

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
January 5, 2020

- A. Prayer
- B. Introduction to the Westminster Shorter Catechism-1647 for children and for us...
 - 1. What would you say the purpose is of catechisms?
 - a. **Our forefathers thought it a necessary tool to teach each generation so they put together a concise and systematic approach to study the Scriptures...creeds, confessions, catechisms.**
 - b. **They saw that one of the weaknesses, if not the greatest weakness is that while we may study the Scriptures we do not study how it all fits together. We are sure or we forget about what is called doctrine. I Tim. 4:6 says, *"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourselves and your hearers."***
 - c. **The church through the ages has been and is full of ignorance about what God's word means...creeds, confessions, and catechisms are a step in the understanding process...**
 - (1) **We all use mathematics every day but we don't all understand or even know why mathematics is important...**
 - (2) **As with other subjects we are okay in our ignorance until we get put in a place to answer some question we can't answer or have some knowledge we need or are expected to know but never took the time to properly study it.**
 - d. **These creeds, confessions and catechisms reflect the teaching of THE Church not a particular part of the Church....formulated, fought for, and died for.**
 - 2. How do you suppose studying through the catechism will help us understand the Scriptures better and be better proclaimers of the truth?
 - a. **The catechisms stated purpose is to teach what we are to know and believe about God and then to teach us what we are to do as kingdom citizens.**
 - b. **It also helps us with an extra standard that enables us to be on the same page. In other words...this is what we believe and this is what we teach our children to believe.**
 - c. **They do not even come close to the level of Scripture but they have been received by the Church as a competent explanation of what the Scriptures say and are to be commended to the people of the Church.**
 - d. **Therefore the catechism teaches through the major areas of faith. Ares that the father's thought to be important for our edification, strength as a people of God and our ability to communicate clearly what we believe to be true.**
 - e. **The catechism is a handbook, if you will, made up of questions and answers to "quiz" us in our on-going discipline of knowing, believing and doing as God commands. See II Tim. 1:13-14- *"Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."***

- f. How might this passage aid our case to study the catechism as we study the Scriptures?
- (1) See I Tim. 1:8-12- *“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.”* This is the type of doctrine/ sound words he desires us to follow...make a lifestyle in our life...a worldview.
 - (2) *“Healthy/sound words”*= a good deposit= sound doctrine...biblical teachings.
 - (3) Men seem to learn best when the teaching is systematized... hence a programmed approach...lesson plans.
 - (4) This has been the case since the beginning. Ex. 12, 13; Deut. 4, 6, 11 speak of teaching these things to our children but also we need to be learning them so we can teach them.
3. The Shorter Catechism is broken down into 3 sections
- a. Q & A 1-3 are introductory.
 - b. Q & A 4-39 tell us what to believe about God.
 - c. Q & A 40-107 tell us what we are to do as kingdom citizens to bring God glory and to enjoy Him forever.
- C. WSC- Q and A #1- *What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*
1. What do the words “chief end” mean?
 - a. Chief purpose...the main purpose for which we were created.
 - (1) Example- What is the main reason a window is made? To let in light.
 - (2) What is the main purpose for which a hammer was constructed?
 - b. What happens when we use something for a purpose other than its real purpose?...
 - (1) Say a glass instead of a hammer to nail a nail?...
 - (2) Or if you want whiter teeth what about using white shoe polish or white paint? Why not?
 - c. So what does the answer to the question say is the chief purpose for ALL men?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
January 12, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. So just so we are clear, what would you say is the primary reason (s) the catechism was written?
 - a. **So that people would be drawn to the Scriptures.**
 - b. **Studying the catechism would motivate them to want to Study the Scriptures and not listen to opinion and conjecture about the scriptures.**
 - c. **Being taught the catechism enables the unity that is required in the church.**
2. WSC- Q and A #1- *What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*
 - a. **What do the words "chief end" mean?**
 - (1)**Chief purpose...the main purpose for which we were created.**
 - (2)**Core**
 - b. **So what does the answer to the question say is the chief purpose for ALL men?**

C. WSC #1 continued...

2. What are we to understand by God's glory?
 - a. **His glory was seen by the prophets**
 - (1) **John tells us that Isaiah "saw His glory and spoke of Him."- John 12:41...Considering how being called into God's presence is recounted in Isaiah 6.**
 - (2) **In Exodus we see how the Lord allowed Moses to see "some" of His glory.**
 - (3) **Along with Joshua, David, Daniel, Ezekiel who all beheld His glory in one degree or another by standing in the presence of the LORD of Glory.**
 - b. **His glory was even seen by the people...**
 - (1) **In the Shekinah Glory that came down on the mountain...it also was with the people of the Exodus.**
 - (2) **John says in John 1:14- "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." And just when did they see His glory manifested specifically?**
 - **At His Transfiguration**
 - **At His ascension.**
 - c. **He is called, "The God of Glory..."in Acts 7:2. And again "The Lord of glory..."in I Cor. 2:8...**
 - (1) **This "glory" is the outward/physical manifestation of His holiness...the light...the warmth...the work He does.**
 - (2) **The Bible makes clear that we must understand that God has glory in Himself. Glory is essential to the Godhead, as light is to the sun. The God head is possessed by this glory...John 17:5.**

