

Glorifying God

by Charles Finney

The sermon emphasizes the importance of glorifying God in all aspects of life, and provides practical guidance on how to do so.

Scripture: Matthew 5:16, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 10:31

Topics: "Glorifying God", "Living for His Glory"

Description

Charles Finney emphasizes the necessity of glorifying God in every aspect of life, explaining that our actions, whether eating, drinking, or engaging in business, should reflect God's character and promote His glory. He outlines how we can glorify God through our conduct, choices, and the spirit we exhibit, stressing that anything less is a misrepresentation of God and detrimental to His reputation. Finney warns that failing to live for God's glory not only harms our relationship with Him but also negatively influences others' perceptions of God. He concludes that true religion is rooted in a benevolent heart that actively seeks to honor God in all things.

Transcript

Text.--I Cor. 10:31: "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

In this discussion, I design to show,

I. WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD, BY THE GLORY OF GOD.

II. HOW WE MAY GLORIFY HIM.

III. TO WHAT EXTENT, WE ARE TO APPLY THIS RULE, IN PRACTICE.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF GLORIFYING GOD.

V. THAT WHATEVER IS SHORT OF THIS, IS ENMITY AGAINST GOD.

I. I am to show, what is to be understood, by the glory of God.

Theologians speak of the essential, and declarative glory of God.

His essential glory is the intrinsic excellence of his natural, and moral attributes. His declarative glory is his renown, or reputation, or the estimation in which he is held, by moral beings.

It is in the latter sense, that the term is manifestly used, in the text. In the former sense, our conduct has nothing to do with the glory of God. But in the latter sense, as we shall see, it has everything to do with it.

II. I am to show how we may glorify God.

1. By exhibiting his spirit, and temper, and character, as Christ did. The man Christ Jesus was a living illustration of the spirit, and temper, and character of the invisible God. As a man, he was constantly engaged in glorifying God. And it is easy to see, that by thus representing God, he highly honored his Heavenly Father, and gave the world occasion to admire, and love, and obey Him.

2. We are to illustrate, by precept, and example, the excellence of his law, and the glorious tendency of his government. We are to embody in our lives, the very spirit, and meaning of the law, and thus possess the world of the idea, that God is love. It is easy to see to what an extent, this would constrain the world to acknowledge the glorious excellency, of his "glorious majesty."

3. We are to glorify him, by holding forth, both in precept and example, the true light, and doctrines of the gospel. The gospel can never be understood, by precept, without a corresponding example. By precept, we are to lay down the principle of the law, and our lives are to be a living illustration of it. The truths of the gospel are, in themselves, exceedingly simple. They are, however, at so great a remove from the common prejudices of men, that no truths in the world need so much to be illustrated, in order to be understood; and no illustration can be effectual, but the souls, and spirit of Christians. And herein is the great source of the ignorance of impenitent men, on the subject of religion. Many of them attend the preaching of the word; but to them, it is a mere abstraction--a dead letter, for want of living illustration, among professors of religion, around them. It is impossible that the gospel should take effect, without being understood; and it is impossible that it should be understood, by selfish minds, without illustration; and it is impossible that it should be illustrated, but by the lives of Christians. Hence, Christ's life first illustrated it to the Apostles--the lives of the Apostles and primitive Christians, to the impenitent of their day, and precisely as living illustrations are found, the gospel is seen to be the "power of God unto salvation."

4. By acting the part of faithful witnesses for God. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." Now the appropriate business of Christians, is to bear testimony continually for God; and the success of his cause on earth, depends upon the fulness, and faithfulness of their testimony. If his witnesses contradict, by their practice what they inculcate in precept, their testimony is destroyed. If at one time, during a revival of religion, they live, and talk, and act, so as practically to represent God; yet, if they suffer a reaction to come over them, they then contradict their former testimony. And like a witness who contradicts himself, on a cross-examination, their testimony goes for nothing.

III. I am to show, to what extent, we are to apply this rule, in practice.

1. In the arrangement of our business. We are bound to make it manifest to all around us, that our business is calculated, and designed, to promote the happiness of our fellowmen. If this does not appear, we do not represent God; but misrepresent him. It is manifest, that all the works of God, are designed to promote happiness; and if, in our works, the same design is not manifest, we are not glorifying, but dishonoring God. If, therefore, our business be of such a nature, as to show that it is a selfish employment; and especially if the business is, in itself, injurious to the interests of society, scarcely a greater abomination, than this, in a professing Christian, can be named. Is this like God? No; it is like the devil. It is representing hell, and not heaven.

