). (b) *Creatures superior to us glorify God.* The angels are “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14). To this day they serve God’s throne and bring revenues of glory into the treasury of heaven. Should we not be students of God’s glory more than the angels? We must realize that God has honored us more than the angels. Remember, Christ took our nature, not the angels’, on himself. It is true that at creation God made man “for a little while lower than the angels” (Heb. 2:7), but in our redemption, God has placed us higher than the angels. He has married mankind. The angels are Christ’s friends, not his spouse. He has covered us with the purple robe of his righteousness, a better righteousness than the angels have (II Cor. 5:21). If, then, the angels bring glory to God, how much more should we since we have been honored above the angels.
- 5. Because all our hopes depend on him.** “My hope is in you” (Ps. 39:7b). “My hope comes from him” (Ps. 62:5b). I expect a kingdom from him. A child actually honors his parents by depending on them to provide everything he needs. “All my fountains are in you” (Ps. 87:7). The silver of grace and the golden springs of glory are in him.



HOW DO WE GLORIFY GOD?

1. **We glorify God when our sole desire is to seek his glory.** It is one thing to advance God's glory, but another thing to seek it. God must be the *terminus ad quem*, the ultimate end of all actions. This was Christ's purpose. He said, "I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge" (John 8:50). The one who is not a true follower of Christ looks more for his own glory than he does for God's. Our Savior sees through this hypocrite and gives a warning to him, "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men" (Matt. 6:2). Imagine a stranger walking along the street asking, "What does the sound of the trumpet mean?" Someone tells him, "They are going to give to the poor." Truthfully, then, they did not really give alms; they sold them for honor and applause so that they could receive glory from men. The breath of men was the wind that blew the sails of their giving. "Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full" (Matt. 6:2). The hypocrite may claim he has paid his debt and write, "Paid in full." Chrysostom calls pride one of Satan's great nets by which to catch men. And Cyprian says, "Those whom Satan cannot defeat through intemperance, he defeats through pride and boasting." Avoid worshipping yourself! Seek God's glory.


(a). **We do this when we desire God's glory above all other things**, including money, homes, and relationships. When the glory of God competes with anything else, we must desire his glory before them. If a relationship is blocking our way to heaven, we must sacrifice it for God's glory. We must even seek God's glory more than we do the welfare of our children (Deut. 33:8-9).

(b). **We aim at God's glory when we are satisfied that God's will is done, even though it may be in conflict with our will.** Lord, I am content to lose if you will gain. I am willing to be sick, if I can receive more grace and you more glory. If I know you are the one giving it to me, I will accept either food or medicine. Lord, I desire whatever will give you the most glory. Our blessed Savior

said, “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). He was willing to suffer, if only his Father might have more glory. “Father, glorify Thy name” (John 12:28).

(c). **We aim at God’s glory when we are content around others who have greater gifts and position than us.** Any person who has God in his heart and God’s glory in his eye wants God to be exalted. It doesn’t matter who the instrument is as long as God is glorified. “Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice” (Phil. 1:15-18). In the early church, there were people who were preaching Christ out of envy - they were jealous of Paul because he had such a large following. So, they tried to preach better than Paul so that some of his audience would follow them. But, in essence, Paul said, “Christ is preached and God is going to receive glory. Therefore, I rejoice. It does not matter if my candle goes out as long as the Sun of Righteousness shines.”

2. **We glorify God when we candidly confess our sins.** The thief on the cross dishonored God with his life, but at his death he brought glory to God by confessing his sins. “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve” (Luke 23:41). He acknowledged that he not only deserved crucifixion, but damnation. “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me” (Josh. 7:19). A humble confession exalts God. How God’s free grace is magnified when he crowns those who deserve to be condemned! Excusing and minimizing sin leads to blaming God. Adam did not deny that he ate the forbidden fruit but, instead of a full confession, he blamed God. “The woman you put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it” (Gen. 3:12). In other words, Adam was saying, “If you had not given me the woman to tempt me, I would not have sinned.”



Confession glorifies God, because it clears him. It acknowledges that he is holy and righteous in whatever he does. Nehemiah vindicates God's righteousness when he says, "In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong" (Neh. 9:33). A confession is genuine when it is free, not forced. "I have sinned against heaven and against you" (Lk. 15:18). The prodigal charged himself with sin before his father charged him with it.