3. How would you describe what it is to glorify God?
 - a. **The (Children's) First Catechism asks the questions this way:**
 - (1) **#3- Why did God make you? Answer: For His own glory.**
 - (2) **#4- How can you glorify God? Answer: By loving Him and doing what He commands**
 - (3) **#5- Why are you to glorify Him? Answer: Because He made me and takes care of me.**
 - (4) **All of these were answered by Caleb White in class...2 ½ years old**
 - b. **The best place to discover this is in the Psalms.**
 - (1) **See Ps. 34:3; 63:3-4; 86:12-13; Ps. 97:9**
 - (2) **But the NT speaks of it as well- John 17:4; I Cor. 10:31.**
 - c. **To esteem God above all other things...**
 - (1) **Is to admire His work, speak of His actions, His attributes and what He has done for us...praise and honor Him above all others.**
 - (2) **What would that look like on a practical rubber hits the road, day to day living experience?**
 - **To worship God as He prescribes. The Scriptures are clear that we are not allowed to make up how to worship Him in each generation.**
 - **The lifting up of His name in all that we do that others will see Him in who we are and what we do...Matt. 5:16**
 - **To love God. To delight in the Lord, His Word, and His ways.**
 - **Since He is the chief reason for our blessing then He should have the chief of our affections.**
 - **To submit to God. John 14:15,21,23-24...to do what is spoken of in this catechism... communing with Him...understanding Him and honoring Him with our words and our work.**
4. Why must we glorify Him?
 - a. **The Bible commands us to...and He has made it a desire of our heart.**
 - b. **He gives us life. Psalm 100:3; Acts 17:24-31; Rom. 11:36**
 - c. **He has made all things for His glory. Psalm 19:1-6;**
 - (1) **How is the truth of this actually reflected in creation?**
 - **They glorify Him naturally because that is what creation was created to do.**
 - **They do ONLY what comes naturally...that is what they were created to do. Prov. 16:4; Isaiah 43:21; I Peter 2:9-12.**
 - (2) **What makes us different? Better or worse?**
5. What does it mean to enjoy Him forever?
 - a. **Since He gives us reason to glorify Him we then should live our lives to do just that.**
 - b. **Ps. 1: 1-2; Psalm 16:11...speak to the joy, pleasure, and continual blessing we have in God when we follow His purposes...His will...His plan...His Way!**
 - (1) **Psalm 73:25... *"What is there in heaven I desire to enjoy but you?"* (Hebrew translation)**
 - (2) **Luke 24:32...*"They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?'"***

(3) II Cor. 3:18... *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”* interesting in its present day applications.

- **If we are not enjoying Him we do not know Him correctly.**
- **Other words communicate the same meaning of “enjoy”, since sometimes using the word to enjoy God may not make sense to us, since we cannot physically be with Him and we are such a physical people...words like; Contentment, delight, blessed...**

6. Look at Westminster Larger Catechism- Question 1: *What is the chief and highest end of man?* Answer: *Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him fully forever.*

- a. Why do you suppose that The Larger Catechism written for us adults adds the words “highest” and “fully”?**
- b. What do these words add to your understanding...if anything...of this catechism?**

7. Who glorifies GOD more a preacher or the man who works the oil field who is seeking to live for GOD in all that he does? Explain.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 2, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. WSC and WLC Catechism questions 2-5.

- a. WLC Q2: *How does it appear that there is a God? The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his Word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.*
 - b. WSC Q2: *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him? The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.*
 - c. WSC Q3: *What do the Scriptures principally teach? The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.*
 - d. WLC Q3: *What is the Word of God? The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.*
 - e. WLC Q 4: *How does it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God? The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God.*
 - f. WLC Q5: *What do the Scriptures principally teach? The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and: What duty God requires of man.*
2. So according to these catechism questions, where do we go to figure out how to fulfill our purpose in this life? **The Bible....the Word of God.** Which requires what of us? And... are these actually telling us that God tells us exactly how He expects we will live before Him? **Yes!** Why does God do this?
3. In what situations of life might these questions and answers be helpful?
- a. **When people around us question the validity of the Bible.**
(1) Look at Amos 8:11-12- “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.”
 - **We are in this day right now. Obviously there have been multiple times in history where this is true...**
 - **God has taken it away and then there will come a time when people will go looking for something that they have lost ...just unsure what it was. Think: We used to do things differently in the old days. Life was so much simpler back in the old days...what was it that made it so?**

(2) Even in churches today there is very little Scripture expounded...it may be read but then we hear the “preachers” opinion...which is not preaching....Preaching is the declaration of God’s Word...it is expository in nature.

b. Christians around us who lack assurance of their faith.

(1) We need to disciple our people the best we can.

(2) Encourage Bible reading..

(3) Daily devotional time which includes reading, praying and meditating on God’s Word...even if it is only 15 minutes a day...or every other day.

(4) As we search the Word the Spirit will cause in us a desire to read it and hear it more.

(5) And then to encourage others not to keep what they are learning to themselves but to share it with others ...that is when it becomes real

(6) Lastly, to encourage them to do what is written there. Practice does equate desire...Psalm 119:1-8

c. Churches teaching false doctrines.

d. When the people around us are seeking for truth.

e. When the people around us are seeking for purpose. Thinking of this one...what do we have to offer the non-believer?

C. WSC #4-6 and WLC 6-11

1. WSC Q#4- What is God? *God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.*
2. WSC Q#5- Are there more Gods than one? *There is but one only, the living and true God.*
3. WSC Q#6- How many persons are there in the Godhead? *There are 3 persons in the Godhead- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these 3 are ONE God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.*
4. WLC Q#6- What do the Scriptures make known of God? *The Scriptures make known: What God is, the persons in the Godhead, His decrees, and the execution of His decrees.*
5. WLC Q#7- What is God? *God is a Spirit, in and of Himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*
6. WLC Q#8- Are there more Gods than one? *There is but one only, the living and true God.*
7. WLC Q#9- How many persons are there in the Godhead? *There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.*
8. WLC Q#10- What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? *It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.*

9. WLC Q#11- How does it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father? *The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.*

D. Questions concerning these.

1. Looking at WLC #6 what do we see? **A basic outlined of what we will cover concerning God in the Larger Catechism.**
2. As we consider WSC #4 and WLC #7 what is the first thing we are told about God?
 - a. **He is a Spirit.**
 - b. This being true why then does the Bible speak of God as having hands and feet if He is a Spirit as the catechism and the confession...and oh, by the way, Scripture itself says? (see John 4:24)
 - c. What are all the qualities called in this list defining God in these 2 questions? **Attributes**
 - d. What is the basic thing that these communicate to us? **That He is God and we are not.**
3. What are WSC #5-6 and WLC #8-9 communicating to us about God?
 - a. **There is only One God and...**
 - b. **There are 3 persons in the Godhead who are the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.**
 - c. In both WSC #6 and WLC #9 speaks of “persons”, and that these 3 are “...the same in substance...” What do you think that means?
 - (1)**Person, in this case, does NOT mean a distinction in essence but a difference in the work done by each member of the Trinity.**
 - **While we can say things like God the Father-Creates...God the Son- Redeems ...and God the Spirit- Sanctifies...we can’t really make that clear of a distinction since all are involved with each aspect of these things while at the same time have a distinct work in making their parts happen.**
 - **Another way that their separate roles have tried to be described with great difficulty is that the Father initiates creation and redemption; the Son redeems the creation and the Spirit regenerates.**
 - **But once again this is limited showing how our ability to describe the “persons” of the Godhead is difficult for limited humans.**
 - (2) **“...the same in substance...” speaks of their essence...**
 - **In their substance/essence as the catechism says and as the Confession states there is no difference...while they may have different functions they are God!**
 - **All the divine essence, perfections and prerogatives belong to each in the same sense and degree.**
 -