But if the business be in its nature lawful, yet, if it be transacted, in a selfish manner--if it be manifest to those with whom you deal, that your main object is to get, and not to communicate good--to accumulate property, and not to diffuse happiness abroad, this is exactly the reverse of glorifying God. It is a misrepresentation of his character, and religion; and there are no more effectual agents of the devil, than those professors of religion who are selfish in the transaction of their business. God's temper, and spirit is to give, give, GIVE--their spirit, and temper is to get, get, GET. This is the exact contrast of true religion.

2. In our houses, equipage, and furniture, we are to glorify God. We are to so arrange our houses, equipage, and furniture, as to show that our hearts are not set upon these things, and especially to demonstrate that it is utility, and not ornament, at which we aim.

By this, I do not mean, that we are not to regard a correct taste, in these things. God has every where, in his works, displayed a most exquisite, and infinitely refined taste; and to pay no regard to this, is to violate a fundamental law of our nature, and to misrepresent God.

But in our houses, and equipage, and furniture, we are to see to it, that we do not appear to have our hearts upon such things, and as if we sought our happiness in them; but, on the contrary, should show to the world, that we seek those things only, that are convenient, and have no fellowship with display, and useless, and worldly ornament.

There are two extremes, upon this subject, both of which are as ridiculous as they are wicked. One is to launch forth into all manner of extravagance; and the other is to discard all taste, decency, and utility, and rush back to barbarism. Now both these extremes are to be avoided by Christians. While they do not neglect the decencies and conveniences of life, they are to avoid useless display, and ornament.

3. In the furnishing of our tables, we are to glorify God. In this, we are continually to demonstrate, that we are not creatures of appetite--that our belly is not our God--and that we do not live, like swine, merely to eat and drink. Scarcely anything is more injurious to the cause of Christ, than for Christians to show, that they are fond of high living. This disposition, in some of the primitive professors of religion, greatly distressed the Apostle, and caused him to say, whose "god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, whose end is destruction." The text expressly enjoins upon us to glorify God, in eating, and drinking. This must respect,

(1) The quality of our food. This should be such, and only such, as is healthful, nutritious, and calculated, in the highest degree, to promote the activity of our bodies, and the clearness, and energy of our minds. It is sin in us to eat and drink those things which we know to be injurious to our health; and the eating and drinking of which violates the laws of life.

(2) In respect to the quantity. We are to eat no more, and no less, than our health requires. It is astonishing to see, to what an extent, mankind are under the government of their appetites, and how much time, and thought, and labor are expended, in procuring something that will gratify their taste, regardless of health, and duty to God, or man. And so much are even some professors of religion, under the influence of a depraved, and artificial appetite, that you can hardly produce a greater excitement, on any subject, than will be created, by calling in question their manner of living, in regard to "meats and drinks." You touch their tea, and coffee--those fashionable narcotics--and you touch the apple of their eye. They are ready to cry out, "the kingdom of God consists not in meats and drinks; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now the quotation of this passage, comes with a very ill grace, from this class of persons; for their practice would indicate, that their living did consist in meat and drink; and their fierce

contentions, in support of the gratification of their tastes, would seem to demonstrate that "meat and drink" is, to them, of much more importance than "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now it is manifest, that for Christians to show that they are creatures of appetite, is exceedingly to misrepresent, and dishonor God. And we are bound, as we value the honor, or regard the authority of God, so to eat and drink, as to show, that we have a higher source of enjoyment, than the pleasure of eating and drinking; and to illustrate the truth of that saying, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In short, it should be manifest, that we eat and drink, not to gratify our palates, but that we may be able, in the best manner, to do the work of God.

4. In the choice of our books, we are to glorify God. Our books are our companions--their authors, the spirits with whom we hold communion; and if a "man may be known by the company he keeps," surely a man's favorite books will tell the story of what is in his heart. Our books, therefore, are always to be chosen with reference to the glory of God--to prepare our minds, in the best manner, to serve him. They are to be so chosen, as to manifest that we regard the knowledge of God, as infinitely more important than any other knowledge.

