

Our Purpose On Earth

Why are we here? Everybody knows the answer to that question. Our purpose is to glorify God.

Guess again!

Where is that passage that tells us that God created us to glorify himself? Maybe I have just been overlooking it. Now that we are here, surely we should glorify him. That is granted, but is that why God put us here? We have gotten some ideas turned around, and it makes a difference in our attitude and feeling toward God.

If you were to learn that your father brought you into this world in order that he might rule over you, gain your respect and praise, lift his self-esteem, and make him look better in the sight of others, how would you feel about him? Add to that his threats when you failed to fulfill his purposes to his liking. You might not be too enthusiastic about catering to his selfish desires or shouting his praises.

How different your father may be from that, though. Often he tells you how he wanted a child to love and to share his life. He made great plans for you and was so happy when you arrived safely into his arms. He has spared nothing, even deeply wounding himself, in his unselfish efforts to make you happy, for he delights in your happiness. He tells everyone he meets about his wonderful child. He continues to tell you how much you mean to him and of his love for you, which love you do not even have to try to earn or deserve. He loves you because you are his.

How would you feel about such a father? In response to his unconditional love, you would try constantly to please and honor him unless you are a truly selfish and insensitive person.

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE ON EARTH IS TO BE LOVED AND GLORIFIED BY GOD! God said, "*Let's make man in our own image.*" That is awesome! Not a subject or servant. "*Let's make them in our likeness and give them dominion over everything we have created!*" Unable to comprehend God's provision for us, man cries out, "*What is man, that you think of him; mere man, that you care for him? Yet you have made him inferior only to yourself; you crowned him with glory and honor. You appointed him ruler over everything you made; you placed him over all creation...*" (Ps. 8 TEV). He made us to live in the Eden of his Presence.

The word "*glorify*" is not some religious expression projecting images of divinity, halos, or sunbursts. To glorify is to hold in high opinion or estimate. Glory is honor resulting from a good opinion. In creating us in his image, God expressed his high estimate of us. He glorified us.

Man's selfish lack of loving response brought the fall and separation which grieved our Maker. From that point *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). But he held us in such high estimate that he planned immediately to send his Son to reconcile us to him. We were bought with a price — Son for son! God is not willing that any should perish but that all should return to him. Man could actively seek that glory again, and, *"to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life..."* (Rom. 2:7). God claims us as children *"provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him"* (Rom. 8:17). In our earthly pilgrimage, *"this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison..."* (2 Cor. 4:17). *"And so those whom God set apart, he called; and those he called, he put right with himself, and he shared his glory with them"* (Rom. 8:30 TEV). What honor! What esteem!

In his prayer Jesus spoke of sharing his glory, *"The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one..."* (John 17:22). We are reconciled to God in Christ in one body, our bodies being living places of the Spirit of God. And Paul adds, *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another..."* (2 Cor. 3:18).

Our ultimate glorification is assured: *"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. ... Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"* (1 John 3:1f). *"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory"* (Col. 3:4).

Paul tells of God's prior purpose and intention of glorifying man: *"But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification"* (1 Cor. 2:7).

True, in this brief look at the subject I have lifted texts from their settings and pieced them together. I am convinced, however, that if you pursue this study, you will be convinced of the validity of my premise. I make no claim to comprehend all the theological implications of these teachings, but I try to accept them as factual revelations.

God created us so he would have us to love and glorify by sharing his likeness and companionship. Rather than creating us to be trembling slaves of whom praise is demanded, he gave to us his nature and he accepts us as his sons and daughters. He invites us to come boldly to his throne. He invites us to reign with him.

When we realize this, we will love him, holding him in the highest opinion and estimation. Yes, we will praise and glorify him in word, life, and song. It will be a happy response to his glorification of us. That, however, will not be an effort to fulfill a supposed purpose on earth to meet his demands for praise.

The two motivations are radically different.

"You were bought with a price." That is the Gospel, the Good News of our glorification. *"So glorify God in your body."* (1 Cor. 6:20). That is our willing whole-life response of giving ourselves as offerings of praise to God.

(Cecil Hook; August 2002. This was published in FR 23, June 1997 but I cannot find it posted at my web site. Minor revisions made.) []