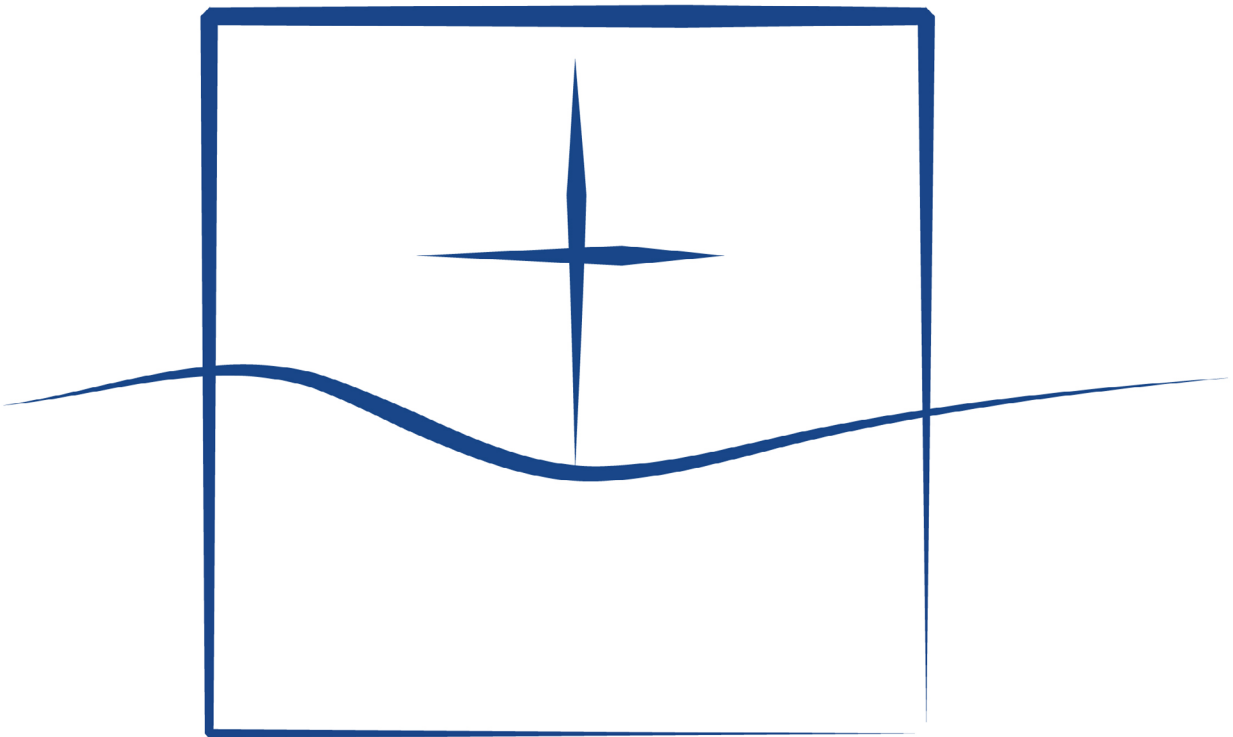




BAY RIDGE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Biblically Based. Christ Centered. Caring Community.



Catechism
With Proofs

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An Introduction

Welcome to the Bay Ridge Christian Church Catechism. By way of introduction we would like to explain why we believe we should use a catechism with both children and adults, and how we developed this catechism. Hopefully this brief introduction will lead you to a greater desire to not only catechize your children, but yourself as well.

First, the concept of catechizing is biblical. The word “catechize” comes from the Greek word katacheo which meant to instruct or catechize. It is used eight times in the New Testament. Perhaps most significantly for our purposes, it is used in Galatians 6:6 which reads “Let the one being catechized in the Word share all good things with the one catechizing him.” (personal translation). For other pertinent examples, see Luke 1:4 and Acts 18:25. The New Testament church catechized, or systematically instructed, believers, and so should we.

Second, the concept of a catechism to teach fundamental beliefs is ancient, and it has been proven throughout the centuries to be a very successful method of instruction. Catechisms are meant to start in the early years of a child’s life (we will begin around 3-4 years old) and continue to build and develop as the child grows older. This is done because in these early years children are capable of memorizing vast amounts of information, and it is all quickly stored into their long term memory. In fact, younger children are better at this type of memorization than most adults. Therefore, we believe it is very important to get many of the basics of the faith ingrained into a child’s memory as early as possible. If this is done in early childhood, when they are adults these foundational truths will simply be a part of their worldview and will affect all that they believe and do. As a result we see this catechism as an essential part of not only teaching children the essential doctrines of the faith, but as a means of raising adults who stand upon a very solid foundation of biblical teaching.

Third, because the idea of catechism is not new, there is a sense in which it ties us to our past. We as individual believers are all tied to this family called the Church. We have a history that we must remember, and we must properly teach our children that history. Our past is primarily rooted today in the early church, and particularly in the Church of the Reformation. Therefore, we have looked to the early church, and especially the Reformers, for guidance in the development of this catechism. All of the early reformers saw the need to catechize children, and some, such as Luther, even developed their own catechism to teach proper doctrine to both children and adults. Thus, although this catechism has been developed by the elders and ministry staff specifically for Bay Ridge Christian Church, we have based much of the catechism on two well known early reformed catechisms. The majority of the catechism has been based on the [Heidelberg catechism](#), because the heart of it’s structure and questions is the gospel of Jesus Christ and a proper doctrine of salvation (soteriology). The other old catechism that we have used is the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), because of both its solid doctrinal basis and its important place in this history of the Church. Both of these catechisms have withstood the test of time and are very solid in their teachings, and therefore we thought it best to build upon that solid foundation in developing our own catechism. (We have also consulted more recent catechisms, especially the [New City Catechism](#), which is available online at <http://www.newcitycatechism.com/home.php>, or as an iPad app. The New City Catechism is also a new catechism that draws heavily upon the Heidelberg and Westminster Shorter Catechisms, but uses updated language and contains a few questions that are not covered in the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms.) Finally, these catechisms are so widely used that there are a variety of resources available which can aid your own study of these questions.

Therefore, in the development and use of this catechism we are seeking not only to teach our children a foundation of doctrine that they can stand upon as adults, but we are also tying them and our adult members to the past of which they are a part. We are instructed in the Scriptures to renew our minds daily through the Word of God. Our Catechism is intended to be another means of renewing our minds, enabling us and our children to love and serve God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. May God bless its use for His glory and our good.

How To Use This Catechism

Overview

The format of this catechism has been designed to help believers grow in their faith and to assist parents and teachers alike to instruct children of all ages in the foundation of our faith: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. After an introductory segment, the catechism is structured in three sections (1) Misery (or Guilt) describing the fact and result of sin; (2) Salvation (or Grace) describing the fact and result of Christ and His work - the Gospel; and (3) Growth and Gratitude describing how Christians grow in their faith and display gratitude to God for the grace we have received in Christ. Additionally four key touchstones of the faith have been built in to aid the child in his or her understanding. The child will memorize (1) the 66 books of the Bible, (2) the Lord's Prayer, (3) The Apostle's Creed and (4) the Ten Commandments.

The catechism will be most effective when it is used in two complimentary ways:

1. In church. From the time children are 3 years old until they are 14, they will be working on catechism questions as part of our children's ministry. Each week the children will review questions previously learned and will be working on the next question in the series.
2. In the home. With the questions and the additional materials provided, parents have the tools to continue working with their child. The scripture references and discussion questions can be used for family devotions, and the questions make for some family fun as you memorize, and quiz each other on the questions around the dinner table or family room as part of your regular family activities.

In order to help parents and teachers use the catechism to help instruct our children in the Christian faith, we will go over each of the sections of the catechism below, describing the format of the section and its intended use.

Questions and Answers

The catechism is made up of a series of questions and answers. The questions are numbered sequentially and progress through a description of what the gospel is and how it affects my life. **The child is only expected to memorize the answers.** The parent or teacher will ask the child the question as it is written, and the child responds with the answer **exactly as it is written**. For example, for question 1, the parent will ask "Why did God create humans?" and the child will respond "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." The child will become intimately familiar with both the questions and the answers, but he or she is only responsible to know the answer. It is important to have the children remember the answers exactly, as this will aid memorization.

Focus and Purpose

This section is provided to enable the teacher, parent, or learner to better understand the intent of each of the questions. The section explains why each question is part of the catechism, and what important doctrine of the faith is being addressed. Furthermore, we have tried to be very careful in our choice of words, and this section will often give a hint as to which words in the question and answer are being stressed and why. Finally, the order of questions in the catechism is not random, but quite purposeful, and this section will show that order. It will often explain why one question leads to the next question, which will help one to understand the flow of the catechism.

Additional Questions

We have provided an additional set of questions that rephrase the main question in several age appropriate ways. This is to give the parent or teacher some ways to help the child better grasp the concept described in the question. For instance a child of 5 may not fully understand question 1 "Why did God create humans?" But she may understand "Why did God make you?" Similarly a middle schooler will likely be bored by a

simple reading of the question, but may enjoy wrestling with “What is the chief end of man?”

In general, these additional questions will increase in difficulty, so that parents and teachers of younger children will probably only use the first couple of additional questions, while parents and teachers of older children will make use of the later additional questions in each section.

Please note that these additional questions are just an aid to help ensure understanding. **The child does not need to memorize these questions.**

Scripture References

This section is included to provide an immediate response to the question, “Why do we believe that this is the answer to the question just asked?” The Scripture alone is the foundation of our faith, and so we must always go back to the Scripture for truth. The catechism does not replace Scripture - it merely summarizes some important biblical teachings in a manner that makes it easy for children to learn the faith.

While an answer is being learned, these scriptures may be used to provide Biblical support for our faith. Additionally, the references may be used to create lessons or devotions for the child, or for the family to look more closely at a specific truth of the faith. Perhaps the most valuable part of this section is that it provides scriptures that may be memorized along with the catechism.

Questions for Further Discussion

Memorizing answers is only the first step in attaining of wisdom. The catechism serves as the raw data in the mind of the child. The next step is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as he transforms that mind data into heart wisdom. These discussion questions are provided to give a jumping off point for further conversations between the child and his peers, parents, and teachers. These may be used by the teacher in designing a lesson plan, or by parents in family devotions. Once the catechism question has been asked and the answer learned, the Questions for Further Discussion can be used to prompt further reflection and conversation.

Please note that these questions are only intended for older children and adults. Young children by nature do not think in abstract terms, and so these questions will not prove helpful to them. However, as children mature, they learn in more abstract ways, and these questions will help them to ponder the implications of the actual catechism question.

Additional Information

This final section is here because there are a lot more great resources that we would have liked to include in the body of the catechism, but to do so would have been an enormous undertaking, and would have created an overwhelming sea for you to find your way through. Instead of doing that (to save us, and you) we have listed only a few resources that you can consult. These resources include similar catechism questions from the [Heidelberg](#), [Westminster Shorter](#), and [New City Catechisms](#), and also other books and teachings which themselves are sources for references and further study.

Finally, along with many of the questions a hymn or worship song has been listed which highlights the glory of God and the truth of the specific tenet of the faith. This can be used for personal reflection, or as a beginning or ending to family devotions. If you are unfamiliar with the tunes to the songs, many of the tunes can be accessed on the internet, and the church has created a playlist with the songs in Spotify.

It is our prayer and desire that you, your child, BRCC, and the world would benefit from this investment as we work together to prepare our children for the calling of God in their life, and ultimately to store up treasures in Heaven for the Glory of Christ. May it help us all to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!

Introduction

Question 1: Why did God create humans?

To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are giving the introduction to the entire catechism. This sums up the purpose of our entire lives - all we are and do. In a sense, the rest of the catechism will expand on this idea. In every thought, word, and deed, we are either glorifying God and enjoying Him, or we are falling short of the very purpose of our existence. The phrase "to glorify God and enjoy Him" will recur at various points in the catechism to underline this central idea.

This question shows us that we are created by God and that we have a purpose. The purpose is to glorify God - not ourselves. Our fulfillment is not found by looking within or trying to simply please ourselves. It is found as we look outside of ourselves and glorify God. Paradoxically, however, the more we glorify God, the more we will enjoy Him, and the more personal joy and fulfillment we will experience. That which glorifies God brings good to us, and as John Piper has famously said: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Finally, note that this purpose is not temporary, but will last forever. What begins now - glorifying and enjoying God - will go on throughout eternity for God's children.

Additional Questions:

Why did God make you?

Why are we here?

Why did God make people?

What is your purpose in life?

Why are you alive?

What is the most important thing in life?

What is the chief end of man?

Scripture References:

Habakkuk 2:14

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Psalms 29:1-2

Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

1 Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Revelation 4:11

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Psalms 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Psalm 73:25-26

Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Does bringing glory to God mean that we make God glorious, or that we recognize that God is glorious?

How can you glorify God in everything you do - school, work, chores, play and leisure - and not just in “spiritual” activities?

Is it possible for me to glorify God and be self-centered or self-focused?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 1 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) (and also question 4 of the [New City Catechism](#)). It is probably the most famous catechism question among Protestants in history. Any resources you find on [Westminster Shorter](#) or [New City Catechisms](#) will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Our Purpose: To Glorify and Enjoy God](#)” (July 7, 2019), “[All In: The Joy of A God-Centered Life](#)” (September 13, 2015), and “[Created To Glorify and Enjoy God Forever](#)” (January 3, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[To God Be the Glory](#) (Fanny Crosby, 1875)

To God be the glory, great things he hath done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the lifegate that all may go in.

Chorus:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God;
the vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.
(Refrain)

Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.
(Refrain)

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Question 2: Where do we learn how to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?

In His Word, the Bible.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are giving the basis for everything taught in the entire catechism. It is in the Scripture that we learn Who God is, who we are, what God desires of us, and how to fulfill that call. Although other things - the Church, Creeds, even this catechism - can be very helpful, the only final authority given by God to humanity is the Bible. Everything - including this catechism - must be tested against the teaching of God's Word.

For this reason, the catechism will have a number of questions regarding the Scripture, its structure, and the actual names and order of the biblical books. Additionally, we will give Scriptures to demonstrate the truth of the answers being given to each question in the catechism. Thus, the ultimate purpose of the catechism is to lead us to God's Word that we might know, glorify and enjoy God - now and forever.

Additional Questions:

What book tells us how to glorify God?

Where do we find out how to glorify God?

What guide has God given to teach us how to glorify and enjoy Him forever?

What authority has God given to teach us how to glorify and enjoy him?

What is the only final authority on how we can glorify and enjoy God?

Scripture References:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Deuteronomy 4:5

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it.

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Acts 17:11

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is the Bible sufficient for us to know how to glorify and enjoy God?

Does this mean that we can not learn truth from other sources such as nature, history, literature, science, etc? What is the relationship between these and the Scripture?

If the Scripture is the only final authority for discovering how to fulfill our ultimate purpose, is it important for the Scripture to be clear, inerrant, and sufficient? Why?

If the Scripture is the only final authority for learning how to glorify and enjoy God, what part should it have in our daily lives?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 2 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 6 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

[Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Chapters 2-8](#), discuss the nature, clarity, inerrancy, and sufficiency of God's Word in depth.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Our Instruction Manual: The Bible](#)" (July 14, 2019), "[The Treasure of God's Word](#)" (January 10, 2010), and "[The Sufficiency of Scripture](#)" (January 24, 2010). For a full overview of the development of the Bible, including the processes of inspiration, determining which books were part of Scripture, how Scripture was copied and transmitted, and how translation works, see the BRCC seminar "[How I Got My Bible.](#)"

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Firm A Foundation](#) (John Rippon, 1787)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Question 3: What is the central message of the Bible?

The central message of the Bible is that God is bringing glory to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ as He creates and redeems a people in whom He lives by His Spirit so that they will glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are giving a concise summary of the central message of the Bible. We have learned that the Bible is a big book composed of sixty-six other books. It has many different sections and types of literature. Does it have a single unifying theme and message? Yes! This question summarizes that message and theme.

Note that the answer has a Trinitarian structure, mentioning God (the Father), Jesus (the Son), and the Holy Spirit. This is the same structure seen in the Creeds and points to the foundational doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This will be developed further in question 6.

Also note that the answer points to the central figure of Scripture, Jesus Christ. Every part of the Scripture - from the five books of the law in the Old Testament to the concluding general letters of the New Testament - is centered on Jesus Christ. Thus, the Person and work of Christ are at the center of Scripture and of the answer to this question.

Finally, notice that the beginning and end of the answer mention glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. This links the question with the first question in the catechism. If the reason God made us is to glorify and enjoy Him forever, we should not be surprised to find that this goal lies at the core of the biblical message.

Additional Questions:

What is the main thing the Bible teaches?

What is the most important thing the Bible teaches?

What is the storyline of the Bible?

What is the central plot of Scripture?

Scripture References:

Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

Luke 2:14

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

John 5:39-40

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 17:1-5

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Luke 24:25-27; 44-47

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.... 44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Ephesians 2:19–21

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Revelation 14:7

He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Questions for Further Discussion:

Who is the central figure of the Bible? Is this true for both the Old and New Testaments?

How do we see Jesus in the Old Testament?

How important is the Church, God's people, in the Scripture?

If God's focus is on his glory, Jesus, and the community of His people the church, how important are you as an individual to God? How do we balance this personal, individual aspect with the larger picture of God's glory, Jesus, and the Church?

Is it possible for me to fully glorify God apart from Jesus Christ?

Is it possible for me to fully glorify God apart from His people, the Church? In which ways are you capable of glorifying God on your own? In which ways can we only glorify God as part of a local church?

How is the gift of the Holy Spirit important for Christians? Can we truly glorify and enjoy God apart from the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit?

Additional Information:

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Central Message of the Bible](#)" (July 21, 2019), and "[A Christ-Centered Church](#)" (January 14, 2018). For a full overview of Jesus Christ as the central figure of the Bible, see the entire series entitled "[Christ the Focus and Fulfillment of the Old Testament](#)" by Bret Hicks, taught during 2004.

Suggested Worship Song:

[A Mighty Fortress Is Our God](#) (Martin Luther, 1529; translated by Frederick Hedge, 1853)

Note how this song gives glory to God (verse 1), shows how Christ has worked salvation for His people (verse 2), speaks of the assured fulfillment of God's plan for His people (verse 3), and encourages us to give all for this great God who has worked salvation for us and given us His Spirit (verse 4).

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name,
from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
through Him Who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

Question 4: What must you know to be part of God's people?

To be part of God's people I must know how great my sin is, how God has delivered me from my sin and misery through Christ, and how I can show my gratitude to God for delivering me and grow in my Christian life.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are discussing how we can be part of the people that God is creating to glorify and enjoy Him forever. If this is the central message of the Bible (question 3), how do I become part of that people? This question provides that answer. Notice that as anticipated in question 3, Christ is central to becoming part of God's people. For us to become part of God's people can only happen through the Person and work of Christ.

This question and answer are really a summary of the Gospel. It shows us three central facets of the Gospel message and its fruit in our lives: our guilt, God's grace through Christ, and our response of gratitude and growth. This structure - guilt, grace, and gratitude and growth - will govern the rest of the catechism. In part one, we will discuss our guilt because of sin, and the effect it has had upon every one of us. In part two, we will then discuss Christ and His work of delivering us from sin and all of its misery. In the final section of the catechism, we will then discuss how we, who have been delivered from our sin, guilt, and misery by Christ, can show gratitude to God for our great salvation and grow in our Christian lives.

Note that the questions below will generally use the word 'gratitude' for the third section. Here gratitude refers to our response to God's work to save us, and how that propels us to grow in our Christian faith, both in knowledge and also in a life that increasingly glorifies and enjoys God.

Additional Questions:

(Note - You might want to use the words guilt, grace, and gratitude to remember these three things). What are the three big things you must know to be part of God's people?

What do you need to know to be saved? What do you do after you are saved?

Scripture References:

Romans 3:23-24

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

1 John 1:8-10

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Colossians 1:12-14

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Questions for Further Discussion:

This question speaks of the three g’s” guilt, grace, and gratitude. What does the Scripture teach about guilt, grace, and gratitude?

What must you know to live and die in the comfort the Gospel provides to His people?

What is the “bad news” that I must admit to be part of God’s people? What is the “good news” (Gospel) of what God has done? What difference must this “good news” make in how I live?

Some have said that the Gospel is grace, and ethics (how we live) is gratitude? Does this seem to be biblical? How does it line up with the three things talked about in this question?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 2 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Heidelberg Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude - A Biblically Shaped Life](#)” (July 28, 2019), and “[Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude - The Gospel and Its Fruit](#)” (May 16, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[And Can It Be That I Should Gain](#) (Charles Wesley, 1738)

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me who caused His pain!
For me who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

Chorus:

Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me!
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me!

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace!
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Part 1 - Guilt
How Great Is Our Sin and Misery

Question 5: Who is God?

God is the Infinite, Eternal, Sovereign Creator of everything.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, and the next one we are discussing the Being and work of God.

Because of God's Being (Infinite, Eternal, and Sovereign) and His work (Creator) we owe God absolute obedience. He is far superior to us and created us, so we must meet His demands. Thus, we owe the Infinite, Sovereign Eternal Creator absolute, perfect obedience and conformity to His character, which will be described in an upcoming question.

Additional Questions:

How does the Bible describe God?

What is God's Being like?

How does the Bible describe God's Being?

What words describe God's Being?

Scripture References:

Jeremiah 23:24

"Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

Psalms 139:7

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

1 Timothy 1:17

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalms 90:2

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Deuteronomy 33:27

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Colossians 1:16

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Revelation 4:11

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean to say that God is infinite? Is anyone or anything else infinite?

What do we mean when we say God is eternal? Is anyone or anything else eternal?

What do we mean when we say God is Sovereign? If He is Sovereign, having all authority, what about other leaders at home, in the church, at work, and in the government? Where do they get their authority? Should we obey them?

Why is it important to know that God is the Creator of everything? If He is the Creator, what do we owe Him?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 4 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and questions [2](#) and [5](#) of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter Catechism or the New City Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Who Is God](#)" (August 11, 2019), and "[The Absolute Supremacy of God](#)" (February 25, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise](#) (by Walter C. Smith - 1867, scripture I Tim. 1:17)

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest—to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish—but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Question 6: Is there more than One True God?

No, there is only one true God. He eternally exists as the Trinity, one God in Three Persons - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct Persons, but are one in being, power, and glory.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are discussing the Being of God, and specifically that there is only One God, but that the One True God is the Trinity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is an absolute essential of the Christian faith, separating it from false understandings of God. It is important that we understand both that there is only one God - not many - and that this One God eternally exists as Three distinct Persons - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This distinction of the Three Persons in the One God is both real (they are not just modes or titles, or different ways of looking at the same Person) and eternal (the Father, Son, and Spirit have always existed, and thus the Son and Spirit were not created by the Father).

Additional Questions:

How many Gods are there?

Is there more than One God? How many Persons are there in the One True God?

Are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit three different Gods?

Scripture References:

Deuteronomy 4:35, 39

You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other... 39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

1 Corinthians 8:4–6

We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Matthew 3:16–17

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean to say that there is only One True God? What about all of the gods of other religions?

When we say we believe in the Trinity, does that mean that we believe in Three Gods? Why not? How can we say that God is One Being, but Three Persons? Humans are one being in one person, so how can we say God is One Being in Three Persons?

Why is it important to say that God is Triune? If God was only One Being in One Person, could He be relational and self-sufficient at the same time? Why not?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 25 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), [questions 5](#) and [6](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 3 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Trinity - One God in Three Persons](#)” (August 25, 2019), and “[The Trinity - The Divine Community](#)” (May 5, 2013), and “[The Trinity](#)” (June 15, 2014).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Holy, Holy, Holy](#) (by Reginald Heber, 1826)

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name,
in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Question 7: What is God's character like?

God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are discussing the character of God, and also laying the groundwork for the discussion of our sin that will follow.

In the previous questions, we have seen that because of God's Being (Infinite, Eternal, and Sovereign) and His work (Creator) we owe God absolute obedience. He is far superior to us and created us, so it is necessary for us to meet His demands. Here we see that God's character defines what is expected of us - holiness, love, and integrity. God's Law is not arbitrary - it is a reflection of His character. Thus, we owe the Infinite, Sovereign Eternal Creator absolute, perfect obedience and conformity to His character - holiness, love, and integrity.

Note the three words holiness, love, and integrity. While many words could be used to describe God's character, these three words provide a good summary of the various words used to describe God's character. For example, justice, righteousness, and wrath are all related to holiness; mercy, grace, forgiveness, and compassion are all related to love; and immutability (unchangeableness), faithfulness, and truthfulness are all related to integrity. For this reason, we will use these three words throughout this section to describe God's character and what He demands of us as His creatures.

Additional Questions:

How does the Bible describe God's character?

What is God's character like?

What three words summarize God's character?

Scripture References:

Isaiah 6:3

And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Revelation 4:8

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

1 John 4:7-10, 16

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins... 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

Malachi 3:6

I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What do we mean when we say God is perfect? Is anyone or anything else perfect?

NOTE: When we speak of God's integrity, we mean both that God does not change, and that He always speaks the truth and does what is in accord with His nature.

What words can you think of to describe God's character? Which of these words are similar to holy? Which ones are similar to loving? Which ones are similar to integrity?

If God is perfect in holiness, how will He treat sin? If He is perfect in love, how does He respond to His people's sin? If He is perfect in integrity, will He change either His holiness or love to respond to our sin? Then how can we be saved? (NOTE: We will deal with these questions in more depth in questions 16 and 18).

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 4 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 2 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[What Is God's Character Like?](#)" (September 29, 2019), "[A Holy Kingdom](#)" (July 10, 2018), "[God Is Holy](#)" (August 3, 2008), "[The Path of Authentic Love](#)" (July 26, 2015), "[The Fugitive's Faithful Father](#)" (June 19, 2016), and "[God is Faithful](#)" (October 17, 2005).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise](#) (by Walter C. Smith - 1867, scripture I Tim. 1:17)

This song presents a grand view of God's Being and His glorious character, which is justice (holiness) and love (verse 2), and also is perfect thus never changes (integrity).

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest—to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish—but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Question 8: What does God demand of you?

God demands that I be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are linking God's character as defined in question 7 and what He demands of us as creatures made in His image. Since God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity, He demands the same of us. This is seen in His law, as we will show over the next several questions.

In essence, this question is meant to show us that what God requires of us is to be like Him in character. Note that we are not like Him in His Being - Eternal, Infinite, and Sovereign. We are creatures - not the Creator - and so we can not be like God in His Being. Yet, we were created with the capacity to be like Him in His character. This is what He demands of us.

Additional Questions:

What does God command you to be like?

What do you owe God as your Creator?

Scripture References:

Matthew 5:48

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Deuteronomy 18:13

You must be blameless before the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:2

Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'

1 Peter 1:15-16

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Luke 6:36

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Leviticus 19:11

"Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another."

Psalms 101:7

No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why does God have a right to demand anything of us?

Why is it that we must be holy, loving, and full of integrity?

Who are we being commanded to be like?

How does this demand relate to our being created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?

If we are to be like God in His character (holy, loving, full of integrity), why are we not also to be like Him in His Being - eternal and infinite? Can we be eternal or infinite? Is it wrong for us to be finite and bound by time?

What does it mean to be holy? How does holiness look in a person's life?

What does it mean to be loving? What does love look like in a person's life?

What does it mean to be full of integrity? What does it look like in a person's life? (Note that integrity has two parts - truthfulness and faithfulness/consistency of action).

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 39 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 7 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[What Does God Demand of You?](#)" (October 6, 2019), and "[What God Demands - And Gives](#)" (September 19, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[He Has Shown Thee](#) (based on Micah 6:8)

He has shown thee, O man
What is good and what the LORD requires of thee. (2x)

But to do justly,
And to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with thy God.

Question 9: What has God given to teach you his demand?

God has given us His law, which is a reflection of His character, to teach us how to be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are making the link between God's character as defined in question 7 and His law. It is in God's law that we learn what God is like, and how we are to be like Him in character - perfect in holiness, love, and redemption.

This question shows us that the standard we must meet is not our own opinions or human standards, but the standard of God Himself - which is revealed in His law.

Additional Questions:

Where do we learn what God demands of us?

What has God given to teach us what we must be like?

What teaches us how to be holy, loving, and full of integrity?

What has God given to show us what holiness, love, and integrity look like?

What has God given to show us what it means to be perfect?

Scripture References:

Deuteronomy 6:25

And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Ezekiel 20:11

I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them.

Romans 2:14-15

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

James 2:12

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why do we say that the Law is a reflection of God's character?

If the Law is a reflection of God's character, and we are made in His image, should we expect the Law to be written into our very nature?

When Paul says that even those who do not have the law in written form still have it written on their hearts, what does he mean? Does every person have God's law written on their heart?

If the law is written on our hearts, why did God give us the law in written form (in the Ten Commandments and in the rest of the Law)?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 40 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 7 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For a more in depth discussion of God's Law and its relationship to God and to us, see the teachings "[How Do We Know What God Demands of Us?](#)" (October 13, 2019), and "[The Proper Use of God's Law](#)" (July 24, 2011).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Psalm 19 \(The Law of the Lord Is Perfect\)](#)

The law of the LORD is perfect,
converting the soul.
The testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple.
More to be desired are they than gold,
yea than much find gold,
Sweeter also than the honey,
and the honeycomb.

The statutes of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart.
The commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes.
More to be desired are they than gold,
yea than much find gold,
Sweeter also than the honey,
and the honeycomb.

The fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever.
The judgments of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
yea than much find gold,
Sweeter also than the honey,
and the honeycomb.

Question 10: Can you summarize what God's law commands you to do?

All the law is summarized in these two commandments: You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are giving a brief summary of the law. This summary was given by Jesus Himself, so we know it is correct. Although there are many commands in God's law that show us what it means to be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity, they can be summarized in two commands - love God with all we are, and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

This question will allow us to quickly see how far short we fall of meeting God's standard. We are commanded to love God perfectly, with everything we are and have, and to love our neighbors just as much as we love ourselves. If we could do these things, we would keep every individual law. If we do not (and we do not) then we will break the individual laws and will lack holiness, love, and integrity.

Additional Questions:

What does God's law require of us?

What are the two most important commands in God's law?

What is a good summary of God's law?

How did Jesus summarize God's law?

Scripture References:

Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Also see Mark 12:28-34)

Deuteronomy 6:5

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 10:12

And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Leviticus 19:18

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Romans 13:9-10

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Galatians 5:14

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why can we say that to love God with everything in us, and to love our neighbor as ourself is a summary of the whole law?

How do the Ten Commandments fit in these two commandments? To which of these two commandments do the first four of the Ten Commandments fit? To which do commandments five through ten fit?

Does anybody fulfill these two commandments? Do we ever love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, or our neighbor as much as we love ourselves? If we did, how would it look in our lives?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 4 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 42 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 7 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For a more in depth discussion of how these two commands summarize the whole law, see the teachings "[The Summary of God's Law](#)" (October 27, 2019), and "[The Heart of God's Law](#)" (July 31, 2011).

Suggested Worship Song:[Love the Lord Your God](#) (by Lincoln Brewster, 2005 Integrity Music)

Love the Lord your God
 With all your heart, with all your soul
 With all your mind, and with all your strength (2x)

(Chorus)
 With all your heart, with all your soul
 With all your mind, And with all your strength
 Love the Lord your God
 With all your heart, with all your soul
 With all your mind, and with all your strength

I will serve the Lord
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, and with all my strength (2x)

(Chorus)
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, And with all my strength
 I will serve the Lord
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, and with all my strength

I will love You (I will love You)
 I will praise You (I will praise You)
 I will serve You, Lord (I will serve You)
 I will trust You, Lord (I will trust You)

And with all my heart
 With all my soul
 With all my mind,
 And with all my strength
 With all my heart
 With all my soul
 With all my mind
 With all my strength

I will love You Lord
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, and with all my strength (3x)

Question 11: Can you live up to all of this perfectly?

No. I have a natural tendency in thought, word, and deed to not love God and my neighbor as He has commanded.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are making the point that we do not keep the two greatest commandments. Even though we were created with the ability to do these things, we do not do them now. In fact, we have a natural tendency to not do them but rather to do the opposite.