Few things are more dishonorable to God, than for a Christian to load down his table, or pollute his closet, with plays and novels, with Shakespeare, Byron and Walter Scott. Are these the spirits with whom Christians are to commune? Do these promote the knowledge of God? Can a Christian make these his favorite companions, and yet make the world believe, that he considers the knowledge of God as of the greatest importance? The Bible represents the knowledge of God as the sum of all that is desirable in knowledge; and declares, that to "know God, is life eternal."

Take the following Bible declarations of the importance of true wisdom; (i.e.) of a knowledge of God, Job 28:12-28: "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth says, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the chrystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof: for he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto him he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

Now can a Christian believe this, and spend his time with novels? He can scarcely give a higher demonstration, that he neither believes, nor loves the Bible, than in choosing such companions for his closet. Certainly it is not paying God a very high compliment, nor attaching much value to a knowledge of him, nor making the impression upon mankind, that divine knowledge is infinitely more important than any other, for Christians to spend their time, in the light, and miscellaneous reading of the day.

5. In all our employments, and spirit, and temper, and conversation--in every thing, we are to glorify God, by exhibiting that which is the very reverse of the spirit, and temper of the world. In other words, in every

thing, as fully as possible, to represent God, (i.e.) to glorify him.

IV. I am to show the importance of glorifying God.

I remark,

1. That God's government is moral, (i.e.) a government of moral suasion, and not of force. Consequently, the stability and strength of this government depend upon his reputation, or the estimation in which his subjects hold him. The devil ruined the world, by shaking the confidence of our first parents, in God. While their confidence continued, their obedience was perfect; and thus it always is. Perfect confidence naturally secures perfect obedience in the subjects of any government, while distrust, or unbelief, certainly, and necessarily results in disobedience.

2. That unconverted men and women, form their opinions of religion, by the lives and temper of professing Christians. Now it is as important, that your lives and temper, should be just what they ought to be, as that their opinions of God, should be just what they ought to be. Their hearts cannot be right, unless their opinions are right, and as their opinions depend upon your lives, if you sin, and exhibit a wrong spirit, you are not only chargeable with all the sin which you thus cause; but their blood will be required at your hands.

3. The efficacy of Christ's death, depends on your living in such a manner, as to illustrate its design. Unless your life is full of love--unless you breathe the spirit, and exhibit the temper, that led Christ to die for sinners, you misrepresent him--contradict the gospel--and throw a cloud of impenetrable darkness around the cross of Christ.

If, on the contrary, you exhibit disinterested love, in all your life, you will be a living illustration of the spirit of the glorious gospel, and will thus glorify God.

4. That Christians under God will save, or ruin the world, and that, in proportion as they live for the glory of God, or not, Christ represents them as "the light of the world," as "the salt of the earth." Thus plainly teaching, that if their "light be darkness," and their "salt have lost its savor," the world must sink down to hell in darkness.

V. I am to show that whatever is short of this, is enmity against God.

1. Because it is slandering God. For a professor of religion to misrepresent God, is to do his utmost to dethrone him. It is the highest influence that can be brought against any government, to misrepresent and slander it. It is by slander, and falsehood that Satan has always maintained his influence in this world. Whoever then misrepresents, and slanders God, is in league with the devil, against God.

But none are so efficient agents of the devil, as inconsistent professors of religion. They are enemies, in the camp. They are God's professed children, and it is taken for granted, that they know God, and that their testimony may be relied on; and as they are God's own witnesses, if they testify against, and misrepresent him, his cause must fail. It is more injurious than the slander of a legion of devils. It is by no means true, as some have supposed, that [S]satan wishes to have every body openly wicked. The testimony of one worldly professor, is more influential, in favor of [S]satan, than that of a host of infidels. He would, doubtless, be glad to have all men professors of religion, if they would be inconsistent enough to misrepresent, and thus betray God.

Now there is no neutral ground upon this subject. Christ has said, "he that is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." It is impossible, that you should not in all your life, and walk, and spirit, either honor, or dishonor God. Your whole spirit, and temper, and deportment, are watched, and scrutinized, by those around you; and inferences are continually drawn, either in favor of, or against the God you profess to worship.

2. He who does not live to the glory of God, is the common enemy of the universe. Just as he is the common enemy of any government, who sets himself to slander, betray, and ruin that government.

REMARKS.