4. WLC #10 and 11 go a step further and seeks to speak about “*the personal properties*” of the 3 persons of the Godhead. How is this helpful for your understanding...if it is?
 - a. What do you suppose this whole conversation is about concerning Christ being begotten of the Father?
 - (1) **The first thing to remember is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are God...they have the same attributes and the Bible considers them all God.**
 - (2) **The passages of Scripture that speaks of Christ having been “begotten” of the Father have caused the Church to struggle...many heresies have arisen seeking to explain this text standing alone from the rest of Scripture.**
 - (3) **Athanasius began to deal with this with his creed at the Council of Nicaea in 325 but it did not become the position of the Church until 381.**
 - **Nicaea defined “begotten” when referring to the Son with the Greek word “homousios”= “the same, of the same being”= Christ being of the same essence with the Father in His divine nature...**
 - **Also another Greek term comes into play here; “monogenes”= “only begotten... eternally begotten...not in time as a creature but eternally as the Son of God...John 1:1-3.**
 - (4) **Scripture bears witness to the Godhead of three Persons united in will and purpose. The following verses: “Who has understood the mind of [Yahweh] . . .?” “The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God . . .” “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.”**
 - (5) **Among all these men (the Westminster divines and most of the believing Church at the time) it was a settled fact...the Church universal had spoken (Council of Constantinople in 381) and based on Scripture there wasn't much more to say than what they said.**
 - (6) **The Trinity is a mystery. By mystery the Church does not mean a riddle, but rather the Trinity is a reality above our human comprehension that we may begin to grasp, but ultimately must know through worship, symbol, and faith. It has been said that mystery is not a wall to run up against, but an ocean in which to swim.**
5. We've talk about “begotten”, now what are we saying when we confess that “...the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son from all eternity.”?
 - a. **Scripture- Matt. 10:20; Rom. 8:9-11; Gal. 4:6**
 - b. **The word “proceeded” naturally means “sent from” or “comes from” as in comes from the Father's side...**
 - (1) **See John 14:26 about the Father sending the Spirit...**
 - (2) **Then John 15:26 where Jesus is sending the Spirit from the Father...**
 - (3) **Then Peter in his sermon in Acts 2:33 states that Jesus received the Spirit from the father and sends His out into His disciples.**
 - c. **Once again these truths are not new and they have been accepted by the church since the late 4th century.**

6. Most theologians go farther than is biblically manageable when talking about the Trinity. Look now for a moment at WCF chapter 2 and section 3 that begins, *"In the unity of the Godhead..."*
 - a. What is the first thing you notice about this section? **How short it is and how little definition is given.**
 - b. **B.B. Warfield once said, *"No doctrine in the Christian Faith has challenged the intellect and belief of man more than the doctrine of the Trinity."***
 - c. **The Bible from beginning to the end speaks about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit...we must affirm this to affirm much more than what the Bible gives us more than what the Confession and the catechism stress might be to go beyond where we should go.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 9, 2020

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

10. What are WLC #8-9 communicating to us about God? **WLC Q#8- Are there more Gods than one? *There is but one only, the living and true God.***
WLC Q#9- How many persons are there in the Godhead? *There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.*

d. There is only One God and...

e. There are 3 persons in the Godhead who are the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

11. As we saw last week WLC #9 (just like WSC #6) speaks of “persons”, and that these 3 are “...the same in substance...” What did we say last week that these terms were seeking to communicate?

a. “Persons”, in this case, does NOT mean a distinction in essence but a difference in the work done by each member of the Trinity.

(1) While we can say things like God the Father-Creates...God the Son-Redeems ...and God the Spirit- Sanctifies...we can’t really make that clear of a distinction since all are involved with each aspect of these things while at the same time have a distinct work in making their parts happen.

(2) Another way that their separate roles have tried to be described with great difficulty is that the Father initiates creation and redemption; the Son redeems the creation and the Spirit regenerates.

(3) But once again this is limited showing how our ability to describe the “persons” of the Godhead is difficult for limited humans.

b. “...the same in substance...” speaks of their essence...

(1) In their substance/essence as the catechism says and as the Confession states there is no difference...while they may have different functions they are God!

(2) All the divine essence, perfections and prerogatives belong to each in the same sense and degree.

C. Continuing in this section from last time...

1. WLC #10 and 11 go a step further and seeks to speak about “the personal properties” of the 3 persons of the Godhead. **WLC Q#10- What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? *It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.*** **WLC Q#11- How does it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father? *The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.***

b. How is this helpful for our understanding of the Trinity...if it is?

- c. Now to a topic that has caused the church much discussion since it showed up in the earliest translations of scripture...the conversation about concerning Christ being begotten of the Father. What have you been taught that this means?

(7) The first thing to remember is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are God...they have the same attributes and the Bible considers them all God.

(8) The passages of Scripture that speaks of Christ having been “begotten” of the Father have caused the Church to struggle...many heresies have arisen seeking to explain this text standing alone from the rest of Scripture.

- Psalm 2:7... remains unchanged in most English versions...
- John 1:14- KJV and ASV...but other translate *“Only Son”*
- John 1:18- KJV and NASB... *“the Only God”* or *“... the Only One, who is God...”*- trying to capture the truest meaning of this word.
- John 3:16 and 18- KJV and NASB- *Only Son of God”*- ESV
- Acts 13:33
- Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5- restatement of Ps. 2:7
- I John 4:9- *Only Son*

(9) Athanasius began to deal with this with his creed at the Council of Nicaea in 325 but it did not become the position of the Church until 381.

- Nicaea defined “begotten” when referring to the Son with the Greek word “homoousios”= *“the same, of the same being”*= Christ being of the same essence with the Father in His divine nature...
- Also another Greek term comes into play here; “monogenes”= *“only begotten... eternally begotten...not in time as a creature but eternally as the Son of God”*...John 1:1-3.