This question shows us that we have a radical problem. We fail to keep God's commands and thus fail to meet the purpose for which we were created. This problem is not just occasional either; we have a natural tendency to disobey God's greatest commands and go our own way. The problem goes to the core of our being and is expressed in thoughts, words, and actions.

Additional Questions:

Can you obey God's law perfectly?

Is your natural desire to love God and your neighbor?

Do you love God with everything in you all the time? Do you love other people as much as you love yourself?

Do you obey God perfectly?

Do any humans obey God perfectly all the time?

Scripture References:

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Romans 3:19-20

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Ecclesiastes 7:20

There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.

1 John 1:8

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Romans 8:7-8

The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Colossians 1:21

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Titus 3:3

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Do you know anyone who seems to really love God and other people? Are they fulfilling the law perfectly? Why not?

Does this mean that people never feel any love for God or their neighbor?

Why is it important to love God in thought, word, and deed? Is it possible to act like we are loving God with our actions but have our thoughts and hearts far from Him? (See Matthew 15:8). Is it possible to think nice things about people but not really love them in action?

Why do we not love God and people as we are commanded to love them? Is it possible for us to do this in our present state?

Are people born with a natural tendency to love God and others, or with a selfish desire to love themselves more than anyone else? Why is this?

Why do we have to love God perfectly? Why must we love our neighbor just like we love ourselves? Why does God command this of us?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 5 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 82 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 13 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Can You Keep God's Law?](#)" (November 10, 2019), and "[Biblical Confession and Repentance](#)" (August 28, 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:[God Be Merciful to Me](#) - Psalm 51 (Scottish Psalter)

God, be merciful to me,
 On thy grace I rest my plea;
 Plenteous in compassion thou,
 Blot out my transgressions now;
 Wash me, make me pure within,
 Cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

My transgressions I confess,
 Grief and guilt my soul oppress;
 I have sinned against thy grace
 And provoked thee to thy face;
 I confess thy judgment just,
 Speechless, I thy mercy trust.

I am evil, born in sin;
 Thou desirest truth within.
 Thou alone my Saviour art,
 Teach thy wisdom to my heart;
 Make me pure, thy grace bestow,
 Wash me whiter than the snow.

Broken, humbled to the dust
 By thy wrath and judgment just,
 Let my contrite heart rejoice
 And in gladness hear thy voice;
 From my sins O hide thy face,
 Blot them out in boundless grace.

Gracious God, my heart renew,
 Make my spirit right and true;
 Cast me not away from thee,
 Let thy Spirit dwell in me;
 Thy salvation's joy impart,
 Steadfast make my willing heart.

Sinners then shall learn from me
 And return, O God, to thee;
 Saviour, all my guilt remove,
 And my tongue shall sing thy love;
 Touch my silent lips, O Lord,
 And my mouth shall praise accord.

Question 12: What is sin?

Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law perfectly.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are defining sin. We need to see that sin is not a mistake or a small misstep; it is direct disobedience to God's righteous commands. Once again, note that the standard is perfection. Obeying most of the time is not sufficient. God is so great that anything less than perfect obedience is utterly insufficient.

Furthermore, note that sin can come in two ways. We can sin by disobeying God's commands. We can not do what He has told us to do, or we can do what He has told us not to do. However, sin is also found when we do not perfectly conform to the law. This goes beyond our actions to our desires. We must not only obey; we must want to obey. Anything less than this is sin because it is unworthy of what we owe to our Creator.

Additional Questions:

What do we mean by sin?

Scripture References:

1 John 3:4

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

1 John 5:17

All wrongdoing is sin.

James 2:10-11

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

Deuteronomy 12:32

See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Romans 2:14-15

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Romans 7:7

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

James 4:17

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

Matthew 5:21-22

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is something sinful because people think it is wrong, or because God declares that it is wrong?

How do we decide if something is sinful?

Is it only sinful if I do something that God has told me not to do, or am I sinning if I do not do the thing that God has commanded me to do?

What are some sins of commission (doing)? What are some sins of omission (not doing)?

What does it mean to conform to God's law? Is it enough to outwardly do the actions, or must my heart desire to perfectly follow God's law? Must I conform to God's law and character in desires, thoughts, words, and deeds?

In Matthew 5:21-22, when Jesus said that the attitude (being angry) makes us subject to judgment, does that mean that the attitude (being angry) is the same as the action (committing murder)? If we have the attitude, should we go ahead and do the action because we are guilty by our attitude? Or is the sin even worse if we do the action?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 14 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 16 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Right and Wrong Responses to Sin](#)" (January 18, 2015), "[The Seven Root Vices](#)" (February 4, 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Love Constraining to Obedience](#) (words by William Cowper (1731-1800))

Chorus:

To see the Law by Christ fulfilled,
To hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child
And duty into choice.

No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright
And what she has, she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.

(Repeat chorus)

How long beneath the Law I lay
In bondage and distress
I toiled the precept to obey,
But toiled without success.

(Repeat chorus)

Then to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do
Now if I feel its power within
I feel I hate it too.

(Repeat chorus)

Then all my servile works were done,
A righteousness to raise
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose His ways.

(Repeat chorus)

Question 13: How do you come to learn of your sin and guilt?

The law of God shows me my sin and guilt.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are showing that it is God's law that reveals our sin. Since God's law is the perfect reflection of His character and shows us what God has demanded of us (question 9), it is also His law that will show us when we fall short. We may convince ourselves that we are not guilty, or try to blame it on other people, but God's law cuts through our excuses and shows us our sin and guilt.

This question shows us that sin and guilt are not a matter of culture or societal norms, but of a violation of God's law. Guilt is not primarily an internal, subjective feeling - it is an external, objective status before God. Those who break God's law are legally, objectively guilty before Him - even if they have seared their conscience so that they no longer feel that they are guilty.

Additional Questions:

How do you learn that you are guilty before God?

How do you know that you are a sinner?

How do you know that you have sinned?

What does God use to show us our guilt?

Scripture References:

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Romans 3:19-20

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Romans 7:7

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

Galatians 3:10

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

James 2:10

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Romans 2:14-15

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Questions for Further Discussion:

When we speak of our guilt, do we mean our feelings of guilt or our actual legal guilt before a holy God?

If someone does not feel guilty, does that mean that they are in fact not guilty of sin?

Are all people really guilty of sin? Isn't there anyone who is sinless?

Do you know anyone who is a "good person"? Then why do we say that there is no one who is good? In what sense are they "good people"? In what sense are they not "good people"?

How does the law of God show me my guilt?

Does the law help me to obey God, or does it merely tell me what I must do? If the law does not help, how will I ever be able to obey God?

What about people who do not have the law in written form in the Bible? How do they know they are guilty of their sin? (See Romans 2:14-15).

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 3 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), [questions 39](#) and [40](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 15 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[The Proper Use of God's Law](#)" (July 24, 2011).

Suggested Worship Song:

The Law of God is Good and Wise (words by Matthias Loy, 1873) *We could not find a version available online

(Note the three uses of the law in this hymn. In verses 1-2 it shows us our sin to cause us to despair and look to Christ; in verse 3 it shows the Christian God's will for how to live in gratitude, and in verse 4 it serves to restrain the wickedness of mankind.)

The law of God is good and wise,
And sets His will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness,
And dooms to death when we transgress.

Its light of holiness imparts
The knowledge of our sinful hearts,
That we may see our lost estate
And seek deliverance ere too late.

To those who help in Christ have found
And would in works of love abound
It shows what deeds are His delight
And should be done as good and right.

When men the offered help disdain
And willfully in sin remain,
Its terror in their ear resounds
And keeps their wickedness in bounds.

The law is good, but since the fall
Its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die
And has no power to justify.

To Jesus we for refuge flee,
Who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at His throne,
Saved by His grace through faith alone.

Question 14: Did God originally create humans so sinful and guilty?

No. God originally created them good, made in His own image, able to glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are making the point that human beings were not created sinful and guilty. We were created with the ability to be like God in character and to fulfill the purpose for which we were made. The problem is not in our original design or creation - it is in our conduct after we were created. This will lead to the following questions that discuss the fall of Adam and how that has affected us.

This question shows us that the problem we have can not be blamed on God. It is not that He made us sinful and guilty. He made us sinless, able to obey Him, and to glorify and enjoy Him forever. The problem we have has come from ourselves - not from God.

Additional Questions:

Did God make people who were sinful?

Were Adam and Eve created as sinners?

Were Adam and Eve able to obey God when they were created?

Scripture References:

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:31

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Genesis 2:15-17

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 5:1

This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

Ecclesiastes 7:29

This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.

Ephesians 4:24

Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Psalms 8:3-9

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean that humans are the image of God? Is it some part or trait of humans that is the image of God, or is it our humanity itself, in its fullness, that is the image of God?

When God looked at everything in creation and said it was very good, what does that tell us about creation as God originally made it? What about humans?

Were Adam and Eve able to obey God when they were created?

What was the original character of Adam and Eve like? How does Paul describe the image of God in Ephesians 4:24? What are the three words we have used to summarize God's character? (See question 7).

What did God command Adam and Eve to do? If they did this, would it have brought glory to God? Would it have brought enjoyment to them?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 6 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), [questions 9](#) and [10](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 14 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Man - The Image of God](#)" (March 25, 2007), and "[God's Call for Mankind](#)" (April 1, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:

[All Creatures of Our God and King](#) (by Francis of Assisi, 1225)

All Creatures of Our God and King
All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!

Refrain

O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!
(Refrain)

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
That givest man both warmth and light.
(Refrain)

And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!
(Refrain)

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!
(Refrain)

Question 15: Then how did humans become sinful and guilty?

Our first father Adam sinned when he willfully disobeyed God. This fall has poisoned our nature so that we are born sinners, guilty before God, and since then we all choose to disobey God as well.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are showing the origin of our problem - the sin of Adam. Sin was not part of our design but came in through Adam's willful disobedience.

Note that the sin is attributed to Adam, even though Eve actually violated God's command first. This is because the Scripture universally attributes the fall and its effects to Adam - not to Eve. The Scripture does this because Adam was the head of the human race - not Eve. As our covenant head, it was Adam whose disobedience has plunged us all into sin, ruin, and despair.

Furthermore, note that Adam's sin affected our nature. We are not born in the pristine state of Adam's original creation. We are born with a sinful nature. This is known as original sin. Adam's sin has an actual effect on our nature so that we are born guilty and with a propensity to sin. This is important because it shows the depth of our problem. It is not one of only external conduct - our very nature is poisoned by sin. The problem is radical - running to the very root and core of our being - and this will necessitate a radical solution.

Finally, note that we are not only sinners because of what Adam did. We are also sinners by our own conduct. We can not simply blame Adam. Each of us has chosen to disobey God throughout our lives. We are sinners by nature and by choice.

Additional Questions:

Why did people become sinful?

Why are all of us sinful?

Why do we all do bad things?

How did sin enter into humanity and our world?

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Genesis 6:5

The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Romans 5:12, 18-19

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--.... 18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Psalm 51:5

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Ephesians 2:3

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Matthew 15:19

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Isaiah 53:6

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why did the sin of Adam lead to all humans being sinful?

What does it mean to say that Adam's sin "poisoned our nature"? What does it mean to have a sinful nature?

When does the Scripture say we become sinful? Is it later in life, or from conception?

Are we sinners because we do sinful things? Or do we do sinful things because we already have a sinful nature? Or are we sinners both because of a sinful nature and because of our own choice to sin?

What does it mean that we receive guilt from Adam's sin? How can his sin make us guilty? Why does Paul say we all 'die' in Adam? (Note carefully 1 Corinthians 15:22 and Romans 5:12-19, and how we receive guilt and death from Adam's sin, and righteousness and life from Christ's obedience. Both of these are imputed - placed on - us. If it is not true with Adam's sin, then it can not be true with Christ's obedience.)

Am I a sinner and guilty simply because of Adam's sin, or have I also chosen to go astray myself?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 7 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), [questions 13](#) through [18](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 14 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Consequences of the Fall on Mankind](#)" (April 22, 2007), "[The Consequences of the Fall on Creation](#)" (April 29, 2007), and "[Christ - The Last Adam](#)" (September 12, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ](#) (words by Horatius Bonar - 1857, music by John Darwall - 1770 [same tune used for Rejoice the Lord is King])

Thy works, not mine, O Christ, speak gladness to this heart;
They tell me all is done; they bid my fear depart.
To whom, save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

Thy pains, not mine, O Christ, upon the shameful tree,
Have paid the law's full price and purchased peace for me.
To whom, save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ, has borne the awful load
Of sins that none in Heav'n or earth could bear but God.
To whom, save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

Thy death, not mine, O Christ, has paid the ransom due;
Ten thousand deaths like mine would have been all too few.
To whom, save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

Thy righteousness, O Christ, alone can cover me:
No righteousness avails save that which is of Thee.
To whom, save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?

Question 16: Will God allow such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

No. In His holiness, love, and integrity God judges all sin, both now and in eternity.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are making the point that God will not simply overlook our sin. His character - note the repetition of holiness, love, and integrity again - will not allow this. God's very Being demands that sin be punished. This question shows that God's response to sin is to punish the sinner; future questions will explore how this is done.

Furthermore, note that it is not even one part of God's Being that demands this, but rather all of His character. Since sin violates God's holiness and is in fact evil, He must punish it. To do so would be unholy and unjust. Because sin destroys the universe He created, His love for His creation demands that sin be punished. To simply overlook it would be hateful and unmerciful. Since God's character does not change, and because He has announced that He will punish sin, He can not simply look the other way. If He did so, He would violate His own character and would be shown to be a liar.

This question shows us that every single sin must be punished. Many proclaim that a God of love would not punish people, but this is utter foolishness. God's holiness, love, and integrity demand that sin be punished fully - and it will be. If there is hope for us (and there is!) it will not be found in God merely overlooking our sin.

Additional Questions:

Will God just forget about our wickedness?

Will my sin go unpunished?

Will sin go unpunished forever?

Scripture References:

Habakkuk 1:13

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.

Psalms 5:4-5

You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. 5 The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

Galatians 3:10

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Romans 1:18

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Isaiah 3:11

Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done.

Romans 2:8-9

But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Hebrews 9:27

Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

Questions for Further Discussion:

If God is loving, why does He judge sin?

If God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity, why does this necessitate that He judge sin? Why can't He just forget about it and forgive?

Why does God's holiness demand that He judge sin? Why does His love demand that He judge sin? Why does His integrity demand that He judge sin?

How does God judge sin during this life? How do we see His wrath against sin in this fallen world?

How does God judge sin in eternity?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 10 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 19 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 18 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Consequences of the Fall on Mankind](#)" (April 22, 2007), and "[Preparing for the Judgment](#)" (September 23, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:[O God Our Lord](#) (by Keith Green)

(Note: This song speaks of the awesome and terrible reality of hell - a terrible thing to ponder).

Who you gonna throw in the lake of fire,
 O God our Lord?
 Who you gonna throw when the flames get higher,
 O God our Lord?
 The Devil and the man with the dark desire,
 O God our Lord.
 The Devil and the man with the dark desire,
 O God our Lord.
 O God our Lord, O God our Lord.
 Who you gonna throw in the lake of fire,
 O God our Lord, O God our Lord.

Will my name be there when the books are opened,
 O God our Lord.
 Will my name be there when the books are opened,
 O God our Lord.
 You better know now, don't just be hoping,
 O God our Lord.
 You better know now, don't just be hoping,
 O God our Lord.
 O God our Lord, O God our Lord.
 Will my name be there when the books are opened,
 O God our Lord, O God our Lord.

Who's outside of the Holy City,
 O God our Lord.
 Tell me, who's left out of the Holy City,
 O God our Lord.
 The liar and the thief and the ones half ready,
 O God our Lord.
 The liar and the thief and the ones half ready,
 O God our Lord.
 O God our Lord, O God our Lord.
 Tell me who's left out of the Holy City,
 O God our Lord, O God our Lord.

My, My, My Lord.
 I'm crying out to you master, oh Lord,
 Don't you know I need you, oh Lord.
 Have mercy on a poor sinner like me, Oh Jesus.
 Don't you know I need you, Oh Lord.

Question 17: What then is the effect of God's judgment upon our fallen condition?

In our fallen condition we have lost fellowship with God, His creation, and one another, and brought His just anger and curse upon ourselves. As a result, we are subject to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are discussing how God punishes sin. In question 16 we saw the fact that God of necessity must punish sin; here we learn how He does this, both now and in eternity. This judgment on sin works itself out in several ways.

First, note how sin has ruptured our relationships with God, creation, and one another. Each of us is at war with God, the earth, and each other. This is the result of sin. God has punished our willful rebellion by allowing sin to have its effect, which has been devastating. This is the curse that has come upon us because of the fall, producing the many miseries we observe and experience throughout this life.

Second, God punishes our sin by death. We were created to live - not to die. Yet, because of sin, all of us will die. Our bodies will wear out and perish. There is no escaping this judgment of God upon the sin of humanity.

Finally, after death sin will be judged by the pains of hell, which last forever. The punishment of sin does not end in death; it will continue in hell - unless we are rescued.

Additional Questions:

What are the effects of sin?

How do we see the effects of God's judgment?

What is our misery from sin?

How does sin affect us?

What bad things have happened because of the fall?

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:8

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:11-13

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" 12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:16-19

To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Titus 3:3

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

Galatians 3:10

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hebrews 9:27

Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

Revelation 20:12-15

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why did Adam and Eve hide from God in Genesis 3:8? Does sin separate us from God?

What effects of the fall did God announce in Genesis 3:16-19? How do you see evidence of these effects in the world today?

When God asked Adam if he had eaten the forbidden fruit, why did Adam blame Eve? (See Genesis 3:11-13). How does sin damage our relationships with other people?

What did God say the punishment for sin would be in Genesis 2:16-17? Has this come to pass? Do you think it refers only to physical death at the end of this life, or does it include spiritual death/separation from God - now and in eternity?

Does God's judgment and punishment of our sin end with our physical death? How does the Bible describe God's judgment and punishment of our sin in eternity?

Why would God punish our sins for eternity? Why wouldn't they stop at physical death? What does this say about the terrible nature of our sin and the utter holiness of God?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 19 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 16 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Consequences of the Fall on Mankind](#)" (April 22, 2007), and "[Preparing for the Judgment](#)" (September 23, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:[Just As I am Without One Plea](#) (by Charlotte Elliott - 1835)

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Question 18: Will God condemn all mankind to suffer and die in sin?

No. In His holiness, love, and integrity God has provided a way of redemption and forgiveness.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are making the point that God has not left us without hope. The previous questions would leave us in despair if God had not provided a way of escape. Because of our sin, we can not save ourselves. But thanks be to God, He has provided a way out for us.

Note that God's way of redemption from sin, like His judgment of sin, is related to His character. Redemption is not based on one aspect of God's character - but all of His character. Because God is holy, redemption must include payment for sin. Because God is loving, He desires to save us from our sin. Because of His integrity, God works redemption in a way that is perfectly consistent with His own character.

This question shows us that there is hope. Though we have sinned and thus deserve endless misery in this life and then the pains of hell forever, God has not abandoned us. He has worked redemption for us - which will be explained in the next section of the catechism - which covers how God has delivered us from our sin and misery through Christ.

Additional Questions:

Did God just forget about us because of our sin?

Did God just condemn us to remain in sin?

Did God just forget about us and condemn us to sin and misery?

Did God just let all mankind remain in sin?

Will God just let everyone suffer and go to hell?

Scripture References:

Exodus 34:6-7

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

Psalms 86:15

But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Psalms 103:6-8

The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Micah 7:18-20

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. 19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. 20 You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago.

John 3:16-18

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Romans 3:20-26

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Ephesians 1:7-8

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Questions for Further Discussion:

How do God's holiness, love, and integrity work together to provide redemption and forgiveness?

How are God's holiness, love, and integrity seen in the verses shown above? Can you see where each of these perfections of God's character is seen in each set of verses?

Why does God's holiness demand that He judge sin? Why does His love demand that He judge sin? Why does His integrity demand that He judge sin?

Why does God's holiness demand that He forgive sin? Why does His love demand that He forgive sin? Why does His integrity demand that He forgive sin?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 11 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 20 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[What Is God's Character Like](#)" (September 29, 2019), "[Our Redemption in Christ](#) (God's Saving Grace)" (May 20, 2007) and "[Yahweh - The Name of Our Covenant God](#)" (August 2, 2009).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder](#) (by John Newton - 1774, scripture I Cor. 6:11, 20, Rev. 1:5)

Let us love and sing and wonder
 Let us praise the Savior's name
 He has hushed the law's loud thunder
 He has quenched Mount Sinai's flame
 He has washed us with His blood
 He has washed us with His blood
 He has washed us with His blood
 He has brought us nigh to God

Let us love the Lord Who bought us
 Pitied us when enemies
 Called us by His grace and taught us
 Gave us ears and gave us eyes
 He has washed us with His blood
 He has washed us with His blood
 He has washed us with His blood
 He presents our souls to God

Let us sing though fierce temptation
 Threatens hard to bear us down
 For the Lord, our strong salvation,
 Holds in view the conqu'ror's crown
 He, Who washed us with His blood,
 He, Who washed us with His blood,
 He, Who washed us with His blood,
 Soon will bring us home to God

Let us wonder grace and justice
 Join and point to mercy's store
 When through grace in Christ our trust is
 Justice smiles and asks no more
 He Who washed us with His blood
 He Who washed us with His blood
 He Who washed us with His blood
 Has secured our way to God

Let us praise and join the chorus
 Of the saints enthroned on high
 Here they trusted Him before us
 Now their praises fill the sky
 Thou hast washed us with Thy blood
 Thou hast washed us with Thy blood
 Thou hast washed us with Thy blood
 Thou art worthy Lamb of God

Part 2 - Grace
How We Are Delivered From Sin and Misery Through Christ

Question 19: If according to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both in this world and for eternity in hell, how then can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

God's holy justice must be satisfied and paid in full, either by ourselves or by another.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are beginning the section of how God has delivered us through the Person and work of Christ. Because God is a holy God, He can not and will not simply overlook sin. It must be paid for in full, or God would be unholy and unjust.

As with the previous question, note that God's way of salvation is related to His character. Redemption is not based on one aspect of God's character - but all of His character. Because God is holy, redemption must include payment for sin.

This question shows us that our deliverance from sin was costly. The cost will be developed in the coming questions. Here, we simply note that the debt of sin must be paid, either by the sinner or by another who bears the penalty in their place.

Additional Questions:

If God is just and holy, how can we escape God's wrath?

If God is just and holy, can He simply forgive our sin without requiring punishment?

What is required for our sins to be forgiven and for us to be returned to God's favor?

Scripture References:

Exodus 23:7

Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.

Job 15:14–16

What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous? 15 If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, 16 how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water!

Ezekiel 18:4

The soul who sins is the one who will die.

Nahum 1:3

The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished.

Habakkuk 1:3

Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.

Romans 2:5–6

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

Hebrews 9:22

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Questions for Further Discussion:

If God is love, why doesn't He just forgive sins, without any penalty being paid?

Why does God's justice demand that sins be paid for by someone?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 12 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 19 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Day of the Lord for the Nations](#)" (July 12, 2009), and "[Our Redemption In Christ](#)" (May 20, 2007), and "[Preparing for the Judgment](#)" (September 23, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Nothing But the Blood of Jesus](#) (Words and Music by Robert Lowry, 1876)

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Now by this I'll overcome—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
Now by this I'll reach my home—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Glory! Glory! This I sing—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
All my praise for this I bring—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Question 20: Can we pay our debt to God by our own efforts and good works?

No. In fact, by our sins we increase our debt every day.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we establish the fact that redemption and salvation are not found in our own efforts. In fact, as the answer indicates, our own actions only increase our debt to God and the penalty we are due. If we are going to be saved, it will have to be through God's work, not our own.

This question shows us that salvation is not found by looking within ourselves. To find peace with God, we will require the work of another, someone who will come and work redemption for us.

Additional Questions:

Can I pay the penalty for my own sin?

Is salvation found in my own good works?

Can I be saved by doing more good than evil?

Scripture References:

Isaiah 64:6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Ephesians 2:8–9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Luke 18:10–14

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Romans 3:20

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Galatians 2:16

Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it impossible for us to do enough good works to pay for our own sin?

What if we do a lot of good works? Will they outweigh our sin, and justify us before God?

Why do my sins only increase my debt to God every day?

If we could stop sinning for even a day, would that justify us before God? Why or why not?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 13 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Justification By Faith Alone](#)" (February 6, 2005), and "[Our Redemption in Christ \(God's Saving Grace\)](#)" (May 20, 2007), and "[Preparing for the Judgment](#)" (September 23, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Rock of Ages](#) (by Augustus Toplady, 1763)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Question 21: What sort of Redeemer and Mediator is needed to bring us back to God?

One who is perfectly righteous, truly human and truly God.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we establish the fact that the one who must work redemption and salvation for us must meet three primary criteria - He must be perfectly righteous, fully human, and fully Divine. The reasons for these requirements will be explored in the next two questions.

This question also shows that sin can not be paid for by animal sacrifice. Although God authorized these in the Old Testament, they were only pointers to the one sacrifice that could truly pay for our sin - the sacrifice of the perfectly righteous God-Man, Jesus.

Additional Questions:

Who can pay for my sin?

What sort of person can pay for my sin?

Since we can not pay for our own sin, what type of Redeemer should we look for and expect?

Scripture References:

Hebrews 7:26–28

Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Hebrews 10:1–4

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Hebrews 2:14, 17

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil... 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

1 Corinthians 15:21

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Romans 5:18–19

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Isaiah 9:6–7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Matthew 1:22–23

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us."

Isaiah 59:15–16

Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, his own righteousness sustained him.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it necessary for the Redeemer to be both God and human?

How can One Person be both God and Human?

What about animal sacrifices? Can't they pay for our sin?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 15 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 21 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 21 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Christ the True Man](#)" (December 26, 2010), and "[The Method of Redemption - The Incarnation](#)" (June 3, 2007), and "[Our Redeemer - Christ the Second Adam](#)" (June 10, 2007), and the entire series "[Images of Christ](#)" (Advent 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:[Hark! The Herald Angels Sing](#) (by Charles Wesley, 1739)

Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with man to dwell;
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace.
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings,
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King.

Question 22: Why must the Redeemer be truly human?

The Redeemer must be truly human so that He might fulfill humanity's obligations to God by completely obeying God's Law and suffering and dying for human disobedience.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we establish the fact that the one who must work redemption and salvation for us must be truly, fully human. He must be a real human being - not just have the appearance of humanity, nor be part human. If he is going to be our representative, he must be truly and fully as we are in every respect - yet without sin (which will be explained in the next question).

This question also shows that to fulfill our obligations to God, the Redeemer had to do two things. First, he had to positively obey God, so that he would fulfill our covenant obligations and have righteousness to give to us. Second, he had to pay the penalty for our disobedience to God's law. He had to suffer and die in our place so that we could be set free from the curse we deserved.

Once again, this question also shows that sin can not be paid for by animal sacrifices. Although God authorized these in the Old Testament, they only pointed to the one sacrifice that could truly pay for our sin - the sacrifice of the perfectly righteous God-Man, Jesus.

Finally, this question shows that Jesus, because He is really and fully human, shows us what humanity was intended to be. Sin is not an essential part of our nature, but rather a distortion of it. We were created to obey God, and Jesus shows us what this looks like.

Additional Questions:

Why was the Redeemer a human?

Why did the Redeemer have to be a real human being?

Why did the Redeemer have to be fully human?

Scripture References:

Hebrews 2:14, 17

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil... 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

1 Corinthians 15:21

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Romans 5:18–19

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Hebrews 10:1–4

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Hebrews 4:14–16

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it necessary for the Redeemer to be a real human being? Does it matter if He only appeared to be a human?

What does it mean to say that Jesus is fully and truly human?

What about animal sacrifices? Why can't an animal pay for our sin? Even if animals could pay for our sin, why would they still be unqualified to serve as our Redeemer?

How is it a help to us to know that Jesus is as fully human as we are and that He fully faced real temptations - yet did not sin?

Why is it important for us to understand that Jesus was fully human and at the same time had no sin? What does this tell us about real humanity?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 16 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and questions [22](#) and [24](#) of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Christ the True Man](#)" (December 26, 2010); "[Christ - The Last Adam](#)" (September 12, 2004); and "[Our Redeemer - Christ the Second Adam](#)" (June 10, 2007); and "[Man - The True Human](#)" (December 2, 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Fairest Lord Jesus](#) (Munster Gesangbuch 1677, translated 1850, 1873)

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling starry host;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels heaven can boast.

Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
Now and forever more be Thine.

Question 23: Why must the Redeemer be perfectly righteous?

The Redeemer must be perfectly righteous so that His obedience and sacrifice in our place will be acceptable to God.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we establish the fact that the one who must work redemption and salvation for us must be perfectly righteous. This is important for two reasons, which are brought out in the answer. First, if he is not perfect in righteousness, he has no obedience to offer in our place. Second, if he is not perfect in righteousness, His sacrifice will not be accepted by God and thus will not be able to pay for our sins.

This question also shows that to fulfill our obligations to God, the Redeemer had to do two things. First, he had to positively obey God, so that he would fulfill our covenant obligations and have righteousness to give to us. Second, he had to pay the penalty for our disobedience to God's law. He had to suffer and die in our place so that we could be set free from the curse we deserved.

As in the previous question, this one shows that the Redeemer's work in our behalf had two aspects - active obedience and passive suffering in our place. Often Christians have only focused on the passive, suffering aspect. But that is only half of the story. Even if Jesus has offered a perfect sacrifice in our place, thus removing our sin, we would still owe God perfect active obedience. Thus, our full redemption and salvation required not only suffering to pay for our sin but also actively obeying God's Law and Covenant in our place.

Additional Questions:

Why did the Redeemer have to be without sin?

Why did the Redeemer have to never disobey God?

Why did the Redeemer have to be perfectly obedient to God?

Scripture References:

Romans 5:18–19

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 4:4–5

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Philippians 2:8

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Leviticus 1:3–4

If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord. 4 He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

1 Peter 1:18–19

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important that Jesus never sinned?

Why is it necessary for the Redeemer to live a long life of obedience to God? Could Jesus have simply appeared on the cross and died?

Why is it important to say that Jesus not only died for us but also that He lived for us?

What if Jesus had sinned prior to dying for us? Could He have still died in our place so that our sins would be forgiven?

Why did the Old Testament law require that sacrificial animals had to be perfect, without defects or blemishes?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 16 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Great Exchange](#)" (April 1, 2012); "[Christ and the Sacrificial Aspect of the Law](#)" (May 16, 2004); "[Our Redeemer - Christ the Second Adam](#)" (June 10, 2007); "[Man - The True Human](#)" (December 2, 2018); and "[Ox - The True Servant](#)" (December 16, 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:

[The Lamb of God](#) (Twila Paris, 1985)

Your only Son, no sin to hide
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God

Your gift of love, they crucified
They laughed and scorned Him as He died
The humble King, they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God

Oh, Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God
I love the holy Lamb of God
Oh, wash me in His precious blood
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God

I was so lost, I should have died
But You have brought me to Your side
To be led by Your staff and rod
And to be called a lamb of God

Oh, Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God
I love the holy Lamb of God
Oh, wash me in His precious blood
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God

Oh, wash me in His precious blood
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God

Question 24: Why must the Redeemer be truly, fully God?

The Redeemer must be truly, fully God so that His obedience and suffering would be of infinite value, He would be able to bear the full wrath of God against sin, and overcome Satan and death.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we establish the fact that the One who must work redemption and salvation for us must be truly God. This is necessary for three reasons, which are brought out in the answer. First, only one who is of Infinite worth can pay our debts to God, because it is an infinite debt. Second, only one who is God could bear the full fury of God's wrath against sin. Third, only one who is God could overcome the power of Satan and death, freeing us and giving us life.

As in the question on why the Redeemer had to be fully, truly human, this question is also meant to draw out that Jesus had to be truly and fully God. He could not be anything less than the fullness of God. A created being - even a 'god' - could not serve as our Redeemer. If Jesus is not fully, truly, really God, then we are still in our sin.

Additional Questions:

Why did the Redeemer have to be God?

Why did the Redeemer have to be truly God?