1. You see why God is represented, in the Bible, as seeking his own glory, as a thing of the highest importance to the universe. Infidelity has objected to the idea of God's seeking his glory, as if, in this, he was proud, and jealous, and ambitious, of being esteemed. But when it is understood, that by his glory is meant his reputation, it is easy to see, that in a moral government of such an extent, and duration, as his, the estimation in which the great head of the government is held, by the subjects, is of infinite importance. And should he not pursue his glory, as of the greatest good, he would not estimate things according to their real value.

This text lays down an easy rule, by which to judge of the lawfulness of any employment, in which we propose to engage. If it is business, the question is, is it such an employment as Christ would engage in, under the circumstances? Is it that kind of business, in which you can reasonably expect to represent, and honor God?

If any amusement invites us, the question is easily settled. Should anyone see me engaged in it, would it be honorable to God, and fairly represent the spirit of his religion?

2. We are not only bound to live to the glory of God, but to choose those employments, and pursue them, in that manner, which will best glorify God. We are to enquire, for what employment we are best suited--in what way we can not only do good, but do the most good! And when we have understood ourselves--our adaptedness, and calling to any employment, we are cheerfully, and with all our hearts, to engage in it, for the glory of God.

3. Herein may be seen the true point of distinction, between real saints, and hypocrites. The true Christian loves God supremely, God's honor, and glory, are of course, dearer to him, than any thing, and every thing else. He just as naturally devotes himself to the glory of God, and lives only for that end, as a man naturally pursues that in which he has supreme delight. If a man is not conscious that this is the end for which he lives--that the glory of God, is dearer to him than all things else, he certainly has not the spirit of God, and it is preposterous to call himself a Christian.

Now right over against this is the hypocrite. He professes to live for the glory of God; but yet he certainly knows, or ought to know, by his own consciousness, that if he seeks God's glory at all, it is with him a subordinate, and not a chief end. He knows full well, if he will be honest with himself, that selfishness lurks in all the religion he has. Instead of having a strong, and permanent consciousness, that he is living for God, the most that he can say is, he hopes he is thus covering up his hypocrisy.

4. From this subject, it is easy to see, how shocking and abominable, are the pretensions of many professing Christians. How many of them are engaged in employments, in which they cannot hope to

glorify God, and can make no such pretension, without rendering themselves ridiculous.

5. Public sentiment seems to have restricted the obligation of this rule to ministers. They are expected to live for the glory of God. Every body feels, that a minister, in his particular employment, should aim at the glory of God. And should a minister engage in many branches of business in which laymen think it lawful for themselves to engage, it would shock common sense.

It is wonderful to see, that where selfishness does not blind them, how ready men are to form right opinions. Previously to the commencement of the Temperance Reformation, I recollect of having heard of a minister, who, by ill health, or for some other cause was prevented from preaching; and for the maintenance of his family, he established a grocery, in which he sold alcohol. This was, even then, universally reprobated. It seemed to shock the common sense of the whole community. And yet multitudes of laymen, and even Christian laymen, were engaged in the same employment, without supposing themselves to be doing any thing wrong.

Now why should the operation of this rule, be thus, by public sentiment, restricted to ministers? It certainly cannot be, unless salvation is also restricted to them. Every man is as much bound to observe this rule, as a minister; and the same reasons that make it obligatory upon a minister, make it obligatory on every man. Now you would say, and say truly, that a minister was no Christian--that he could not be saved, if, in his employment, he did not aim at the glory of God--if his main object was to support his family, under the pretense of complying with the command, to provide for his own household, you would say, that he could not be saved. Now a minister may have, and is bound to have, just as much respect to the maintenance of his family, as any other man may lawfully have to the maintenance of his. But neither has any right to pursue any worldly object, or any heavenly objects whatever, as an end, other than the glory of God. Every man, who has a family, is bound to make the maintenance of his family one of the ways, and one of the means of glorifying God. But to pursue this as an end, is ruin and death.

6. Every man is bound to pursue that employment to which he is called of God, as much as a minister is.

He is bound to be as careful, and diligent, in ascertaining his duty, and mark the leadings, and Providences of God, in relation to his employment for life, as a minister is; and he has no right to pursue any business, to which he is not called, by the Providence, and Spirit of God, any more than a minister has, to preach without such a call.

7. It seems sometimes as if nearly all the laymen in the Church, must go to hell. You find them driving in different directions, and pursuing almost every kind of business, and, in great multitudes of instances, without the least pretence, that they were ever called to that particular employment, by the Spirit, or Providence of God.