(10) Scripture bears witness to the Godhead of three Persons united in will and purpose. The following verses: *“Who has understood the mind of [Yahweh] . . .?” “The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God . . .” “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” “I and the Father are one”*

(11) Among all these men (the Westminster divines and most of the believing Church at the time) it was a settled fact...the Church universal had spoken (Council of Constantinople in 381) and based on Scripture there wasn’t much more to say than what they said.

(12) The Trinity is a mystery. By mystery the Church does not mean a riddle, but rather the Trinity is a reality above our human comprehension that we may begin to grasp, but ultimately must know through worship, symbol, and faith. It has been said that mystery is not a wall to run up against, but an ocean in which to swim.

2. We’ve talk about “begotten”, now what are we saying when we confess that *“...the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son from all eternity.”?*

d. Scripture- Matt. 10:20; Rom. 8:9-11; Gal. 4:6

- e. **The word “proceeded” naturally means “sent from” or “comes from” as in comes from the Father’s side...**
 - (4) See John 14:26 about the Father sending the Spirit...**
 - (5) Then John 15:26 where Jesus is sending the Spirit from the Father...**
 - (6) Then Peter in his sermon in Acts 2:33 states that Jesus received the Spirit from the father and sends His out into His disciples.**
 - f. **Once again these truths are not new and they have been accepted by the church since the late 4th century.**
3. Most theologians go farther than is biblically manageable when talking about the Trinity. Let’s look now for a moment at WCF Chapter 2, Section III; it simply says- *In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.*” What is the first thing you notice about this section?
- d. **The eternality of the Godhead.**
 - e. **The unity of the Godhead.**
 - f. **How short it is and how little definition is given.**
 - g. **B.B. Warfield once said, “No doctrine in the Christian Faith has challenged the intellect and belief of man more than the doctrine of the Trinity.”**
 - h. **The Bible from beginning to the end speaks about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit...we must affirm this.**
 - i. **To affirm much more than what the Bible gives us... more than what the Confession and the catechism stress might be to go beyond where we should go.**

**Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 16, 2020**

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. The last couple of weeks we looked at the various WLC and WSC questions concerning the Godhead. Then at the end of last week's class we looked at the short paragraph found in the Westminster Confession on the Trinity. Today, for a couple of moments, let's look at a couple of Creeds of the Church: The Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed and let's consider how these Creeds might help us in our understanding of the Godhead. (you can find them on pages 845 and 846 in the Hymnal) According to these what are we saying we believe when we recite these?

a. The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who 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 into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come 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.

b. The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of Gods, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made,
who for us, and our salvation came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man,
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures,

and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the
dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets;
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

2. Why is a Biblical understanding of the Godhead essential for our faith to be true?

C. WSC 7-10 and WLC 12-17

1. Let's look at WSC #7, WLC #12-13- What are these telling us about God actions?
 - a. *WSC #7-What are the decrees of God? The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*
 - b. *WLC #12- What are the decrees of God? God's decrees the wise, free and holy acts of His will, whereby, from all eternity, He has, for His own glory unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass concerning angels and men.*
 - c. *WLC #13- What has God especially decreed concerning angels and men? God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of His mere love, for the praise of His glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, has elected some angels to glory; and in Christ has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to His sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of His own will (whereby He extends or withholds favor as He pleases), has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the glory of His justice.*
(1) Clearly directs us to see One plan and that that plan will not change....and it is for His own Glory!
(2) Definition of term,- decree
 - **Simple definition- An order from a king/sovereign that everyone in the kingdom must obey...**
 - **God's purposes, His plan, His will...what He has determined from eternity past to do.****(3) Definition of a term- foreordination.**
 - **Generally speaking, as in WSC #7 and WLC #12 say, it is God's act of determining what is to be done with His creation ...**
 - **An act of God's justice towards His elect unto salvation and the no-elect under eternal wrath...**
 - **Nothing happens by chance...no accidents...freaks of nature...fate...luck...everything is arranged in a plan that is worked out day by day in our time.**
 - **A decree determining that the guilty should be condemned to everlasting death.**

- **This determination is one to pass by or pass over those who are not elect as a choice by God not as a sign of “hatred” as we define it.**
 - **The Bible defines God’s hatred (like towards Esau) as a passing over of His saving love that was given to Jacob.**
- (4) It is important for us to remember that the Larger Catechism is seeking to emulate the WCF and these last 2 questions can be found in WCF Chapter 3 concerning God’s eternal Decrees. The Shorter Catechism seeks to emulate the Larger by shortening the answer in this case eliminating the part about angels and the part about the foreordination of the non-elect angels and men...seeking rather to capture the essence of this section of the Larger Catechism.**
- (5) 4 specific things revealed about God’s actions:**
- **God decrees who shall be saved and who shall be left in their lost estate. See Romans 9:11, 21....God has the “right” to do this.**
 - **Also, that the determination of these remains unchangeable...nothing can or will change the decree made before the foundation of the world.**
 - **These actions are based on His divine love and choice for His elect men and angels, and His divine justice and choice for those who are non-elect. See Luke 10:21**
 - **The ultimate purpose for all of this is to and for His own glory.**
- d. The fact the He HAS ordained whatsoever comes to pass, how should this knowledge affect how we live daily? Why aren’t we living that way?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
March 8, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Why is a correct understanding of creation so important for the Christian...especially in this day and age?
 - a. **If we do not have a biblical understanding of creation of profession of faith may be in question.**
 - b. **If we do not take the biblical view of creation our view of Scripture becomes suspect.**
 - c. **If we do not take a biblical view of Scripture our view of God is suspect.**
2. The Larger Catechism seems to make a big deal about angels whereas the WSC does not. What are some of the things we are to take away from this?
 - a. **The WLC reflects the Confession of Faith which reflects the Scriptures and so it will always include more information to be as true to Scripture in short form as possible.**
 - b. **There are 2 groups...elect angels and no-elect angels. See WLC #13**
 - c. **They are talked about in Scripture.**
 - d. **Because there had arisen or maybe always has been so many superstitions surrounding angels.**
 - e. **So that we would not fear knowing that God has them under control like everything else.**

C. Continued discussion on how God executes His decrees.

1. WSC #8- *How does God execute His decrees? God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.*
2. WLC #14- *How does God execute His decrees? God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and free and immutable counsel of His will.*
3. WSC #11 and WLC #18
 - a. WSC #11- *What are God's works of providence? God's works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.*
 - b. WLC #18- *What are God's works of providence? God's works of providence are His most holy wise, powerful preserving and governing all His creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to His own glory."*
 - c. So what is the purpose of God's works of creation and providence? **His own glory!**
 - d. Thinking of this answer a minute, is there anything that God does not oversee the way the catechism talks about? **NO!** What about our thoughts, words, choices and deeds? **Those too.** So we are robots?

e. Short definition of God's providence?