Why did the Redeemer have to be fully God?

Scripture References:

Psalms 49:7–9

No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him — 8 the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough — 9 that he should live on forever and not see decay.

Isaiah 59:15–16

Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.

Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Isaiah 53:4–11

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. 11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

1 John 3:8

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Colossians 2:13–15

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Acts 2:24

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Hebrews 7:15–17, 23–27

And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."... 23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26 Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it necessary that Jesus is truly God?

Why is it necessary that Jesus is fully God?

What if Jesus is not fully God, but only the highest of God's creatures? Could He pay the infinite debt we owe to God?

Why did Jesus have to be God to be able to bear the full fury of God's wrath against sin?

How long did Jesus suffer to pay for our sin? How long would a mere human have to suffer to pay for sin?

Why did Jesus need to be fully God to overcome Satan and death? Could a created being overcome Satan and death?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 17 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 21 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 23 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Eagle - The True God](#)" (December 23, 2018); "[Fullness In Christ](#)" (May 6, 2012); "[The Preeminence of Christ](#)" (March 11, 2012); and "[The Method of Redemption - The Incarnation](#)" (June 3, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:[And Can It Be That I Should Gain?](#) (Charles Wesley, 1738)

And can it be that I should gain
 An interest in the Savior's blood?
 Died He for me, who caused His pain—
 For me, who Him to death pursued?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above
 So free, so infinite His grace—
 Emptied Himself of all but love,
 And bled for Adam's helpless race:
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
 For O my God, it found out me!
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
 For O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
 Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
 Alive in Him, my living Head,
 And clothed in righteousness divine,
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Question 25: Who is the Redeemer and Mediator, the perfectly righteous God-Man?

The only Redeemer and Mediator between God and humanity is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God who became human for us and for our salvation.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show that Jesus is the one who fulfills all of the requirements necessary for the Redeemer and Mediator. He is the one Person who is fully and truly God, fully and truly human, perfectly righteous, and who in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension worked salvation for us. It is important to note the word 'only' in the answer. Jesus is not a Redeemer - He is the only Redeemer. He is not one of many Mediators between God and humanity - He is the only Mediator between God and humanity. All others who claim to provide access to God are impostors, whose efforts lead not to God, but to hell.

Additional Questions:

Who is the Redeemer?

Who is the only Mediator between God and humanity?

Who is the only Person who fulfills all of the requirements to serve as the Redeemer?

Scripture References:

1 Timothy 2:5–6

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Galatians 4:4–5

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Questions for Further Discussion:

How do we see that Jesus fulfilled all of the requirements to be the Redeemer and Mediator?

How can we claim that Jesus is the only Redeemer and Mediator?

Why isn't it narrow and bigoted to say that Jesus is the only way to God and that all other ways that promise to take us to God are false?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 18 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 21 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 20 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Pure Gospel vs. Corrupt Teachings](#)” (May 28, 2006); “[The Great Exchange](#)” (April 1, 2012); “[The Centrality of Christ](#)” (May 15, 2005).

Suggested Worship Song:[There Is No Other Name](#) (Robin Mark, 2002)

There is no other name
 By which man can be saved
 There is no other Name under heaven
 There is rest for my soul
 And the wounded made whole
 And the captives set free and forgiven

There is no other name
 By which man can be saved
 There is no other Name under heaven
 There is rest for my soul
 And the wounded made whole
 And the captives set free and forgiven

Such love as I've never known
 I've found in the grace that Flowed to me
 In my unrighteousness
 This is why my heart and soul
 And tongue confess

Question 26: What three major roles from the Old Testament did Jesus fulfill?

Jesus fulfilled the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we establish the fact that Jesus fulfilled the roles of prophet, priest, and king. These three roles are often called the 'offices' of Christ. They refer to the three major types of leaders over God's people in the Old Testament. In His work of restoring God's people, Jesus fulfilled all three of these roles.

The purpose of the roles of prophet, priest, and king, and the differences between them will be discussed in the next question.

Additional Questions:

What three religious and political offices did Jesus fulfill?

What three roles in the Old Testament did Jesus fulfill?

Scripture References:

Hebrews 1:1–3

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18–19

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.... 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.

Acts 3:22–23

For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. 23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

Psalms 110:4

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 7:15–17, 23–27

And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."...

23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

26 Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Psalms 110:1

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

Isaiah 9:6–7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important that Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King?

How do we see the three roles of prophet, priest, and king discussed in Hebrews 1:1-3?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 31 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 23 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg and Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Offices of Christ](#)" (August 21, 2011), "[Christ and the Priesthood](#)" (March 21, 2004), "[Christ and the Prophets](#)" (March 28, 2004), and "[Christ and the Kingship](#)" (April 4, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Join All The Glorious Names](#) (Isaac Watts, 1709; chorus by Bob Kauflin)

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom love and power
That mortals ever knew
That angels ever bore
All are too poor to speak
Your vast and priceless worth
Too poor to set my Savior forth

CHORUS

Jesus Your name is glorious
Our Prophet Priest and King
Jesus You're reigning over us
And forevermore
Your praises we will sing

Great Prophet of my God
My tongue would bless Your name
Through You the joyful news
Of our salvation came
The long-awaited news
Of every sin forgiven
Of hell subdued and peace with heaven

Jesus my Great High Priest
You shed Your blood and died
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside
Your pure and precious blood
For all my sin atoned
And now it pleads before the throne

Question 27: How does Jesus fulfill the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King?

As Prophet, Jesus speaks the Word of God to us. As Priest, He sacrifices Himself for our sins and intercedes for us before God's throne. As King, He rules over us and all of creation to accomplish the will of God.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show how Jesus fulfills the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King. This helps us see the difference between prophets, priests and kings, and shows which part of Jesus' ministry is the fulfillment of each of these roles.

Additional Questions:

How is Jesus the Prophet? How is Jesus the Priest? How is Jesus the King?

How is Jesus our Prophet, Priest, and King?

Scripture References:

Hebrews 1:1–3

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Luke 4:18–21

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Hebrews 7:15–17, 23–27

And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."... 23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26 Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Ephesians 1:19–22

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church...

Questions for Further Discussion:

What is the role of a prophet? What is the role of a priest? What is the role of a king?

How does Jesus fulfill the role of Prophet, Priest, and King?

What would happen if a church only focused on one or two of these roles of Christ, and rejected the other roles? Why is it important that we focus on and receive Christ's ministry in all three of these roles?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 31 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and questions [24-26](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg and Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Offices of Christ](#)" (August 21, 2011), "[Christ and the Prophets](#)" (March 28, 2004); "[Christ and the Priesthood](#)" (March 21, 2004); "[Christ and the Kingship](#)" (April 4, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds](#) (John Newton, 1779)

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.

Dear Name, the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place,
my never-failing treasury, filled
with boundless stores of grace!

Jesus! my Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

Till then I would thy love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of thy Name
refresh my soul in death!

Question 28: Does Jesus' work as Redeemer mean that all of our sins can be forgiven?

Yes, through the redeeming work of Jesus, we may be reconciled to God, having all of our sins forgiven and having the righteousness of Christ credited to us.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show the effectiveness of the redeeming work of Jesus for humanity. Through Christ's Person and work our sins may be forgiven and the righteousness of Christ may be credited to us so that we are received by God.

Note that we see a twofold aspect of the work of Christ. First, he removes our sin. Second, He credits righteousness to our account. Regarding this second aspect, notice that it does not say Jesus makes us righteous, but that His righteousness is credited (or 'imputed') to our account. We do not become inherently righteous; His righteousness is given to us.

It is important to note the word 'may' in the first part of the answer. The work of Christ does not guarantee forgiveness of the sins of all human beings. As we will see in a future question, His Redeeming work is only effective for His people who are united to Him in faith. However, at this point, it is critical to note that all of our sins, no matter how great, are forgiven through the redemptive work of Christ.

Additional Questions:

Can all of our sins be forgiven because of Jesus?

Did Jesus' work open the way for us to be reconciled to God?

Scripture References:

2 Corinthians 5:18–19, 21

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.... 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 4:4–5

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is there any sin so awful that it can not be forgiven because of the work of Christ?

Why is it important to know that Jesus' redeeming work not only removed my sins but also credited his righteousness to my account?

What is the difference between saying that the righteousness of Christ is credited (or imputed) to me, and saying that Jesus makes me righteous?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 25 of the [New City Catechism](#).

For additional information, see the teachings "[Our Great Redemption In Christ](#)" (March 26, 2006); "[The Great Exchange](#)" (April 1, 2012).

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Suggested Worship Song:

[Nothing But the Blood](#) (Robert Lowry, 1876)

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

(Refrain):

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Question 29: Did Jesus' work as Redeemer accomplish anything else?

Jesus' redeeming work is the beginning of reconciling all fallen creation.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show the effectiveness of the Redeeming work of Jesus on the rest of creation. Not only did Jesus' death open reconciliation between God and humanity; it also reconciles all of creation, which was affected by our fall, with God. This aspect will reach its consummation at the return of Christ when all things are renewed by God.

It is important to note the word 'may' which appeared in the answer to the previous question does not appear in this answer. While Christ's redemptive work is only effective for some human beings (those who are His people and look to Him in faith), there is no such contingency relative to creation. His reconciling work is effective for creation, which does not have to respond (nor could it) in faith.

Additional Questions:

What did Jesus' work do for creation?

What did it accomplish for the rest of creation?

How did Jesus' work affect the rest of the universe?

Scripture References:

Colossians 1:19–20

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Romans 8:19–23

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Acts 3:21

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Matthew 19:28

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is Jesus only the creator of humans, or all creation? Does His redemptive work only apply to humanity, or does it affect all of creation?

If Jesus' work had all of creation in view, how should we view creation? Is it important to God?

What is the future of the present creation? Will it simply be destroyed, or does God plan to renew it because of Christ's redemptive work?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 26 of the [New City Catechism](#).

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Cosmic Scope of Christ’s Redemptive Work](#)” (June 17, 2007); “[The New Heavens and the New Earth \(Part 1\)](#)” (August 19, 2007); “[The New Heavens and the New Earth \(Part 2\)](#)” (August 26, 2007); “[The Preeminence of Christ](#)” (March 11, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[All Creatures of Our God and King](#) (Francis of Assisi, 1225)

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

And thou most kind and gentle Death,
Waiting to hush our latest breath,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou leadest home the child of God,
And Christ our Lord the way hath trod.
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Question 30: Are all people saved through the redemptive work of Christ?

No, only those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united to Christ in sincere faith are saved.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show that the benefits of the redeeming work of Jesus are not given to all humans, but only to those who are born again and look to Christ with a true, living faith. Although all human beings were placed under the curse when Adam fell, only those who are “in Christ” receive the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work. Those who are not born again and who do not look to Christ in faith remain under the curse of sin.

Additional Questions:

Are all human beings saved?

Is everyone automatically saved because of the work of Christ?

Does Jesus’ redeeming work save everyone?

Scripture References:

Romans 5:17

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 3:22–24

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Titus 3:4–7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Since all human beings are punished for Adam’s fall, why don’t all of them automatically receive the benefits of Christ’s work?

Why are some human beings not saved by the work of Jesus?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 20 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 29 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 27 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Justification By Faith Alone](#)” (February 6, 2005); “[The Blessings of Faith](#)” (February 20, 2005); “[Our Redemption In Christ](#) (God’s Saving Grace)” (May 20, 2007)

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Sweet and Aweful Is the Place](#) (Isaac Watts, 1707)

How sweet and aweful is the place
With Christ within the doors,
While everlasting love displays
The choicest of her stores!

While all our hearts and all our songs
Join to admire the feast,
Each of us cry, with thankful tongues,
“Lord, why was I a guest?”

“Why was I made to hear Thy voice,
And enter while there’s room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”

’Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly drew us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.

Pity the nations, O our God!
Constrain the earth to come;
Send Thy victorious Word abroad,
And bring the strangers home.

We long to see Thy churches full,
That all the chosen race
May with one voice, and heart and soul,
Sing Thy redeeming grace.

Question 31: What happens to those who are not united to Christ by faith?

They remain under God's righteous judgment, and after death are cast into hell, where they will be justly punished forever.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show the sad condition of those who do not receive the great benefits of Christ's redeeming work. These people remain under God's righteous judgment in this life, even though they may still experience the blessings of God's common grace. Worst of all, however, after death, those not united to Christ by faith will experience God's just punishment in hell, forever paying the penalty for their sin.

Additional Questions:

What happens to those who do not believe in Christ?

What happens to unbelievers?

What happens to those who are not Christians?

Scripture References:

John 3:16–18, 36

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.... 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

2 Peter 2:9

The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

2 Thessalonians 1:8–10

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Hebrews 10:28-29

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

Matthew 25:46

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean that those who do not believe in Christ remain under the righteous judgment of God in this life?

If unbelievers are still under God's judgment, why do they experience so many blessings in this life?

Why does God require such a terrible punishment as hell for the sins of those who do not receive Christ?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 28 of the [New City Catechism](#).

For additional information, see the teachings “[Justification By Faith Alone](#)” (February 6, 2005); “[The Blessings of Faith](#)” (February 20, 2005); “[Our Redemption In Christ \(God’s Saving Grace\)](#)” (May 20, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:[O God Our Lord](#) (by Keith Green, 1982)

Who You gonna throw in the lake of fire
 O God, our Lord?
 Who You gonna throw when the flames get higher
 O God, our Lord?

The Devil and the man with the dark desire
 O God, our Lord
 The Devil and the man with the dark desire
 O God, our Lord

O God, our Lord, O God, our Lord
 Who You gonna throw in the lake of fire
 O God, our Lord, O God, our Lord

Will my name be there when the books are opened
 O God, our Lord?
 Will my name be there when the books are opened
 O God, our Lord?

You better know now, don't just be hoping
 O God, our Lord
 You better know now, don't just be hoping
 O God, our Lord

O God, our Lord, O God, our Lord
 Will my name be there when the books are opened
 O God, our Lord, O God, our Lord

Who's outside of the holy city
 O God, our Lord
 Tell me, who's left out of the holy city
 O God, our Lord

The liar and the thief and the ones half ready
 O God, our Lord
 The liar and the thief and the ones half ready
 O God, our Lord

O God, our Lord, O God, our Lord
 Tell me who's left out of the Holy City
 O God, our Lord, O God, our Lord

My, my, my Lord
 I'm crying out to You Master, oh Lord
 Don't You know I need You, oh Lord?
 Have mercy on a poor sinner like me, oh Jesus
 Don't You know I need You, oh Lord?

Question 32: How may we be saved from this terrible fate?

We are saved only by repenting of our sin and having true faith in Jesus Christ and His substitutionary atoning death on the cross.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we show that the only way we may escape the righteous wrath of God against our sin is by repenting of our sin and having true faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The definition of repentance, true faith, and all of the benefits of being saved will be explored in the upcoming questions.

It is important to note the word ‘only.’ The important understanding of faith alone will be explored in the upcoming questions, but for now, it is important to note that salvation comes from faith alone in Christ alone. Just as we may not seek salvation in anyone other than Christ, we also may not seek salvation in Christ by any means other than true faith in Him.

Finally, it is critical to note that our faith is in the substitutionary atoning work of Jesus - not just His example. We are saved because Christ died in our place (substitution), bearing the righteous wrath of God against sin (atonement). Any other understanding of the work of Jesus Christ is insufficient and does not lead to salvation. If Christ was merely our example or a great teacher, we are still lost in our sin. True faith is in the Person of Jesus (His full and true Deity and humanity) and His work on our behalf (His perfect obedience, and His substitutionary and atoning death).

Additional Questions:

How may we be saved from going to hell?

How are we saved?

How do we receive the benefits of Jesus’ redeeming work for us?

Scripture References:

Mark 1:14–15

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Luke 24:46–47

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Acts 5:31

God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Acts 20:21

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Romans 10:9–10

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

John 20:30–31

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Ephesians 2:8–9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why are both repentance and faith required for us to receive Christ’s redeeming work? Is it possible to have genuine faith without truly repenting of our sin?

Why is it important to say that we are saved ‘only’ by repentance and faith in Christ? What other things are we tempted to add to the work of Christ?

Why is it important to say that our faith must be in the Person and work of Christ? What if someone says they believe in Jesus, but do not believe that He had to die in their place for a loving God to receive them?

Why must we believe in the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ? Why can’t we just believe that His life was a great example for us and that His teachings are the guide by which we should live?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 60 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 85 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 29 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[What It Means To Be A Disciple](#)” (July 13, 2008); “[Justification By Faith Alone](#)” (February 6, 2005); “[Paul, Peter, and Justification By Faith Alone](#)” (January 2, 2005); “[Second Chance](#)” (September 4, 2011).

Suggested Worship Song:[Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy](#) (by Joseph Hart, 1759)

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus, ready, stands to save you,
Full of pity, joined with power.
He is able, He is able;
He is willing; doubt no more.

Come ye needy, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh.
Without money, without money
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Bruised and broken by the fall;
If you tarry 'til you're better,
You will never come at all.
Not the righteous, not the righteous;
Sinners Jesus came to call.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.
This He gives you, this He gives you,
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Lo! The Incarnate God, ascended;
Pleads the merit of His blood.
Venture on Him; venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.
None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.

Question 33: What is repentance?

Repentance is when a person becomes aware of their sin, grieves over and hates it, and turns from their sin to God, seeking mercy in Christ.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we define true repentance. Since salvation is found only in repentance and faith in Christ, it is critical that we understand repentance and faith accurately.

Note that there are three parts to true repentance. First, there is knowledge of the fact of our own sin. Second, there is an internal response to our sin (grief and hatred). Third, there is an active turning away from sin and toward God. True repentance has all of these elements. Simply understanding that we sin is not repentance, nor is knowing our sin and being sorry for it. Real repentance always includes turning from our sin to God.

Additional Questions:

What is true repentance?

How do we repent?

Scripture References:

Joel 2:12–13

*“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”
13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.*

2 Corinthians 7:9–10

For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Isaiah 55:6–7

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is simply knowing that we are sinners the same thing as repentance?

What is the difference between being sorry for our sin and repenting of our sin? Is it enough to simply be sorry for our sin?

Why must true repentance include not only turning from our sin but also turning to God?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 87 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 29 of the [New City Catechism](#).

For additional information, see the teachings “[Biblical Confession and Repentance](#)” (August 28, 2018), “[The Joy of Confession and Forgiveness](#)” (September 4, 2018), and “[What It Means To Be A Disciple](#)” (July 13, 2008).

Suggested Worship Song:[God Be Merciful to Me - Psalm 51](#) (by Richard Redhead, 1853, scripture Psalm 51)

God, be merciful to me,
On thy grace I rest my plea;
Plenteous in compassion thou,
Blot out my transgressions now;
Wash me, make me pure within,
Cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

My transgressions I confess,
Grief and guilt my soul oppress;
I have sinned against thy grace
And provoked thee to thy face;
I confess thy judgment just,
Speechless, I thy mercy trust.

I am evil, born in sin;
Thou desirest truth within.
Thou alone my Savior art,
Teach thy wisdom to my heart;
Make me pure, thy grace bestow,
Wash me whiter than the snow.

Broken, humbled to the dust
By thy wrath and judgment just,
Let my contrite heart rejoice
And in gladness hear thy voice;
From my sins O hide thy face,
Blot them out in boundless grace.

Gracious God, my heart renew,
Make my spirit right and true;
Cast me not away from thee,
Let thy Spirit dwell in me;
Thy salvation's joy impart,
Steadfast make my willing heart.

Sinners then shall learn from me
And return, O God, to thee;
Savior, all my guilt remove,
And my tongue shall sing thy love;
Touch my silent lips, O Lord,
And my mouth shall praise accord.

Question 34: What is true faith in Jesus Christ?

True faith in Jesus Christ is a knowledge of what God has revealed in his Word concerning the Person and redeeming work of Jesus Christ, agreement that God's Word on these things is true, and an active trusting in Jesus, receiving and resting on him alone for salvation.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we give a definition of true faith. Since salvation is found only in repentance and faith in Christ, it is critical that we understand repentance and faith accurately.

Note that there are three parts to true faith. First, true faith is built on a knowledge of the facts of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. True faith rests on the actual Christ that is revealed in the Bible, not a Christ of our own making. Second, true faith not only recognizes the facts about Jesus, but it acknowledges that what God has revealed in the Bible about Jesus' Person and work is true. It is not simply that we can accurately speak what the Bible says about Jesus and salvation; it is a recognition that these things are true. Third, true faith receives and rests on Christ alone. It does not simply acknowledge the truth about Christ, but actively responds to that truth. Simply understanding and acknowledging as true the facts of the Gospel is not biblical faith. Real faith always includes a personal response to those facts.

Additional Questions:

What is true faith?

What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ?

Scripture References:

Romans 10:14

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

John 20:30–31

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

James 2:19

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder.

Romans 10:9–10

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Galatians 2:15–16

We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why must true faith consist of an accurate knowledge of the basic biblical facts, an assent of the truth of those facts, and an active trust in Christ as revealed in the Biblical revelation?

What if someone understands the facts of the Gospel and says they believe they are true, but does not actively turn to God. Is such knowledge and assent true faith?

Does Satan understand the basic facts of the Gospel? Does he know that they are true? Does he have an active trust in the God revealed in those facts?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 21 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 86 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 30 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Sola Fide - Justified Through Faith Alone](#)" (October 22, 2017), "[Justification By Faith Alone](#)" (June 29, 2014), and "[Our Confidence In Christ - Holding On to the Gospel](#)" (April 6, 2008).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Approach My Soul the Mercy Seat](#) (by John Newton, 1779)

Approach, my soul, the mercy seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there.

Thy promise is my only plea,
With this I venture nigh;
Thou callest burdened souls to Thee,
And such, O Lord, am I.

Bowed down beneath a load of sin,
By Satan sorely pressed,
By war without and fears within,
I come to Thee for rest.

Be Thou my Shield and hiding Place,
That, sheltered by Thy side,
I may my fierce accuser face,
And tell him Thou hast died!

O wondrous love! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead Thy gracious Name.

"Poor tempest-tossed soul, be still;
My promised grace receive";
'Tis Jesus speaks—I must, I will,
I can, I do believe.

Question 35: What does it mean that we are saved by Christ alone through faith alone?

It means that we are accepted before God because of Christ's righteousness and atoning work alone, apart from any works or merits of our own, and that His righteousness is received by faith alone, apart from any efforts on our part.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we expand on the idea that we are saved by Christ alone through faith alone. It explores in what sense we are saved by Christ and in what sense through faith. Furthermore, it begins to show why there is an emphasis in this question, is on the word 'alone.' This will be more fully developed in the next question.

Note that we are saved by the work of Christ. The basis of our salvation is not our faith; it is the Person and work of Christ. Faith is not the ground or basis of our justification and salvation; Christ is the ground, and faith is the instrument or means by which we receive Christ's righteousness as our own. This is critical. Some have falsely said that faith is the only work God accepts. Faith is not a work, and it is not why we are saved. We are not saved because of our faith, but because of Christ. Faith is merely the way we receive Christ.

Also, note that we are saved by Christ alone through faith alone. We do not add anything to Jesus, nor do we receive Him by any means other than faith.

Additional Questions:

How are we saved by Jesus alone through faith alone?

What does it mean that we are saved by Jesus alone? What does it mean that we are saved through faith alone?

Scripture References:

Philippians 3:7–9

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Galatians 2:15–16

We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:20–21

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

1 Corinthians 1:30

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Ephesians 2:8–9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Questions for Further Discussion:

In what sense are we saved by Christ? In what sense are we saved by faith?

What does it mean to say that Christ is the ground or basis of our salvation? What does it mean to say that faith is the instrument or means of our salvation?

Why is it wrong to say that faith is the only work that God accepts? Is faith a work?

Are we accepted by God because we have faith, or because of what Christ did for us, which is received by faith? What is the difference?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 61 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 86 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and questions [29](#), [30](#), and [33](#) of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Solus Christus - Saved By Christ Alone](#)" (October 15, 2017); "[Sola Fide - Justified By Faith Alone](#)" (October 22, 2017); "[Justification By Faith Alone](#)" (February 6, 2005); "[Our Confidence In Christ - Holding On To the Gospel](#)" (April 6, 2008).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Rock of Ages](#) (by Augustus Toplady, 1763)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Question 36: Can our own works contribute anything to our acceptance before God?

No, they can not, because even our best efforts and works are defiled by sin, and because everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ. To seek salvation through good works is a denial that Christ is the only Redeemer and Savior.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we continue to explore the idea that we are saved by Christ alone through faith alone. It shows that salvation is completely separate from our own works. We are not saved by faith plus some of our works. Our works contribute nothing to our acceptance before God.

Note that there are two reasons that our works do not contribute to our acceptance before God. First, they can not contribute because they are all defiled by sin. To be acceptable to God, they must be perfect, and even our best works are marred by sin, and therefore they can not contribute to our acceptance by God. Second, there is no need for anything other than the works of Jesus. He has done everything necessary for our salvation. To try and add anything to His perfect work is a denial of the sufficiency of Christ for salvation.

Additional Questions:

Are our own works part of our being saved by Jesus?

Can my works add to what Jesus has done for me?

Scripture References:

Galatians 3:10–14

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Philippians 3:7–9

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Ephesians 2:8–9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Galatians 2:15–16

We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:20–21

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

Galatians 5:3–4

Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Even though we are accepted before God because of Christ, and we receive this through faith, can't our good works make us more acceptable to God?

If we think that our works add even a little to our standing before God, what does that say about the sufficiency of the work of Christ for us?

Why does Paul say that if we think our works contribute to our justification we are obligated to obey the whole law?

Why does thinking that our works add to our justification place us under the curse of the law?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 62 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 33 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Sola Gratia - Saved Because of Grace Alone](#)" (October 8, 2017); "[Solus Christus - Saved By Christ Alone](#)" (October 15, 2017); "[Sola Fide - Justified By Faith Alone](#)" (October 22, 2017); "[Justification By Faith Alone](#)" (February 6, 2005); "[Our Confidence In Christ - Holding On To the Gospel](#)" (April 6, 2008).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Yet Not I, But through Christ In Me](#) (by Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, Michael Farren)

Verse 1

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

Refrain 1

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to his
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

Verse 2

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed

Refrain 2

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

Verse 3

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

Refrain 3

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released, I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

Verse 4

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne

Refrain 4

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:

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Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

Refrain 4

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus

All the glory evermore to Him

When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:

Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

Tag

When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:

Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

Question 37: What change in status occurs for those who receive Christ through faith alone?

Those who receive Christ through faith alone are justified and adopted by God.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we explore how our position before God changes when we are saved by Christ alone through faith alone. In short, when the Spirit regenerates us and we turn to Christ in faith, we are justified and adopted by God. In this question, we simply introduce these two terms. We will define them in the next two questions.

It is important to note that other things happen when we are saved. For example, the Spirit comes to live in us and He begins the process of sanctification in us. We will consider some of these in later questions. Here we are not looking at all of the benefits we receive through the work of Christ, but only the change in our standing before God that accepting His work through faith brings about.

Additional Questions:

When we believe in Jesus, how is our standing before God changed?

How does receiving Christ through faith change our position before God?

Scripture References:

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 3:21–25

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:33–34

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Romans 8:15–16

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

Galatians 4:4–7

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Galatians 3:26

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Before someone is a Christian, they are guilty before God and counted as a child of Satan. How is this changed after we receive Christ by faith?

Why is it important to understand how our legal situation before God is changed when we are united to Christ by faith?

How does justification change our legal standing before God?

How does adoption change our legal standing before God?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 60 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 32 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Sola Fide - Justified By Faith Alone](#)” (October 22, 2017); “[Justification By Faith Alone](#)” (February 6, 2005); “[Our Confidence In Christ - Holding On To the Gospel](#)” (April 6, 2008); “[Christ: The True Son of God](#)” (May 30, 2004); and “[Heirs of God Through Christ](#)” (March 6, 2005).

Suggested Worship Song:

[You Are My King](#) (by Billy James Foote, 1997; verse 2 lyrics by Perry Anderson)

I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well
Your spirit is within me
Because You died and rose again

Amazing love, how can it be?
That You, my King, would die for me
Amazing love, I know it's true
Its my joy to honor You
Amazing love how can it be?
That my King would die for me
Amazing love I know it's true
Its my joy to honor You
In all I do
I honor You

I'm adopted, You left the Father
I am righteous, You wore my sin
I'm alive and well
And reigning in your kingdom
Because You died and rose again

Amazing love, how can it be?
That You, my King, would die for me
Amazing love, I know it's true
Its my joy to honor You
Amazing love how can it be?
That my King would die for me
Amazing love I know it's true
Its my joy to honor You
In all I do
I honor You

Question 38: What is justification?

Justification is the gracious act of God in which He declares that we are totally righteous, as if we had never sinned and as if we had positively obeyed all of God's law perfectly.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we define the term justification. This is a very important biblical term, and it is critical that we have a clear understanding of what it means.

Note that there are several key points in the definition. First, justification is a gracious act of God. It is not something we earn, nor is it something we do. Second, justification is a legal declaration. It does not refer to an infusion of righteousness or a change in our nature, but rather refers to a legal declaration by God. This is evident not only from the actual meaning of the term, but also the way it is used in Scripture and other ancient writings. Third, in justification we are declared righteous, as if we had never sinned and as if we had actually obeyed God's law perfectly. Both aspects are essential to justification. Justification is not "just as if I had never sinned" - it is "just as if I had never sinned and just as if I had kept the entire law perfectly."

Additional Questions:

What does justification mean?

What does it mean that we have been justified?

Scripture References:

2 Corinthians 5:18–21

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 8:33–34

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Philippians 3:7–9

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Romans 4:5–8

However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Romans 3:20–26

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished — 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Questions for Further Discussion:

As a result of being justified, how does God view us? Are we partially or totally innocent?

Why is it important that justification is a legal declaration and not an infusion of righteousness into us?

Is the righteousness of justification our own, or is it the righteousness of Christ that is given to us? Why is that important?

Why is it important to understand that in justification we are not only counted as having not sinned but also as having actually kept God's law perfectly?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 60 and 61 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 33 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 32 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Sola Fide - Justified By Faith Alone](#)" (October 22, 2017); "[Justification By Faith Alone](#)" (June 29, 2014); "[Justification By Faith Alone](#)" (February 6, 2005); "[The Great Exchange](#)" (April 1, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness](#) (by Count Nikolaus Ludwig Von Zinzendorf, 1739; trans. John Wesley, 1740)

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which, at the mercy seat of God,
Forever doth for sinners plead,
For me, e'en for my soul, was shed.

When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
Ev'n then this shall be all my plea,
Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

This spotless robe the same appears,
When ruined nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new.

Jesus, the endless praise to Thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me—
For me a full atonement made,
An everlasting ransom paid.

O let the dead now hear Thy voice;
Now bid Thy banished ones rejoice;
Their beauty this, their glorious dress,
Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness.

Question 39: What is adoption?

Adoption is the gracious act of God in which He makes us members of His family with all of the rights, privileges, and inheritance of being His child.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we define the term adoption. This is a very important biblical term, and it is critical that we have a clear understanding of what it means.

Note that while it is true that we are also God's children through regeneration, in this section we are only concerned with adoption, in which we are legally taken to be God's children, even though by nature we were sons of disobedience, children of the Devil and children of wrath.

Additional Questions:

What does adoption mean?

What does it mean that we have been adopted by God?

Scripture References:

Romans 8:15–17

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Galatians 4:4–7

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Galatians 3:26–29

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is adoption a legal action, or is it the result of a change in our nature?

What are the benefits of us being adopted by God?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 34 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Adopted By God](#)” (April 28, 2013); “[Christ: The True Son of God](#)” (May 30, 2004); and “[Heirs of God Through Christ](#)” (March 6, 2005).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Children of the Living God](#) (Fernando Ortega, 1998)

Children of the Living God,
come and sing, sing out loud!
Children of the Living God,
sing to the Living God!
Sing of the wonders He has made,
bird in flight, falling rain.
Sing of the wonders He has made,
sing to the Living God!

(Chorus)

How He loves us with great love,
He who sits enthroned above.
For our lives He spilled His blood,
sent His Spirit like a flood.
Children of the Living God,
sing to the Living God!
Sing of His gentle healing hands,
how they found the lowliest man.
Sing of His gentle healing hands,
sing to the Living God!