I, some time since, asked a lawyer, if he supposed God called him to that particular employment, and if he engaged in it from such motives, as he supposed a minister ought to engage in the work of the ministry. He frankly said, No. How then, I inquired, can you be saved? Are you not bound to live for the glory of God, as much as any minister? Are you not living in the habitual neglect of known duty? Is not the whole tenor of your life selfishness, and a palpable violation of the commandment of God? In the light of this text, he could not deny, that it was so. Now there are hundreds, and thousands of such laymen, in the Church. They know themselves to be pursuing courses of life, from such motives as they would utterly condemn, in a minister. And they would judge, and rightly judge, that he had no religion at all. Know then, assuredly, that in your employment, whatever it is, unless you have such an eye to the glory of God, as you know a

minister ought to have, in his employment, you cannot be saved.

8. From this subject, you can see the great wickedness of dishonoring God, in our methods of obtaining property, under the pretence that we shall devote it to benevolent purposes. Unless we get money, in a manner which is honorable to God, it is in vain to pretend to make any amends, for the manner of getting it, by the use we make of it.

9. You see how absurd and wicked it is, to engage in any business, that is dishonorable to God, for the purpose of paying debts. Because it is dishonorable to God to be in debt, some persons will engage in employments that violate the law of love; and trample on God's commandments, for the sake of getting money to pay their debts. Now why not as well steal to pay your debts, or engage in highway robbery, or piracy? It is as absolute a violation of the law of God, to obtain property by any selfish means, as to steal, or engage in piracy.

10. Every pretended conversion, that does not result in shaping the man's business, and life, and spirit, in conformity with this precept, is a spurious conversion. Have you seen a man engaged in the selfish transaction of any business, and does he profess conversion? Now mark me, if one of the first fruits be not the reformation of his business, that man is deceived. If his business was unlawful in kind, he will renounce it altogether. If the fault was in the manner of transacting a business, lawful in its kind, he will instantly reform the manner. And it is an outrage to common sense, to call that man a Christian, the secret of whose life, and thoughts, and especially whose business transactions are not turned manifestly into the channel of glorifying God.

11. The same is true of those seasons of religious awakening, in which great multitudes profess conversion to God. If the fruits of these excitements fall short of the principle laid down in this text--if it does not break up, and reform the business transactions of selfish men, no matter how great their excitement of mind may have been--they have, after all, fallen short of true conversion--they have not yet taken the first step in religion, and do not yet understand in what it consists.

12. Since my last lecture was written, a question has been proposed to me, by a brother, an answer to which may well be given here. It is, Does the law of love, when applied to business transactions, require that a man should merely support his family, by his business, and have nothing more, or less, reserved to himself? I answer,

(1) That the support of a man's family is not to be the end at which he aims; but, as I have already said, the support of ourselves, or families, is to be regarded by us, as one of the means of glorifying God.

(2) That the support of ones-self, or family, is by no means to be the criterion, by which we are to be governed in the transaction of business, (i.e.) whatever it may cost to support ourselves, or families, is not to regulate the prices, at which we are to buy or sell. If a man should keep one cow, and under the pretence of her being the support of his family, should attempt to sell milk at two shillings per quart--this certainly would not be lawful, any more than keeping one hen, and attempting, under the pretence of supporting his family, to sell eggs for one dollar each, would be lawful. The truth is, that no man has a right to attempt to support himself, or family, in such a way as this.

So, on the other hand, if a man be engaged in an extensive business, the amount of his necessary expenditures, in the maintenance of his family, is not to be the criterion by which he is to be governed, in his established prices. But in buying, and selling, he is to have the same regard to the interest of every

individual, with whom he trades, as to his own. He is to sell as low as he can, without injuring himself, more than he benefits others. And the amount of what he makes must depend upon the amount, and nature of his business.

Suppose a wholesale merchant to employ an immense capital, and perform a vast amount of business, and suppose him to supply one hundred country merchants with goods, and in this suppose him to consult the good of each, equally with his own. In this case, the aggregate of his income would be equal to the aggregate of all their income together. So that, in fact, he might become very rich, and have it in his power, to exercise great hospitality, and greatly promote benevolent objects, and still consult every man's interest, with whom he trades, equally with his own.