(1) One theologian defined providence this way... *"The best way to describe Providence is to say that it is God's hand over man's hand, always and for all time."* – What do you think of this definition?

- **Think Acts 2 a minute- Peter says under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was crucified by the wicked hands of men and then he says that these wicked men did exactly what God's hand and His counsel had predetermined beforehand to be done.**
- **The hand of God is not absent from the affairs of the world even when evil men are acting. Think of Job and of Revelation...Satan presumes he is acting on his own but in both places God specifically directs the acts of Satan and his minion.**

(2) The simplest definition I have found and one that I often use: His presence. God's all seeing to His creation.

- **Providence is God.**
- **All of life is under His direction and governmental authority.**
- **Seeing to His creation...equals providing for...on-going relationship that remembers how He has provided for us in the past...looking to how He will provide for us in the future.**
- **Gen. 22:14- *"The LORD will provide"*** The actual Hebrew here is ***"The LORD will see."*** For God never sees without acting. He does act...He has acted...he will act based on His covenant promise and His covenant plan that requires Him to act as His plan is unfolded for us in time and space. So when God sees ...he sees to...He provides for...

(3) Interesting the letters and papers of the 16th through 19th Century often found the word Providence capitalized to underscore who it is and what He is doing....Providence...

(4) Washington, Jefferson, Franklin to name a few of our founding Father's always used this to speak of God and His actions in time and space.

- **What he sees.**
- **What He knows.**
- **What has done, is currently doing and what He may or will do...how He provides for His creation...seeing to our needs...**

(5) Providence is the means by which God directs all things...both animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, good and evil...toward a worthy purpose...His own glory.

- f. John Calvin said in the Institutes, *"Ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it."* You have to love the force and absoluteness of such preacher/teachers!
- g. R.C. Sproul said this about providence years ago, *"Modern man has no concept of Providence. Because we are so caught up with what is in front of us."*

- h. The WCF says this about God's providence- WCF Chapter 5, Sect.1- *God the great Creator of all things does uphold, direct, make willing, and govern all creatures, actions and things, from the greatest to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and unchangeable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.*
- i. Just so we are clear again: What "right" does God have to do all of what the catechism and the Confession say He can and does do?
- (1) He is God and as the Creator and King He can do whatever He wants to do...because anything He does is "good".**
- (2) He cares for His own glory and He will make sure that He is glorified by doing all that He does.**
- j. Now this may sound like an odd question, but then I have asked odd questions before. Does it take as much power to preserve all of His creation as it did to make it? Why or why not? Why is this question even important for the Christian?
- (1) We must always consider His greatness...**
- (2) We must consider the work that He accomplished in creation and also how He preserves or we fall into the trap of thinking we somehow are doing something when we are not...thus denying God in too many ways. Something else we need to confess on a daily basis.**
- k. Some people say that they can agree that God created everything, but...then He withdrew leaving it to itself to work out its own destiny.
- (1) Do you agree?**
- (2) How would you argue against this claim in light of the catechism and the Scriptures??**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
March 15, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. WSC #8- *How does God execute His decrees? God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.*
2. WSC #11- *What are God's works of providence? God's works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.*
3. WLC #18- *What are God's works of providence? God's works of providence are His most holy wise, powerful preserving and governing all His creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to His own glory."*
4. So according to these catechism questions what is the purpose of God's works of creation and providence? **His own glory!**
5. Given what the catechism says, how would you define providence in your own words?
6. Why is it ultimately important to have an understanding of God's providence when virtually no one talks about Providence today.
 - a. **R.C. Sproul said this about providence years ago, "Modern man has no concept of Providence. Because we are so caught up with what is in front of us."**
 - b. **John Calvin said in the Institutes, "Ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it."**

C. Providence continued...

1. If you agree with this so far, then how would you answer this question, what "right" does God have to do all of what the catechism and the Confession say He can and does do?
 - l. **He is God and as the Creator and King He can do whatever He wants to do...because anything He does is "good'.**
 - m. **He cares for His own glory and He will make sure that He is glorified by doing all that He does.**
2. It has been established (last week) that we are NOT robots, so if we are not robots, what is required of us?
 - a. **We should begin each day by asking God to give us faith to see His hand in every encounter....so that we may be prepared to receive God's help in unexpected ways...that may include hardship and suffering... through unexpected people.**
 - b. **Each day we should ask God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that He might enable us so that those around us can see God and His truth through what we are doing and saying?**

