



Desiring Man

By Thomas Eglinton

Why did God create the world?

The answer on the lips of anyone who knows Question One of the Westminster Shorter Catechism is “to glorify Him” or, as my children learn it, “for His glory!” And if either of these was your answer, you are correct. Paul says that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). The angels in heaven continually seek to bring God glory and we will join them in that task, if we are trusting in Christ.

When we contemplate why God has created people, we must not miss the second part of the catechism answer: “...and enjoy Him forever.” As well as glorifying Him, we are built to enjoy God, to delight in Him, or as John Piper says, to desire Him.

All of this is true and worthy of much contemplation. However, I was reminded recently of a similar truth that we can miss at times.

Why did God create the world?

Proverbs 8 is a fascinating passage that paints a picture of the interaction between the LORD and ‘wisdom’. Who is this ‘wisdom’? Verse 30 points us in a particular direction: “...I was beside Him like a master workman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always.” Wisdom is not only being poetically personified in this passage, the wisdom of God is a specific person. Who does it sound like to you? Who was a master craftsman beside the LORD when the heavens were established? Who is daily the delight of the LORD? And who likewise rejoices in the LORD?

At Jesus’ baptism the heavens opened, the Spirit descended and the Father declared the object of His delight, “this is My beloved

Son in whom I am well pleased.” In Proverbs 8 we are seeing a picture of an interaction between God the Father and “Christ... the Wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24, 30).

Verse 31 of Proverbs 8, is even more remarkable: “I was always beside Him... rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.”

Did you catch that? First we saw the Father and the Son. The Father is delighting in the Son and the Son is rejoicing in the Father’s delight. But what else is the Son doing? The Son is delighting in the children of man. The Son of God delights in people. Humans. Mankind!

John 17:24 gives us a deeper insight into what is happening here. “Father,” Jesus prayed, “I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” The Son of God desires Man. To be clear, He desires a specific group of people—the people that the Father has given to Him. He desires the church.

I recently heard of a catechism question where someone asks their children: ‘What is the story of the whole Bible? The answer is one that my kids love: Kill the dragon, get the girl!’¹

There is a sense in which this has been the story since the beginning. Adam’s job was to kill the dragon and get the girl. Even before sin entered the world there was a dragon to kill and a girl to fight for. He should have fought the serpent when he appeared in the garden and driven him away so that Eve would not be deceived.

There is a reason we love the idea of a man fighting an enemy,

1. <https://dougwils.com/books-and-culture/s7-engaging-the-culture/conflict-makes-the-story.html>

maybe even dying in order to save a girl. We love it because it is the story.

It is obvious that the one who kills the dragon to get the girl really wants to get the girl. The dragon-slayer doesn't just slay the dragon for fun or because he is mildly interested in the girl. He really wants that girl.

In the great story of all history, Jesus kills sin and Satan and death itself to win the church whom He desires.

One of the great parts of the story deals with what happens when the girl is won — the 'happily ever after' scene at the end. This is where the Son of God's desire for the church links to the first question of the Westminster Catechism.

Just as the Son delights in man, Proverbs 8 goes on to say that man should delight in serving the Son (v32-36). Man should delight in listening to the Son, keeping His ways, hearing instruction and not neglecting it, and watching daily. When we listen and obey and serve God with our lives, we glorify God.

This is also described by the writer as a good thing, a thing to be desired or enjoyed: "the one who finds me finds life and obtains favour from the Lord, but the one who misses me harms himself; all who hate me love death" (v35).

Back in John 17:24, Jesus desires that His people may be with Him, to look at Him. To marvel at Him. To see His glory. "Father", Jesus prayed, "I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

The girl is won and then the girl is enraptured with her saviour. This is how man desiring God and the Son of God desiring man fit together. Jesus kills the dragon in order to win the girl and

then the girl adores Him.

The Father loves the Son and the Son rejoices in that love and so glorifies the Father. Likewise, the Son loves the church and the church rejoices in that love and so glorifies the Son.

It is the Spirit who enables all of this. He works in the church to "pour the love of God into our hearts" (Rom. 5:5). We experience the Father's love through the work of the Spirit because of the Son's work to unite us to Himself.

When we trust in Jesus as our saviour, the Bible says we are in Christ. "The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and You in Me." (John 17:22-23)

The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the church and so He takes on human flesh and fights to win His people, the church. He does this to unite the church to God – to make us one with Him (John 17:22-23). Through Jesus' work, the Father's love for the Son flows through to the church. This is applied and experienced through the work of the Spirit.

The Father's love for the Son is poured out on the church through the Spirit (Rom. 5:5) because the church is one with the Son! So, the Christian experiences what we see in Proverbs 8: the church is daily the Father's delight, rejoicing before Him always.

What a wondrous, mysterious, mind-expanding truth! No—truth is too benign a word. What a wondrous, mysterious, mind-expanding, life-giving, joy-producing love story.

It ought to be your story.

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