13. Here another question may be, and has been recently asked. It is said, if every man is bound to sell so low, as to consult every customer's interest, equally with his own, then those who have a small capital cannot live, by their business. To this I answer,

That no man has a right to live, by business, by which he cannot support himself, and transact it, upon the principle of the law of God.

I was asked, the other day, this question. Suppose a certain man, in the employment of an immense capital, should conduct his business upon the principle of the law of God; and, in consulting his customers' interests as much as his own, should undersell those of smaller capital, or sell at prices so low that they would become bankrupt, in attempting to support their families, at these prices? Now, in this case, it is said the man of great capital, would ruin the business of all the rest. To this I reply,

It is every man's duty to benefit the public as much as possible. And if one man can supply the market, at a lower rate, than others, he ought to supply it, and no others have a right to complain. Individuals, and their families, are not to be supported at the expense of public, and higher interests. If other individuals cannot afford to act upon the law of love, their business ought to cease. And they are bound to engage in some employment, in which they can conform themselves to the law of God. The very question I have been answering, is founded upon the supposition, that every man has a right to engage in any particular calling, and support his family by it, whether consistent, or inconsistent with the public good. But this is the direct reverse of the truth.

If one man, therefore, is so circumstanced, that he can supply the whole demand, in any market, more advantageously to the public, than another, he not only has a right, but is bound to do so; and the other is under obligation to retire.

Another question has been proposed, (viz.) If persons are to sell, as cheap as they can, without injuring themselves, more than they benefit those with whom they deal, would not their profits be so small as to prevent their accumulating property with which to do good? Now this is indeed a strange question. If a man is living, and conducting business, upon the principles of the law of God, or of love, he is all the time, doing good upon the largest scale possible. And can it be imagined, that he would really do more good, by over-reaching his customers, for the sake of giving his property to others? Shall a man do injustice to one man, and violate the law of God, for the sake of giving to another man? As well might a man steal, to give to the poor, or support the gospel, under the pretence of doing good, as in any other respect, to violate the law of love, for the sake of acquiring property, to do good with. It should be understood, that the man who lives, and feels, and acts, and transacts business upon the principles of the law of God, is continually doing all the good in his power. He is diffusing more happiness, by far, than if he were grinding the faces

of his customers, one day, to give to some benevolent object the next.

It is as ridiculous, as it is wicked, for a man to violate the law of benevolence, under the pretence of having something to give away. Suppose that every man were conformed to the law of love; then every man would be continually doing all that he possibly could do, for benevolent objects. And in such a case, where would be the necessity of one man laying up money, to give to these objects? He is giving, as fast as he receives, to benevolent objects. The fact is, that, in such a case, the coffers of all benevolent institutions would immediately overflow. The ice that has so long locked up the channels of love, would be universally dissolved, and the streams of light, and life, and love, would flow on, until what are now commonly called objects of charity, and benevolence, could not be found.

14. I have often been led to inquire, in what do Christians of the present day, suppose religion to consist? It seems as though they thought it consisted in praying in their closets--reading their Bibles--attending Church on the Sabbath--and occasionally giving something for the support of the institutions of religion. Now religion consists, in no one, nor in all these things together. And millions of such things would not make a particle of true religion. Religion consists in the true benevolence of the heart. Not a mere desire to do good, but a willing good--a benevolence that controls the conduct--that is, active, blessed, god-like.

15. To glorify God, is the only object for which you have any right to live, for one hour. And you can live for no other purpose, with the least reasonable hope of being saved. If this be not the end, and object of your life, I forewarn you, that your hope will perish "in the giving up of the ghost."

16. And now, beloved, let me ask you, have you ever laid your all upon the altar, and rendered yourselves, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God?

Is it your daily prayer, and constant endeavor, to be used all up with the most divine economy for God?

Do you husband your time, your strength, your all, in such a way as to make the most of your influence for the promotion of the glory of God?

Is it really in your heart to live, and die for him?

Are you willing--nay, are you supremely desirous, and are you conscious of this desire, to live, or die--to be sick, or well--rich, or poor, or in any other circumstances, that will make the most of you, and use you up with the greatest economy for God?

Do those with whom you sit at table, see that you eat and drink for the glory of God--that you have made yourself acquainted with dietetics, so far, at least, as to exclude whatever is injurious?

Do you prove to them, by the quantity, and quality, of your food, that you are not a creature of appetite--that you live, not to eat, but eat to live, and live to glorify God? "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/charles-finney/glorifying-god/>

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