Sing of the mercy that He gives,
though we sin, He forgives.
Sing of the mercy that He gives,
Sing to the Living God!

(Chorus)

Sing for the morning when He comes in the clouds,
Glorious Son!
Sing for the morning when He comes,
sing to the Living God!

Question 40: Since we receive all of these benefits by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, must we still do good works and obey God's Word?

Yes, because those who have been redeemed by Christ and regenerated by the Spirit receive a new nature that desires to submit to God and to show gratitude to God by obeying Him and doing good works.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we begin the transition to the final section of the catechism - growth in grace and gratitude. From the earliest days of the Gospel, those who advocate works righteousness have claimed that proclaiming justification by Christ alone through faith alone will produce people who never do good works and whose lives are dominated by sin. Paul faced this constantly, as did the Reformers in the 16th and 17th centuries, and we will face it today.

However, this claim is utterly false. It is false because those who are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone have also been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, being given a new nature. This is distinct from justification and is not part of our legal standing before God, but it is true of everyone who is justified. Anyone who is not regenerated will not look to Christ in faith and be justified. And everyone who looks to Christ in faith has been regenerated and given a new nature that desires to obey God, is grateful for salvation, and longs to produce good works.

This question only gives the ground for good works - our new nature. In the final section of the catechism, we will go into all of the means (or ways) God will use to help us grow in our faith and become like Christ, and will discuss what Christlikeness and good works actually look like in the life of a believer.

Additional Questions:

Since we are justified apart from works, do Christians have to obey God?

Since we become God's children by grace apart from works, does it matter if Christians try to obey God?

Will those who have been justified and adopted begin to live different lives?

Scripture References:

Romans 6:1–3, 11-14

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?... 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Titus 2:11–14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Titus 3:4–8

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Romans 6:15–18

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Ephesians 2:8–10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Questions for Further Discussion:

If we are not justified and adopted because of our good works, then why not just continue to live under the domination of sin, doing whatever we want?

Is it possible for a Christian to live a life that is characterized by a total disregard for obeying God?

Why is it important that we keep the doctrines of justification (our being declared righteous by God apart from works) and the importance of Christians doing good works distinct from one another? If Christians are going to obey God because of their new nature, why do we stress the importance of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions [64](#) and [86](#) of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 34 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Gospel of God's Grace](#)" (June 18, 2006); "[Good Citizens and Neighbors Through the Gospel](#)" (July 2, 2006); "[A Fruitful Knowledge In Christ](#)" (March 4, 2012); "[Our Present Call - Walking Dead To Sin](#)" (August 5, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:[Love Constraining To Obedience](#) (William Cowper, 1772)

Chorus: To see the Law by Christ fulfilled,
To hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child
And duty into choice.

No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright
And what she has, she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.
(Repeat chorus)

How long beneath the Law I lay
In bondage and distress
I toiled the precept to obey,
But toiled without success.
(Repeat chorus)

Then to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do
Now if I feel its power within
I feel I hate it too.
(Repeat chorus)

Then all my servile works were done,
A righteousness to raise
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose His ways.
(Repeat chorus)

**Part 3 - Gratitude and Growth
How We Grow In Our Faith and
Live In Gratitude to God for the Grace We Have Received In Christ**

Question 41: What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son, and He dwells forever in everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are beginning to look at how we grow in the Christian faith and live in gratitude to God for all we have received. In short, all of this is done through the work of the Holy Spirit - so we begin with a couple of questions about the Spirit's Person and work.

In this question we are identifying the major fact about the Holy Spirit - He is God. As the third Person in the Trinity, He is as fully Divine as the Father or the Son, and is co-eternal with them. There was no time when the Spirit did not exist. True, full Deity is the fundamental fact that we must know regarding the Holy Spirit.

The second thing we need to know at this point is that in the new covenant the Spirit dwells in every single child of God. Those who have been regenerated by the Spirit and have placed their faith in Christ are indwelt by that same Holy Spirit. The reception of the Holy Spirit is not some secondary experience only given to a select few. On the contrary, He lives in every single new covenant believer.

Additional Questions:

Who is the Holy Spirit?

What do we believe about the Spirit of God?

Who do you believe the Holy Spirit is?

Scripture References:

Genesis 1:2

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Psalms 139:7–12

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Job 33:4

The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

John 14:16–17

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

Galatians 4:6

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”

Romans 8:9

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Romans 8:15–16

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

Ephesians 1:13–14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession — to the praise of his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:21–22

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important to know that the Holy Spirit is God Himself?

Why does Paul say that if someone does not have the Holy Spirit living in them they do not belong to Christ? Is it possible for someone to come to Christ or to live for Christ apart from the Person and work of the Spirit?

Why is it important to know that the Holy Spirit dwells in me? How does that help me to walk with God? How does that help me to not give in to temptation?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 53 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 36 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the series entitled “[The Holy Spirit](#)” by Bret Hicks, taught during 2008 and 2009.

Suggested Worship Song:

[Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God](#) (Keith Getty & Stuart Townend, © 2006 Thankyou Music)

Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Bring the presence of the risen Lord
To renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see;
Give me passion for Your purity.
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within;
May Your joy be seen in all I do—
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin
In each thought and deed and attitude,
Kindness to the greatest and the least,
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.
Turn my striving into works of grace.
Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,
Giving life to all that God has made,
Show Your power once again on earth;
Cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise.
Lead us on the road of sacrifice
That in unity the face of Christ
Will be clear for all the world to see.

Question 42: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, comforts us, guides us, gives us spiritual gifts, and empowers us to resist sin and obey God.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are continuing to look at the Holy Spirit - and specifically at His work in the life of a believer. The Spirit of God works to help us discern sin and righteousness and then empowers us to live in a way that pleases God. He is the Holy Spirit - and He ever works to produce holiness in God's children.

This process of growing in holiness begins with the conviction of sin and continues with the comfort we receive through the Gospel. Furthermore, the Spirit guides us into truth and away from error, gives us spiritual gifts so that we might serve God and others, and empowers us to turn from sin and to embrace God's ways. The ways he does this in us will be explored in the coming questions. For now, it is important to understand that this is His primary work in us as believers.

Additional Questions:

What does the Holy Spirit do in the life of believers?

What is the work the Holy Spirit is trying to do in our lives?

Scripture References:

John 16:8–11

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Romans 8:1–4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:13–14

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

John 14:26

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Hebrews 2:4

God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

1 Corinthians 12:7, 11

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.... 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Galatians 5:16–26

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is so much of the Spirit's work in relation to showing us our sin and helping us to resist sin and obey God?

How does the Holy Spirit comfort us? What is the relationship between the Spirit's work of comforting us and the Gospel?

What do we mean when we say the Spirit guides us? Is this primarily about daily guidance for decisions, or for the ability to help us discern right from wrong, truth from error, and sin from righteousness?

Why is it important that the Holy Spirit imparts gifts to every believer? Do you know what gifts God has given to you by His Spirit? How can you use them to serve other people?

Can we resist sin and embrace holiness apart from the work of the Holy Spirit?

Do we grow to be more like Christ by striving to keep the law, or by receiving help from the Holy Spirit as we walk with Him?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 37 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the New City Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For a detailed look at the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, including many of the specific works listed in the answer to this question, see the series entitled "[The Holy Spirit](#)" by Bret Hicks, taught during 2008 and 2009.

For additional information, see the series entitled "[Spiritual Gifts](#)" by Bret Hicks, taught during 2012 and 2013.

Suggested Worship Song:

[Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God](#) (Keith Getty & Stuart Townend, © 2006 Thankyou Music)

Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Bring the presence of the risen Lord
To renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see;
Give me passion for Your purity.
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within;
May Your joy be seen in all I do—
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin
In each thought and deed and attitude,
Kindness to the greatest and the least,
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.
Turn my striving into works of grace.
Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,
Giving life to all that God has made,
Show Your power once again on earth;
Cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise.
Lead us on the road of sacrifice
That in unity the face of Christ
Will be clear for all the world to see.

Question 43: What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the gradual process through which those who have already been justified by faith alone are being made holy in all they desire and do, as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit to actively resist sin and embrace righteousness.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are continuing to look at the Holy Spirit - and specifically at His work in sanctification in the life of a believer. There are several points that are essential to understand sanctification.

First, sanctification is a gradual process. Justification is an instantaneous, completely accomplished fact in which the believer is declared by God to be righteous because of the work of Christ. Sanctification, however, is not instantaneous but rather a gradual process. All believers are equally justified, but every believer is at a different place in the process of sanctification.

Second, sanctification follows justification. We are justified by faith alone, and then and only then can we begin the process of being sanctified. Justification and sanctification must never be separated from one another - but they also must never be confused with one another. Justification comes first, and then the Spirit begins the work of sanctification in our lives.

Third, sanctification results in changed conduct. In justification, we are declared righteous despite our actual conduct. In sanctification, our actual conduct is being gradually conformed to Christ.

Fourth, sanctification involves the whole person. The Spirit is not only working to change our external conduct, but also our internal desires and thoughts. In fact, His work is often from the inside out, changing our very desires, which in turn issue in new actions.

Fifth, while justification is solely the work of God, in sanctification the Spirit begins the work and empowers us at every step, but we also must actively participate. If we try to work we will never be justified, but if we do not participate with the Spirit and actively work we will never be sanctified. Some of the principal ways we participate with the Spirit will be explored in the next two questions.

Finally, sanctification consists of both resisting sin and dying to its power and desires, and also embracing righteousness as we become alive to holiness by the work of the Spirit.

Additional Questions:

What do we mean by the word sanctification?

What does it mean to be sanctified or holy?

Scripture References:

Philippians 2:12–13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

2 Peter 1:5–9

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Ezekiel 36:25–27

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Ephesians 4:22–24

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 12:1–2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Galatians 5:16–18, 25

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.... 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Romans 8:12–14

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Romans 6:19–22

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important that we make a distinction between sanctification and justification? What happens if we begin to confuse justification and sanctification?

Why is it important to understand that sanctification is a gradual process?

Why is it important for us to know that we must cooperate with the Spirit in sanctification? What happens if we do not cooperate with the Spirit’s work in us?

Is it possible to be a Christian and to not be growing in our sanctification? If I never grow in the process of dying to sin and living for holiness, what might that say regarding my conversion?

Is holiness really important for the Christian? Why or why not?

Why is it important for us to both resist sin and to positively embrace righteousness?

Is sanctification possible apart from the work of the Spirit and His empowering? What happens if we try to simply change our own actions?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 35 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 32 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Law and the Spirit in Sanctification](#)” (August 7, 2011), “[Christian Moral Formation](#)” (November 19, 2017), “[The Power of God in the Obedience of Christians](#)” (August 20, 2017), and “[Our Present Call - Walking Dead to Sin](#)” (August 5, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Take My Life \(Holiness\)](#) (Scott Underwood, © 2005 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)

Holiness, holiness is what I long for
 Holiness is what I need
 Holiness, holiness
 Is what you want from me

[Chorus:]

Take my life and form it
 Take my mind transform it
 Take my will conform it
 To yours, to yours, oh Lord

Righteousness, righteousness is what I long for
 Righteousness is what I need
 Righteousness, righteousness
 Is what you want from me

Take my life and form it
 Take my mind transform it
 Take my will conform it
 To yours, to yours, oh Lord

Purity, purity..is what I long for
 Purity is what I need
 Purity, purity
 Is what you want from me

Take my life and form it
 Take my mind transform it
 Take my will conform it
 To yours, to yours, oh Lord

Question 44: What things does the Holy Spirit use to help us grow in our sanctification?

The Holy Spirit works in many ways to sanctify us, but He primarily uses the means of grace - specific activities in which God has promised to meet His people and strengthen them by His grace. The most important means of grace are the Word of God, fellowship with believers in the Church, the sacraments of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are beginning to look at the primary ways that believers cooperate with the Holy Spirit in our process of sanctification - the means of grace.

This question is important because it helps us understand that although the Spirit is free to work in our lives to empower us as He sees fit, He has revealed to us the ways He has promised to work in our lives. These ways or activities are called by various names such as the spiritual disciplines or devotional practices, but here we use the name the means of grace, which indicates that these activities are not primarily about our discipline in following Christ, but rather about the ways that the Spirit meets us to empower us in our Christian lives.

The final part of the answer lists the four most important of the means of grace - the Word, prayer, fellowship with believers in the Church, and the sacraments of water baptism and the Lord' Supper. Each of these will be unpacked further in the remainder of the catechism, but for now, it is important to identify the primary means of grace.

Additional Questions:

How do we grow in our sanctification?

What do we mean by the phrase 'means of grace'?

How do we participate with the Holy Spirit to grow in our Christian lives?

What are the means of grace the Holy Spirit uses to help us grow?

Scripture References:

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Colossians 2:6–7

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Jude 1:20

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:36–42

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important that we understand the primary ways that God has promised to meet us - the means of grace? Can't God meet us anywhere at any time? Why is it important to stress these four activities then?

How can you practice these four means of grace in your daily lives?

How important are these means of grace in the life of a local church? How much of our worship should be comprised of these means of grace?

Is it possible to be Spirit-filled and growing in our salvation apart from consistent use of the means of grace?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 88 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and questions 65- 67 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#). Any resources on the Westminster Shorter or Heidelberg Catechisms will have a good discussion of this topic.

For a detailed look at the means of grace, see the series entitled "[The Habits of Grace](#)" taught during 2016, and also the series "[The Means of Grace](#)" taught during 2006.

For additional information on how the Spirit uses the means of grace in our Christian lives, see the teaching "[The Spirit, The Word, and the Means of Grace](#)" taught by Bret Hicks on September 7, 2008.

Suggested Worship Song:

[The Church's One Foundation](#) (Samuel Stone and Samuel Wesley, Public Domain)

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.
She is his new creation by water and the word.
From heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride.
With his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
this world sees her oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping;
their cry goes up: "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore:
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth has union
with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
like them, the meek and lowly,
may live eternally.

Question 45: What guide has God given us so that we may grow in our faith and learn how to live in a way that pleases him?

God has given us His Word, the Bible, to feed us, guide us, point us to Christ, and show us how to live in a manner that is pleasing to Him and for our good.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are now beginning to take a more specific look at each of the means of grace discussed in the previous question. We begin with the Word of God because it is foundational to understanding each of the means of grace.

This question causes us to consider the primary way that God feeds and guides us so that we might grow in our faith and become more like Christ. The primary means God uses to do this is the Bible - His Word. The Scripture is food for our soul, guides and directs our thoughts so that we may know truth from error, right from wrong, and points us to Christ so that we may see the perfect example of holiness - and so that we may be comforted in our struggles with sin. All of this enables us to walk more like Christ - which is pleasing to God and good for us since it is how we were made to live.

Additional Questions:

How do we know God's will for our lives, so that we can grow as Christians?

Where do we find guidance on how to live in a manner that is pleasing to God?

Where do we learn about Jesus so that we may see how we are called to live?

Scripture References:

2 Timothy 3:14–17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Ephesians 6:17

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

John 5:39

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.

Psalms 119:9–13

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. 12 Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees. 13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is the Word of God the foundational means of grace?

In what sense are all of the other means of grace built upon this one?

Why is the Bible central in our being guided by God into a life that is pleasing to Him?

In what two ways does the Scripture point to Jesus that are essential for us as we are trying to grow in holiness? Why is it important to see Him as the perfect example of holiness? Why do we need to be reminded of His atoning work on our behalf as we struggle with sin?

Why is it both pleasing to God and for our own good when we live in accordance with God's will as revealed in the Scripture?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 19 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), to questions [2](#) and [3](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 42 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter or New Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information on the Word of God as a means of grace, see the teachings "[Letting the Word Dwell in You Richly](#)" (January 17, 2010), "[Enjoying Jesus Through His Word](#)" (August 7, 2016). For a good overview of the idea of the means of grace and how the Word is foundational to all of the other means of grace, see the teaching "[The Spirit, The Word, and the Means of Grace](#)" (September 7, 2008).

For additional information of the Word of God, see the teachings "[God's Penetrating Word](#)" (June 16, 2019), "[Sola Scriptura - The Ultimate Authority of Scripture Alone](#)" (October 1, 2017), "[Devoted](#)" (September 2, 2013), and "[Meditating on God's Word](#)" (September 2, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Firm A Foundation](#) (R. Keen, Public Domain)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Question 46: How many books are in the Bible?

There are 66 books in the Bible.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are beginning a series of questions on the structure and names of the biblical books. If our lives are to be built upon the rock of God's Word, we must be familiar with that Word. If Christians do not know the basics about the Bible - how many books it contains, the basic structure of the Bible, and the names and order of the books - it is unlikely that they will dig into God's Word for themselves. Thus, though many catechisms have not included questions on the number and names of the biblical books, we thought it was critical to memorize this information at the very beginning of the catechism.

It should also be noted that in claiming the Scripture has sixty-six books, we are also claiming that the books of the Apocrypha (sometimes called the 'deutero-canonical writings') are not part of the Scripture. They, along with many other writings, can be read for edification and instruction, but they are not inspired and therefore not part of the Scripture. There are only sixty-six inspired writings, and these are whole of Scripture, and everything else must be judged by them.

Additional Questions:

How many books are in God's Word?

What is the total number of books God has placed in His Word?

How many books has God inspired and placed in the Scripture?

Scripture References:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Questions for Further Discussion:

How do we know which books belong in the Scripture?

Why do some Christians believe that there are more books than these 66? Why do we disagree?

What determines if a book belongs in the Scripture?

What do we mean when we say these 66 books are 'inspired'?

Additional Information:

The questions for further discussion and the additional information given below are only for older children and adults. Younger children simply need to know that the Bible contains 66 books.

This question is based on question 2 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

Wayne Grudem, [Systematic Theology, Chapter 3](#), discusses the canon of Scripture - which books belong in the Bible.

For further information on what books belong in the Bible, see the BRCC seminar "[How I Got My Bible](#)." This seminar covers in-depth the question of how we determined which books God had given us to be in the Bible and lists a lot of other resources for discussing these topics.

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Firm A Foundation](#) (R. Keen, Public Domain)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Question 47: What are the two major sections of the Bible?

The two major sections of the Bible are the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In this question, we are noting the most important structure of the Bible - it has two major parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. As noted above, without a basic familiarity with the structure of the Bible, it is unlikely that we will truly study God's Word and build our lives upon its teaching.

Additional Questions:

What are the two big parts of the Bible?

What are the two Testaments in the Bible?

What are the two halves of the Bible?

Questions for Further Discussion:

How do we know which books belong in the Scripture?

Why do some Christians believe that there are more books than these 66? Why do we disagree?

What determines if a book belongs in the Scripture?

What do we mean when we say these 66 books are 'inspired'?

Additional Information:

The questions for further discussion and the additional information given in chapter 3 are really only for older children and adults. Younger children simply need to know that the Bible contains 66 books, divided into the Old and New Testaments.

This question is based on question 2 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

Wayne Grudem, [Systematic Theology, Chapter 3](#), discusses the canon of Scripture - which books belong in the Bible.

For further information on what books belong in the Bible, see the BRCC seminar "[How I Got My Bible](#)." This seminar covers in-depth the question of how we determined which books God had given us to be in the Bible.

For additional information on the structure of the Bible, see the teaching "[Exploring the Book: Understanding the Structure of the Bible](#)" (February 28, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Firm A Foundation](#) (R. Keen, Public Domain)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Question 48: What are the thirty nine books of the Old Testament?

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs)
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question requires us to memorize the names and order of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. This basic familiarity gives the confidence to open the Scriptures and read them! It also helps us quickly find the various books when others reference them in a teaching or discussion.

Additional Questions:

Can you name all of the books of the Old Testament in order?

What are the names of the Old Testament books?

Scripture References:**Questions for Further Discussion:**

Why are the Old Testament books put in this order in our Bibles? Are they in chronological order? If not, in what order are they placed?

Can you discover the order of Old Testament books in the Jewish version? Why are they in that order?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 2 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

Wayne Grudem, [Systematic Theology, Chapter 3](#), discusses the canon of Scripture - which books belong in the Bible.

For further information on what books belong in the Bible, see the BRCC seminar "[How I Got My Bible](#)." This seminar covers in-depth the question of how we determined which books God had given us to be in the Bible and also gives information on the ordering of the books in the Jewish Bible.

For additional information on the structure of the Bible, see the teaching "[Exploring the Book: Understanding the Structure of the Bible](#)" (February 28, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Firm A Foundation](#) (R. Keen, Public Domain)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Question 49: What are the twenty seven books of the New Testament?

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts
Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
Revelation

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question requires us to memorize the names and order of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. This basic familiarity gives the confidence to open the Scriptures and read them! It also helps us quickly find the various books when others reference them in a teaching or discussion.

Additional Questions:

Can you name all of the books of the New Testament in order?

What are the names of the New Testament books?

Scripture References:**Questions for Further Discussion:**

Why are the New Testament books put in this order in our Bibles? Are they in chronological order? If not, in what order are they placed?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 2 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

Wayne Grudem, [Systematic Theology, Chapter 3](#), discusses the canon of Scripture - which books belong in the Bible.

For further information on what books belong in the Bible, see the BRCC seminar "[How I Got My Bible](#)." This seminar covers in-depth the question of how we determined which books God had given us to be in the Bible and also gives information on the ordering of the books in the Jewish Bible.

For additional information on the structure of the Bible, see the teaching "[Exploring the Book: Understanding the Structure of the Bible](#)" (February 28, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Firm A Foundation](#) (R. Keen, Public Domain)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

Question 50: How is the Word of God to be read and heard?

The Word of God should be read and heard prayerfully with delight, humility, diligence, reverence, and submission, so that we may receive it in faith, store it in our hearts and apply it to our lives.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question reminds us that it is not enough to read and hear the Bible. Because it is nothing less than God's Word to us, it must be attended to properly if we are to receive all of its many benefits. To approach the Scripture properly it requires that we approach it in the right posture and attitude (delight, humility, diligence, reverence, and submission) and that we also have the right goal in mind (receive it in faith, store it in our hearts and apply it to our lives).

This question serves as a way to ask ourselves and our children if we are merely going through the motions in reading the Scripture and listening to it being taught. If we are, it will only serve to harden our hearts. But if we approach it in the right attitude and with the right goals, it will be a source of endless blessing to us and it renews our mind and transforms our heart and will.

Additional Questions:

What attitude and goals should you have as you read the Bible?

What are the right attitudes we should have when receiving God's Word?

How should we respond to God's Word?

Scripture References:

Psalms 119:18

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psalms 1:2–3

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Acts 17:11

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

James 1:21

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Isaiah 66:2

"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Deuteronomy 6:6–9

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Hebrews 4:2

For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

Proverbs 2:1–6

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, 3 and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, 4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Matthew 7:24–27

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

John 14:21

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What happens to us if we do not approach the Bible with the right attitude? Can we still receive the blessings it has for us? Will it leave us unchanged or will our hearts actually be hardened as we hear God's Word improperly?

What is the danger of not applying God's Word to our lives?

If we continually read or hear the Word but do not actually apply it to our lives, can this hypocrisy make God's Word of no effect in our lives? Why or why not?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 90 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 42 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster Shorter and New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[God's Penetrating Word](#)" (June 16, 2019), "[The Question of the Bible](#)" (April 8, 2018), "[Sola Scriptura - The Ultimate Authority of Scripture Alone](#)" (October 1, 2017), "[Shema - hear and Speak God's Word](#)" (January 1, 2017), "[Devoted](#)" (September 2, 2013), "[God's Word - Our Treasure](#)" (January 1, 2012), and "[Meditating on God's Word](#)" (September 2, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:[Do You Tremble](#) (Wes King, 2009)

Have you counted the stars in the heavens
Have you walked the circumference of the earth
Have you measured the boundaries of the universe
Do you tremble at the Word of God
Have you uncovered the source of the thunder
Have you tamed the crashing mighty sea
Have you defied the force of gravity
Do you tremble at the Word of God

CHORUS:

The wise will hear Him and obey His word
Long and blessed will be their days upon the earth
The fool will perish in the folly of his ways
Do you tremble at the Word of God

Have you considered the scope of eternity
In the light of unwavering truth
Have you regarded the works of a strong and mighty hand
Do you tremble at the Word of God
Do you tremble, oh do you tremble at the Word of God?

CHORUS

Question 51: How is the teaching of God's Word summarized in the Apostles' Creed?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question is meant to give a brief overview of key Christian doctrinal beliefs. To do this it uses the Apostles Creed. Although the early creeds are not Scripture, they are excellent summaries of the faith that have been received by virtually every Christian group from the early days of the Church. They do not carry the authority of Scripture, but they are excellent summaries of the teaching of Scripture, carefully worked out, and universally received. Thus, the shortest of these Creeds, the Apostles Creed is used here. (Note: Even though it is called the Apostles Creed, it is nearly universally acknowledged that the Creed was not penned by the Apostles. But it is a very old creed, dating back to between 200 and 700 AD.)

Because the Creed is not Scripture, but only a summary of it, we will not take time in this Catechism to go through each of the articles of the Creed. This is done in the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions 23-58. There are also discussions of it in many other writings (including John Calvin's Institutes) and by many teachers.

By their very nature, Creeds are meant to briefly summarize key doctrinal beliefs and do not discuss the moral requirements of the Scripture. That will be covered in the next section on God's Law. Here we merely want to focus on essential Christian doctrines in a brief statement.

NOTE: The phrase "I believe in the holy catholic Church" is NOT referring to the Roman Catholic church, which did not exist as a unique church at this time. The word "catholic" means "universal" and so the phrase is referring to the universal Church, God's people.

Additional Questions:

Can you recite the Apostles' Creed?

Can you give a brief summary of the things Christians believe?

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it good to memorize brief statements of what Christians believe?

What is the difference between the Scripture and Creeds which attempt to summarize the teaching of Scripture? Which has more authority? Do Creeds have value for Christians today?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 23 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 31 of the [New City Catechism](#). In the Heidelberg Catechism, the various articles of the Creed are then discussed in questions 24-58. Any resources you find on Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Contending for the True Faith](#)" (June 23, 2019), "[Guarding the Deposit of Faith](#)" (September 6, 2015), "[The False Shepherds and Their Destructive Teachings](#)" (May 21, 2006).

Suggested Worship Song:Creed (Rich Mullins, 1993)

I believe in God the Father almighty
 Maker of Heaven and Maker of Earth
 And in Jesus Christ
 His only begotten Son, our Lord
 He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
 Born of the Virgin Mary
 Suffered under Pontius Pilate
 He was crucified and dead and buried

CHORUS:

And I believe what I believe
 Is what makes me what I am
 I did not make it, no it is making me
 It is the very truth of God and not
 The invention of any man

I believe that He who suffered
 Was crucified, buried, and dead
 He descended into hell and
 On the third day, rose again
 He ascended into Heaven where
 He sits at God's mighty right hand
 I believe that He's returning to
 Judge the quick and the dead
 Of the sons of men

CHORUS

I believe it, I believe it
 I believe it
 I believe it, I believe it

I believe in God the Father almighty
 Maker of Heaven and Maker of Earth
 And in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son,
 Our Lord
 I believe in the Holy Spirit
 One Holy Church, the communion of Saints
 The forgiveness of sin
 I believe in the resurrection
 I believe in a life that never ends

CHORUS

I believe it, I believe
 I believe it, I believe
 I believe it, I believe it

Question 52: What has God given to us so that we may know true holiness?

God has given us His moral law so that we might know true holiness, which is a reflection of God's character and thus never changes.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question reminds us that it is not enough to believe certain things - we are called to walk in holiness. The demons believe - but they will not obey (James 2:19).

To show us what true holiness is, God has given us His moral Law. This law is not arbitrary but is a reflection of the very character of God, and thus it never changes. Human ideas of good and evil fluctuate and shift over time and from culture to culture, but God's moral law is unchanging. In the coming questions, we will use the Ten Commandments as a summary of that moral law, but for now, it is enough to note that God's will for our lives is revealed in His moral law.

This question also is reflecting a different use of the law than we studied earlier in the catechism. In the first part of the catechism (on guilt) we saw that God's law convicts us of sin to point us to Christ for salvation. Here we are looking at a different aspect of God's law - how it guides the Christian to know God's moral will for us. (This is sometimes referred to as the third use of the law.) This idea will be developed in question 68 following all of the questions which look at the specifics of the moral law as summarized in the Ten Commandments.

Additional Questions:

How do we know what is holy and what is sinful?

Where can we discover God's will for how all humans are to live?

Scripture References:

Romans 2:14–15

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

1 Peter 1:14–16

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Deuteronomy 10:12–13

And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

Questions for Further Discussion:

Is it enough to believe the right things? Is it possible to believe the right things about God, ourselves, the world, etc. but not apply it to ourselves? What happens if we do this?

How do we know what is really holy and what is sinful? Does this change over time? Why or why not?

Does everyone really know what God expects of us as humans? In some way, do all of us know deep down what is right and wrong? If so, then why do some people seem to be so confused about right and wrong?

Since I am justified by faith alone and have the Holy Spirit living within me, do I still really need God's moral law? Why or why not?

Why is it important for me as a believer to still meditate on God's moral law?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions [39-41](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 15 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on Westminster Shorter and New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Proper Use of God's Law](#)" (July 23, 2011), "[How Do We Know What God Demands of Us?](#)" (October 13, 2019), and "[Christ and the Moral Aspect of the Law](#)" (April 18, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:

[These Things Are True of You](#) by Tommy Walker

(This song reminds us of the goal of sanctification and all of the commands in the moral law - to be like God. The moral law is not a random collection of changing rules, but rather a reflection of the character of God, which is why it is important for believers to know and follow by the power of the Spirit.)

Unshakable, immovable, faithful and true
Full of wisdom, strength and beauty
These things are true, of You

Fearless, courageous
Righteousness shines through in all You do
Yet You're so humble, You laid down Your life
These things, are true, of You

~Chorus~

And as I, turn my face to You
Oh Lord I ask, and pray
By the power of, Your love and grace
Make these things true of, me too
Make these things true of, me too

Patient, compassionate
Love flows through You
You never give up, on the hopeless ones
These things, are true, of You

Your holy, and blameless
You stand up for justice and truth
Yet You love mercy, and forgiveness
These things, are true, of You

~Chorus~

Question 53: How is the moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments, which are given in Exodus 20 and repeated in Deuteronomy 5, summarize the moral law as follows:

Preface: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt

1. You shall have no other gods
2. You shall not make an idol
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
5. Honor your father and mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question points us to the Ten Commandments as a summary of the moral law. Earlier in the catechism in question 10, we saw that Jesus summarized the entire law in two commands: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Here we look at the moral law as summarized in a little more detail in the Ten Commandments. In the next question, we will note how the Ten Commandments may also be summarized by the two great commandments given by Jesus as well, but for now, we want to focus on the Ten Commandments themselves.

The answer begins by noting the location of the Ten Commandments, so that we may all remember where to find these important words. It then goes through a list of the commandments, beginning with the preface and then listing each of the ten commands in order. It is important for the learner to be able to recite all ten commands, as these provide a solid foundation for what is contained in the rest of the law. In fact, in many ways, the rest of the moral laws contained in Scripture are simply a further explaining of what these ten commands state.

Finally, note that we do not ask for an explanation of the preface or any of the commands. This will be done in future questions. At this point, the focus is on being able to accurately state the content of the Ten Commandments.

Additional Questions:

Can you state the Ten Commandments, including where they are found and the preface to the commandments?

Where are the Ten Commandments found in the Bible? Can you list the preface and the Ten Commandments?

Scripture References:*Exodus 20:1–17*

And God spoke all these words: 2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 3 “You shall have no other gods before me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. 8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. 12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. 13 “You shall not murder. 14 “You shall not commit adultery. 15 “You shall not steal. 16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. 17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Deuteronomy 5:6–22

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 7 “You shall have no other gods before me. 8 “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 9 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 10 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. 11 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. 12 “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. 16 “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you. 17 “You shall not murder. 18 “You shall not commit adultery. 19 “You shall not steal. 20 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. 21 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor’s house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” 22 These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

Matthew 19:17–19

“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” 18 “Which ones?” the man inquired. Jesus replied, ““Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 19honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.”