3. **We glorify God by believing.** Abraham "did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God" (Rom. 4:20). Unbelief is a sin against God, in that it makes him a liar. "Anyone who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son" (I Jn. 5:10). On the contrary, faith brings glory to God. Faith establishes the fact that God is true. "The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful" (Jn. 3:33). The one who believes flies to God's mercy and truth as he would to an altar of refuge. He surrounds himself with the promises and entrusts all that he has to God. "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (Ps. 31:5). This is a wonderful way to bring glory to God. God honors faith, because faith honors him. When we trust another person with everything we have and put our lives and property in his hands, we honor him. It is a clear sign that we have a very high opinion of him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego glorified God by believing. "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king" (Dan. 3:17). Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God and will trust him when he cannot be found.

4. **We glorify God by being considerate of his glory.** God's glory is precious to him, the apple of his eye. A young child weeps when he sees his father unjustly disgraced. "The insults of those who insult you fall on me" (Ps. 69:9). When we hear God criticized, it is as if we were criticized. When God's glory suffers, it is as if we suffer. This is what it means to be considerate of his glory.



5. **We glorify God by being fruitful.** “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8). Just as it is dishonoring to God to be a barren Christian, so fruitfulness honors him. “Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:11). We must not be like the fig tree that is mentioned in the gospel. It only bore leaves. Rather, we must be like the pomecitron (a citron apple) that is continually ripening or blossoming and is never without fruit. It is not a profession of faith, but fruit that glorifies God. God expects to receive glory from us in this way. “Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes?” (I Cor. 9:7). Trees in the forest may be barren, but trees in the garden are fruitful. We must bring forth the fruits of love and good works. “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Faith sanctifies our works, and works demonstrate our faith. When we do good to others - when we are eyes to the blind and feet for the lame - it glorifies God. This is the way Christ glorified his Father: “He went around doing good” (Acts 10:38). By being fruitful, we are beautiful in God’s eyes. “The Lord called you a thriving olive tree with fruit beautiful in form” (Jer. 11:16). We must bear much fruit and bearing much fruit glorifies God. Even though a little grace will save you, it will not bring much glory to God. It was not a spark of love in Mary that Christ praised, but much love. “For she loved much” (Lk. 7:47).

6. **We glorify God by being content in the state in which Providence has placed us.** We acknowledge the glory of God’s wisdom when we are satisfied with whatever he plans for us. Paul is a good example for us. The Lord placed him in many different circumstances - “been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again” (II Cor. 11:23) - yet he learned to be content. Paul could sail in a storm or when it was calm. He could be anything that God wanted him to be. He could either be in need or well off (Phil. 4:13). This is the way a Christian ought to think: “God has put me in this situation. He could lift me out of it if he wanted to, but that could possibly lead to some other entanglement. I am




convinced he has done it in wisdom and love. Therefore, I will be satisfied with my situation.” This certainly glorifies God. He is honored by the Christian who thinks this way. “Here is a person,” says God, “who is after my heart. No matter what I do with him, I do not hear complaining. He is content.” This demonstrates an abundance of grace. When grace is overflowing, it isn’t difficult to be content. But when grace is faced with inconveniences, then to be content is a wonderful thing. It is not surprising that one would be content in heaven, but it is Christ-like to be content under the weight of some cross. This kind of person brings glory to God, because he demonstrates to the whole world that even if he has very little food left, he is satisfied with God and that makes him content. He says with David, “Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance” (Ps. 16:5).

7. We glorify God by working out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12).

God has woven together his glory and our good. We glorify him when we make progress in our sanctification. So while we are working out our salvation, we are honoring God. What an encouragement this is in our service to God, that while I am listening and praying, I am glorifying God. While I am furthering my own glory in heaven, I am increasing God’s glory. Wouldn’t it encourage a subject to hear his prince say to him: “I want you to honor and please me. Go over there to the gold mine and dig up as much gold for yourself as you can carry away.” Similarly, God says, “Get as much grace as you can get. The more happiness you have, the more I will consider myself glorified.”

8. We glorify God by living for him. “And he died for all, that those

who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them” (II Cor. 5:15). “If we live, we live to the Lord” (Rom. 14:8a). Some live for money; others, to feed their appetites. The goal of an unbeliever is to satisfy lust, but we glorify God when we live for him. We live for God when we live to serve him and surrender ourselves totally to him. The Lord has sent us into the world, as a corporate boss sends an agent overseas to make deals for him. We live for God when we have his



interest in mind and propagate his Gospel. God has given everyone at least one talent. When we do not hide it, but improve it for God, we live for God. “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death” (Phil 1:20). Paul had three wishes and they were all about Christ. He wanted to be found in Christ, be with Christ, and magnify Christ.


