

Glorifying God

Glorifying God by Worship

Selected Scriptures

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Scripture

Our ultimate goal in life is to glorify God.

The first question in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* asks, “What is the chief end [or goal] of man?” The answer given is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

The reason we exist is to bring glory to God. God created us and all things for his own glory. All creation exists to glorify God. The Psalmist says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1).

What is the glory of God? It is who God is. It is the essence of his nature, the core of his character, the weight of his being.

How do we glorify God? We glorify God, as the *Children’s Catechism* says, by loving him and doing what he commands.

Our supreme example, of course, is Jesus. He glorified his Father every moment of his life. In fact, toward the end of his life Jesus said to his Father, “I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do” (John 17:4, *NLT*).

We glorify God in the same way. There are five key ways in which we bring glory to God.

First, we bring glory to God by worshiping him. Worship is the primary way in which we glorify God. All of life is a reflection of whom or what we worship. We are to worship God in all that we do. The Bible says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Second, we bring glory to God by loving other believers. Becoming a Christian means becoming part of God’s family. We glorify God when we belong to a church family where we love our brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible says that “we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers” (1 John 3:14).

Third, we bring glory to God by becoming like Christ. God wants his children to grow to spiritual maturity. What does that look like? It means becoming like his Son, Jesus Christ. Becoming more and more like Christ brings glory to God. The Bible says, “And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more” (2 Corinthians 3:18, *NLT*).

Fourth, we bring glory to God by serving others with our gifts. God has given every believer spiritual gifts. He wants us to serve others with the gifts he has entrusted to us. The Bible says, “God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God’s generosity can flow through you. . . . Then God will be given glory in everything through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 4:10-11, *NLT*).

And fifth, we bring glory to God by telling others about him. God wants to use us to tell the world who he is and how he can be known. It is an incredible privilege to introduce others to Jesus and help them discover how they too can bring glory to God. God’s Word says, “As God’s grace brings more and more people to Christ, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory” (2 Corinthians 4:15, *NLT*).

For the five Sundays of January I plan to preach a series of sermons that will explore in greater depth how we can bring glory to God in each of these five key areas of our lives. Today we will look at how we bring glory to God by worshiping him.

Each of these five areas corresponds to one of our purposes as a church. The mission of our church is “to bring people to Jesus Christ and *membership* in his church family, develop them to Christ-like *maturity*, equip them for their *ministry* in the church and life *mission* in the world, in order to *magnify* God.” Bringing glory to God by worshiping him corresponds to *magnify*.

Our text for today is 1 Corinthians 10:31:

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Introduction

In the late 1980s Dr. Hugh Moorhead, a philosophy professor at Northeastern Illinois University, wrote to 250 of the best-known philosophers, scientists, writers and intellectuals in the world, asking them, “What is the meaning of life?” He then published their responses in a book titled, *The Meaning of Life According to Our Century’s Greatest Writers and Thinkers*. Some of his respondents offered their best guesses. Some admitted that they just made up a purpose for life. Others were honest enough to say that they were clueless. In fact, a number of his respondents asked Dr. Moorhead to write back and tell them if he discovered the purpose of life!¹

The good news is that we don’t have to guess at the meaning of life. God has revealed the meaning and purpose of life to us in his Word. Our ultimate goal in life is to glorify God.

One of my favorite movies is *Chariots of Fire*, which is the true story of two British runners competing in the 1924 Olympics. Eric Liddell is a devout Christian and one of the finest runners in the world. Eric’s sister, Jennie, wants him to leave competitive running and join the family on the mission field in China. Jennie feels Eric is putting running ahead of serving God, and she questions his commitment.

In one scene, Eric attempts to help his sister see his point of view. Eric announces with a smile, “I’ve decided I’m going back to China. The missionary service has accepted. . . .”

“Oh, Eric, I’m so pleased!” interrupts Jennie.

Eric continues, “But I’ve got a lot of running to do first. Jennie, you’ve got to understand. I believe that God made me for a purpose, for China. But he also made me fast, and when I run, I feel his pleasure. To give it up would be to hold him in contempt.”²

¹ Hugh S. Moorhead, comp., *The Meaning of Life According to Our Century’s Greatest Writers and Thinkers* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 1988).

² *Chariots of Fire*, (Warner Brothers, 1981), written by Colin Welland, directed by Hugh Hudson.

