

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON # 5 - (Q1LES5) INTRODUCTION TO GOD

QUESTION # 1

1. Prayer

2. Bible reading: Psalm 29: 1 – 11

3. **Question 1:** **What is the chief end of man?**

Answer: **Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.**

4. Introduction

Man's chief end is to Glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever. Wow, what a novel idea! I always thought man's chief end was that new fancy car, or a trophy wife, or to be a multi millionaire. Or to watch the Superbowl this afternoon. You know, like important stuff. But to glorify God? Seems like someone has it wrong.

Remember, this was Calvin's main premise, and that is probably why this question ended up as the first question.

On no other question does there seem to be more material available than on question one. When I first started this project, the Pastor gave me a whole stack of literature. This subject has been written about often and extensively.

5. The WCF and the LC.

a. The LC, q1 is very similar to the SC question, adding only "and highest" after chief. The answer the LC question is also similar, stating, "*Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and to fully enjoy him forever*", adding "fully".

b. Chapter 2 of the WCF is titled **Of God, and the Holy Trinity**. It covers God's glory, as well as much more about God and his attributes.

5. Man's chief end

a. Man's chief end. What is meant by "Mans chief end"?

Definitions consistent with that offered by Thomas Vincent. “The chief end of man, is that which man ought chiefly to aim at or design, to desire, seek after, and endeavor to obtain, as his chief good and happiness; unto which his life and his actions should be referred and directed.....”

b. So what is mans chief end? By definition in Q1, mans chief end has two parts:

- Glorify God
- Enjoy him forever

c. Can man have other ends?

Man should have **no other** “chief end” than to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. What about lesser ends?

- The lesser ends of man are defined in **Genesis 1:26** *“And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth.”*
- **Psalm 8:6** adds: *“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou has put all things under his feet.”*
- With this direction, Thomas Vincent elaborates:
 1. Man should be diligent in their particular calling (**1 Thes 4:11** *“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.”*)
 2. Man should eat, drink & sleep, and nourish their bodies. (**1 Cor 10:31** *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”*)
 3. Moderately desire and endeavor after the good things

6. “to glorify God”

a. How can man add to God’s glory?

Man cannot add to God’s glory. The WCF, C2p2 says, *“God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, and is alone in and unto Himself all sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by unto and upon them:*

God is infinitely glorious. God created everything, and rules all. We are being told here that God is the ultimate, He is everywhere, and rules everything. **Job 35:7 “If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thy hand?”**)

b. Does the rest of the SC have anything to say about the importance of God’s glory?

- Questions 45 thru 47. First commandment. Commandment is order of importance.

Q45 Which is the first commandment? The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

Q46 adds, in part, that we are “to worship and **glorify** him accordingly.”

Q47 says, in part, that we are forbidden the “not worshipping and **glorifying** the true God as God, and our God, and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to Him alone.”

- Q101 asks “What do we pray for in the first petition?” It is talking about the first petition of the Lord’s prayer. In the first petition, (which is *hallowed by thy name*), we pray, That God would enable us and others to **glorify him** in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own **glory**.
- Q107 What doth the conclusion of the Lord’s prayer teach us? The conclusion to the Lord’s Prayer, (which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, Amen*), teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayer to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power and **glory** to him. And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen*.

God’s glory is a consistent theme. I get the opinion that God considers it important.

c. How does God manifest his glory? Two ways:

- essential glory – What do you think this means? Exodus 3:14 explains it pretty well although it still may be a bit difficult to understand. (**Ex 3:14 “And God said to Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.”**) This is pretty clear. And (**Matt 5:48 adds “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”**) “he is absolutely in himself”

- declarative glory – What would this include? The works of creation, from the vastness and complexity of the heavens to the orderliness and complexity of life. (**Rom 1:20** *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; ...”*) and (**Col 1:16** *“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:”*) and (**Rom 11:36** *“For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”*)
- d. How can man glorify God? By manifesting His glory. (**1 Cor 6:19-20** ⁽¹⁹⁾*What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ⁽²⁰⁾For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*)
- Inwardly, by having the highest love and respect for him, confidence and affections for him.
 - Outwardly, by acknowledging God
 1. Praise God
 2. Actions - the way we lead our lives

7. “and to enjoy Him for ever”

- a. How is man to enjoy God? **Ps 16:11** *“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”*
- In this life, by settling on and cleaving to the Lord through faith. (**Ps 16:5-6** ⁽⁵⁾*“The Lord is a portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. ⁽⁶⁾ The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage,..”*)
 - Thomas Vincent *“God is enjoyed here, when people do settle themselves upon and cleave to the Lord through faith.”*
- b. For ever: Why do you think “for ever” is added to the end of this answer?

A reminder to God’s elect, that we are his, not only in this life, but in that life to come. (**Ps 16:11** *“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence if fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”*)

8. Discussion

- a. How are glory and enjoyment joined together? God has inseparably joined them together.
- When man has truly accepted and loves God, he will automatically demonstrate his glory.
 - Through this faith, comes enjoyment for now and for ever.
- c. Why should glorifying God in all their actions be man's chief end?
- Because God made us, and made us for this end, and has given us a soul.
 - Because God preserves us, and makes provisions for us that we may glorify him.
 - Because God has redeemed us and bought us with the price of His Son's blood, that they may glorify him. **1 Cor 6:19-20**
 - Because he has given us his Word to direct, his Spirit to assist. And promised his kingdom to encourage us to glorify him.
- d. Has man answered this chief end?

9. **LC q 2 "How doth it appear that there is a God?"**

- a. This is a pretty good question, which has been asked and answered from the beginning. It has no parallel question in the SC, and when you think about it, is directly related to God's glory. How do we know that there is a God?
- The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God. **(Rom 1: 19 – 20 ⁽¹⁹⁾Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. ⁽²⁰⁾For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:')**
 - But his Word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectively reveal Him unto men for their salvation. **(1 Cor 2: 9 – 10 ⁽⁹⁾But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ⁽¹⁰⁾But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.')**