9. **We glorify God by living joyfully.** When the world sees a Christian who is joyful even in the worst of times, it brings glory to God. This joy enables him, like the nightingale, to sing with a thorn in his breast. God’s children have good reason to be joyful. They are justified and adopted into God’s family, and this creates inward peace. There is music within, whatever storms are without (II Cor. 1:4; I Thess. 1:6). If we consider what Christ has done for us by his blood and done in us by his Spirit, we have good reason to be joyful - and this joyfulness glorifies God. When God’s children are always sad, it reflects on their Master and makes him out to be someone who is not good. This dishonors God. As the sins of unbelievers disgrace the gospel, so also the lack of joy in the lives of Christians. “Serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs” (Ps. 100:2). Serving him does not glorify him unless it is done with gladness. A Christian’s joyful disposition glorifies God. Religion does not take away our joy, but refines it; it does not break our violin, but tunes it and makes the music better.
10. **We glorify God by standing up for his truths.** God has entrusted us with his truth like a master entrusts his servant with his possessions. We do not have a richer treasure to trust God with than our souls; and God does not have a richer treasure to trust us with than his truth. Truth is a beam of light that shines from God. Much of his glory lies in his truth. When we are advocates for truth, we glorify God. “Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). The Greek word for *contend* signifies a *great* contending, as someone would contend for his property and not allow it to be taken from him. In a similar way, we should contend for the truth. If there were more of this holy contention, God would receive more glory. Some contend

passionately for things that have little value, but not for the truth. Yet we would consider a person to be unwise who contended more for a photograph than for his inheritance, a box of money than for his box of title deeds.

- 11. We glorify God by praising him.** Doxology, or praise, is a God-exalting work. “He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me” (Ps. 50:23). The Hebrew word *Bara* (“to create”) and *Barak* (“to praise”) are not very different, because the purpose of creation is to praise God. David was called the sweet singer of Israel. When he praised God, he was glorifying God. “I will *praise* you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will *glorify* your name forever” (Ps. 86:12). Though nothing can be added to God’s essential glory, praise exalts him in the eyes of others. When we praise God, we spread his fame and renown; we display the trophies of his excellency. The angels, as members of the choir of heaven, sound forth his praise. Praising God is one of the highest and purist acts of religion. In prayer we behave like ordinary people; in praise we behave like the angels. Believers are called “temples of God” (I Cor. 3:16). When our tongues praise him, then the organs in God’s spiritual temple are sounding. How sad that God does not receive more glory from us in this way! Many people are full of complaining and discontent, and seldom bring glory to God by giving him the praise that is due his name. We read of the saints having harps in their hands, the symbols of praise. Many have tears in their eyes and complaints in their mouths, but few have harps in their hands by which to bless and glorify God. Let us honor God by praising him. Praise is the rent we pay to God - while God renews our lease, we must renew our rent.
- 12. We glorify God by being zealous for his name.** “Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them” (Num. 25:11). Zeal is a combination of love and anger. It expresses our love for God and our intense anger against sin. Zeal gets upset when God is dishonored. A zealous Christian is more offended when God is dishonored than when he himself is dishonored. “I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men” (Rev. 2:2). Christ glorified his Father by being zealous and

driving the money-changers out of the temple. “Zeal for your house will consume me” (John 2:14-17).

13. **We glorify God when we honor him by the way we live our lives and by the way we conduct our business.** “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31). A gracious person lives in moderation. He eats food in order that he can be more fit to serve God. He makes his food, “not fuel for lust, but help to duty.” Also, in our business practices, we must do all to the glory of God. The ungodly live on the profit they unjustly make from others. “The merchant uses dishonest scales; he loves to defraud” (Hosea 12:7). Consequently, while these cheats are making their weights (for the scales) lighter, they make their sins heavier. We must buy and sell for the glory of God and observe that golden maxim: “To do to others as we would have them do to us.” When we sell our commodities, we should not sell our consciences with them. “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 24:16). We glorify God, then, when we live righteously under God in our business and in our daily lives, and do nothing that might damage the cause of Christ.
14. **We glorify God by seeking to bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ so that they also may bring glory to God.** We should be both diamonds and magnets: diamonds for radiating the beauty of God’s grace and magnets for drawing others to Christ. “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). When we break open the devil’s prison and turn people from the power of Satan to God, we glorify God greatly.
15. **We glorify God when we suffer for God and seal the gospel with our blood.** “I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God” (John 21:18-19). God’s glory shines in the ashes of his martyrs. Micah was in prison, Isaiah was sawn in two, Paul beheaded, and