Deuteronomy 10:4–5

The Lord wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the Lord gave them to me. 5 Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the Lord commanded me, and they are there now.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why are the Ten Commandments a good summary of the whole moral law? Can other commandments regarding right and wrong moral conduct really be based on just these ten commands?

In Matthew 19 when Jesus is talking to the rich young ruler, he summarizes God's commandments by quoting from the Ten Commandments, particularly the latter half. Why did He do this?

Who spoke and wrote the Ten Commandments? Did God give them through a human author, or did He write them directly Himself? How many things in Scripture were directly written by God without using a human intermediary?

After reading Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, do you notice any slight differences in wording? Do these different words change any of the meaning of the Ten Commandments?

The [Heidelberg Catechism](#) covers the Ten Commandments in the early part of the Catechism under "Guilt." But the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) covers it later as we have. Why would Heidelberg use it under "Guilt"? Why did we (and Westminster) use it later under the heading of growing as a Christian? Can it really be used for both?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 92 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), to questions [39-41](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and in question 8 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Summary of God's Law](#)" (October 27, 2019), and "[Christ and the Moral Aspect of the Law](#)" (April 18, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:[These Things Are True of You](#) by Tommy Walker

(This song reminds us of the goal of sanctification and all of the commands in the moral law - to be like God. The Ten Commandments are not a random collection of changing rules, but rather a reflection of the character of God, which is why it is important for believers to know and follow by the power of the Spirit. To know the Ten Commandments is to know what God is like - and therefore what we were created to be like.)

Unshakable, immovable, faithful and true
 Full of wisdom, strength and beauty
 These things are true, of You

Fearless, courageous
 Righteousness shines through in all You do
 Yet You're so humble, You laid down Your life
 These things, are true, of You

~Chorus~

And as I, turn my face to You
 Oh Lord I ask, and pray
 By the power of, Your love and grace
 Make these things true of, me too
 Make these things true of, me too

Patient, compassionate
 Love flows through You
 You never give up, on the hopeless ones
 These things, are true, of You

Your holy, and blameless
 You stand up for justice and truth
 Yet You love mercy, and forgiveness
 These things, are true, of You

~Chorus~

Question 54: How are the Ten Commandments divided?

The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts; the first teaches what we owe directly to God, and the second teaches what we owe to God in the way we treat our fellow humans.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question notes how the Ten Commandments are divided into two portions - the two tables of the law. The first, comprised of commands 1-4 (no other gods, no idols, don't misuse God's name, keep the Sabbath) all refer to our duties to God. The second, comprised of commands 5-10 (honor your father and mother, no murder, no adultery, no stealing, no bearing false witness, no coveting) all refer to our duties to our fellow humans - our neighbor.

Note that this means that the Ten Commandments themselves may be summarized by the two great commandments given by Jesus - love God and love your neighbor. All other commands relative to our responsibilities to God and to other humans flow from the two commandments. This principle is first seen in how the Ten Commandments further explain what is inherent in the two commandments given by Jesus. And as we will see in the coming questions, the same process is intended for the Ten Commandments themselves.

However, it should also be noted that while each of the sections has a primary focus, all of our obedience ultimately goes back to God. The reason we are to love our neighbor as ourselves is because God has commanded us to do so and because they are the image of God. Thus, to murder someone is wrong because God has commanded us not to do so and because to murder is to destroy the image of God.

Additional Questions:

What are the two major sections of the Ten Commandments?

Where are the two tablets of the Ten Commandments? What is commanded in each tablet?

Scripture References:

Exodus 31:18

When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

Exodus 34:28–29

Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant — the Ten Commandments. 29When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord.

Deuteronomy 9:15

So I turned and went down from the mountain while it was ablaze with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands.

2 Chronicles 5:10

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

Matthew 22:36–40

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest

commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Romans 13:9–10

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why are the Ten Commandments a good summary of the whole moral law? Can other commandments regarding right and wrong moral conduct really be based on just these ten commands?

Why does Paul say in Romans 13:9-10 that love is the fulfillment of the law? Does this mean I can do whatever I want and just say I love God or the other person? What does it mean to say love is the fulfillment of the law?

Why is it important to understand that the Ten Commandments are not only specific commandments from God that we are called to keep and which show us holiness, but that they are also to be expanded to cover the whole law? Is this important, or should we just view them as separate commands without any relationship to the rest of the moral law?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 93 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and to question 42 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Summary of God's Law](#)" (October 27, 2019), and "[The Heart of God's Law](#)" (July 31, 2011).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Love the Lord Your God](#) (by Lincoln Brewster, 2005 Integrity Music, scripture Luke 10:27)

(Note how this song summarizes the law as loving God, and then serving God. This is how to best view the Ten Commandments. The first section deals with our direct obedience to God, the second with how we obey God by loving our neighbor.)

Love the Lord your God
 With all your heart, with all your soul
 With all your mind, and with all your strength (2x)

(Chorus)
 With all your heart, with all your soul
 With all your mind, And with all your strength
 Love the Lord your God
 With all your heart, with all your soul
 With all your mind, and with all your strength

I will serve the Lord
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, and with all my strength (2x)

(Chorus)
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, And with all my strength
 I will serve the Lord
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, and with all my strength

I will love You (I will love You)
 I will praise You (I will praise You)
 I will serve You, Lord (I will serve You)
 I will trust You, Lord (I will trust You)

And with all my heart
 With all my soul, With all my mind,
 And with all my strength
 With all my heart, With all my soul
 With all my mind, With all my strength

I will love You Lord
 With all my heart, with all my soul
 With all my mind, and with all my strength (3x)

Question 55: What is the preface to the Ten Commandments, and what does it teach us?

The preface to the Ten Commandments is “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” It teaches us that God is our Redeemer, who has freed us, and therefore as His people we should love and obey Him.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question begins the discussion of each specific command in the Ten Commandments. This process will continue for the next ten questions.

We begin with a discussion of the preface to the Ten Commandments. The reason for this is that it lays out the fact that the Ten Commandments were not given so that Israel might keep them and be redeemed. They had already been redeemed and delivered. The Lord was already their God. So we also are using the commandments, not as a way to earn God’s favor, but as a guide to show those who have already been redeemed through Christ how they should live to please their Redeemer.

Additional Questions:

What is the introduction to the Ten Commandments? What does it teach us?

What is the preface to the Ten Commandments, and what do we learn from it?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:2

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Deuteronomy 5:6

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Luke 1:74–75

to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

1 Peter 1:15–19

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” 17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Revelation 1:5–6

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father — to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Hebrews 2:14–18

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Ephesians 2:8–10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1 Peter 2:9–12

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is the preface to the Ten Commandments important?

Do we keep God’s law to earn His favor and be justified, or because we already have His favor and are justified because of Christ? Why does it matter?

Does this preface really apply to Christians, since we were not literally in slavery in Egypt? Does the New Testament ever use such an analogy? If so, from what slavery have we been delivered?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions [43](#) and [44](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The LORD Who Saves \(O Adonai\)](#)” (November 24, 2019), “[Unchained By Grace](#)” (July 27, 2014), and “[Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude: A Biblically Shaped Life](#)” (July 28, 2019).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Amazing Grace \(My Chains Are Gone\)](#) (Words by John Newton, additional words by Chris Tomlin)

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

[2x]
My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, Who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.
Will be forever mine.
You are forever mine.

Question 56: What is the first commandment, and what does it teach us?

The first commandment is “You shall have no other gods.” It teaches us that we must worship and serve God, and that we must not worship or serve any other gods.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the first commandment. It also sets the pattern we will follow for each of the commandments. For each commandment, we will not only ask that the command be stated but also ask what this means. Each command has a specific thing that is forbidden or commanded. However, the opposite of what is forbidden or commanded is also implied in the command. So, in the case of the first command, the actual command is forbidding the worship of other gods. However, when Moses reiterates this command in Deuteronomy 6:13-14, which is quoted by Jesus in the temptation story in Matthew 4:10, the command is now expanded to indicate that (1) we are to positively fear and worship God and (2) we are forbidden from worshipping anyone or anything other than the One True God. So the first commandment teaches not only what is explicitly forbidden (worshipping other gods), but also the opposite of this which is implied (you must worship the One True God).

This same pattern is seen in many of the Scriptures we list below. For example, in Paul’s critique on humanity in Romans 1:21-23, he notes that we are guilty of both not worshipping the One True God, and also of then making other gods to worship. This shows that Jesus, the apostles, and the other writers of Scripture understood that the first command not only forbade worshipping other gods but that it also positively commanded the worship of God. We will also see this pattern repeated for each of the commands.

Thus, the first command really deals with the only proper object of worship - Yahweh, the One True God. We must worship Him, and we must worship only Him.

Additional Questions:

What is the first commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the first commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:3

You shall have no other gods before me.

Deuteronomy 5:7

You shall have no other gods before me.

Matthew 4:10

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Deuteronomy 6:13–14

Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. 14 Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you.

Joshua 24:14

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.

Psalms 14:1–3

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. 2 The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 1:21–23

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

2 Kings 17:34–37

To this day they persist in their former practices. They neither worship the Lord nor adhere to the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands that the Lord gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel. 35 When the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites, he commanded them: “Do not worship any other gods or bow down to them, serve them or sacrifice to them. 36 But the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices. 37 You must always be careful to keep the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands he wrote for you. Do not worship other gods.

Colossians 3:5

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Ephesians 5:5

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the first commandment teach us? What does it actually forbid? What are we told in the rest of Scripture that it implies we must do?

If we simply do not worship other gods, have we really kept the first commandment? What about an atheist who denies any god exists - even Yahweh. When this atheist does not worship Yahweh, is he violating the first commandment?

Why is it important to understand that each of the Ten Commandments not only is teaching what is explicitly commanded or forbidden, but also its opposite duty is being implied?

Are other gods only deities, or can we turn almost anything into a god that we worship and serve? Does the Bible ever refer to other things as gods or idols, even if they are not literally gods or idols?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 94 and 95 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [45-48](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 9 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings [“Idolatry in the iWorld”](#) (September 16, 2013), [“The Lord and the gods of This World”](#) (November 8, 2009), and [“Thyatira - The ‘Tolerant’ Church”](#) (March 19, 2017).

Suggested Worship Song:Give Us Clean Hands (By Charlie Hall)

We bow our hearts, we bend our knees
 Oh Spirit come make us humble
 We turn our eyes from evil things
 Oh Lord we cast down our idols

So give us clean hands and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another
 Oh give us clean hands and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another

Oh God let this be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob

We bow our hearts, we bend our knees
 Oh Spirit come make us humble
 We turn our eyes from evil things
 Oh Lord we cast down our idols

So give us clean hands and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another
 Give us clean hands, oh God and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another

Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God of Jacob
 (Give us clean hands)
 So give us clean hands and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another
 Give us clean hands, oh God and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another

Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God of Jacob
 Oh God of Jacob

Give us clean hands and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another
 Give us clean hands, oh God and give us pure hearts
 Let us not lift our souls to another

Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God let us be a generation that seeks
 Who seeks Your face, oh God of Jacob
 Oh God of Jacob

Question 57: What is the second commandment, and what does it teach us?

The second commandment is “You shall not make an idol.” It teaches us that we must worship God as He commands, not using images or other things God has forbidden.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the second commandment. In this commandment we are learning how to worship Yahweh. It is not enough that we worship Him alone - we must worship Him as He desires and commands.

It is important that we understand what this command is actually speaking about when it forbids idols or graven images. In this case, the command is not speaking of idols as other gods - that has already been forbidden in the first commandment. Rather, it is here speaking of how we are to worship Yahweh - and how we are not to worship Him. We are not only tempted to worship the gods of this world, but we are also tempted to try and worship Yahweh in the same way others worship their gods - and this is forbidden.

The real prohibition here is using any kind of idol or image to represent Yahweh and then to use that image or idol in worship. This is part of what Israel did with the golden calf in Exodus 32, and it is what God forbids in Deuteronomy 4:15-18. Furthermore, this is what the idol made in Judges 17 is - a representation of Yahweh. Finally, it is what Jeroboam did for the Northern tribes 1 Kings 12:28-32. He was not giving them new gods - He was telling them that the calves represented Yahweh and that they could worship Yahweh without going to Jerusalem. Thus, he violated the way Yahweh wanted to be worshipped (no images) and the place Yahweh commanded Israel to worship (Jerusalem). All of these are violations of the second commandments - worship the true God in the wrong way.

This is no small matter. The reason for the prohibition is that any visible representation used in worship necessarily reduces and distorts God. He is greater than all, so no image can adequately represent Him. This is why we are forbidden using an image of God in our worship of Him.

Thus, the second command really deals with the manner of true worship. We must not only worship Yahweh alone (as in the first commandment), but we must not create our own ways of worship, especially through the use of images. We must worship God, and we must worship Him as He commands in His Word and no other way.

Note: The Roman Catholic and Lutheran Church actually combine the first two commandments as a single commandment. To arrive at the number ten, they then split the last commandment no coveting, into two commands prohibiting coveting. This does not seem to be the best explanation of the Ten Commandments, and we follow the breakdown used in this catechism (and the Heidelberg and Westminster Shorter Catechisms as well.)

Additional Questions:

What is the second commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the second commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:4-6

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:8–10

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 9 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 10 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Deuteronomy 4:15–18

You saw no form of any kind the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, 16 so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, 17 or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, 18 or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below.

Exodus 32:4–6

He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” 6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

Judges 17:3–4

When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, “I solemnly consecrate my silver to the Lord for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you.” 4 So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah’s house.

1 Kings 12:28–32

After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there. 31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the second commandment teach us? What does it actually forbid? Are these idols/images false gods, or are they images of the One True God?

If we say we are worshipping God, but do it the way we want rather than how He has commanded, is our worship pleasing to God?

Does this commandment forbid all visual art - or only using such items as part of worship?

What ways might we be tempted to worship God wrongly today? Is it just through images - or are there other things we may be tempted to use in our worship because they are part of the way our culture worships and expresses its commitments - but which are not in line with the true worship of God?

What warnings and promises does God add to the end of this command? Why do you think He does this here, and not in most of the commandments?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 96-98 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [49-52](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 9 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Joy of Corporate Worship](#)” (February 21, 2010), “[A Worshipping Kingdom](#)” (July 17, 2018), and “[How the Mighty Have Fallen](#)” (November 9, 2014).

Suggested Worship Song:[The Heart of Worship](#) (By Matt Redman)

When the music fades
 All is stripped away
 And I simply come
 Longing just to bring
 Something that's of worth
 That will bless Your heart
 I'll bring You more than a song
 For a song in itself
 Is not what You have required
 You search much deeper within
 Through the way things appear
 You're looking into my heart

Chorus:

I'm coming back to the heart of worship
 And it's all about You,
 It's all about You, Jesus
 I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
 When it's all about You,
 It's all about You, Jesus

King of endless worth
 No one could express
 How much You deserve
 Though I'm weak and poor
 All I have is Yours
 Every single breath
 I'll bring You more than a song
 For a song in itself
 Is not what You have required
 You search much deeper within
 Through the way things appear
 You're looking into my heart

[Chorus]

Question 58: What is the third commandment, and what does it teach us?

The third commandment is “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.” It teaches us that we must not misuse or profane God’s name with our words or actions, but rather honor and fear God’s name with them.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the third commandment. In this commandment we are learning the proper attitude with which we must approach Yahweh and bear His name as His people. It is not enough that we worship Him alone, and do it in a proper biblical manner - we must have the right attitude in worship, and our actions must line up with our worship.

It is important that we understand what this command is actually speaking about when it speaks of misusing God’s name. While it certainly includes using God’s name in a disrespectful manner as part of a curse, it includes much more than that. God’s name, which represents God Himself, is misused or profaned whenever people empty it of its grandeur and glory by using it in an empty manner. (This is what the word “vain” means - something that is empty or worthless.)

However, it is not just words that can misuse or profane God’s names. The same thing happens whenever God’s people’s words or actions bring disrepute to God rather than honor. If our words and lives do not line up with our profession of faith, we bring dishonor to God’s name - we empty it of its value and thus misuse or profane it.

Once again, the opposite idea is also included. It is not enough to avoid misusing or profaning God’s name; we must positively honor it. This is what Jesus teaches us in the first part of the Lord’s Prayer - we are to pray and work so that God’s name will be honored.

Thus, the third command really deals with the attitude of true worship. We must worship only God (first command), we must worship as He desires and commands (second command), and we must have the right attitude - desiring to honor and reverence God’s name rather than misusing and profaning it.

This is no small matter. God’s name is holy, and thus He warns that there is grave danger for those who misuse that name. Men may think it is no big deal, but God takes it very seriously.

Additional Questions:

What is the third commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the third commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:7

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Deuteronomy 5:11

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Matthew 6:9

This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...”

Malachi 1:11, 14

“My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty.... 14 “Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the Lord Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.”

Leviticus 18:21

Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.

Leviticus 24:11

The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name with a curse; so they brought him to Moses.

Romans 2:24

As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

1 Timothy 6:1

All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered.

John 17:6

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the third commandment teach us? What does it actually forbid?

Is misusing the name of God referring to using God’s name in a curse? Does it include more than that as well?

Can we misuse, profane, and empty God’s name of its glory by our actions? What type of actions would do this?

How can we honor God’s name by our words and actions?

What warning does God add to the end of this command? Why do you think God adds this warning?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions [99-102](#) of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [53-56](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 9 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings [“Praying to Our Father in Heaven”](#) (January 5, 2014), and the teachings series [“Names of God”](#) (July-October, 2009).

Suggested Worship Song:[Your Great Name](#) (Natalie Grant)

Lost are saved find their way at the sound of your great name
All condemned feel no shame at the sound of your great name
Every fear has no place at the sound of your great name
The enemy—he has to leave at the sound of your great name

[Chorus:]

Jesus,
Worthy is the Lamb
That was slain for us,
Son of God and Man
You are high and lifted up and all the world will praise your great name

All the weak find their strength at the sound of your great name
Hungry souls receive grace at the sound of your great name
The fatherless—they find their rest at the sound of your great name
The sick are healed and the dead are raised at the sound of your great name

[Chorus:]

[Bridge:]

Redeemer, My Healer, Lord Almighty
My Savior, Defender, You are My King

[Chorus:]

Jesus,
The name of Jesus,
You are high and lifted up and all the world will praise your great name

Jesus,
Worthy is the Lamb
That was slain for us,
Son of God and Man
You are high and lifted up and all the world will praise your great name, your great name,
your great name

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Question 59: What is the fourth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The fourth commandment is “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” It teaches us that we must not work constantly, but that we must set aside a weekly time for rest and worship of our Creator and Redeemer.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the fourth commandment. In this commandment we are learning that there is to be a time for rest and worship each week. Just as God worked six days and then rested one, so His people are to work six days and then set aside a day for rest and worship.

There are several reasons we are called to do this. First, because we were created by God. This weekly day of rest and worship reminds us that we are created and not self-sufficient like God. We need rest, and the Sabbath provides this for us. This reason is given in both [Exodus 20](#) and [Deuteronomy 5](#).

Second, we celebrate the Sabbath because we have been redeemed by God. This time of weekly rest and worship gives us the opportunity to remember the salvation we have been given in Christ, and to worship God and give Him thanks for saving us. This reason is not given in Exodus 20, but it is given in [Deuteronomy 5:15](#).

Third, we celebrate the Sabbath because it is a foretaste of our eternal Sabbath rest. Every time we set aside this weekly day of rest and worship it reminds us of the great rest that awaits us in heaven, and thus encourages us to serve God now. This reason is given in [Hebrews 4](#).

It is not often mentioned, but we should note that this commandment not only tells us when not to work, but it also commands us that we are to work. We are to set aside the one day, but we are to work the other six. God expects His people to be productive and to give themselves to serving others through the labors of their hands.

Thus, the fourth command really deals with the time of true worship. Although there is a sense in which all of life is worship, God calls us to set aside a day for rest and worship specifically. And this is so important it is not to be done once in a while but is to be a regular, weekly occurrence.

It should be noted that some groups point out that in the Ten Commandments the seventh day is specified as the day of rest and worship. This was true in the old covenant. However, in the New Covenant it is no longer true. This is true because we are no longer bound by specific days ([Colossians 2:16-17](#)), but even more, because our new creation and our redemption occurred on the first day of the week when Christ was raised. This is why the early church shifted their day of rest and worship to Sunday which was often called the Lord’s Day in honor of the resurrection (see [Acts 20:7](#); [1 Corinthians 16:2](#); and also Didache 14:1 and other early church writings.) Furthermore, this fits with the new covenant where we receive our rest in Christ, and then we work from that rest to show our gratitude to God. For all of these reasons Christians are no longer required to worship on Saturday, and most have gathered on Sunday instead.)

Additional Questions:

What is the fourth commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the fourth commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:*Exodus 20:8–11*

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5:12–15

Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Genesis 2:2–3

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Leviticus 19:3

Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 23:3

There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.

Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

1 Corinthians 16:2

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Mark 2:27–28

Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Isaiah 58:13–14

“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Hebrews 4:8–11

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the fourth commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do?

Why is it important for Christians to set aside a regular day for rest and worship? What does this practice teach us?

What are three reasons that we need to practice a regular day of rest and worship?

Why don't Christians observe a Sabbath on the seventh day? Isn't this commanded in the Ten Commandments? What reasons can be given for gathering for worship and rest on Sunday instead of Saturday?

What does this command positively teach us about work? Does it matter if Christians are good workers at their jobs?

According to Mark 2:27-28, who needs us to have a Sabbath of rest and worship? Who suffers if we fail to do this - God or us?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 103 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [57-62](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 10 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Covenant of Creation - Part 3](#)" (January 26, 2020), "[The Lord of the Sabbath](#)" (March 31, 2019), "[Jubilee](#)" (June 5, 2018), and "[The Resurrection Changes Everything!](#)" (April 19, 2020).

Suggested Worship Song:O Day of Rest and Gladness (Christopher Wadsworth)

O day of rest and gladness,
 O day of joy and light,
 O balm of care and sadness,
 Most beautiful, most bright:
 On Thee, the high and lowly,
 Through ages joined in tune,
 Sing holy, holy, holy,
 To the great God Triune.

On Thee, at the creation,
 The light first had its birth;
 On Thee, for our salvation,
 Christ rose from depths of earth;
 On Thee, our Lord, victorious,
 The Spirit sent from heavn,
 And thus on Thee, most glorious,
 A triple light was givn.

Thou art a port protected
 From storms that round us rise;
 A garden intersected
 With streams of paradise;
 Thou art a cooling fountain
 In lifes dry dreary sand;
 From Thee, like Pisgahs mountain,
 We view our promised land.

Today on weary nations
 The heavenly manna falls;
 To holy convocations
 The silver trumpet calls,
 Where gospel light is glowing
 With pure and radiant beams,
 And living water flowing,
 With soul-refreshing streams.

New graces ever gaining
 From this, our day of rest,
 We reach the rest remaining
 To spirits of the blessed.
 To Holy Ghost be praises,
 To Father, and to Son;
 The church her voice upraises
 To Thee, blessed Three in One.

Question 60: What is the fifth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The fifth commandment is “You shall honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” It teaches us that we must not dishonor or disrespect our parents or any others in authority over us, but must honor, submit, and obey them as those given authority over us by God. We are to do this so that we may enjoy a long and prosperous life.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the fifth commandment. In this commandment, we are told that we must honor our father and mother. With this command, we now turn to the “second table of the law” - our responsibilities before God for our fellow humans.

In a certain sense, all of the remaining commands are built upon the foundation laid out in this command. If we do not learn to honor and respect the authorities over us - beginning with our parents - there is no way we will have a heart to do the good to our neighbors required in the remaining commands.

Several things should be noted about this command. First, it explicitly speaks of honoring parents. Obviously, this means that God commands us to honor our parents. But carefully note that the command is not “children honor your parents” for that might imply that the command ceases in adulthood. But it does not. Parents are to be honored throughout life.

Second, the command speaks of “honoring” rather than “obeying.” Certainly, children are to honor their parents by obeying them, but the command is after more than external obedience. It is after a heart attitude. This is why even in adulthood, and in fact even after the parent has died and there is no further chance for obedience, our attitude should be one of honor.

Third, as with the other commands, both the negative and the positive aspects are included. In other words, we are to honor and submit to our parents, and thus we are forbidden from harboring a rebellious, dishonoring attitude towards them.

Fourth, the New Testament interprets this command as having broader application than just parents and children. The same principle that demands children honor their parents also underlies the command to submit to governing rules and those with authority in any realm of our life. Thus, while the command explicitly teaches honoring of parents, it implicitly teaches that we honor all those in authority. This may be seen in a number of the verses listed below.

Fifth, this is the only command that has a promise attached to it. God told the Israelites that if they adopted this attitude towards authority, they would live long in the land God was giving them. Paul expands this to be long life on earth. This promise indicates that God blesses those who show their faith by having an attitude of honor and submission to the authorities given by God. Of course, this does not mean that it happens in every single instance, but it does speak of the general truth that those who walk in this way will experience blessing and long life, while those who are rebellious and dishonoring often experience lives of frustration and futility.

Finally, it should be noted that this command to honor does not mean that we are required to obey every command given by those in authority over us. There are times where we must disobey authorities because their orders are violations of God’s commands in Scripture. However, even when we must disobey, we must maintain an attitude of honor and submission rather than rebellion. All of this is indicated in the last few verses and “Questions for Further Discussion” below.

Additional Questions:

What is the fifth commandment? What does it teach us? What promise does it give?

What is the fifth commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Leviticus 19:3

Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.

Ephesians 6:1–3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Proverbs 1:8

Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.

Proverbs 15:20

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

Proverbs 20:20

If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.

Romans 13:1–7

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Hebrews 13:7, 17

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.... 17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

Colossians 3:18–4:1

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. 22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

1 Peter 2:17

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Acts 4:19–20

But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Exodus 1:15–17

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 16 “When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” 17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the fifth commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do? Does this command only apply to our parents, or does it have broader application to all those in authority over us? Why?

According to Scripture, who has placed people in authority over us? If we are dishonoring and rebellious towards them, what does it reveal about our attitude towards God?

Why is it important for us to honor and submit to the people in authority over us, especially our parents? What happens to a family and society where this is not done?

Is it ever right to disobey those in authority? If so, when are we allowed to do this? Can you think of biblical examples of this?

What should our attitude be even if we can not follow the commands and laws of those in authority? What promise is given as part of the fifth commandment? Why do you think God specifically attached a promise to this commandment?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 104 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [63-66](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 10 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The God of Generations](#)” (February 16, 2020), “[Called to Family](#)” (November 16, 2012), “[Relationships and Responsibilities in Christ the Lord](#)” (June 24, 2012), “[Living with a Multi-Generational Perspective](#)” (November 4, 2007), “[Spring - Young Children](#)” (May 29, 2005), “[Called to Citizenship](#)” (November 25, 2012), and “[Living in Godly Submission](#)” (Part 1) (July 18, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[The Family Prayer Song](#) (Promise Keepers Version)

(This song speaks of a family that is submitted to God and therefore full of His Presence.. This should be the longing of every Christian family, and it is the most important attitude that will lead to the embracing of the fifth commandment in all of life.)

Come and fill our homes with your presence
You alone are worthy of our reverence

CHORUS

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
We will serve the Lord.

Lord we vow to live holy
Bowing our knees to You only

Question 61: What is the sixth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The sixth commandment is “You shall not murder.” It teaches us that we must not murder or do any harm to others in thought, word, or deed, but must pray and work for their good.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the sixth commandment. In this commandment, we are told that we must not murder. The remainder of the commands will go in decreasing order of the potential harm to another - from murder, to adultery, to stealing possessions, to lying, to coveting. Murder is obviously the greatest harm we could do to another person. But it is more than that - it is direct disobedience to God and a violation of God’s image. When we murder someone we are destroying the very image of God.

However, as with all of the other commands, murder is simply the most extreme example of what is being forbidden. Any type of evil we might do to harm the other person is ultimately in view. In fact, Jesus taught us that it is not just murder in view in this command, but even hatred. According to Jesus, to hate my fellow human is to break this command.

Furthermore, as we have already noted, not only are we being prohibited from doing evil to others, but rather the opposite is also implied. We must pray and work for the good of others. It is not enough to avoid harming them; we must work to bless and help them whenever possible.

Additional Questions:

What is the sixth commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the sixth commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

Deuteronomy 5:17

You shall not murder.

Genesis 9:6

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Matthew 5:21–22

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Romans 13:8–10

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 12:17–21

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Matthew 5:43–48

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

James 4:17

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

Proverbs 3:27

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the sixth commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do? Why is murder wrong? Is it simply because it harms another person, or are there other reasons that make murder a supreme form of evil?

Why does Jesus say that this command means that even hating my neighbor is wrong? Why must I guard my heart and mind against even evil thoughts and desires towards another person? What happens if I do not stop evil thoughts about another person?

Does this command prohibit all killing? What about soldiers in a war? What about capital punishment? Is it ever allowable to put a human being to death? When can this be done? By whom?

Does Jesus say that this command is limited to avoiding doing evil to others? Or does it require something more? What does it teach that I must try to do to others - even to my enemies?

Why does God expect believers to pray and work for the good of others, even if they are unkind or hateful towards us? How does this relate to the goal of sanctification - becoming more like Jesus?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 105-107 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [67-69](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 11 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Covenant of Preservation - Noah](#)" (February 9, 2020), and "[The Sanctity of Human Life](#)" (January 22, 2017).

Suggested Worship Song:

[These Things Are True of You](#) (Tommy Walker)

(This song reminds us of the goal of sanctification and all of the commands in the moral law - to be like God. For this question, especially notice the last verse which speaks of God's love and compassion - even for those who do not deserve it.)

Unshakable, immovable, faithful and true
Full of wisdom, strength and beauty
These things are true, of You

Fearless, courageous
Righteousness shines through in all You do
Yet You're so humble, You laid down Your life
These things, are true, of You

~Chorus~

And as I, turn my face to You
Oh Lord I ask, and pray
By the power of, Your love and grace
Make these things true of, me too
Make these things true of, me too

Patient, compassionate
Love flows through You
You never give up, on the hopeless ones
These things, are true, of You

Your holy, and blameless
You stand up for justice and truth
Yet You love mercy, and forgiveness
These things, are true, of You

~Chorus~

Question 62: What is the seventh commandment, and what does it teach us?

The seventh commandment is “You shall not commit adultery.” It teaches us that we must not commit adultery or sexually sin in thought, word, or deed, but must be sexually pure whether in single life or marriage.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the seventh commandment. In this commandment, we are told that we must not commit adultery. God calls His people to be faithful to their vows in all of life, and especially to their marriage vows. Adultery is nothing less than the violation of covenant vows made to others and to God Himself.

However, as with all of the other commands, more than the things specifically mentioned (adultery) is in view. God calls us to be sexually pure in every way. This means that all forms of sexual activity other than a man and a woman married to one another are sinful and outside of the will of God. This is why the New Testament does not condemn just adultery but all forms of sexual sin - fornication, homosexuality, orgies, etc. All sexual sin is in view in this command.

Furthermore, Jesus once again teaches us that this command not only forbids sexual sin in our actions but also in our thoughts and desires. To lust after someone to whom we are not married is sin, even if we do not act upon the thoughts or desires. God calls us to be pure in heart, mind, and body.

Finally, the New Testament teaches us that we are also commanded to make sure that we do not tempt others to think or act in sexually sinful ways by our own words or behavior. To do so is to violate this commandment, for as always the command includes a requirement to do the opposite of what is being forbidden. Thus it is not enough to avoid sexual sin ourselves; we must not act in a way that could lead others to sexual sin.

Additional Questions:

What is the seventh commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the seventh commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

Deuteronomy 5:18

You shall not commit adultery.

Proverbs 6:32

But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Matthew 5:27–32

You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. 31 “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Galatians 5:19–21

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Colossians 3:5

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Ephesians 5:3

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–7

It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the seventh commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do?

Why is adultery wrong? Is it simply because it emotionally harms our spouse, or are there other reasons that make adultery evil?

Why does Jesus say that this command means that even lusting is wrong? Why must I guard my heart and mind against even thoughts and desires towards someone to whom I am not married? What happens if I do not stop thoughts and desires about another person?