Eric Liddell is an example of a man who knew that all of his life was to bring glory to God. Whether it was by running, or eventually through missionary service in China, his goal was to bring glory to God by worshiping him.

God has called us to worship him in every area of our lives. Whether it is eating or drinking or running or whatever, we are to worship and glorify God.

Lesson

Today, I want us to see that *we bring glory to God by worshiping him*. I would like to proceed using the following outline:

1. What is worship?
2. Why should we worship God?
3. How should we worship God?

I. What Is Worship?

First, what is worship?

Let's define the word *worship*. John MacArthur has a simple, sound definition of *worship*. He defines *worship* in the following way: "worship is honor and adoration directed to God."³ That simple definition is a good place to start.

The New Testament uses several words for worship. Two of them are particularly noteworthy. The first word for worship is *latreuo*, which suggests "rendering honor," or "paying homage."

The second term is *proskuneo*, a term commonly used in the New Testament that literally means "to kiss toward," "to kiss the hand," or "to bow down." This word for *worship* is used to signify humble adoration.

Now, both of these terms carry the idea of *giving*, because worship is giving something to God. Even our English word has this connotation. The English word *worship* comes from the An-

³ John F. MacArthur, *The Ultimate Priority* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1983), 14.

glo-Saxon word *weorthscipe*, which is tied to the concept of worthiness. Worship, then, is “ascribing to God his worth,” or “stating and affirming his supreme value.”

We are people who continually receive both our life *and* our redemption from God. Our worship of God then is a response to him for who he is and for what he has done. We give of ourselves, and then of our attitudes, and finally of our practices—until worship is way of life for us.

II. Why Should We Worship God?

Second, why should we worship God?

The reason we should worship God is for his own glory.

The apostle Paul says to the Corinthians, **“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”** (1 Corinthians 10:31).

King David puts it this way in the Psalms, “Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (Psalm 29:1-2).

There is no higher reason than the glory of God because the glory of God is more important than anything else in all creation.

The Westminster divines captured this as the most important reason in answer to the first question of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, “What is the chief end of man?” Their answer was, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

John Piper communicates this as effectively as anyone in our generation. Piper has written, “God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in him.” We worship God because we want him to be glorified in every area of our lives.

John Piper tells the story in a sermon of deciding where to send their 13-year-old to school. Dr. Piper visited a Christian school to check it out. At one point, he asked two faculty members this question. “What is the ultimate goal of our education?” He thought he had tipped his hand with the word “ultimate.”

They smiled as though they had been waiting for this question, “Our goal in this institution is to train minds of young people so that they will think critically and become fully human.”

They wondered why Dr. Piper didn’t respond positively, and their faces looked questioning.

Then he said, “I thought maybe the mission statement of a Christian school would be different than an atheistic school.”

They were shocked. Dr. Piper continued, “I just thought you’d say, ‘To glorify God and enjoy him forever,’ or something like that.”

The teachers said, “Oh, we assume that.”

Dr. Piper did not say, “God doesn’t like to be assumed.” He thought it, but he didn’t say it to the two faculty members.⁴

We should never assume that we glorify God in all that we do; we should be very conscious about bringing glory to God in all that we do.

The reason we should worship God, and in fact do everything in life, is to bring glory and honor to God.

There are other reasons why we should worship God. Ligon Duncan gives further reasons why we should worship God:

Because God said to worship, because God created us to worship, because God saved us to worship, because it is our natural duty as creatures and joyful duty as Christians to worship, because our worship is a response of gratitude for saving grace, because those with new hearts long to hear his word and express their devotion, because God wants to bless us with himself, because God has chosen us for his own inheritance and seeks to commune with us in his ordinances, and more.⁵

These are all important reasons for worshipping God. They deserve time and attention, more than we can give right now. But the most important reason for worshipping God is to glorify him.

⁴ John Piper, “God Is an Important Person,” *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 125.

⁵ J. Ligon Duncan III, “Foundations for Biblically Directed Worship,” in *Give Praise to God* (ed. Philip Graham Ryken, Derek W. H. Thomas, J Ligon Duncan III; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 63.

III. How Should We Worship God?

And third, how should we worship God?

Let me mention just a few ways in which God may be worshiped.

First, we worship God by prayer. John 14:13 is a clear statement that prayer glorifies God: “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.”

Praying in Jesus’ name means praying on behalf of Jesus, asking in line with what he desires. Our requests must be in accordance with his will. In other words, it is not possible to pray in Jesus’ name for something that he does not want.