- c. **When someone hurts us or God hurts us we should spend time reflecting on God's good purposes in this event...what it is that He wishes us to learn through this.**
 - d. **We should continuously be in a state of repentance...because we are so easily distracted and made angry when things do not go "our way"...but considering God's providence...they always go His way whether we fully understand it or not.**
 - e. **We can't fully know God's purposes, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't ponder them and act upon what we do know...what God does reveal to us in His word.**
- 3. What comfort exists for us in this doctrine of God's providence? Consider a minute HC #27- 28.**
- a. **The Heidelberg Catechism answers this pretty well.**
 - (1) **#27-What do you understand by the Providence of God? *The almighty everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures; and so governs them, that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.***
 - (2) **#28. What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by His providence still upholds all things? *That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and for what is future, have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.***
 - b. **Kevin De Young's paper...**
 - c. **God's providence does not make our troubles go away, but it does frame them within His majestic and loving purposes for us and His glory.**
 - (1) **See Gen. 50:20**
 - (2) **See Matt. 10:29**
 - (3) **See John 1:29**
 - (4) **Rom. 8:28**
 - **This passage expresses a certain knowledge of God's providence...all things are in His hands to do with as He pleases....And what pleases Him, as I am in Him, pleases me if not in the short run definitely in the long run.**
 - **Only if God ordains all things can we be confident that He is working all things together for our good.**
 - (5) **Hebrews 1:3**
- 4. Since God ordains whatsoever comes to pass, how comfortable would you be in saying God ordained Covid-19 for His own glory?**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
October 11, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Looking over the first 11 Catechism Questions, generally speaking, what are some of the things that we learn?
 - a. **What our purpose is. How it involves us...that is why we are here and even how we got here.**
 - b. **About the Bible.**
 - c. **About God....who He is. What He does, and how we know these things.**
 - d. **About His decrees and actions.**
2. Look at Q&A #7, what is this question communicating about God specifically?
 - a. **That God's decrees are still active and relevant for today.**
 - b. **That He is Sovereign and sovereignly in charge of all things whatsoever comes to pass.**
3. Why is a correct understanding of creation so important for the Christian?
 - a. **We see our God ...His activity and His love at the same time.**
 - b. **If we can't understand and believe this than it brings into question the rest of His Word and Himself.**
4. Why is it also, ultimately important to have an understanding of God's providence, think Q&A #11, when virtually no one talks about Providence today.
 - a. **R.C. Sproul said this about providence years ago, "Modern man has no concept of Providence. Because we are so caught up with what is in front of us."**
 - b. **John Calvin said in the Institutes, "Ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it."**

C. Special Acts of Providence.

1. WSC #12- What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created? *When God created man, He entered into a covenant of life with Him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.*
2. WLC #20- What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created? *The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with Himself; instituting the Sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with Him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death. Look at what God had done for man.*

3. With these two before us, what more is learned in the Larger Catechism and why is it helpful for us today?
 - a. **We see their belief in the truth of the Genesis account as given in Scripture again. God had a plan to reveal His good providence toward man.**
 - (1) **God by His good providence placed Adam into paradise.**
 - (2) **God by His good providence gave him work to fulfill to God's glory...to work and keep the garden. Adam wasn't just a gardener...but he was most assuredly a guardian of the garden.**
 - (3) **God by His good mercy gave abundantly for Adam to eat from the garden.**
 - (4) **God by His good providence gave man dominion over the animals...to care and keep them as God would Himself.**
 - (5) **God by His good providence ordained marriage for the good of man because man needed a helper suitable for him to be complete.**
 - (6) **God by His good providence established and maintained communion between Himself and man... as the Father came down to man everyday...the Immanuel principle....God with us.**
 - (7) **God by His good providence instituted the Sabbath rest...(7th Day example...later codified in the commandments but already understood even before the Fall)**
 - (8) **God by His good providence entered into a covenant of life which required personal, perfect and perpetual obedience.**
 - **WCF Chapter 7, Section 2- *"The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience."***
 - **The Covenant of Grace comes into effect after the Fall.**
 - (9) **God by His good providence gave man to eat of the tree of life...(read eternal life) as its pledge and promise of eternal life.**
 - (10) **God by His good providence forbids man to eat of only one tree...the tree of good and evil. Gen. 2:15-17**
 - **There is no reason for us to think that this tree was somehow ugly or ominous...remember the Fall had not happened so this tree would have probably been just as lush as any other. After all God had made all thing "GOOD". What makes this tree different is only what God will say about this tree in verses 16-17.**
 - **Yet, far from diminishing the status of humanity, that prohibition was essential to establish the unique dignity of humans as moral beings. In order for morality to be real, humans must have a certain degree of freedom.**
 - **And in order to be moral beings, there must exist a real moral choice between right and wrong. There must be a moral boundary. So, one fruit was forbidden.**
 - **Also privileges and obligations define a relationship... establishing structure...which also points to the structure of the covenant.**
 - a. **They were to show their love for Him by refusing to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**

as God commanded. i.e. personal, perfect and perpetual obedience.

b. In their pre-Fall estate they would choose to love God rather than what this tree offered.

- They were free to eat from any tree in the garden—except one. God told them that in the day they ate it, they would surely die. What an easy choice...all the other trees give life ...the one causes death...something that was obviously in opposition to God's will.**
- It was not forbidden because it (the tree) was evil, it was forbidden because to disobey was evil.**
- To eat of the tree would not just enable them to comprehend good and evil...which is a good thing, when you think about it... To eat of it was to assume to themselves the right to decide for themselves what is good and evil rather than to depend upon God to define these 2.**
- So this was a call to faith in God alone.**
- The tree of Life was to be a reward for loyalty...a reward ultimately for those who persevere in the faith to the end.**

b. This catechism question is written almost as a confession...that each Christian could affirm...and which would bind us together.

4. We spend so much time on the Fall of mankind...which is understandable since this is the world in which we live...but why is it important to know what life was like pre-fall?
 - a. We see the blessings that God promised to man actually coming to fruition.**
 - b. We see the privileges and obligations that we have that are always true.**
 - c. We see that God...our Creator...did have a plan and that He is still carrying out that plan even all these years later.**
 - d. We see God's great love for His own.**
5. How could/can God expect such a condition as perfect obedience to be able to live within the covenant He has made with us?
 - a. He is God!**
 - b. God created them with the ability to keep His commands...even with the knowledge that they were subject to Fall. So just as a parent He could expect it.**
 - c. It was His plan...knowing that none of us would be able to fulfill the requirements of the Law...the Godhead determined that Jesus would be that One who could and would uphold the requirement of the Law, personal, perfect and perpetual obedience. Interesting thing about This obedience...
 - (1) He came to fulfill this requirement because we couldn't....yet...**
 - (2) He had to learn obedience... Heb. 5:7-9-*"In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. Although He was a son, He*****

learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” What does it mean that He had to learn obedience?