Luke hanged from an olive tree. By their deaths, they glorified God. The sufferings of the early Christians brought honor to God and made the gospel famous in the world. What would others say? “See what a good master they serve. Notice how they love him. They will even risk losing everything to serve him.” The glory of Christ’s kingdom is far different from the grandeur and ceremony of earthly kings. The glory of his kingdom is seen in the joyful sufferings of his people. The early Christians “did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Rev. 12:11). They embraced being tormented as a crown. If he calls us to martyrdom, may God grant us the power to glorify him in the way we approach it. Many pray, “Let this cup pass away,” but few say, “Thy will be done.”

16. We glorify God when we give God the glory for all that we do.

When Herod had finished his speech, the people shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man” (Acts 12:22), and he took the glory for himself. “Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died” (vs. 23). We glorify God when we refuse to accept the praise and glory for anything and give it to God instead. Paul said, “I worked harder than all of them” (I Cor. 15:10). From this statement, some would think Paul was prideful. But the Apostle takes the crown from his own head and places it on the head of free grace. “Yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me” (I Cor. 15:10b). When Joab fought against Rabbah, he sent for King David that he might carry away the crown of victory (II Sam. 12:28). In similar fashion, a Christian who has received the power to resist temptation sends for Christ, that he might carry away the crown of victory. The silkworm hides herself under the silk when she weaves her fascinating work, and is not seen. So, when we have done anything worthy of praise, we must hide ourselves under the veil of humility and transfer the glory of all we have done to God. As Constantine used to write the name of Christ over his door, so we should write the name of Christ over our duties. Let him wear the garland of praise.

17. We glorify God by living a holy life. A bad life dishonors God. “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a




people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (I Pet. 2:9). “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Rom. 2:24). Epiphanius says “that the looseness of some Christians in his time made many of the heathens shun their company, and would not be drawn to hear their sermons.” We glorify God by living out the truths taught in the Bible. Even though the main work of religion lies in the heart, nevertheless, our light must so shine that others are able to see it. A building might be considered safe if it is resting on a solid foundation, but its glory is in the facade. So the beauty of faith is in the way we live our lives. When Christians (who are called jewels) reflect the brightness of holiness to the watching world, they “walk as Christ walked” (I John 2:6). When they live as if they had seen the Lord with their physical eyes and had been with him on the Mount of Transfiguration, they adorn religion and bring revenues of glory to the crown of heaven.

FIRST APPLICATION

These truths show us that our chief end should not be to seek after great wealth, not to lay up treasures on earth as has been the habit of man since the fall. Many who seek after the things of this world never accumulate the wealth they desire. They do not get the venison they hunt for. But even if they do, what do they have? No matter how successful they are, material possessions will never fill the heart any more than a sailor’s breath will fill the sails of the ship. They spend their time gathering straw, like Israel, but do not remember that the purpose for living is to glorify God. “And what does he gain, since he toils for the wind?” (Eccl. 5:16). These possessions are soon gone.

SECOND APPLICATION


This teaching reproves three kinds of people. *First*, this teaching reproves those who bring no glory to God, who do not respond to the purpose for which they have been created. They do not spend their time wisely; instead, they waste it. They are like the wood of a vine spoken of in Ezekiel 15:2, which is not useful for anything except to be burned as fuel on a fire. As St. Bernard said, their lives are “either



sinfulness or barrenness – a useless burden on the earth.” One day God will ask the kind of question that King Ahasuerus did: “What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?” (Esther 6:3). He will inquire, “What honor have you brought to me? What revenues of glory have you brought into my treasury?” God has put some capacity for glorifying him into everyone. The health he has given you, your talents, your home, and the seasons of his grace – all are opportunities put into your hand to glorify him. Be assured, he will call you to account. He will ask what you have done with the mercies he has entrusted to you, what glory you have brought to him. The parable of the talents tells us about the men with the five and two talents who are asked to settle their accounts with their master. Evidently, this shows that God will call you to a strict account in order to determine what you have done with your talents and to ascertain what glory you have brought to him. How sad will it be for those who hide their talents, who bring God no glory at all! “And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness” (Matt. 25:30). It is not enough for you to say that you have not dishonored God, that you have not lived in gross sin. What good have you done? What glory have you brought to God? It is not sufficient that the servant of the vineyard does not harm the vineyard, that he does not break the trees or destroy the hedges. If he does not perform service in the vineyard, he forgoes his pay. So, if you fail to do good where God has placed you and do not glorify God, you will miss salvation. Oh, think about this, all you who live without serving God. Christ cursed the barren fig tree.