Fundamentally, prayer is communicating with God. It is living in the consciousness of God’s wonderful presence and communicating with him there, learning his thoughts and desires, and praying for their fulfillment.

Second, we worship God by reading Scripture. Communication with God is of course a two-way communication. In prayer we tell God what is on our mind. We tell him our concerns. We praise him. We exalt him. But in the reading of Scripture, God tells us what is on his mind. In Scripture we discover the will of God.

In your regular daily, private worship of God, you should have a plan to read through the Bible. There are many different plans. Whatever you do, don’t just read haphazardly. Find a systematic way of reading through the Bible that works for you.

And since this is the start of a new year, let me encourage you to read your Bible through this year. That is a good habit.

Third, we worship God by singing. We are urged to sing at God’s command no less than 75 times in Scriptures! The singing is clearly not just mental but also vocal—out loud! Even those who are monotone should sing praise and worship to God.

Fourth, we worship God by trusting him. God is glorified when we trust him completely. Trusting God is the most basic form of worship. Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossi-

ble to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

As Christians we *say* that we believe God keeps his Word and never breaks his promises, but so few of us live lives of *total* trust in God and his Word. When we fail to trust God we fail to worship and glorify him. But more than that, when we fail to trust God, we are saying to all, “My God cannot be trusted. He is not worthy of trust.”

Fifth, we worship God by verbal praise. The Psalmist says in Psalm 71:8, “My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.” Many of the Psalms are expressions of praise to God.

What is praise? Praise is simply exalting God by reciting his attributes and his works, and thanking him for who he is and what he has done.

We should worship God throughout our day praising him for who he is and what he has done.

But, as everyone knows, it is easy to praise God for the good things that come our way. But what should we do when we encounter trials and adversity and even evil in our life? How should we respond when the dinner burns, the car breaks down, we get sick, lose our jobs, face financial hardship, or lose a loved one? Even in these circumstances we should offer up praise to God.

Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in *all* things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Paul assures the believer that he has God’s guarantee that *everything* that happens to him in this life will ultimately work for the good.

Some of you may know that we have been praying for a nine-month old boy named Cole. Around Thanksgiving Cole developed a terrible disease called *meningococcal blood poisoning*. Remarkably, Cole is still alive, but in the past six weeks Cole has had both arms and both legs amputated, as well as his nose, one of his lips and one of his ears. Since Thanksgiving Cole has been fighting for his life. His parents have maintained a constant vigil at his bedside.

Glorifying God

Just last night I received an email from his parents, in which they wrote, “While we’re sad for Cole’s losses, we are joyful that we have each other and our faith in a loving God who will never abandon us.” Friends, only Christians who believe Romans 8:28 say that. Only Christians praise God in the most difficult of situations.

We must learn to praise God in all circumstances. I came across a poem some time ago called *The Weaver*. It may be helpful to you during those dark hours when it feels hard to praise God.

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colors,
He worketh steadily.

Often times He chooseth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride;
Forget He sees the upper,
And I the underside.

The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver’s skillful hand;
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttle cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

There are other ways to worship God too, but we don’t have time to talk about them. Let me just mention a few other ways in which we worship God. We worship God by a contented heart, a willingness to suffer, and bearing spiritual fruit.

Conclusion

Our ultimate goal in life is to glorify God.

We bring glory to God by worshiping him.

Russell Kelfer wrote a poem that summarizes what I have been saying:

You are who you are for a reason.
You're part of an intricate plan.
You're a precious and perfect unique design,
Called God's special woman or man.

You look like you look for a reason.
Our God made no mistake.
He knit you together within the womb,
You're *just* what he wanted to make.

The parents you had were the ones he chose,
And no matter how you may feel,
They were custom-designed with God's plan in mind,
And they bear the Master's seal.

No, that trauma you faced was not easy.
And God knew that it hurt you so;
But it was allowed to shape your heart
So that into his likeness you'd grow.

You are who are for a reason,
You've been formed by the Master's rod.
You are who you are, beloved,
Because there is a God!⁶

There are five key ways in which we glorify God. Each of these key ways corresponds to one of our church's five purposes.

Today we have been talking about magnifying God, or worship. Worship is the primary way in which we glorify God. Let us bring glory to God by worshiping him in every area of our lives. Amen.

⁶ Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002), 25-26.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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