Does this command only prohibit adultery, or are other forms of sexual sin included? Does the Scripture only condemn adultery or all forms of sexual sin? Where does it teach this?

What does this command teach us regarding our culture's belief that as long as sex is between consenting adults it is ok? What if the people really love each other? What if they have deep desires for one another? Is sex really restricted to a man and a woman who are married to each other?

Does this mean that sex is in itself wrong? Does God hate sex - or just sexual sin? Within marriage is sex evil, neutral, or is it a positive, holy good?

Why is it important that I not speak or act in a manner that might lead others to sexual sin? What words or actions might lead others to sin?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 108-109 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [70-72](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 11 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Question of Sexuality](#)" (April 22, 2018), "[Lust](#)" (March 25, 2018), "[A Holy Sexuality](#)" (June 11, 2017), "[Is Cohabitation the Same AS Marriage?](#)" (December 4, 2005), "[Does God Allow Homosexual Marriage](#)" (December 11, 2005), and "[#TamarToo](#)" (September 18, 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:

[A Pure Heart](#) (Rusty Nelson, Integrity Hosanna Music)

A pure heart, that's what I long for.
A heart that follows hard after Thee;
A pure heart, that's what I long for.
A heart that follows hard after Thee.

VERSE:

A heart that hides Your Word
So that sin will not come in.
A heart that's undivided
But one You rule and reign;
A heart that beats compassion,
That pleases You, my Lord.
A sweet aroma of worship
That rises to Your throne.

Question 63: What is the eighth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The eighth commandment is “You shall not steal.” It teaches us that we must not steal through theft, deceit, trickery, or fraud, but must be content and work hard to take care of our own needs and to have enough to share material possessions with those in need.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the eighth commandment. In this commandment, we are told that we must not steal. God calls His people to be honest and to not take that which belongs to another. To take that which belongs to another is a violation of God’s character, for He is a God who gives generously. However, as with all of the other commands, more than the thing specifically mentioned (stealing) is in view. Theft may occur in many forms. It is certainly stealing to physically take that which belongs to someone else for which we have not paid, but it is equally theft to knowingly and purposefully deceive someone into a situation where we acquire that which belongs to them without adequate compensation. It is also theft to commit fraud - convincing someone that if they purchase something from us it has a certain value or ability that we know is not true. All such actions are forbidden by this commandment.

Furthermore, the New Testament once again teaches us that this command not only forbids theft in our actions but also forbids greed in our thoughts and desires.

To lust after someone to whom we are not married is sin, even if we do not act upon the thoughts or desires. God calls us to be pure in heart, mind, and body. In fact, it calls greed “idolatry” and thus makes it a violation not only of this command but also of the first command. Once again, this is because if we are greedy in our thoughts, it will lead to greedy actions - which usually usher in theft in one form or another.

Finally, the New Testament teaches us that we are also commanded to do the opposite of what is forbidden. We must not only avoid stealing - we must work hard to earn what we need and even more so that we are able to share and help those in need. Far from being thieves, as God’s children we are called to be like our Father - generous, freely giving to others. This is the import of the eighth commandment.

Additional Questions:

What is the eighth commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the eighth commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:15
You shall not steal.

Deuteronomy 5:19
You shall not steal.

Leviticus 19:35
Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity.

Proverbs 11:1
The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Colossians 3:5

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Ephesians 5:3

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Exodus 23:4–5

If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. 5 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it.

Ephesians 4:28

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Hebrews 13:16

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

1 Timothy 6:17–18

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the eighth commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do?

Why is theft wrong? Is it simply because it deprives someone of their own property, or are there other reasons that make theft evil?

Is theft only the physical taking of someone else's property, or are there other ways to steal? Where is this seen in Scripture?

What are some forms of theft that occur today that do not involve physically stealing something? What about digital products? What about false advertising? Are these forms of theft? Why or why not?

What does this command teach about the importance of private property?

What does this command teach about sharing with those in need? If I scrupulously avoid theft, but do not share with the needy, have I kept this command or violated it?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 110-111 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [73-75](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 11 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Greed](#)” (March 11, 2018), “[Shaping A Contented Soul](#)” (November 26, 2017), and “[All In: The Disciple and Money](#)” (October 18, 2015).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Be Thou My Vision](#) (Public Domain)

(This song teaches us that we are to find everything we need in Christ. In particular the next to last verse teaches us to not look to earthly riches but rather the Christ as our real treasure.)

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Question 64: What is the ninth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The ninth commandment is “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” It teaches us that we must not lie or in any way deceive our neighbor, nor speak falsely about or slander our neighbor, but must speak the truth in love.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the ninth commandment. In this commandment, we are told that we must not give false testimony against our neighbor. God calls His people to be honest in our words. To speak falsely about someone robs them of their reputation.

However, as with all of the other commands, more than the thing specifically mentioned (bearing false witness) is in view. It is not just lying in a legal proceeding that is in view. We are clearly prohibited from lying in any form. This includes lying to someone or lying about them. Furthermore, we are not allowed to carefully select what we say, avoiding direct lies, but distorting the truth so that the impression left is wrong.

Finally, the New Testament teaches us that we are also commanded to do the opposite of what is forbidden. We must not only avoid lying - we must positively be people who speak the truth. Our word should be trustworthy. Anything less is a distortion of the Image of God - Who can not lie and always speaks the truth to us.

Additional Questions:

What is the ninth commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the ninth commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:16

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 5:20

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Leviticus 19:11

Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.

Psalms 101:7

No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

Proverbs 12:22

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.

Zechariah 8:16–17

“These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; 17 do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Ephesians 4:28

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Ephesians 4:14–15

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the ninth commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do?

Why is lying wrong? Is it simply because it misleads others, or are there other reasons that make lying evil?

Is lying under oath the only form of lying in view in this commandment? What other forms does lying take?

What is slander? Is it a violation of this commandment? Why is slander considered so evil?

Why is it important that we not only avoid all forms of lying but that we be people who speak the truth? Is it sometimes possible to lie without actually saying something?

What does it mean to speak the truth in love? How is speaking the truth in love different than just speaking the truth?

In the name of love, is it possible for us to lie? How do we determine the difference between speaking the truth in love, and in the name of love speaking falsely so as to not hurt someone?

Why is it important for Christian, Who follow the One called the Truth, to be people who speak truthfully? What does it say about God and our faith if our words can not be trusted?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 112 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [76-78](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 12 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[The Integrity of the Wise](#)" (December 17, 2006), "[Watching Your Words](#)" (April 28, 2019), and "[Slip of the Tongue](#)" (May 4, 2014).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Speak, O Lord](#) (Words and Music by Keith Getty & Stuart Townend Copyright © 2005 Thankyou Music). (This song reminds us that God speaks truth to us. As His people we should speak truth to others as well - and God's truth can form us to be people of the truth.)

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail—
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

Question 65: What is the tenth commandment, and what does it teach us?

The tenth commandment is “You shall not covet.” It teaches us that we must not covet anything that is not ours, but rather be content with what we have and able to rejoice when others are blessed.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question focuses on the tenth commandment. In this commandment, we are told that we must not covet. With this command, God is driving to the motives of the heart that underlie our actions. That which has been implicit is now brought out openly - the commandments are not just concerned with outward actions, but with the motives and desires of the heart. Of course, this becomes a major theme in the New Testament, as we have seen through all of these questions on the Ten Commandments.

This command lists a number of things which we might covet - a neighbors family, their wealth, their assets, their possessions. In reality, however, it is not just the specific things mentioned that are in view. Rather, it is coveting itself that is being forbidden.

This becomes clear in the New Testament. Paul does not list the specific items from the command, but rather that we simply must not covet at all. It is not the item - which may be good in itself - that is in view, but our unrighteous desire for it.

Once again, this means we are also commanded to do the opposite of what is forbidden. We must not only avoid coveting - we must positively be content. We must be satisfied with what God has given us, and able to rejoice when others are blessed with things we would like but do not have. Only when this is the case have we really followed the intent of this final commandment.

Additional Questions:

What is the tenth commandment? What does it teach us?

What is the tenth commandment? What does it forbid us from doing? What does it teach us to do?

Scripture References:

Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 5:21

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Romans 7:7

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”

Hebrews 13:5

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

1 Timothy 6:6–10

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Romans 13:9

The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

James 4:1–3

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Philippians 4:11–13

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does the tenth commandment teach us? What does it forbid? What does it command us to do?

Why is coveting wrong? Is it really sinful if I do not act upon my covetous desires?

What is explicit in this command that was only implicit in the other commands? Why does Paul specifically mention that it was this sin that the law really exposed in his own life, and which he would not have understood apart from the law?

What are some things that we might covet? Does our culture of advertising and possessions encourage coveting or discourage it?

Why is contentment important? Does our culture encourage contentment - or does it encourage discontent and greed? If I am not content, what does that say about God and His provision for me? How important does the New Testament seem to think contentment is in the Christian life? If I am not content what does that say about my faith in God?

Why is it important that instead of coveting and being jealous of what others have, I must learn to be content and to rejoice when others are blessed?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 113 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [79-81](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 12 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Greed](#)” (March 11, 2018), “[Envy](#)” (February 18, 2018), “[A Life of Joyful Contentment](#)” (May 11, 2008), “[Shaping A Contented Soul](#)” (November 26, 2017), and “[All In: The Disciple and Money](#)” (October 18, 2015).

Suggested Worship Song:

[It Is Well With My Soul](#) (Horatio G. Spafford, 1873)

(This song reminds us that if we are believers, no matter what comes we can rest and be content. Christ is all we need, and He has made us a child of God, with a forgiven past, and a glorious future - no matter how the present may seem.)

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Question 66: Even as a Christian can you perfectly keep these commandments?

No. Even those who have been regenerated and given the Holy Spirit will continue to struggle with sin and will break God's law in thought, word, and deed.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question is the first of three that will look at the moral law in the life of a believer. We have spent a lot of time looking at the content of the Ten Commandments. But this does not mean that even as believers we will be able to keep God's Law as we should. There will always be a struggle with sin. Some have taught that there is a special group of Christians who become so spiritual they can nearly or completely overcome the power of sin in this life. This idea is simply wrong. Paul, speaking of his present experience as an apostle of Christ, details his own continuing struggle with sin. James notes that we all stumble in many ways - particularly our words. John tells us that if we claim that we do not sin (present tense), we are deceived and we make God a liar. Sin will be an ever-present reality in our lives.

The purpose of the law in the life of a believer and the role of the Spirit in empowering us to grow in our sanctification and experience a greater degree of freedom from the power of sin will be explored in the next two questions. For now, it is important that we remind ourselves that even as believers we break God's law.

Additional Questions:

Can you keep all of the Ten Commandments perfectly?

Scripture References:

Romans 7:14–25

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

James 3:2

We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

1 John 1:8–10

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Philippians 3:12–14

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Can you as a Christian keep the Ten Commandments perfectly?

As a Christian, you have been regenerated, given a new heart, put off the old man in water baptism, filled with God's Spirit, and given spiritual gifts. Then why are you not able to walk free from the power of sin? Will you ever be able to be completely free from sin in this life?

Does Paul's description of himself in Romans 7 sound familiar to you? Are there any areas that you find to be a particular struggle?

What should we do when we sin? Do we need to confess it to God, or should we just assume He forgives us? Why would God want us to confess our sins specifically?

If we can never perfectly keep God's law, then why even try? Why should we even teach God's law if no one - unbeliever or Christian - can keep it?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 114 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 82 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 13 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings "[Right and Wrong Responses to Sin](#)" (January 18, 2015), "[Authentic Atonement](#)" (April 26, 2015), "[UnCommon Confession in Prayer](#)" (April 7, 2013), and "[The Seven Root Vices](#)" (February 4, 2018).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Come Thou Fount](#) (Robert Robinson (1758), fourth verse alternate words by Bob Kauflin.)

(This song reminds us that even as believers our hearts are prone to wander - until the resurrection when we will be freed from sinning.)

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the name! I'm fixed upon it
Name of Thy redeeming love

Hitherto Thy love has blessed me
Thou hast brought me to this place
And I know Thy hand will bring me
Safely home by Thy good grace
Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God
He, to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood

Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it
Seal it for Thy courts above

Oh that day when freed from sinning
I shall see Thy lovely face
Full arrayed in blood-washed linen
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry
Bring Thy promises to pass
For I know Thy pow'r will keep me
Till I'm home with Thee at last

Question 67: Does the law of God help us to obey and to overcome sin?

No, the law does not enable us to obey; that is the work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to resist sin and works to conform us to Christ.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question is the second of three that look at the moral law in the life of a believer. We have already seen that even as a believer there will always be a struggle with sin. Yet, as a believer, we are being sanctified so that we are increasingly being freed from the power of sin to be conformed to the image of Christ. But where does this power come from? Does it come from the law, or from the Holy Spirit? This question provides the answer.

This concept is critical for our sanctification. If we look to the law (or resolutions, key principles, etc.) we will be disappointed and in an endless cycle of fresh resolutions and failure. The power to live holy does not come from ourselves or from the law but from the Spirit. It is His work to empower us to resist sin and conform us to Christ.

The question of why the law is important will be answered in the next question. For now, we must know what the law does NOT do - it does not empower us to obey God.

Additional Questions:

Does the law help you to obey God?

Do the Ten Commandments give you the power to obey God?

Who gives you the power to obey God?

Scripture References:

Romans 7:22-8:4

For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16–25

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:25–27

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Romans 8:12–14

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Does the law help you to obey God?

Now that you know and understand the Ten Commandments, will they give you the power to obey God?

People often try to become better by making resolutions, learning principles, or making promises to change. Is this how Christians become sanctified? Where does our power to overcome sin and temptation come from?

How do we receive power from the Holy Spirit? Is there anything we are called to do to be filled with the Holy Spirit, walk with Him, and receive power from Him? (See question 44.)

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 115 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 37 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Law and the Spirit in Sanctification](#)” (August 7, 2011), “[Walking By the Spirit](#)” (April 10, 2005), and “[Keeping in Step with the Spirit](#)” (May 1, 2005).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Spirit of the Living God](#) (Daniel Iverson, Public Domain)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
 Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Question 68: Then how is the law of God useful for the Christian?

The law of God is useful to give us a perfect guide to holiness, clearly distinguishing good from evil, so that we might know how the Spirit is working to conform us to God's image.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question is the last of three that will look at the moral law in the life of a believer. We have seen that even as Spirit-filled Christians there will always be a struggle with sin and that the power to obey God does not come from the law but from the Spirit. So is the law of any use in our sanctification? Why even study God's law? Why have we spent so many questions going through the Ten Commandments in detail?

Although the law does not empower us to obey, it is our guide to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives. The Spirit is working to make us more like Christ - but how are we to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this process? How do we understand what is holy and what is unholy, what is righteous and what is sinful? The Spirit uses the law to make this clear to us.

As an analogy, consider the Christian life as a trip. The law is the map showing our destination and the route we must take. But the map of the law does not actually get us to our destination. That requires a vehicle - and the Holy Spirit is the vehicle that will get us there. We need the map of the law to know where to go, but we need the vehicle of the Spirit to give us the power for the long journey.

This question is reflecting a different use of the law than we studied earlier in the catechism. In the first part of the catechism (on guilt) we saw that God's law convicts us of sin to point us to Christ for salvation. Here we are looking at a different aspect of God's law - how it guides the Christian to know God's moral will for us. (This is sometimes referred to as the third use of the law.) The same law which convicts us of sin to cause us to look to Christ for salvation is also used by the Spirit to show us the character which the Holy Spirit is working to form in us.

Additional Questions:

Why is God's law important for the Christian?

Why do Christians need God's law?

Why do Christians need the Ten Commandments?

Should Christians try to keep the Ten Commandments? Why?

Scripture References:

Romans 7:7, 12

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet"... 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Matthew 5:17-19

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

James 2:8–13

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. 12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Romans 8:3–4

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:27

And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Hebrews 8:10

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Since we can not keep God’s law perfectly, why do we even need it?

Some Christians say we are no longer under the law. They say that Romans 6:14-15 tells us we are no longer under law, and that Romans 10:4 says Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. What is wrong with this understanding? In what sense are we no longer under the law because Christ has fulfilled it? In what sense are we still under the law? Did Jesus really come to abolish the law?

In the new covenant, what is the relationship between the believer, the law, and the Holy Spirit? How is the law still useful to the believer?

Can the Christian still pray with the Psalmist “Oh how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long?” (Psalm 119:97). Why or why not?

If we can never perfectly keep God’s law, then why even try? Why should we even teach God’s law if no one - unbeliever or Christian - can keep it?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 115 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and questions [13](#) and [15](#) of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Law and the Spirit in Sanctification](#)” (August 7, 2011), and “[The Proper Use of God’s Law](#)” (July 24, 2011).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Love Constraining to Obedience](#) (William Cowper, Public Domain)

(Note how in this hymn our attitude towards obeying the law is changed from that of a slave to that of a child, from one of duty to one of choice. All of this has happened because Christ kept the law for us, so that our position is changed and we now can receive the law as a delight rather than just a terror.)

Chorus:

To see the Law by Christ fulfilled,
To hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child
And duty into choice.

No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright
And what she has, she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.
(Repeat chorus)

How long beneath the Law I lay
In bondage and distress
I toiled the precept to obey,
But toiled without success.
(Repeat chorus)

Then to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do
Now if I feel its power within
I feel I hate it too.(Repeat chorus)

Then all my servile works were done,
A righteousness to raise
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose His ways.

Question 69: Does God call you to live the Christian life by yourself?

No, when I was united to Christ by faith, I was also united to other believers in the Church and called to walk in fellowship with them.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This question is the first of several that will look at the next in the list of the means of grace that we listed in question 44 - fellowship. We begin with the recognition that to be united with Christ is also to be united to His people the Church.

It is important for all Christians to understand that the Christian life is never meant to be lived in isolation. As those who were created in the image of the Divine Community, the Holy Trinity, we were created for relationships, and as those re-created through Christ, we were redeemed for relationships within the community of faith.

In the coming questions, we will define the church, and look at fellowship within a local church of believers. For now, it is important to simply understand that we need other believers.

Additional Questions:

Can I live the Christian life alone?

Do I live the Christian life by myself or with other believers?

Does God want me to live apart from other Christians?

Scripture References:

Acts 2:36–47

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.” 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Ephesians 4:3–6

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

John 17:11, 20–23

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one....20 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Romans 12:4–5

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Corinthians 12:12–13

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Ephesians 2:19–22

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Questions for Further Discussion:

When I was united to Christ in faith, was I also united to other believers? In what sense am I united to other Christians?

Is my unity with other believers something that comes later in my Christian life, or is it something that happens at the moment of my conversion?

Is the unity I have with other Christians something that is automatic, something I have to work for, or is it both? How does Paul seem to view it in Ephesians 4:3-6?

Look at Luke’s picture of the early church in Acts 2:37-46. How close do the believers seem to be with one another? What words would you use to describe the relationship between these new believers? Is it possible to even think of any of them trying to live in isolation from other Christians? If every Christian has been united to Christ, given the Spirit, and has God’s written word, then why do we need other believers? Is it really important for us to live in fellowship with other Christians?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 54 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Church - The Community of Believers](#)” (August 30, 2020), “[Called To the Church](#)” (November 12, 2012), “[A Thriving Community](#)” (October 9, 2011), and “[All In: The Church As Community](#)” (October 25, 2015).

Suggested Worship Song:Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken (John Newton, Public Domain)

(This hymn notes that all Christians are part of Zion, God's City, and that He cares for us in Zion.)

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He, Whose word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for His own abode
On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

See the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love.
Well supplies Thy sons and daughters,
And all fears of want removes.
Who can faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to quench?
Grace which like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.

Blessed inhabitants of Zion,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood;
Jesus, Whom their souls rely on,
Makes them kings and priests to God
'Tis His love His people raises,
Over self to reign as kings
And as priests His solemn praises
Each for a thank offering bring.

Savior, if of Zion's city,
I, through grace, a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy Name
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show
Solid joys and lasting treasures
None but Zion's children know.

Question 70: What is the Church?

The Church is the body, bride, and temple of Christ, the community of all true believers for all time.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous question, we saw that to be united to Christ by faith is also to be united to the Church. But what is the Church? This question answers that question.

It is important for all Christians to understand that the Christian life is never meant to be lived in isolation. As those who were created in the image of the Divine Community, the Holy Trinity, we were created for relationships, and as those re-created through Christ, we were redeemed for relationships within the community of faith.

In the next question, we will look at the local church, the place where we actually live out our Christian lives. For now, it is important to understand the nature of the one, holy, catholic (universal) Church.

Additional Questions:

What do we mean by the word 'Church'?

Can you define the Church?

Scripture References:

Ephesians 1:22–23

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 5:25–30

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church — 30 for we are members of his body.

1 Corinthians 12:12–13

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

Ephesians 2:19–22

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1 Peter 2:4–5

As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him — 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:3–6

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

John 17:11, 20–23

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one....20 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Romans 12:4–5

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Peter 2:9–10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

John 10:16

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Revelation 21:1–4, 12,14

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”... 12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel... 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What is the Church?

What metaphors are commonly used to describe the Church? What is intended by these metaphors? What do we learn from them regarding the relationship of the Church to Christ?

Does Jesus have many bodies, or one body? Does He have many brides or one bride? Does He have many temples or one temple? What does this tell us about the unity of the Church?

If there is only one temple, one body, and one bride for Christ, then what does this tell us about our relationship to Old Testament saints? Are they part of the Church as well? How does John picture this in Revelation 21?

If there really is only one people of God, how should I view other Christians? How should I view believers from the past? How should I view other believers today?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 54 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 48 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Church - The Body of Christ](#)” (September 6, 2020), “[The Church - The Bride of Christ](#)” (September 13, 2020), “[The Church - The Temple of God](#)” (September 20, 2020), and “[The Church - The Communion of Saints](#)” (September 27, 2020).

Suggested Worship Song:The Church's One Foundation

(This song mentions many of these metaphors for the Church and includes the communion of saints.)

The church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one over all the earth;
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

The church shall never perish,
Her dear Lord to defend
To guide, sustain and cherish,
Is with her to the end
Though there be those that hate her,
And false sons in her pale
Against a foe or traitor,
She ever shall prevail

Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore;
'Til, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blessed,
And the great church victorious
Shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee.

Question 71: Are Christians only called to be part of the universal Church?

No, all Christians are called to be part of local churches where they are led and cared for by elders, worship God, learn the Scripture, receive the sacraments, pray together, serve one another, and carry out the Great Commission together.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous question, we learned a definition of the Church that embraces all believers across all time. This is known as the universal church. However, Christians can not really fellowship with the universal church. You can't really serve or receive from believers who died years ago or from believers who live across the globe and don't speak your language. For this reason, God calls every Christian to be part of a local church.

This question describes the basics of life in a local church. A local church is not just a random gathering of Christians. It is a place that is organized with official leaders (elders) who lead and care for the flock, and where believers regularly gather for worship, the teaching of the Scripture, receive the sacraments, serve one another, and work to reach out to the lost both locally and around the globe, and to disciple those who come to faith. Anything else is not a local church, and such informal gatherings are insufficient to live out the Christian life as God commands in the Scripture.

In the coming questions, we will look at the sacraments which are mentioned in this question. For now, it is important to understand that all believers are called to specific local churches, and to also understand the nature and activities of such local churches.

Additional Questions:

Are Christians only part of the universal Church?

Scripture References:

Acts 14:23

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Titus 1:5,9

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you... 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Hebrews 13:7, 17

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.... 17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Corinthians 14:26

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

Acts 2:36–47

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.” 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Galatians 5:13

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Philippians 2:3–4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Acts 1:14

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

2 Timothy 2:1–2

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Matthew 28:18–20

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Romans 10:13–15

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Questions for Further Discussion:

What is the local church?

Why do we need the local church? Isn't it enough to simply be part of the universal church and to fellowship with other Christians?

What distinguishes a local church from a group of Christians that get together to fellowship, study the Scripture, and pray together? Why is that not a local church?

Why does a local church need to be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission together? Is it enough for a local church to have leaders, teach the Scripture, and spend time in fellowship and prayer with each other? Why do they have to reach out to the lost and make disciples?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 83-85 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [85-89](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 48 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[The Local Church and the Universal Church](#)" (October 14, 2012), "[The Church - Universal and Local](#)" (October 11, 2020), "[The Church - Elders](#)" (October 18, 2020), "[The Church - The Community of Worship](#)" (October 25, 2020), "[The Church - The Community of Servanthood](#)" (November 15, 2020), and "[The Church - God's People on Mission Together](#)" (November 22, 2020).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Speak, O Lord](#) (Words and Music by Keith Getty & Stuart Townend Copyright © 2005 Thankyou Music)

(This song is a great picture of what happens when we gather as a local church. We pray for God to speak to us, to fashion us, for us to serve one another and the lost around us.)

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail—
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

Question 72: What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a special symbol given by God to His people that, when received in faith, serves as a sign and seal of His promises to us, functions as a means of grace to strengthen us, and through which we testify of our faith in Him and His promises.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous question, we looked at God's call for every Christian to be part of a local church. In the answer we mentioned several things that characterize a local church. Among these was that it is in the local church that we receive the sacraments. But what is a sacrament? This is the question we are addressing here.

Here we need to understand the basic nature of a sacrament - a special type of symbol given by God to His people that serves as a means of grace.

In the coming questions, we will explore the sacraments further. For now, it is important just to be able to define a sacrament.

Additional Questions:

Can you define what we mean by the term 'sacrament'?

Scripture References:

Genesis 17:11

You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.

Romans 4:11

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Romans 6:3–4

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Galatians 3:26–29

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Are sacraments just symbols - or do they somehow connect us to the reality of which they are a sign? When you read the verses above, do they sound like empty symbols, or something more?

Do the sacraments precede faith or do they follow it? (See Romans 4:11). If this is true, is it of any value to give sacraments to unbelievers or to children who have not yet come to conscious faith?

Why do you think God has given visible signs for us? Why is a visible sign important for the believer receiving it? Why is it important as a testimony to the world? Why not just have the invisible reality?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 66 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), questions [88](#), [91-92](#) of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 43 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[What Is A Sacrament?](#)" (March 7, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:[Behold the Lamb](#) (The Communion Hymn) (Keith and Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend)

(This song is specifically about communion, but it is a great picture of the sacraments. It pictures that these special symbols are not empty, but vitally link us to what they represent.)

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away,
Slain for us - and we remember
The promise made that all who come in faith
Find forgiveness at the cross.
So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice
As a sign of our bonds of peace
Around the table of the King.

The body of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Torn for you - eat and remember
The wounds that heal, the death that brings us life
Paid the price to make us one.
So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice
As a sign of our bonds of love
Around the table of the King.

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin,
Shed for you - drink and remember
He drained death's cup that all may enter in
To receive the life of God.
So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice
As a sign of our bonds of grace
Around the table of the King.

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise
To respond, - and to remember
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ
As His body here on earth.
As we share in His suffering
We proclaim Christ will come again!
And we'll join in the feast of heaven
Around the table of the King

Question 73: What is required for the sacraments to be effective?

The sacraments do not work automatically, but only as the Holy Spirit makes them effective for those who receive them in faith.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous question, we defined the sacraments. Now we must ask how the sacraments become effective. Do they automatically work for anyone who simply does the physical act of receiving the sacrament? Or do they require faith on the part of the recipient?

This is a question where there is a clear distinction between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church states that the sacraments work automatically. (The technical term is *ex opere operato* - in the working it works.) However, Protestants correctly note that the only way we receive any benefits from Christ - whether by sacrament or otherwise - is by faith. Without faith it is impossible to receive anything from God.

Additional Questions:

What is necessary for the sacraments to help us?

Do the sacraments help everybody or just those who have faith in Christ?

Scripture References:

Romans 4:9–12

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Hebrews 4:2

For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

1 Corinthians 11:27–30

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Do the sacraments work like some magical ceremony? If not, what is necessary for us to receive anything from the sacraments?

Can we receive anything from God apart from faith? If not, what does that tell us about what would be necessary for the sacraments to be effective for us?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 91 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 43 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[What Is A Sacrament?](#)" (March 7, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

[By Faith](#) (Keith and Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend)

(This song reminds us that the people of God have always walked with God by faith, and that this is the only way to receive anything from our gracious God.)

By faith we see the hand of God
In the light of creation's grand design
In the lives of those who prove His faithfulness
Who walk by faith and not by sight

By faith our fathers roamed the earth
With the power of His promise in their hearts
Of a holy city built by God's own hand
A place where peace and justice reign

We will stand as children of the promise
We will fix our eyes on Him our soul's reward
Till the race is finished and the work is done
We'll walk by faith and not by sight

By faith the prophets saw a day
When the longed-for Messiah would appear
With the power to break the chains of sin and death
And rise triumphant from the grave

By faith the church was called to go
In the power of the Spirit to the lost
To deliver captives and to preach good news
In every corner of the earth

We will stand...

By faith this mountain shall be moved
And the power of the gospel shall prevail
For we know in Christ all things are possible
For all who call upon His name

We will stand...

Question 74: What are the sacraments the Lord Jesus Christ gave to the Church in the new covenant?

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted two sacraments for the Church in the new covenant: water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous questions, we defined the sacraments and note that they need to be received in faith to be effective. Now we must ask how many sacraments there are, and what are those sacraments. This is a question where there is a clear distinction between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church states that there are seven sacraments. However, Protestants correctly note that in order for a practice to be a sacrament it must have been specifically commanded to be practiced by Jesus Himself. Other practices may be important, but they are not sacraments unless they were given to the Church by the Lord Jesus Himself and commanded to be practiced until His return. Protestants correctly note that only two things meet this criterion: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (which also goes by other names such as Communion).

In the coming questions, we will look at each of these sacraments individually. For now, it is important just to be able to correctly identify the two sacraments practiced in the new covenant Church.

Additional Questions:

Can you name the two sacraments?

What are the two sacraments Jesus gave to the Church?

Scripture References:

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 22:19–20

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Acts 2:38–39

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Colossians 2:11–12

In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 5:7–8

Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

Romans 4:11

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

Questions for Further Discussion:

How many sacraments are there? How do we determine what is and what is not a sacrament? Do the sacraments precede faith or do they follow it? (See Romans 4:11).

Why does the Church no longer practice circumcision and Passover? Why do we believe that these are no longer signs for believers? What is the relationship between water baptism and circumcision? What is the relationship between the Lord's Supper and Passover?

Which of the two sacraments is for the beginning of the Christian life? Which of them is to be a continual source of grace for the Christian life?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 68 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 93 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 43 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For further information, see the teaching "[What Is A Sacrament?](#)" (March 7, 2010), "[Why Should I be Baptized?](#)" (March 14, 2010), and "[Communion](#)" (June 3, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[The Church's One Foundation](#) (Samuel Stone and Samuel Wesley, Public Domain)

(This song begins with a number of lines that are pictures of the Word and sacraments - which lie at the heart of our life in the Church.)

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.
She is his new creation by water and the word.
From heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride.
With his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.

Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore:
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth has union
with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
like them, the meek and lowly,
may live eternally.

Question 75: What is water baptism?

Water baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ and the cleansing He provides for sin, a means of grace to provide strength in our struggle against sin, and the medium through which we testify of our faith in Christ and membership in the church.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous question, we identified the two sacraments given by Jesus for the Church in the new covenant: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. In this question, we begin taking a look at water baptism by defining water baptism and its benefits.

The answer to this question points to several things. First, baptism is a sign and seal of our union with Christ. (As we noted before, sacraments are signs and seal of the realities of salvation.) Second, water baptism signifies the cleansing from sin we receive through our union with Christ. Third, water baptism is a means of grace through which the new believer receives strength for the coming struggle against sin. Fourth, in water baptism, the new believer personally testifies to others of their faith in Christ and their membership in the Church.

In the coming questions, we will look at other questions related to water baptism such as the proper mode and recipients for water baptism. For now, it is important just to be able to correctly identify the nature and benefits of water baptism.

Additional Questions:

Can you explain water baptism?

Can you define the nature and benefits of water baptism?

Scripture References:

Galatians 3:26–27

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Acts 22:16

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

Titus 3:5–6

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Romans 6:3–4

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Colossians 2:11–12

In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38–39

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Ephesians 4:3–6

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What are the things that are signified and pictured in water baptism?

