

## Work/Life Balance

On Sunday, we talked about the first question in the Westminster Catechism, which emphasizes the sacred importance of enjoying life.

1. Warm up question: Jeff told a story about a little boy who wanted the epitaph on the tombstone of his goldfish to say, “He was fun while he lasted.” If your friends and family were to put an honest, but humorous, epitaph on your tombstone, what might it say?

2. The first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism reads as follows:

**Question:** What is the chief end of human beings?

**Answer:** The chief end of human beings is to glorify God, and to enjoy God forever.

Most of us aren’t surprised by the first half of that answer – the idea that our lives should glorify God. But the second part is probably new to some of us – the idea that we have a sacred responsibility to enjoy life!

- a. Some of us are “nose-to-the-grindstone” people. For us, work and service feels like our highest calling. Others of us are laid back “party-on” people. For us, relishing life feels like our highest calling. Although a few of us may have achieved a great balance between work and play, most of us are still “in process.” Do you tend to gravitate more naturally toward work or play? Where do you think that tendency within you comes from?
  - b. Before turning our focus to the importance of enjoyment, let’s think briefly about the idea of glorifying God. Google defines “glorify” as “to reveal or make clear the glory of God by one’s actions.” Jesus says, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven.” Matthew 5:16. Does the idea that our actions should glorify God resonate with you? Why or why not?
  - c. Tell us about at least one time this week when you feel your actions, large or small, brought glory to God.
  - d. Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant . . . , just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. . . .” Matthew 20:26. In your life right now, what is your most significant service activity?
3. Read Psalm 104:10-24. This passage reminds us how much God delights in providing us, all living creatures, with wonderful things. Just as we’re asked to serve God, so too God takes delight in serving us. How does that feel to you? Are you comfortable with the idea that God enjoys serving you?

4. Read John 2:1-11. In Jesus' time, wedding feasts typically lasted a whole week. In this story, the wine ran out before the week ended. So Jesus turns 150 gallons of water into wine – really good wine. According to John, this was Jesus very first miracle.
  - a. What do you think we're supposed to learn from this miracle story about how Jesus saw life? What does it tell us about his attitude toward good times?
  - b. Are you comfortable with the idea that Jesus created so much wine, even after people had drunk quite a bit? What should we draw from this?
  
5. Feasting seems to have been Jesus' favorite pastime, so much so that his enemies falsely accused him of being "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Matthew 11:19. By contrast, John the Baptist was an ascetic, who never drank alcohol and ate a very plain diet. Matthew 11:18, Luke 1:15, and Matthew 3:4.
  - a. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach us by his example?
  - b. Have you ever been part of a church where people acted more like John the Baptist than Jesus? Tell us about them. What motivated them? Do you think their rejection of earthly pleasures helped them spiritually?
  - c. Read Matthew 7:9-11. What does this passage teach us about who God is and how God thinks and feels?
  - d. Read Luke 12:32. What does this passage teach us about who God is and how God thinks and feels?
  
6. So now let's try to draw this altogether.
  - a. Do you think having fun in life is as important spiritually as serving? Why or why not?
  - b. Suppose a person doesn't embrace enjoyment as one of his or her chief objectives in life. Does that stunt spiritual development? If so, how?
  - c. Jeff shared Laura Allen's story about her grandparents and their ongoing game of "shmily," which meant "see how much I love you." As you look back over this past week, tell us about a time God left you a "shmily note."
  - d. Name something that gives you great pleasure in life. In the past, have you seen that activity as an important part of your spiritual wholeness and development? Given what we've talked about, will you now?
  - e. Who here feels called to devote more time and energy to simply enjoying life with God?