- **Heb. 4:15- tells us- *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”* –**
 - a. So He had no sin ...so there was no disobedience in Him... so that is not what it means.**
 - b. It means that He moved from untested obedience to tested obedience by what He suffered as the Son of Man.**
 - c. God the Son had no need but in time and space the God Man did have to experience and know the suffering of man.**
- **The word *“suffered”* (in Hebrews 5:7-9) is an interesting word...the definition includes enduring the pain of grief or illness or rejection, or persecution, but it also, and more often than not means- enduring a challenging process that transforms the sufferer. The point of suffering for us is sanctification. The pointing of suffering for Him was for our benefit in salvation and as an example of how to suffer in this life.**
- **Then come the question of His being made perfect. Heb. 2:10- *“For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.”***
 - a. Christ was made perfect?... He was made complete...God made the God Man perfect through suffering so that He could be the perfect sacrifice...the *“source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”***
 - b. There was no defect or immorality in Him...but He had not yet been tested...not yet proven in suffering in time and space.**
 - c. He had to understand fully the human experience. When He prayed the prayer in Gethsemane He knew at that moment the depth of human suffering and He hadn’t yet endured the cross.**
 - d. But passing the test in time and space was in the Garden and all that He had had to endure up to that point bringing Him to pray to God with loud cries and tears.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
October 18, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

6. Why is it also, ultimately important to have an understanding of God's providence, think Q&A #11 and #12, when virtually no one talks about Providence today.

b. R.C. Sproul said this about providence years ago, "Modern man has no concept of Providence. Because we are so caught up with what is in front of us."

c. John Calvin said in the Institutes, "Ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it."

d. Providence, described how sovereignty involves more than God's power to do whatever He desires; it also expresses itself in purposeful action that is always personal, wise, and good. It's what makes the events that God foreordains "pleasing in his sight" (Hebrews 13:21).

5. How could/can God expect such a condition as perfect obedience, as WSC #12 says, to be able to live within the covenant He has made with us?

d. He is God! God created them with the ability to keep His commands... even with the knowledge that they were subject to Fall. So just as a parent He could expect it.

e. It was His plan...knowing that none of us would be able to fulfill the requirements of the Law...the Godhead determined that Jesus would be that One who could and would uphold the requirement of the Law, personal, perfect and perpetual obedience.

- C. WCS Q and A #13- Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created? Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

1. Why do you suppose the catechism says, "our first parents"...instead of blaming Adam or Eve?

a. This is maybe a contrast between them and our "adopted" Father in heaven.

b. Making the point that they are the parents of all humanity.

c. They will be making the point soon that because of their sin all humanity fell into sin.

2. What 2 options were in front of them that day in the Garden?

d. He had the liberty to follow the path of obedience

e. He had the liberty to follow the path of disobedience unto death.

f. He chose?

3. What does the fact that they chose tell us about this act of sinning against God on his part?

a. It was willful so they were responsible for their sin.

b. Let's look at some texts:

a. Gen. 3:6; I Tim. 2:14—What do these two passages tell us about Adam and Eve?

- i. First part of the verse say that Adam was not deceived...**
 - ii. In other words, he knew exactly what he was doing**
 - iii. He ate in spite of knowing the truth of the consequences. God's word had always been clear and precise and unchanging.**
 - iv. Adam did not stand up at that point and point out the truth of God's Word which was his place.**
 - v. Some commentators have talked of Adam's chivalry towards Eve...He may have taken it because of his love for his wife so she would not die alone...but I think this stretches the text a bit too far.**
 - vi. So his sin is even greater as the one who was accountable and responsible for his wife.**
- 1. The next half of the verse says that Eve was deceived...**
 - vii. The Serpent deceived her...she admits this in Gen. 3:13.**
 - viii. She really thought the serpent spoke the truth...that she and Adam would not die.**
 - ix. Adam did not correct the serpent. He did not lead his wife as he should have at that very pivotal moment...he let her eat without trying to stop her. He abdicated his role as covenant keeper at this moment...he sinned...**
 - x. And it is under this deception that she then fell into transgression...she acted out the sin in her heart.**
 - xi. Some have tried to excuse her behavior this way: For whatever reason she either did not have all the information the Adam had had or Adam being her protection did not aid her at that point with what he knew.**

(2) Deut. 30:19- How could the OT believers keep the Law?

- 1. Through Christ's Cross work we once again are given the liberty and the ability to choose.**
- 2. OT believers looked forward to His finished work and we look back.**

D. WSC- Q and A #14- What is sin? *Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the Law?* Q and A #15- What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created? *The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.*

- 1. If and when the culture speaks of sin...how does it define it?**
 - a. A mistake.**
 - b. An accident...I didn't know.**
 - c. "Anything that proves harmful to me"...**
 - d. You know that saying that we should be free to do whatever we want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else.**

2. In WSC #14, what conformity is due to the law of God?
 - n. Strict adherence.**
 - o. Consistent in application and action.**
 - p. Perfection through the Holy Spirit.**
 - q. Internal- Conformity in our hearts. We must be convinced that it is trustworthy and true in our hearts.**
 - r. External- Conformity in our lives. If we are convinced of its truthfulness we will then want to live as it says....and we, who believe can, because the Spirit of God is with us.**
 - s. I John 3:4- *"Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness."***

3. In WSC #14, what 2 kinds of sins are spoken of here?
 - a. Sins of omission... Not doing what God commands...some people define this as sinning without knowing it.**
 - b. Sins of commission... Willfully doing what God forbids...we all understand this one.**
 - c. So with these 2 definitions in mind is there really any sin that we do without knowing it?**
 - (1)The answer to this is NO...for whether we set out to sin or not we are told in the Scriptures that every thought word and deed are tainted by sin so we KNOW or should KNOW we sin.**
 - (2)Often the reason we think we don't know we are sinning is because we aren't paying close enough attention to our lives before the LORD.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
October 25, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