What happens in water baptism? As a sacrament, is it simply an empty symbol, or does God actually give grace to believers who obey His command to be water baptized?

In water baptism do we merely receive from God, or does it also serve to allow the believer to testify to others? If so, to what does the believer testify in water baptism?

Given the things signified or pictures in water baptism, when should one be water baptized - at the beginning of the Christian life or sometime later?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 69-71 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 94 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 44 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series “[Water Baptism](#)” taught during 2010, especially the teaching “[The Benefits of Baptism](#)” (March 21, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:[There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood](#) (William Cowper)

(This song uses baptismal imagery to remind us of the reality that stands behind water baptism - the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.)

There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains.
 Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
 That fountain in His day;
 And there have I, though vile as he,
 Washed all my sins away.
 Washed all my sins away, washed all my sins away
 And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
 Shall never lose its pow'r,
 Till all the ransomed church of God
 Are safe, to sin no more.
 Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more
 Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die.
 And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die
 Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy pow'r to save
 When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave,
 I'll sing Thy pow'r to save, I'll sing Thy pow'r to save,
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy pow'r to save.

Question 76: Does water baptism itself regenerate or wash away sin?

No, it is only the sign that points to the regeneration which is done by the Holy Spirit, and the washing away of sin which comes by the blood of Christ and is received by faith alone.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

In the previous question, we looked at water baptism and its benefits. In this question, we consider if water baptism itself actually accomplishes regeneration or cleansing from sin, or if it is merely a pointer to these realities.

This is important because we must remember that sacraments are not the reality itself, but rather a sign and symbol that points us to the reality. In this case, water baptism points to the reality of regeneration (being born again), which occurs by the work of the Holy Spirit, and the cleansing of sin, which happens by the blood of Christ.

In the coming questions, we will look at other questions related to water baptism such as the proper mode and recipients for water baptism. For now, it is important just to be able to correctly identify the limits of water baptism - what it actually does and does not do.

Additional Questions:

Are you born again by being water baptized? Does it actually wash away your sins?

Scripture References:

Titus 3:5–6

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

1 Corinthians 6:11

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Romans 5:1–2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Galatians 3:26–27

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Romans 4:9–12

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Romans 3:23–26

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished — 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

1 John 2:1–2

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Acts 2:38–39

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 22:16

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

1 Peter 3:21

This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Are your sins forgiven because you are baptized in water? What actually washes away sin?

Are you born again because you are baptized in water? How are you actually regenerated?

If water baptism does not actually regenerate or wash away sin, then explain verses like Acts 2:38-39, Acts 22:16, and 1 Peter 3:21. Why do they seem to link water baptism so strongly with regeneration and the cleansing of sin?

Can you name some verses that show that we are born again by the work of the Spirit - and not by water baptism? Can you name verses that show we are cleansed by the blood of Christ and not by water baptism?

What if someone said that sins are washed away by the blood of Christ, but we access the blood of Christ by water baptism? How would you respond? What is the only way we access the benefits of Christ’s atoning work on the cross?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 72-73 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 45 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series “[Water Baptism](#)” taught during 2010, especially the teaching “[The Limits of Baptism](#)” (March 28, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:

Nothing But the Blood of Jesus (Words and Music by Robert Lowry, 1876)

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Nothing can for sin atone,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Now by this I'll overcome—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
Now by this I'll reach my home—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Glory! Glory! This I sing—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,
All my praise for this I bring—
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Question 77: Understanding these things about water baptism, what is the best method for water baptism, and who should be water baptized?

Water baptism should be done by immersion, under the authority of the Trinity in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it should be administered only to those who have personally professed faith in Christ, not infants.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the final question on water baptism. It asks us who should be water baptized and in what method, in light of everything we have already learned about the sacraments in general and water baptism specifically.

To review what we have learned so far: (1) sacraments are signs which link us to the spiritual realities they represent; (2) sacraments are signs of an already existent faith, must be received in faith, and strengthen that already existent faith; (3) water baptism is the sign and seal of our union with Christ and the cleansing He provides for sin; (4) water baptism is a means of grace to provide strength in our struggle against sin; (5) water baptism is the medium through which we testify of our faith in Christ and membership in the church. Knowing these things, it is apparent that water baptism is only effective for those who have personally professed faith. It is of no use to infants since they are not linked to Christ through faith, can not receive the sacrament in faith, have not yet had the old nature crucified and thus are not able to receive grace to overcome it, and they can not personally state a personal faith in Christ nor a desire to be part of the church. Therefore, water baptism can not be properly administered to infants.

Regarding the best method for water baptism, we believe that the apostolic practice was to baptize by immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The practice of immersion seems to be best fit what is being symbolized (union with Christ; being clothed fully with Christ; washing away of our sins; being buried and raised with Christ), and the meaning of the word itself. And it appears that the practice of the early church was to baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16). However, since some heretical groups have denied the Trinity, it is critical to note that this is in no way a denial of the Trinity. Water baptism, like everything else, is done under the authority of the Triune God. But the actual practice, while taking this situation into account, should still follow the biblical pattern and practice.

Additional Questions:

Who should be baptized? How should they be baptized? In whose name should they be baptized?

How should we actually practice water baptism, and with whom?

Scripture References:

John 3:23

Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.

Mark 1:5, 10

The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.... 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Acts 8:36–38

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”... 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38–39

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 8:16

The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 10:48

So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 22:16

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

Galatians 3:26–27

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

1 Peter 3:21

This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:9–12

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What is the best method of water baptism - sprinkling, pouring, or immersion? Which one seems to best symbolize the things being pictured in water baptism? How did the early church seem to practice water baptism?

In whose name did the early church baptize? Why?

If we baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, does this mean we do not believe in the Trinity? Does it matter if we believe in the Trinity? How can we show that we believe in the Trinity when we do water baptisms?

Given the nature of sacraments (see questions 71 and 72), and the things being symbolized and received in water baptism, who should be water baptized? Can an infant or unbeliever actually receive any benefits from water baptism? Can an infant or unbeliever exercise the personal faith necessary to receive anything from the sacrament of water baptism?

What if someone said that the infant children of believers should be water baptized, because the parents have faith for the child, and the sign of water baptism is the sign of a future faith - how would you respond?

What if someone said that infants should be water baptized because they can not be saved unless they are water baptized - how would you respond?

Additional Information:

For additional information, see the teaching series "[Water Baptism](#)" taught during 2010, especially the teaching "[Who Should Be Baptized](#)" (April 25, 2010), "[Baptism In the Name of the Lord](#)" (May 2, 2010), and "[Baptism - Immersed Into Christ](#)" (May 9, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:By Faith (Keith and Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend)

(This song reminds us that the people of God have always walked with God by faith, and that this is the only way to receive anything from our gracious God - and therefore only those who have already professed faith should be water baptized.)

By faith we see the hand of God
In the light of creation's grand design
In the lives of those who prove His faithfulness
Who walk by faith and not by sight

By faith our fathers roamed the earth
With the power of His promise in their hearts
Of a holy city built by God's own hand
A place where peace and justice reign

We will stand as children of the promise
We will fix our eyes on Him our soul's reward
Till the race is finished and the work is done
We'll walk by faith and not by sight

By faith the prophets saw a day
When the longed-for Messiah would appear
With the power to break the chains of sin and death
And rise triumphant from the grave

By faith the church was called to go
In the power of the Spirit to the lost
To deliver captives and to preach good news
In every corner of the earth

We will stand...

By faith this mountain shall be moved
And the power of the gospel shall prevail
For we know in Christ all things are possible
For all who call upon His name

We will stand...

Question 78: What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is the sacramental meal Christ commanded all believers to eat, in which the death of Christ for our salvation is represented in the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the cup, and through which the believer spiritually feeds upon Christ, giving thanks to God as the elements are received in faith.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the first in a series of questions on the Lord's Supper. In this question, we define the Lord's Supper and look at its major benefits.

The answer to this question points us to several things. First, the Lord's Supper is a sacramental meal, which means that Christ has given it to the Church and commanded all believers to receive it. Second, the Supper is a visible representation of the death of Christ and the salvation it gives to us. (As we noted before, sacraments are signs and seal of the realities of salvation.) Third, the Lord's Supper is a means of grace through which the believer is united to Christ and spiritually feeds upon Him and all of His benefits. Finally, the Supper is only beneficial as we give thanks to God and receive it in faith.

Additional Questions:

Can you explain the Lord's Supper and its benefits?

Scripture References:

Matthew 26:26–29

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

Mark 14:22–25

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." 23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:19–20

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

John 6:47–54

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." 52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

Questions for Further Discussion:

What happens in the Lord’s Supper? As a sacrament, is it simply an empty symbol, or does God actually give grace to believers who obey His command to eat this meal?

What does the bread represent? What does the juice/wine represent?

How does this meal represent the death of Jesus? How does it point to our salvation?

Does this meal automatically allow someone to spiritually feed upon Christ, or must it be received in faith? Why?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 75-77 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 96 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 46 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[The Thanksgiving Meal](#)” (August 19, 2012), “[Enjoying Jesus Through His Table](#)” (August 28, 2016), “[Communion](#)” (June 3, 2012), and “[Grace In Communion](#)” (October 1, 2006).

Suggested Worship Song:[Come to The Table](#) (Michael Card)

(This song reminds us that the Lord's Supper began as the Last Supper, and we are connected to all He did then as we come in faith.)

Come to the table and savor the sight
The wine and the bread that was broken
And all have been welcomed to come if they might
Accept as their own these two tokens

The bread is His body, the wine is the blood
And the one who provides them is true
He freely offers, we freely receive
To accept and believe Him is all we must do

Come to the table and taste of the glory
And savor the sorrow, He's dying tomorrow
The hand that is breaking the bread
Soon will be broken

And here at the table, sit those who have loved You
One is a traitor and one will deny
But He's lived his life for them all
And for all be crucified

Come to the table He's prepared for you
The bread of forgiveness, the wine of release
Come to the table and sit down beside Him
The Savior wants you to join in the feast

Come to the table and see in His eyes
The love that the Father has spoken
And know you are welcome, whatever your crime
For every commandment you've broken

For He's come to love you and not to condemn
And He offers a pardon of peace
If you'll come to the table, you'll feel in your heart
The greatest forgiveness, the greatest release

Come to the table and taste of the glory
And savor the sorrow, He's dying tomorrow
The hand that is breaking the bread
Soon will be broken

And here at the table, sit those who have loved You
One is a traitor and one will deny
But He's lived his life for them all
And for all be crucified

Come to the table He's prepared for you
The bread of forgiveness, the wine of release
Come to the table and sit down beside Him
The Savior wants you to join in the feast

Come to the table He's prepared for you
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Question 79: What other names are given for the Lord's Supper in Scripture? What do we learn about this meal from these names?

The Lord's Supper is also known as the Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Table, the Eucharist, and Communion. From these we learn that this sacrament is a meal belonging to God, for which we give thanks, and through which we are united with God and His people as we partake in faith.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the second in a series of questions on the Lord's Supper. In this question, we list the various names given for this meal in Scripture. As we do this, we are able to see its major benefits for the believer. It also helps us understand why different churches refer to this meal by a variety of names. First, the Supper is also called the breaking of bread, which shows that it is a meal. Second, it is called the Lord's Table, which shows that this meal belongs to God and He is the Host of the meal. Third, it is called the Eucharist (the Greek word for 'thanksgiving') because in this meal we give thanks to God for Christ and the salvation He has given to us. Finally, it is called Communion, because as we receive it in faith, we are united with Christ and with His people the Church.

Additional Questions:

What are the various names given in Scripture for the Lord's Supper? What do you think each of these different titles might help us to understand about this meal?

Scripture References:

Acts 2:42

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

1 Corinthians 10:21

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

1 Corinthians 10:16

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is this meal referred to as the Breaking of Bread? Since regular meals were also referred to as breaking bread, why do you think Luke (see Luke 24:30-35; Acts 2:42; 20:7) used the name of regular meals for this special covenant meal?

Why is this meal referred to as the Lord's Table? If this is His Table, and He is the Host of the meal, what does that tell me about its importance?

Why do some Christians call this meal the Eucharist? What does calling this meal "The Thanksgiving" tell me about how I should receive it?

Why is the meal referred to as communion? What does it mean when Paul says that eating and drinking this meal is a communion/participation (the Greek word is *koinonia*, which means fellowship or participation) with the body and blood of Christ? What does it mean to say that when we all partake of the one loaf we are all one Body?

Additional Information:

For further information, see the teachings “[The Thanksgiving Meal](#)” (August 19, 2012), “[Communion](#)” (June 3, 2012), and “[The Church - The Community of Worship](#)” (October 25, 2020).

Suggested Worship Song:

[The Table](#) (Chris Tomlin)

(This song refers to the sacrament as the Table of the Lord, another of the key names for the Lord’s Supper.)

I will feast at the table of the Lord
 I will feast at the table of the Lord
 I won’t hunger anymore
 At His table [x2]

Come all you weary; come and find
 His yoke is easy; His burden light
 He is able; He will restore
 At the table of the Lord

There is peace at the table of the Lord
 There is peace at the table of the Lord
 I won’t worry anymore
 At His table

There is healing at the table of the Lord
 There is healing at the table of the Lord
 I won’t suffer anymore
 At His table

Come all you weary; come and find
 His yoke is easy; His burden light
 He is able; He will restore
 At the table of the Lord

I know He has a place for me
 Oh, what joy will fill my heart
 With the saints around the mercy seat of God

Come all you weary; come and find
 His yoke is easy; his burden light
 He is able; He will restore
 At the table of the Lord
 At the table of the Lord

I’m invited to the table of the Lord
 I’m invited to the table of the Lord
 He says, “Come just as you are”
 To His table

Question 80: Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work?

No. Christ died once for all, forever completing His atoning work. In the Lord's Supper His sacrifice is remembered by believers, and they are spiritually strengthened as they receive the meal in faith.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the third in a series of questions on the Lord's Supper. In this question, we see that, contrary to what some have taught, this meal does not add anything to Christ's atoning work. The Roman Catholic idea of the Mass, that Christ is sacrificed again each time the Eucharist is performed, finds no support in Scripture. Christ was sacrificed once, and that one sacrifice was sufficient for all time. The Lord's Supper is not a re-sacrifice of Christ, but a time when believers remember His once for all sacrifice and are spiritually strengthened as they receive the elements in faith and are united to Christ and all of His saving benefits.

This question is showing us that the benefits of this meal are not found in something new that it does, but in the fact that it nourishes us through what was done by Christ long ago. Further, it prepares us for the coming questions regarding the nature of how we "feed" upon Christ, and the importance of properly receiving the elements.

Additional Questions:

What happens when we eat the Lord's Supper? Is Christ sacrificed again?

Is Christ sacrificed again when we observe the Lord's Supper? What then happens to believers?

Scripture References:

John 19:28–30

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit...

Hebrews 1:3

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 9:25–28

Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. 26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews 10:11–14

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. 13 Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, 14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important to understand that Christ is not sacrificed each time we take the Eucharist? What does the writer to the Hebrews indicate it would say about the value of Christ's sacrifice if he had to offer it more than once?

When Jesus says "It is finished!" on the cross, to what was He referring? What exactly was finished and completed?

If Christ is not sacrificed when we take the Supper, does this mean there is no benefit to taking the meal many times? What happens to a believer when they remember Christ's once for all sacrifice as they come to the Lord's Table?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 80 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 47 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For further information, see the teachings "[The Thanksgiving Meal](#)" (August 19, 2012), and "[Communion](#)" (June 3, 2012), and "[Christ and the Sacrificial Aspect of the Law](#)" (May 16, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:[Behold the Lamb](#) (The Communion Hymn) (Keith and Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend)

(This song reminds us that it is not the Lord's Supper itself that brings forgiveness, but rather the death of Christ to which the Table points.)

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away,
Slain for us - and we remember
The promise made that all who come in faith
Find forgiveness at the cross.
So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice
As a sign of our bonds of peace
Around the table of the King.

The body of our Savior Jesus Christ,
Torn for you - eat and remember
The wounds that heal, the death that brings us life
Paid the price to make us one.
So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice
As a sign of our bonds of love
Around the table of the King.

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin,
Shed for you - drink and remember
He drained death's cup that all may enter in
To receive the life of God.
So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of His sacrifice
As a sign of our bonds of grace
Around the table of the King.

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise
To respond, - and to remember
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ
As His body here on earth.
As we share in His suffering
We proclaim Christ will come again!
And we'll join in the feast of heaven
Around the table of the King

Question 81: Do the bread and wine actually become the very blood and body of Christ?

No. The bread and wine are symbols of His body and blood, His redeeming life and death for us, and they unite us to Christ and all of His saving benefits when received properly.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the fourth in a series of questions on the Lord's Supper. In this question, we discuss whether the bread and wine are physically transformed so that they become the literal, physical body and blood of Jesus. The Roman Catholic church teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation - that the elements of bread and wine are transformed into the physical body and blood of Christ as the priest consecrates the elements. They admit that they still look, smell, feel, and taste like bread and wine. But following categories provided by Aristotle, they say that although the outward characteristics (the accidents) do not change, the inner essences (the substances) are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. However, while this is an application of Aristotelian philosophy, it finds no support in Scripture.

It is important to understand that Jesus does speak of the bread and the wine as His body and blood, but He clearly does so using figurative language. This is apparent for a few reasons. First, as He says these words, His real, physical Body is still sitting right there in front of the disciples. Second, because Jesus has a real, human, physical body, it shares the same characteristics as our bodies, and therefore could not have been in multiple places at once (as would have had to happen as He uttered the words and also at every celebration of the Lord's Supper since that time.) Third, sacraments, by their very nature, are symbols that point to something else, and they do not become the thing they signify (see question 72). For example, the water in baptism points to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and also to our cleansing from sin, and yet the water is not changed into the blood of Christ, or into His tomb. Nor were we literally, physically buried with Christ. It remains water - but it unites us to Christ's bloody death, His burial, and His resurrection, and conveys those benefits to those who are baptized in faith. So also here, the sacramental symbols of bread and wine point to the body and blood of Christ and His death for us, but they do not actually become the body and blood of Christ.

However, while denying that the elements are somehow changed into the actual body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of the Real Presence), it is imperative that we do not overreact and deny the real presence and work of Christ at His Table through the work of the Spirit. If we partake of the elements in faith, they spiritually unite us to Christ and strengthen us in the faith as we feed our souls upon Him and all of His saving work in our behalf. In rejecting the doctrine of the Real Presence, let us not overreact and embrace a doctrine of the Real Absence - as if Christ were present everywhere except at His Table! There is a real union with Christ and a real feeding - but are spiritual, not physical.

Additional Questions:

Are the bread and wine physically transformed into the literal body and blood of Jesus?

Scripture References:

Matthew 26:26–29

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

John 6:35, 47–51, 63

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty... 47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”... 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

1 Corinthians 10:1–4

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Romans 6:3–4

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important to understand that the bread and wine do not literally become the physical body and blood of Jesus?

What would it say about the nature of Jesus' humanity and His body if His body literally became present in multiple places at once, both while He was on the earth and even now that He has ascended to the right hand of the Father? If Christ is not physically present with all believers, how is He present with us? How is He present with us in the Lord's Supper?

What does Jesus mean when He says He is the true Bread of Life? Was He literally bread?

What does Jesus mean when He says we must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have life? Was He speaking of physical or spiritual life? Was he speaking of physical or spiritual eating?

How do we feed upon Christ at His Table? Do we literally eat His flesh and drink His blood - or do we feed upon Him spiritually?

Is Christ actually Present with us at His Table? Do we actually receive anything by coming to His Table?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 78 and 79 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 96 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Jesus is the Bread of Life](#)” (February 14, 2016), “[Communion](#)” (June 3, 2012), and “[What Is A Sacrament](#)” (March 7, 2010).

Suggested Worship Song:Communion Song (Barry McGuire)

(This simple song reminds us that as we take the bread and the cup, we remember the broken body and shed blood of Christ, which were given for us on that day at Calvary so long ago.)

Verse 1

Take this bread I give to you
And as you do remember Me
This bread is My body broken just for you
Take it (take it)
Eat it (eat it)
Each time you do
Remember Me remember Me

Verse 2

Take this cup I fill for you
And as you do remember Me
This cup is the new covenant
I'm making with you
Take it (take it)
Drink it (drink it)
Each time you do
Remember Me remember Me

Verse 3

Take this love I've given you
And as you do remember Me
Remember Me remember Me
Each time you do
Remember Me remember Me

Question 82: What is the proper way to receive the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper must be received in faith with thanksgiving by those who have confessed and repented of their sins. Those who receive the meal in this manner are assured of the forgiveness of their sins and receive grace to strengthen them in the faith, but those who do not come properly eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the fifth in a series of questions on the Lord's Supper. In this question, we discuss the proper way we must receive the Lord's Supper. There are two key requirements: faith and repentance.

As always, we do not receive anything apart from faith. As we have noted in question 73 above, there is a clear distinction between Protestants and Roman Catholics on this point. The Roman Catholic Church states that the sacraments work automatically. (The technical term is *ex opere operato* - in the working it works.) However, Protestants correctly note that the only way we receive any benefits from Christ - whether by sacrament or otherwise - is by faith. Without faith it is impossible to receive anything from God

However, it is also important that we repent of any known sins, confessing them to God and sincerely desiring to depart from them in the future. This is seen in Paul's warning to the Corinthians that some had eaten of the meal improperly and were thus sick. He told them that they must judge themselves as they come to the Table so they would not be judged. This does not mean that Communion must be a time of morbid introspection, trying to think of every sin - but it does mean that we must not approach the sacrament flippantly. It is a serious thing to approach the Table that is Hosted by Christ and points to His death for our sins. Therefore, those who come must be repentant and must confess known sins to Christ.

Those who come to the Table properly - confessing sins and approaching God in faith - are assured of forgiveness and receive fresh grace and spiritual strength. But those who do not come properly - either because they do not have faith in Christ as Lord, or because they refuse to repent of their sin - do not receive grace but rather judgment.

Additional Questions:

What is the right way to come to receive Communion?

What attitudes should we have when we come to the Lord's Table?

Scripture References:

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

1 Corinthians 11:27-31

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

Lamentations 3:40

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.

1 John 1:6–9

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 32:1–5

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord”— and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important to understand that to receive the blessings promised in the Lord’s Supper we must receive the meal in faith? Do we receive any of God’s covenant blessings apart from faith?

If we have to come to the Table with conscious faith in the Lord Jesus and a heart that is mindful of our sins and willing to repent of them, who should partake of the Lord’s Supper? Should an unbeliever eat the Supper? Should children come to the Table before they have understood the Gospel and received Christ?

What does it mean to repent of our sins as we come to the Table? Does this mean we must have lived in perfect obedience? Does it mean we try and think of every single sin we have committed? What attitude is God calling for as we come to receive His Supper?

If those who eat improperly fall under the judgment of God, is it better just to avoid the Lord’s Table? What benefit do we receive if we come properly?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 76 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and question 97 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Enjoying Jesus Through His Table](#)” (August 28, 2016), “[Jesus is the Bread of Life](#)” (February 14, 2016), “[Communion](#)” (June 3, 2012), “[What Is A Sacrament](#)” (March 7, 2010), and “[The Thanksgiving Meal](#)” (August 19, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:[In Remembrance of Me](#) (Cheri Keaggy)

(This song reminds us of the need to examine ourselves before we eat and drink - for this is no ordinary meal, but is the very sacrament given by Christ.)

This is my body given for you
This is the cup that holds the blood of the new covenant
This is forgiveness, simple and true
This is the way that I have made for you

[Chorus]:

Before you eat,
Before you drink
Take a long look inside
And tell me what you see
He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me".
Do this in remembrance of Me

This is the bread of life broken for you
This is the cup that holds the wine of the new covenant
This is the love of Christ poured out anew
This is the Son of God who died for you

[Chorus]

I will remember the cross that You bore for me
I will remember the crown that You wore for me.
I will remember the reason You suffered and died

[1st verse]

This is the way that I have made for you (I am the way)
This is the way that I have made for you

Question 83: What is meant by the words ‘until He comes’ in reference to the Lord’s Supper?

The words ‘until He comes’ teach us that Jesus will return again, and we will eat and drink with Him in the consummated Kingdom. This is the joy and blessed hope of all believers.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the last in a series of questions on the Lord’s Supper. In this question, we discuss the final words of Paul that are usually used when celebrating the Lord’s Supper - ‘until He comes.’ While many of the other things we have spoken of call us to look to the past or present, these words give the Supper a future aspect. The Church is to celebrate Communion until the return of Christ.

This future aspect is not something Paul invented. When Jesus instituted the Supper He said that He would not eat of it again until we all eat together in the consummated Kingdom. Paul picks up on this and tells us that we must continue to observe the Breaking of Bread until Christ returns.

This future aspect is also important because it reminds us of the return of Christ, and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. The return of Christ is the Blessed Hope, and it is the joy that sustains believers in the trials and temptations of this life. So it is appropriate that as we come to the Table to receive strength, we look forward to the consummation of the Kingdom when our salvation will be complete and our struggles past.

Additional Questions:

Why do we celebrate the Lord’s Supper ‘until He comes’?

Scripture References:

1 Corinthians 11:26

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Matthew 26:26–29

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Revelation 19:6–9

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) 9 Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

Titus 2:13–14

while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

1 John 3:2–3

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Questions for Further Discussion:

How long is the Church supposed to continue celebrating the Lord's Supper? Is it something that was for earlier days but that we are free to stop as times change?

Why is it important to remember the future aspect of the Lord's Supper?

Why is the return of Christ our blessed hope? Why should it produce joy in us?

What is the relationship between meditating on the return of Christ and confessing and repenting of our sins? Would such examination and repentance be appropriate as we come to the Lord's Table?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 76 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 97 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 46 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[Communion](#)" (June 3, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[We Will Feast In the House of Zion](#) (Sandra McCracken and Joshua Moore)

(This song focuses on the final wedding feast. Each time we take communion we are foreshadowing that great feast, and we will continue to do so 'until He comes.')

We will feast in the house of Zion
 We will sing with our hearts restored
 He has done great things, we will say together
 We will feast and weep no more

We will not be burned by the fire
 He is the LORD our God
 We are not consumed, by the flood
 Upheld, protected, gathered up (Chorus)

In the dark of night, before the dawn
 My soul, be not afraid
 For the promised morning, oh how long?
 Oh God of Jacob, be my strength (Chorus)

Every vow we've broken and betrayed
 You are the Faithful one
 And from the garden to the grave
 Bind us together, bring shalom. (Chorus)

Question 84: What is prayer?

Prayer is conversation with God in which believers pour out our hearts to God in the name of Christ in adoration, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication, and through which our desires are changed to conform with the will of God.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the first in a series of questions on prayer. In this question, we define prayer. Many Christians know that we are supposed to pray, but often we have not even thought about exactly what prayer is in the first place. In this question, we begin our discussion on prayer with a simple definition.

The fundamental fact about prayer is that it is conversation with God. In prayer we talk to God, giving Him praise for Who He is, confess our sins, make our own desires and requests known, and give God thanks for hearing our prayer and granting us so many good things. All of this is done in the name of Christ, for it is only through Him that we have access to the Father.

However, this conversation is not simply one way. As we talk with God, He also speaks to our hearts, further revealing His will, helping us to see our desires and our situations better, so that often our very desires are changed to conform with God's will.

Additional Questions:

Can you give a simple definition of prayer?

Scripture References:

Psalms 62:8

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalms 10:17

You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.

John 16:23–24

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Psalms 32:5–6

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

Luke 18:9–14

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Matthew 7:7–11

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 73:16–17

When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me 17 till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

Psalms 42:8–11

By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life. 9 I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" 10 My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 11 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Do we tend to think of prayer as simply telling God the things we want? Is this a correct understanding of prayer?

What does it mean to pray in Christ's name? Why is this important?

Why is it important for our prayer to include praise to God for Who He is and thanksgiving for what He has done?

Why is it important for us to specifically confess our sins to God in prayer?

Do you tend to think of prayer as a monologue, or a dialogue with God? How can God speak to us as we wrestle through thoughts, desires, fears, and situations with Him?

How often do I find prayer changing me and my desires rather than the situation?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 119 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 98 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 38 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series "[Prayer](#)" taught during October 2004.

Suggested Worship Song:[Make My Life A Prayer To You](#) (Melody Green)

(This song stresses that real prayer is more than just words - it involves our whole life.)

Make my life a prayer to you
I wanna do what you want me to
No empty words and no white lies
No token prayers no compromise

I wanna shine the light you gave
Through your son you sent to save us
From ourselves and our despair
It comforts me to know you're really there

[Chorus]

Well I wanna thank you now
For being patient with me
Oh it's so hard to see
When my eyes are on me
I guess I'll have to trust
And just believe what you say
Oh you're coming again
Coming to take me away

I wanna die and let you give
Your life to me so I might live
And share the hope you gave me
The love that set me free

I wanna tell the world out there
You're not some fable or fairy tale
That I've made up inside my head
You're God the son and you've risen from the dead

[Chorus]

I wanna die and let you give
Your life to me so I might live
And share the hope you gave me
The love that set me free

Question 85: Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

God commands us to pray because it is a constant reminder of our need for God and His grace, and He has promised to hear and answer our prayers as we come to Him properly.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the second in a series of questions on prayer. In this question, we ask why it is necessary for Christians to pray. If we do not know why we should pray, we are not likely to spend time in prayer.

The answer shows that there are two key reasons we need to pray. First, God commands us to pray. If for no other reason we should pray out of obedience to God. Second, we should pray because God has promised to hear our prayers and respond to them, giving us grace to meet our many needs.

Additional Questions:

Why should we pray?

Why is prayer important?

Scripture References:

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

John 16:23–24

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Matthew 7:7–11

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Philippians 4:6–7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean when God commands us to pray continually? How can I do this if I have a job, play a game, and take care of daily responsibilities?

Do you really believe that God hears and answers your prayers? Why do we sometimes not get what we ask for in prayer?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 116 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series "[Prayer](#)" taught during October 2004.

Suggested Worship Song:

[King of This Heart](#) (Matt Redman)

(This song gives a good picture of our great need for prayer.)

Verse 1

Time is too short to say it's okay
 To think I can live this way
 For just another day
 So I'll search through the night
 For the One my heart loves
 Won't stop 'til I've found You
 For Lord I need to hold You close

Chorus

Be the King of this heart again
 Be the King of this life
 In my soul there's a cry today
 Be the King of this heart
 Be the King of this heart (always)

Verse 2

I've stood in the desert and thirsted for You
 I've run through the city now I won't let go
 I'm throwing myself on Your mercy O God
 You say it's all or nothing
 I'm saying Jesus have it all

Bridge

Be the light for my eyes
 Be the strength for my feet
 Be the love of my soul
 Be my ev'rything
 Be my day and my night
 When I wake when I sleep
 Undivided my heart will be

Question 86: What is the proper attitude in prayer?

We should pray with love for God and our neighbor, perseverance, gratitude, humble submission to God's will, and faith, knowing that God always hears our prayers because of Christ.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the third in a series of questions on prayer. In this question, we ask what is the proper attitude in prayer. The previous question on why prayer is necessary for Christians mentioned that God will answer, but it also included the statement that we must come to Him properly. This question explores what that means.

The answer shows several key attitudes we must have in prayer. First, prayer must be prompted by love - both love for God and love for the people for whom we pray. Second, we must persevere in prayer. Some teach that if we have faith, we only ask once and then thank God it is done, but the Scripture clearly teaches otherwise - we must persevere in coming to God in prayer until we know the answer we have from Him. Third, we must pray with gratitude for the access we have to God in prayer, and for all of God's many blessings. Fourth, we must pray with an attitude of submission to God's will. Sometimes the answer to our request is "No" and we must be willing to accept this, knowing God's wisdom is greater than ours and His will is always best. Finally, we must pray in faith, knowing that our loving Father delights to hear and answer our prayers because we are His children through Christ, and we come in the name of Jesus.

These attitudes are part of how prayer is two-way communication. In question 84 we saw that prayer often changes our own attitudes and desires. This question reflects on some of how that happens. If we strive to pray properly, it will often require wrestling through to see if our own will lines up with God's will, if we are trusting in faith and expressing doubt, if we really love those for whom we pray. If we continue to pray through these things, we will find ourselves often being transformed as a result.