Second, this teaching reproves those who are so far from bringing glory to God that they actually rob God of his glory. “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me” (Ma. 3:8). Those who take for themselves the glory that is due to God, rob God.

1. If they have accumulated wealth, they maintain it was because of their own abilities and work ethic. They place the crown on their own head and fail to consider the truth of Deut. 8:18: “But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”
2. If they perform any religious duty, they do it for their own glory, “in order to be seen by men” (Matt. 6:5). They want to be on stage




for others to admire and praise. The oil of pride feeds their lamp. How many have been blown to hell by the wind of popular breath! Those whom the devil cannot destroy by intemperance, he does by pride.

Third, it reproves those who fight against God's glory. "But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God" (Acts 5:39). Those who oppose whatever promotes God's glory are fighting against God's glory. His glory is promoted through the preaching of the Word, which is his means of converting those who are lost. So, those who try to hinder the preaching of the Word fight against God's glory. "Hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved" (I Thess. 2:16). Diocletian, who brought the tenth persecution against the Christians, prohibited church meetings and burned their buildings. Those who hinder preaching, like the Philistines that stopped the wells, stop the well of the water of life. They remove the physicians who heal the souls of men. Ministers are lights (Matt. 5:14), and who but thieves hate the light? They directly attack God's glory. What an account they will have to give to God when he charges them with the blood of men's souls. "You have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered" (Luke 11:52). If there is either justice in heaven or fire in hell, they will not go unpunished.

THIRD APPLICATION

This teaching should be used as an exhortation. Let every one of us, wherever we are, make it our chief end and design to glorify God.

1. Let me speak to **government leaders**. God has given you much glory. "I said, 'You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High'" (Ps. 82:6). Will you not glorify him who has given you so much glory?
2. **Ministers** should seek to promote God's glory. God has entrusted you with two of the most valuable things possible: his truth and the souls of his people. By virtue of your office, you are to glorify God. You must glorify God by studying and teaching



the Word. “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (II Tim. 4:1-2). It was Augustine’s wish “that Christ, at his coming, might find him either praying or preaching.” Ministers must glorify God by their zeal and personal holiness. The Old Testament priests, before they served at the altar, had to wash in the basin. In like fashion, those who serve as ministers in the church must first be washed from their own sins in the basin of repentance. It is grievous and shameful to think how many who call themselves ministers dishonor him rather than bring glory to him. “And he (Rehoboam) appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made” (II Chron. 11:15). Their lives, as well as their doctrines, are unorthodox. They are not free from the sins which they reprovved in others. Plutarch’s servant rebuked him saying, “He has written a book against anger, yet he falls into a passion of anger with me.” So is the minister who preaches against drunkenness, yet is drunk himself. He preaches against swearing, yet he himself swears!

3. **Heads of families** must glorify God. You must seek to raise your children with the knowledge of the Lord. Your houses should be little churches. “For I have chosen him (Abraham), so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him” (Gen. 18:19). You who are heads of families have been given a charge by God to nurture the souls of your children. When the bridle of family discipline is lacking, teenagers run wild.

Final Thoughts

It will be a great comfort to us in our dying hour if we can think about the fact that we have glorified God in our lives. It comforted Christ before his death: “I glorified Thee on the earth” (John 17:4). At the point of death, all your earthly comforts will vanish. You may think about how rich you have been or about all the pleasures you have had

on earth. But this will never bring comfort to you. In fact, it will torment you all the more. How would you be better for having had wealth that is now spent? On the other hand, think about having a conscience that tells you that you have glorified God on earth. What comfort and peace will accompany these thoughts! How you will long for death! The servant who had been working all day in the vineyard longs for the end of the day when he will receive his pay. How can those who have lived without giving glory to God think about dying with comfort? They should not expect a harvest where they did not sow any seed. How can they expect any glory from God when they never brought any glory to him? Oh, in what horror will they be at death! The worm of conscience will gnaw their souls before the worms can gnaw their bodies.

If we glorify God, he will glorify our souls forever. By raising God's glory, we increase our own. By glorifying God, we come at last to the blessed enjoyment of him.





N O T E S

Man's Chief End:
GOD'S
glory
