

Life is Good Because
We are Children of God
1 John 3:1-7

Life is good. That's a simple, yet profound, statement. But is it true? Is life good? As we continue to celebrate the gift of eternal life which we have been promised by the Resurrection of Christ, the theme of the messages and services will be "Life is good." And we hope to convince you, to really convince you, that life is good.

People want to believe that life is good. They hope it is good. But aren't there times when you aren't certain that life is good? There are times when life doesn't feel like it is good. It's in the midst of those times when you need to know that life is good, even if it doesn't feel like it.

How do we know life is good? Well, one reason we know that life is good is because we are children of God, and God created us to enjoy the goodness of life.

Much of what I have learned about God has come from reflecting on my experiences as a father and a grandfather. Before I became a parent, I used to wonder why God created us. I had heard several reasons philosophers and theologians had given to explain why God created us, but none of them satisfied me.

Some say that God created us because it is just God's nature to create. God didn't create us intentionally or for any purpose. God created us the same way that we create carbon dioxide. It's just a by-product of our breathing.

They are telling us that God is like careless and irresponsible people who have children accidentally, with no purpose or intention for having them. It just happened.

But the Bible tells me that God is nothing like those people. The Bible tells me that God is more like parents who have waited and planned for the coming of their child for a long, long time. You know, the kind that have the nursery all fixed up and decorated, and have bought all the clothes for the first year of their baby's life, and have the name carefully selected and the college their child will attend—all before the child is even conceived.

The creation story tells us that God carefully planned for us. Over a period of billions of years, God carefully prepared the universe to receive. Finally, when all was complete and ready for us, God was ready to create us. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit held a council and said, "Let us make human beings in our image." We weren't an accident. We were planned. God wanted children.

So, God created us intentionally. But why?

Some say that God created us because God was lonely. When I hear that, it reminds me of when my daughter was about four or five years old, she said, "Daddy, I know why you and momma had me." I said, "Why is that?" She said, "Because you and momma were really lonely before I was born. You had me because you were unhappy without me." Well, I hated to burst her bubble, but the truth is that before she was born her mother and I were very happy. We enjoyed each other's company very much. In fact, there were many times after she was born that we were not as happy as we were before she was born. Caring for children can be very stressful at times.

I don't believe God was lonely without us. How can God be lonely? God is an eternal fellowship. God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit eternally and perfectly united in harmony, purpose and love. God has never been lonely, because God has never been alone. And that is to say nothing about the hosts of heaven. God did not create us because God was lonely.

I've heard others say that God created us to worship and glorify God. That doesn't make sense to me either. What would you think of a parent who said, "I had my children so that they would worship and adore me." That's not a good reason to have children. It's not very practical either. Children may adore you for a few years, but it doesn't last long.

Why would God need to be worshipped and adored? Does God have an ego problem? Does God need to be told how wonderful God is, so that God can feel good about God's self? Why would God need us to be worshipped and glorified? I can't buy that one either.

Another explanation I've heard is that God created us to serve God. Again, what would you think of a parent who had children for the purpose of having someone to order around and do their work for them?

Why does God need to be served? All God has to do is say the word and universes are created. Why would God need us to do God's work?

Now, I'm not saying that we shouldn't seek to fellowship with God. We do should seek to be as close to God as possible—not for God's sake, but for our sake. God is not lonely without us, but we are lonely without God. There is a loneliness deep within our souls that only God can satisfy.

Again, I'm not saying we shouldn't worship and serve God. We should, and we do worship and serve God. We worship God, because the truth is that God is worthy to be worshipped. In fact, God alone is worthy of being worshipped. We worship because we enjoy worshipping God and because it is right to worship God. We do not worship God because God demands to be worshipped or needs to be worshipped.

In the same way, we serve God because we want to serve God. God's ways are right and good. God's will is the right way. When we catch the vision of what God is creating in the world and in our lives, we want to be a part of it. We want to help build God's kingdom. But we don't serve God because we have to or because God needs us. We need to serve God.

We don't have to worship God, and we don't have to serve God. We get to worship and serve God.

But that leaves us with the question unanswered: If God didn't create us because God needed us—God doesn't need us for company, or to be praised, or to be served—then why did God create us? I looked for the answers to that important question. The answers the philosophers and theologians gave are the ones I just listed, and I knew in my heart they were the wrong answers. So, I pondered that question a long time, until finally, desperate for an answer, I prayed and asked God for an answer. This is the answer I was given:

Life is good. Our God is a living God, and God enjoys being alive. From all eternity, God has enjoyed life. The only way God could enjoy life more was to create others who had the capacity to enjoy life as much as God does. God created us to share

with us the goodness of life. God created us for the joy of watching us enjoy the goodness of life.

That's the reason parents should have children--not because our lives are empty or incomplete without them, but because we want to share the goodness of life with them.

We are the children of God. God didn't create us because God needed us to fill some emptiness or void in God's divine being. God created us to share with us the goodness of life.

As much as God enjoyed life before us, God enjoys it that much more through us. I know that's true because as a parent I've experienced it.

I remember when my daughter had her first taste of watermelon. It's been over thirty years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday. Becky was cutting up a watermelon on the kitchen table. Kathleen was about less than a year old. She climbed up on a chair and took a piece of watermelon and put it in her mouth. The look of sheer ecstasy went filled her face was amazing. Now, I enjoy watermelon myself. But I've never enjoyed watermelon as much as I enjoyed watching her enjoy her first bite of watermelon.

And it continues. Our daughter is a preacher serving a church in Virginia. I talked with her recently, and she was telling me how much she enjoys being a pastor. Now, I've been a pastor for over 37 years. For the most part I have enjoyed being a pastor. But I never enjoyed being a pastor as much as I enjoyed hearing her talking about the joy she gets from being a pastor.

Surely the greatest joy of all is experiencing the joy of someone you love. That's the reward of parenting. God created us to experience that joy.

Do you want to make God happy? Then be happy. God smiles when we are enjoying life. When we laugh for joy, God is laughing right along with us. That's why God created us, to share the joy of life with us.

So, enjoy life. That's what you were made to do. Trust God's goodness and wisdom. Trust that life is good. And enjoy it. For the children of God, life is good.

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