Additional Questions:

What is the proper way to pray?

What attitude should characterize us as we approach God in prayer?

Scripture References:

Psalms 42:1–2

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Psalms 84:1–2

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! 2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Luke 6:27–28

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Romans 12:14–15

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Luke 18:1–8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ 4 “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’” 6 And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

1 John 5:14–15

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Mark 11:22–24

“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. 23 “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

James 1:5–8

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

John 14:13–14

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is the proper attitude in prayer so important?

Can the wrong attitude in prayer eclipse the great promises God has given regarding hearing and answering our prayers?

Why is it important for us to persevere in prayer? Why would God want us to continue praying?

Why is it that we can pray in faith - because we have done all the right things and have the proper attitude, or because of Christ?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 117 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), question 98 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#), and question 39 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Shorter, or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series “[Prayer](#)” taught during October 2004, the series “[Praying Like Jesus](#)” taught during June-August 2013, and “[Pray Like Jesus - The Lord’s Prayer](#)” (August 26, 2012).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Heal Our Land](#) (Michael Card)

(The focus on 2 Chronicles 7:14 shows a lot about the proper attitude we should have in prayer.)

Forgive oh Lord and heal our land
 And give us eyes to seek Your face and hearts to understand
 That You alone make all things new
 And the blessings of the land we love are really gifts from You

If My people will humbly pray and seek My face and turn away
 From all their wicked ways
 Then I will hear them and move My hand
 And freely then will I forgive and I will heal their land

Unite our hearts in one accord
 And make us hungry for Your peace and burdened for the poor
 And grant us hope that we might see
 The future for the land we love our life our liberty

If My people will humbly pray and seek My face and turn away
 From all their wicked ways
 Then I will hear them and move My hand
 And freely then will I forgive and I will heal their land

If My people will humbly pray and seek My face and turn away
 From all their wicked ways
 Then I will hear them and move My hand
 And freely then will I forgive and I will heal their land

Question 87: Where do we learn how to pray?

The whole word of God teaches us how to pray, particularly in the Psalms and other prayers recorded in Scripture, and especially in the model prayer given by Jesus to His disciples, commonly known as the Lord's Prayer.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the fourth in a series of questions on prayer. In this question, we ask where we can learn how to pray. The previous question asked about the proper attitudes in prayer. This question asks where we can see examples of such prayer and learn how to actually pray.

It should not be surprising to see that the place we learn to pray is the Word of God. If the Scripture is our guide to all of life, then we should expect that it would teach us how to pray. And so it does, teaching us about prayer, and giving us many examples.

The answer also notes that while all of Scripture is useful to teach us about prayer certain sections of the Scripture are especially useful. Most notable are the prayers contained in Scripture, particularly in the book of Psalms. As we read and pray the prayers of Paul, Peter, Moses, and other great biblical figures, and especially as we read and pray the Psalms, we learn how to pray.

Finally, the answer notes that the greatest model of prayer in Scripture is given by Jesus Himself. When His disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them a prayer, which is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer. This prayer is the greatest model of prayer in the Scripture, and so the next series of questions will examine this prayer in detail.

Additional Questions:

Where is the best place to learn how to pray?

What is the best place to learn about how we should pray?

Where can we find the greatest examples of prayer?

Scripture References:

Colossians 1:9–12

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Ephesians 3:14–21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Matthew 6:9–13

“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” 2 He said to them, “When you pray, say: “ ‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’ ”

Besides the prayers shown above, here are a few other passages that should be read, studied, and prayed:

- John 17
- The entire book of Psalms
- Nehemiah 9
- Daniel 9
- Philippians 1:9-11
- Exodus 15:1-18
- 1 Kings 3:5-14
- 2 Chronicles 6:14-42

Questions for Further Discussion:

What is the best book on prayer ever written?

If we want to pray for others, is it good to pray the prayers we find in the Scripture? Are these prayers really applicable for today?

Do we have to pray the exact words found in Scripture, or can we use them as a model for our own prayers as well?

Have you ever tried praying through the book of Psalms, using a psalm or portion of a psalm each time you pray?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 99 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) and question 40 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Westminster Shorter or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series “[Psalms](#)” taught from October 2003-February 2004, the series “[The Book of Uncommon Prayer](#)” taught from February-April 2013, and the series “[Praying Like Jesus](#)” taught from June-August 2013.

Suggested Worship Song:

[The Lord Is My Shepherd](#) (Psalm 23) (Keith Green)

(This song is a version of Psalm 23 set to music, and is a great example of how we can pray the Scripture.)

VERSE 1

The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restore'th my soul
And guides my path in righteousness
For His name's sake.

CHORUS

Surely goodness and loving kindness
Shall follow me all the days of my life.
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever and ever and ever.

VERSE 2

Though I walk through the valley
Of the shadow of death
I will not fear, Thou art with me.
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.
Thou prepar'est a table
Before me in the presence of my enemies.

TAG

Thou anoint'est my head with oil
My cup's overflowing

CHORUS

Surely goodness and loving kindness
Shall follow me all the days of my life.
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever and ever and ever.

Question 88: What are the words of the Lord's Prayer?

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the first in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask to simply recite the words of the Lord's Prayer. The coming questions will then examine the prayer in detail, helping us to understand more about how we should pray.

Three things should be noted about this version of the Lord's Prayer. First, it follows the longer version recorded in Matthew rather than the shorter version recorded in Luke. Second, it uses the NIV translation of the words rather than the archaic King James or Book of Common prayer that is familiar to older people but not to the younger. Finally, the words contained in italics are not contained in the body of the NIV text, but rather in the margin, because they are not in the oldest New Testament manuscripts. However, the words are found in many very old manuscripts, and were used from the earliest days in the church, and are also very familiar to many people. For these reasons we will keep them in the version of the Lord's Prayer we discuss.

Additional Questions:

What are the words of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples?

Can you recite the Lord's Prayer?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” 2 He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Questions for Further Discussion:

Do we have to pray the exact words of this prayer, or can we use them as a model for our own prayers as well?

Why is it helpful to memorize the words of this prayer?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 118-119 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 41 of the [New City Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or New City Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching series “[The Lord's Prayer](#)” taught from January-February 2014, and the teaching “[Pray Like Jesus - The Lord's Prayer](#)” (August 26, 2012).

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Suggested Worship Song:

[The Lord's Prayer](#)

Our Father, which art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
On Earth, as it is in Heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For thy is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Forever
Amen

Question 89: What is the preface to the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us?

The preface to the Lord's Prayer is "Our Father in heaven." It teaches us that God is our Father in Christ, so we should approach Him with reverence and confidence, as children to their father, and that we should pray with and for others.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the second in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the preface to the Lord's prayer and what it teaches us. The coming questions will all follow a similar format, asking for each successive part of the prayer, and what that part teaches us regarding prayer. Since this is a model for prayer, this format is important. It is important to not only remember the words of the Lord's Prayer itself, but to understand what those words mean, and how they should be put into practice in our own prayers.

The answer to this question tells several things. First, because we are in Christ, God is our Father. This is the basis for why we are even able to approach God in prayer. Second, it tells us that because God is our Father in Christ we should approach Him with confidence. Though we should always have a deep respect and reverence for God (the fear of the Lord), we are His children and He welcomes us into His presence because of Christ. Finally, we note that this preface teaches us that prayer is not just for myself, for God is not just My Father, He is OUR Father. In one sense, prayer is an intensely communal thing (which is why all of the pronouns in this prayer regarding humans are plural, not singular). This facet of prayer will be seen in each section of the prayer.

Additional Questions:

What are the first words of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples, and what do they teach us?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

Matthew 6:5–6

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 7:11

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Romans 8:15–17

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

John 16:26–27

In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean that we call God our Father? Is Jesus saying God is the Father of all humans?

If God is our Father because of Christ, how should this affect our praying?

Why is it important that Jesus taught us to pray “Our Father” instead of “My Father”?

Additional Information:

This question is based on questions 120-121 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 100 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching “[Praying To Our Father In Heaven](#)” (January 5, 2014).

Suggested Worship Song:

[How Deep the Father's Love for Us](#) (Stuart Townend)

(This song reminds us how great is the love of the Father for us, as seen in the death of Christ. This deep love should give us great assurance as we approach our Father in prayer.)

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One,
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice,
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Question 90: What is the first request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The first request is "Hallowed be your name." In it we learn to pray that God will enable us to glorify Him in everything, and that He will work all things for the honor of His own Name.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the third in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the first request in the Lord's prayer and what it teaches us. The coming questions will all follow a similar format, asking for each successive part of the prayer, and what that part teaches us regarding prayer. Since this is a model for prayer, this format is important. It is important to not only remember the words of the Lord's Prayer itself, but to understand what those words mean, and how they should be put into practice in our own prayers.

Furthermore, as we will see with each request, when we pray for this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us two key things. First, we are to pray that God will receive the glory and honor He is due. In a sense, this is praying that the very first question of the catechism would be fulfilled: that humans would glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Since this is why we were made, we begin our prayer with the request that God would cause this to happen in us. Second, we are asking that God would cause all things to work for the glory, honor, and praise of His own Name. This shows that prayer is primarily oriented to God, His Kingdom, and His work rather than to us. This will be reinforced by the fact that the first half of the prayer will be devoted to similar themes.

Additional Questions:

What is the first request Jesus taught us to pray, and what does it teach us?

What do we learn to pray in the first request?

What do we learn to pray in the first petition?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

Nehemiah 9:5

And the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah—said: "Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting." "Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise."

Psalms 57:5

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

Isaiah 6:1–3

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Revelation 4:8–11

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.” 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why is it important that this prayer begins with a request for God to make His own name honored? What does this tell us about the proper focus of prayer?

What does it mean for God’s Name to be held as holy? How is this related to the third commandment we studied in question 58?

Why is it important that we not only pray that God’s Name would be honored, but that it would be honored in and through us?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 122 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 101 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Praying To Our Father In Heaven](#)” (January 5, 2014), and “[Praying for God to Be Glorified and Known](#)” (June 16, 2013) by Bret Hicks.

Suggested Worship Song:[How Great Is Our God](#) (Chris Tomlin)

(This song reminds us how great is our God. It is this attitude that should inform our prayer, and the first desire expressed in prayer should be that all would recognize our great God and worship Him.)

The splendor of a king
Clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice

He wraps Himself in light,
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

How great is our God – sing with me
How great is our God – and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
Beginning and the end

The Godhead Three in One
Father, Spirit and Son
Lion and the Lamb
Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God – sing with me
How great is our God – and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Name above all names
Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing
How great is our God

Name above all names
You're worthy of all praise
And my heart will sing
How great is our God

[3x]
How great is our God – sing with me
How great is our God – and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Question 91: What is the second request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The second request is "Your Kingdom come." In it we learn to pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, that God's Kingdom of grace and righteousness would be advanced through us, and that it would come in its glorious fullness quickly.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the fourth in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the second request in the Lord's prayer and what it teaches us. Every question regarding each petition in the Lord's Prayer will follow a similar format, asking for each successive part of the prayer, and what that part teaches us regarding prayer. It is important to not only remember the words of the Lord's Prayer itself, but to understand what those words mean, and how they should be put into practice in our own prayers. Additionally, as we saw in the previous question, when we pray for this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us three key things. First, we are to pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed. If God's Kingdom is to advance, this necessarily means that the kingdom of Satan must be destroyed. Second, we are asking that God's Kingdom (which is characterized by grace and righteousness) would be advanced in and through us. Finally, in praying this we are asking that God's Kingdom would come in its fullness - and quickly. God's Kingdom is already here among us, but it is not yet fully realized - but we are to pray that it will be fully realized, and soon.

Additional Questions:

What is the second request Jesus taught us to pray, and what does it teach us?

What do we learn to pray in the second request?

What do we learn to pray in the second petition?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

Psalms 103:19

The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

Revelation 11:15

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Philippians 3:20–21

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Peter 3:11–13

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean to pray for God’s Kingdom to come?

In what sense is God’s Kingdom already present? In what sense do we still pray for it to come?

What things characterize Satan’s kingdom? What things characterize God’s Kingdom?

Can we help to advance God’s Kingdom? Can we bring about the Kingdom by our own efforts, or is that the work of God?

Why do we pray that God’s Kingdom would come quickly? What things will be better when the Kingdom of God has fully come?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 123 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 102 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Praying To Our Father In Heaven](#)” (January 5, 2014), “[Christ - The Risen Lord of All](#)” (April 5, 2015), and “[New Testament Eschatology - The Now But Not Yet](#)” (June 24, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Sing To the King](#) (Billy Foote)

(This song reminds us that Jesus is already our King, but that we still await the fulness of His Kingdom, and that we now are praying and preparing for that day.)

Sing to the King Who is coming to reign
 Glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain
 Life and salvation His empire shall bring
 And joy to the nations when Jesus is King

Come, let us sing a song
 A song declaring that we belong to Jesus
 He is all we need
 Lift up a heart of praise
 Sing now with voices raised to Jesus
 Sing to the King

For His returning we watch and we pray
 We will be ready the dawn of that day
 We’ll join in singing with all the redeemed
 ‘Cause Satan is vanquished and my Jesus is King

Question 92: What is the third request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The third request is "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In it we learn to pray that by His grace God would make us to know, submit to, and obey His will in everything, as the angels do in heaven.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the fifth in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the third request in the Lord's prayer and what it teaches us. This question follows the same format as the previous questions, asking the words of the request, and what the request teaches us regarding prayer. Additionally, as we saw in the previous questions, when we pray for this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us three key things. First, we are to pray that God's will would be done on earth as it is done in heaven. In a sense, this is the completion of the request for the Kingdom to come. When God's Kingdom comes, His will is done. Second, we see that if the will of God is to be done, it must be done in us. This means that we must be able to know, fully submit to, and obey God's will in everything. Finally, we are asking, not that this would be done partially, but that we would all obey God's will just as fully and quickly as the angels in heaven do. This is what it means for God's will to be done on earth as in heaven.

Additional Questions:

What is the third request Jesus taught us to pray, and what does it teach us?

What do we learn to pray in the third request?

What do we learn to pray in the third petition?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

Matthew 26:39–42

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

John 4:31–34

Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

1 Peter 4:1–2

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. 2 As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

Romans 12:1–2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

Hebrews 13:20–21

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalms 103:20

Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean to pray for God’s will to be done on earth?

If God’s will is to be done in earth, what does that require of me after I pray?

Where do I find the will of God?

How does prayer show me areas where my will and God’s will are in conflict? Does prayer change God’s will - or mine?

What does it mean to pray for God’s will to be done on earth - as it is in heaven?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 124 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 103 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[Praying To Our Father In Heaven](#)” (January 5, 2014), “[The Two Aspects of God’s Will](#)” (January 4, 2009), and “[What Is God’s Will For My Life?](#)” (January 11, 2009).

Suggested Worship Song:

Take My Life and Let It Be (Frances R. Havergal)

(This song is a prayer that every aspect of our lives would be given over to God. It is essentially an extended prayer saying "God's will be done - in my life.")

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Always, only for my King.

Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my love, my God, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my self and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Question 93: What is the fourth request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The fourth request is "Give us today our daily bread." In it we learn that we should acknowledge that everything we have is a gift of God and so we pray to God each day for our needs, asking Him to bless us so that we might be a blessing to others, as we look to Jesus, the True Eternal Bread.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the sixth in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the fourth request in the Lord's Prayer and what it teaches us. This question follows the same format as the previous questions, asking the words of the request, and what the request teaches us regarding prayer. Additionally, as we saw in the previous questions, when we pray for this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us four key things. First, we are to pray with the recognition that everything we have comes as a gift from God. We are praying for our daily bread, the most basic of life's necessities, and we ask God for this because we recognize that all we have comes from Him. Second, we ask God to meet our daily needs. While we recognize they come from God, we do not take this for granted. We ask Him for the needs we have this day. (Note that this would also mean that prayer is a daily need.) Third, because we are asking for OUR daily bread, we commit ourselves to being a source of blessing to others. When God blesses us, we promise to pass this blessing on to others. Finally, when we pray for God to grant us bread, we are reminded that our deepest and truest need is not for earthly bread, but for the True, Eternal Bread - Jesus. In this request, we are reminded to not simply labor for the earthly and the temporal, but rather for the heavenly and eternal.

Additional Questions:

What is the fourth request Jesus taught us to pray, and what does it teach us?

What do we learn to pray in the fourth request?

What do we learn to pray in the fourth petition?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

Deuteronomy 8:18

But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Proverbs 30:8–9

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. 9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

2 Thessalonians 3:10–12

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

Ephesians 4:28

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Romans 12:13

Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

1 Timothy 6:18

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Deuteronomy 8:3

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Job 23:12

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

John 6:35, 48–50

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty... 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What does it mean when we say that God is the one who gives us everything? Does this mean that we do not have to work hard?

If God gives us everything, do we have the right to hoard what we have been given?

If I am not generous and willing to share, what does that say about my trust that God really will provide for my daily bread - all of the things I really need?

Is this prayer only about the bread we buy at the store? Or is our food supposed to always remind us of a deeper need?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 125 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 104 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching [“Praying For Our Daily Bread”](#) (January 12, 2014), and [“The Feast of Fasting”](#) (January 11, 2015).

Suggested Worship Song:[All The Way My Savior Leads Me](#) (Fanny Crosby)

(This song reminds us that God always meets our needs, and even more beside. It also points us beyond our earthly needs in the final verse, to the day when we will dwell with God forever.)

All the way my Savior leads me
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His faithful mercies?
Who through life has been my guide
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort
Ere by faith in Him to dwell
For I know whate'er fall me
Jesus doeth all things well

All of the way my Savior leads me
And He cheers each winding path I tread
Gives me strength for every trial
And He feeds me with the living bread
And though my weary steps may falter
And my soul a-thirst may be
Gushing from a rock before me
Lo a spring of joy I see

And all the way my Savior leads me
Oh, the fullness of His love
Perfect rest in me is promised
In my Father's house above
When my spirit clothed immortal
Wings its flight through the realms of the day
This my song through endless ages
Jesus led me all the way

Question 94: What is the fifth request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The fifth request is "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." In it we learn to pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely forgive all our sins, and we promise that by His grace we will forgive others as we have been forgiven.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the seventh in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the fifth request in the Lord's prayer and what it teaches us. This question follows the same format as the previous questions, asking the words of the request, and what the request teaches us regarding prayer. Additionally, as we saw in the previous questions, when we pray for this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us four key things. First, we are to pray that God would forgive us for all of our sins. Although God is gracious to us as His children, we are not to presume upon His grace. Instead, we are to specifically ask Him in His mercy to pardon and forgive us. Second, we recognize that God's forgiveness is not because of anything within us, but because of Christ. We are forgiven for Christ's sake. This reminds us of the great truths of the Gospel we saw in questions 19-32. Third, we are reminded that we can not pray for forgiveness and then be unwilling to extend it to others. If we wish to receive mercy, we must extend it to others. Thus, in praying this we are promising that by God's grace we will forgive as we have been forgiven.

It should be noted that in Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer the request is specifically about debts rather than sins. However, it is clear that sins are in view because this is how the idea of debts was often used by Jesus and others, because the very next verses specifically deal with forgiving sins, and because this is how Luke records it in his version of the prayer.

Additional Questions:

What is the fifth request Jesus taught us to pray, and what does it teach us?

What do we learn to pray in the fifth request?

What do we learn to pray in the fifth petition?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

Psalms 51:1–7

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. 5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. 6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Psalms 32:5–6

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

Psalms 143:2

Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

1 John 1:8–10

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2:1–2

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Matthew 6:14–15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 18:21–35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26 The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. 28 But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. 29 His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' 30 But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32 Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35 This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Mark 11:25

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Questions for Further Discussion:

If God has already promised to forgive our sins because of Christ, why do we need to confess them? Why is God willing to forgive our sins? Is it because I have the right attitude - or because of what Christ has done?

Why does Jesus link my being forgiven of my sins with my willingness to forgive others? Is this teaching salvation by works - that I must forgive before I can be forgiven? What is Jesus wanting me to understand?

Consider the parable Jesus told in Matthew 18:23-35. How great is my sin before God? Has God forgiven that sin? How great is the sin others have committed against me in light of my sin before God? Do I have any right to harbor unforgiveness towards another?

Does forgiving someone mean that there are no consequences for their behavior? What is the difference between forgiveness and consequences?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 126 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 105 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching "[Praying For Our Forgiveness](#)" (January 26, 2014), "[Slipping Over the Line](#)" (May 18, 2014), and "[UnCommon Confession In Prayer](#)" (April 7, 2013).

Suggested Worship Song:[Kyrie Eleison](#) (Keith Getty and Stuart Townend)

(Kyrie Eleison is the Greek phrase for “Lord have mercy” and is a traditional prayer in the Church. It is a beautiful song of confession, and also a prayer to show mercy to others as we have received mercy.)

Kyrie eleison; have mercy.
 Christe eleison; have mercy.
 Kyrie eleison; have mercy.
 Christe eleison; have mercy.

As we come before You
 With the needs of our world,
 We confess our failures and our sin,
 For our words are many
 Yet our deeds have been few;
 Fan the fire of compassion
 Once again.

CHORUS

When the cries of victims
 Go unheard in the land,
 And the scars of war refuse to heal,
 Will we stand for justice
 To empower the weak
 Til their bonds of oppression
 Are no more?

CHORUS

If we love our God with all our
 Heart, mind, and strength,
 And we love our Neighbors as ourselves,
 Then this law of love
 Will heal the nations of earth,
 And the glory of Christ Will be revealed.

CHORUS

Lord, renew our vision
 To be Christ where we live,
 To reach out in mercy to the lost;
 For each cup of kindness
 To the least in our midst
 Is an offering of worship
 To the throne.

Question 95: What is the sixth request in the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The sixth request is “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” In it we learn to pray that God would protect us from Satan and his temptations, humbly recognizing our need for God and His grace to sustain and deliver us.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the eighth in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the sixth and final request in the Lord's prayer and what it teaches us. This question follows the same format as the previous questions, asking the words of the request, and what the request teaches us regarding prayer. Additionally, as we saw in the previous questions, when we pray for this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us two key things. First, we are to pray that God would protect us from Satan and His temptations. This is a straightforward request to not be placed in the path of Satan, evil, or temptation. Second, we ask this because we recognize that apart from God's gracious sustaining power, we give in to Satan and his temptations all too easily.

It should be noted that many translations have “deliver us from evil” rather than “deliver us from the Evil One.” The Greek may be translated either way, and both aspects are certainly included in the prayer. Here we follow the NIV translation. [For more information about this translation choice, see the teaching “[Praying for Our Deliverance](#)” (February 2, 2014).]

Additional Questions:

What is the sixth request Jesus taught us to pray, and what does it teach us?

What do we learn to pray in the sixth request?

What do we learn to pray in the sixth petition?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

“This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” 2 He said to them, “When you pray, say: “ ‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’”

Psalms 19:13

Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

John 17:15

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

1 Peter 5:8–10

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

James 1:12–15

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Romans 7:21–25

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Ephesians 6:10–13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why do we need to ask God to protect us from Satan, evil, and temptation?

If I pray and ask God to keep me from temptation, what actions should I take to line up with my prayer?

If I ask God to keep me from temptation, can I allow myself to act in a way that might lead others to sin? What are ways that my actions might tempt others to sin?

What things has God given to us to help us in the face of temptation and evil?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 127 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 106 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching [“Praying For Our Deliverance”](#) (February 2, 2014), [“Authentic Faith In A World of Illusion”](#) (May 31, 2015), [“Paradise Lost: The Fall of Humanity”](#) (April 15, 2007), and [“Protection Through Prayer”](#) (September 26, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:[A Mighty Fortress Is Our God](#) (Martin Luther)

(This song is considered one of the greatest of the Reformation. It is based on Psalm 46, and expresses the great spiritual battle of which we are a part, that our foe is Satan, and that we need God's help in this battle.)

A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right man on our side,
the man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth, his name,
from age to age the same,
and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours,
thru him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever.

Question 96: What is the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer and what does it teach us regarding prayer?

The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer is "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." In it we learn to acknowledge all authority, power, and glory belong to God, and He is able to do all we ask and more; so we pray for these things that we might live for Him and His glory now and forever.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the ninth in a series of questions on the Lord's Prayer. In this question, we ask what is the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer and what it teaches us. This question follows the same format as the previous questions, asking the words of the prayer, and what the words teach us regarding prayer. Additionally, as we saw in the previous questions, when we pray this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us three key things. First, we are acknowledging that all authority, power, and glory belong to God. As the prayer began with a focus on God and His Kingdom and glory, so it now comes to a close with the same focus. Second, we recognize that if God has all power and authority He is able to answer all we have prayed for, and even more. This is a fitting way to close the prayer. We cry out to God in prayer because He is mighty and well able to answer. Third, we ask God to help us so that we might live for Him and His glory, now and forever. Once again, we want our lives to line up with our prayers.

Finally, it should be noted that these words are not contained in the body of the NIV text, but rather in the margin. This is because they are not in the oldest New Testament manuscripts. However, the words are found in many very old manuscripts, and were used from the earliest days in the church, and are also very familiar to many people. For these reasons we have kept them in the version of the Lord's Prayer we are discussing. [For more information about this translation choice, see the teaching "[Praying for Our Deliverance](#)" (February 2, 2014).]

Additional Questions:

What is the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, and what does it teach us?

What is the doxology (concluding praise) of the Lord's Prayer?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

1 Chronicles 29:10–13

David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. 13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."

1 Timothy 1:17

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 4:11

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

Revelation 5:11–13

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” 13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

Revelation 7:9–12

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” 11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

Ephesians 3:20–21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Jude 1:24–25

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Questions for Further Discussion:

Why should we acknowledge that all power, authority and glory belong to God?

Since this prayer begins and ends with a focus on God, what does that tell us about the central facet of biblical prayer? Do my own prayers follow this practice?

Why is it comforting to know that God has all authority and power?

How might I live in recognition of God’s authority, power, and glory?

How is this doxology related to question 1 in this catechism?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 128 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 107 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teaching [“Praying For Our Deliverance”](#) (February 2, 2014), [“Praying For God To Be Glorified and Known”](#) (June 16, 2013), and [“The Absolute Supremacy of God”](#) (February 25, 2007).

Suggested Worship Song:[How Great Is Our God](#) (Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves)

(This song is a simple reflection on the greatness and majesty of our God.)

The splendor of a king
Clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice

He wraps Himself in light,
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

How great is our God – sing with me
How great is our God – and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
Beginning and the end

The Godhead Three in One
Father, Spirit and Son
Lion and the Lamb
Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God – sing with me
How great is our God – and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Name above all names
Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing
How great is our God

Name above all names
You're worthy of all praise
And my heart will sing
How great is our God

[3x]
How great is our God – sing with me
How great is our God – and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Question 97: Why do we end our prayer with “Amen”?

Why do we end our prayer with “Amen”?

We end our prayer with “Amen” to show that we earnestly desire these things, and we have confidence that our Father in heaven hears us and delights to answer our prayers, because every promise of God is given to us in Christ.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the tenth and final in a series of questions on the Lord’s Prayer. In this question, we ask about the response “Amen” that we speak at the end of the Lord’s Prayer. This question follows the same format as the previous questions, asking the words of the prayer, and what the words teach us regarding prayer. Additionally, as we saw in the previous questions, when we pray this specific thing, we are also committing ourselves to work for it. It would not be possible to pray with the attitudes we saw in question 86 and then not labor to see these things done in our own life.

The answer to this question tells us two key things. First, amen is often used today to express earnest agreement. When we conclude our prayer this way, it means these have not been empty words. We truly desire the things for which we have prayed. Second, it shows our confidence that God has heard and will answer our prayer. The word “amen” means “so shall it be.” When we close a prayer with “Amen!” we are expressing confidence that our request will be granted. Thus, this close forms a “bookend” with “Our Father” at the beginning of the prayer. Because God is our Father in Christ, we are confident that He hears and answers our prayer.

It is common practice to end our prayers with “Amen” but people often do not even understand what it means. It is important that we learn the meaning and why we do this, lest we fall into vain babbling of words. This little word has a rich history, being used to close out each of the “books” within the book of Psalms (see Psalm 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48). It was often used by God’s people in Scripture to show agreement and earnest desire, and it is the final word in all Scripture. And so it is still used today - and hopefully with a good understanding of what is meant.

Additional Questions:

What is the final word of the Lord’s Prayer, and what does it teach us?

Scripture References:

Matthew 6:9–13

“This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Luke 11:1–4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” 2 He said to them, “When you pray, say: “ ‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

1 Kings 1:36

Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, “Amen! May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, so declare it.”

1 Chronicles 16:36

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said “Amen” and “Praise the Lord.”

Nehemiah 8:6

Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, “Amen! Amen!” Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Psalms 41:13

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.

Jeremiah 11:5

Then I will fulfill the oath I swore to your forefathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey’—the land you possess today.” I answered, “Amen, Lord.”

Romans 11:36

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

2 Corinthians 1:20

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Ephesians 3:20–21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Revelation 22:21

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

Questions for Further Discussion:

What do we mean when we say “Amen”?

Why is it important that we understand what we are praying?

Why is it fitting to end a prayer with “Amen!”?

Additional Information:

This question is based on question 129 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) and question 107 of the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#). Any resources you find on the Heidelberg or Westminster Shorter Catechisms will have a good discussion on this question.

For additional information, see the teachings “[UnCommon Confidence In Prayer](#)” (March 24, 2013), and “[Provision by Prayer](#)” (October 3, 2004).

Suggested Worship Song:

[Doxology](#) (Ken Thomas; Amen addition by David Crowder)

(This is the traditional Doxology, which speaks praise to God, but it has a refrain of “Amen” added to it. This Doxology captures the heart of the doxology and our response in the Lord’s Prayer.)

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
 Praise Him, all creatures here below;
 Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
 Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

Question 98: Knowing all of these things, what is your only comfort in life and death?

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, from this day forth, to live unto him.

Focus and Purpose of this Question

This is the final question in the catechism! To close out this instruction in our faith, we have used question 1 of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) (it is also question 1 of the [New City Catechism](#)). They used this question an answer as a preview of questions and answers that were to follow. Here we use it as a review of what has preceded.

The answer reveals a heart that has understood and been transformed by all we have studied. As we have looked at the great truths of our faith - our guilt, the grace of God seen in the Gospel, and our gratitude and growth in response to God's grace - we are captivated by God and filled with comfort and confidence in the face of life's storms.

Rather than laying out the specific statements in this answer, it is recommended that we simply memorize the answer and let its words soak into our hearts until we are filled with the confidence and comfort expressed in the answer. For this reason, we are not including the other various materials normally following each question (except for a closing hymn). These points have been discussed throughout the catechism and need not be reiterated here. May God make the words of this classic question and answer true in each of our lives, so that we may glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and thus find true comfort in life and in death!

Suggested Worship Song:[Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery](#) (Matt Boswell, Michael Bleecker, Matt Papa)

(This beautiful modern hymn reminds us of the great mystery of our faith, and how it pierces even through death. As we sing it receive comfort - in life and death.)

VERSE 1

Come behold the wondrous mystery
In the dawning of the King
He the theme of heaven's praises
Robed in frail humanity
In our longing, in our darkness
Now the light of life has come
Look to Christ, who condescended
Took on flesh to ransom us

VERSE 2

Come behold the wondrous mystery
He the perfect Son of Man
In His living, in His suffering
Never trace nor stain of sin
See the true and better Adam
Come to save the hell-bound man
Christ the great and sure fulfillment
Of the law; in Him we stand

VERSE 3

Come behold the wondrous mystery
Christ the Lord upon the tree
In the stead of ruined sinners
Hangs the Lamb in victory
See the price of our redemption
See the Father's plan unfold
Bringing many sons to glory
Grace unmeasured, love untold

VERSE 4

Come behold the wondrous mystery
Slain by death the God of life
But no grave could e'er restrain Him
Praise the Lord; He is alive!
What a foretaste of deliverance
How unwavering our hope
Christ in power resurrected
As we will be when he comes
What a foretaste of deliverance
How unwavering our hope
Christ in power resurrected
As we will be when he comes