4. WSC- Q and A #14- What is sin? *Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the Law?*
5. According to WSC #14, what conformity is due to the law of God?
 - t. **Strict adherence.**
 - u. **Consistent in application and action.**
 - v. **Perfection through the Holy Spirit.**
 - w. **Internal- Conformity in our hearts. We must be convinced that it is trustworthy and true in our hearts.**
 - x. **External- Conformity in our lives. If we are convinced of its truthfulness we will then want to live as it says....and we, who believe can, because the Spirit of God is with us.**
6. In WSC #14, what 2 kinds of sins are spoken of here?
 - d. **Sins of omission... Not doing what God commands...some people define this as sinning without knowing it.**
 - e. **Sins of commission... Willfully doing what God forbids...we all understand this one.**
 - f. **So with these 2 definitions in mind is there really any sin that we do without knowing it?**
 - (3)**The answer to this is NO...for whether we set out to sin or not we are told in the Scriptures that every thought word and deed are tainted by sin so we KNOW or should KNOW we sin.**
 - (4)**Often the reason we think we don't know we are sinning is because we aren't paying close enough attention to our lives before the LORD.**
- C. WSC Q and A #15- What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created? *The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.*
 1. WSC #15 brings up a whole slew of questions:
 - b. **How can the catechism say that the sin that caused out first parents to sin was eating of a piece of fruit?**
 - c. **What about all the thinking along the way that led to this sin? Wasn't that sinful as well?**
 - d. **That brings up the question of when do we actually sin...with the temptation or the follow through there of?**
 - e. **Is the temptations the sin or is it the act?**
 7. Let's be clear here. Some might say, "What is the big deal? They just took a piece of fruit off a tree and ate it?" So what is the big deal?
 - a. **The transgression was not the fruit...the transgression was taking the fruit and eating it...the action of disobeying God's expressed Law... when God had given Adam and Eve... Eden...the whole fruitful garden along with perfect rest and peace and purpose with God,**

- b. He had also given them the liberty and the ability to choose...so Adam was fully aware of what he was doing...and God had also told them what would happen if they transgressed His Law...death would come physically and spiritually. It seems the Adam rationalized that the consequence would not be all that bad to be like God...much like mankind today.
 - c. Look at the consequences for such a “little sin”:
 - (1) The relationship with God was marred...
 - (2) The relationship with one another was marred...and
 - (3) The relationship to the rest of creation was marred...until Christ, the 2nd Adam came to make all things new.
8. So let's consider those questions a minute:
- a. Was the thinking that determined they would sin sinful...or did it become sinful when they actually took and ate?
 - b. Another way to ask the question...When do we actually sin...with the temptation or the follow through there of? Is the temptation the sin or is it the act?
 - c. How would you support your answer with Scripture?
- D. Q and A # 16- Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? *The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind—descending from him by ordinary generation—sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.* Q and A #17- Into what estate did the Fall bring mankind? *The Fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.*
- 1. What is a “transgression” again?
 - e. Doing what God forbids.
 - f. How does the answer to 16 explain how God can hold all men accountable for one man's sin?
 - 2. How do we know this doctrine of all man's fall is true?
 - a. The Scriptures say that it is true.
 - (1) Rom. 5:12-13 *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...”*
 - (2) Rom. 7:21-25- *“So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”*- the context of this battle is the struggle within himself as a believer. On one hand he wants to do what God commands...but on the other, he is still imperfect with a fallen nature and knows that he still does sinful acts...And, he knows it is him who is doing the sinful acts, not some impersonal force outside of or in him...so there is no excuse for his behavior.
 - b. Testimony of the world of men!

3. According to Gen. 3: 6-13... What were some of the results of the first sin that shows how man became miserable? **Shame... fear... blame shifting...God, to woman....to serpent.** Do we see these exhibited in human behavior today?
4. Look at these texts and see what they say:
 - a. **Rom. 5:12-13- *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given..."*** Sin, then, is part of our DNA...it is inherited from our first parents. Sin is not something that is learned or determined by our environment.
 - b. **By God's design Adam stood for all of us when he sinned.**
5. Why did God decree that sin would be a part of His creation? Why did He put Adam over us knowing what he would do...knowing the consequences that would occur?
 - a. **This was His plan. He created it all knowing that this is what would happen. This did not happen by chance.**
 - b. **He did it because it was a necessary part of His purpose for creation, to fully reveal His power, justice mercy, grace and glory.**
 - c. **The perfect universe is not the one where men never sinned but the one where God redeems His people with the blood of His Son on a Cross.**
9. Just a second before we move on....thinking about this environment argument for why people are the way they are.
 - a. **Where were they when Adam and Eve first sinned?**
 - i. **They were in paradise= Eden.**
 - **No bad neighbors...no gangs...no bad influences of any kind.**
 - **No abusive parents...no drugs addictions.**
 - **No trauma of any kind- death, disasters, diseases to contend with.**
 - ii. **You would have thought they could easily say No to anything that God would have forbidden considering ALL the good things they were surrounded with.**
 - iii. **All the tragedies, sorrows and misery throughout history have their origin in this one moment in time.**
 - b. **What about Cain and Able? What outside influences brought on the first murder committed?**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
November 22, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC Q #22- How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? *Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.*

1. Why is the doctrine of the virgin birth so necessary to our salvation?

a. **If Jesus were born by ordinary generation...as we all are...as the product of a human father and mother then He would have had to have been born with a sinful nature.**

(1) In His own words *"...that which is born of the flesh is flesh..."* John 3:6.

(2) If Joseph was His earthly father as well Jesus would only be human. He would not be the Son of God. He would have had His beginning in time and space and not in eternity past with the Father and the Spirit who are all eternal. John 1:1- 3- *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."*

(3) This is important because Jesus is sinless in His Character/Nature. If he had been born of a man and a woman only he would have sin as a product of the Fall and so He could not be a suitable sacrifice. 1John 3:5- *"You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin."*

(4) Without a sinless Christ there would be no salvation. God required a sacrifice without blemish. If Jesus had been a sinner in any sense of the word He could not provide salvation for His people.

(5) The virgin birth also shows the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. This has never happened again or before. It was a miracle and the miraculous nature of Jesus' life carried through His entire life.

- **His birth was a miracle.**
- **His ministry consisted of miracles.**
- **He lived a sinless life.**
- **He miraculously came back from the dead.**
- **He ascended into heaven miraculously.**

b. **The Bible says so! If Jesus didn't come into the world as the Bible says...if He didn't lead a sinless life...then the Bible is wrong and our faith is futile. This doctrine and the credibility of Jesus go hand in hand.**

(1) But instead He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit to a virgin... (not a sinless virgin...rather a true virgin in the sense that she had not known a man)...so that the One who was born to die would be the "perfect" sacrifice.

(2) Gal. 4:4-5- “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

(3) II Cor. 5:21- “For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”- God imputed to Him our sin and at the same time He imputes to us His righteousness.”

2. Westminster Larger Catechism asks a couple of more questions for clarification of this point:

- a. Question 38: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God? *It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation. ---There was great work to be done...a work so great that NONE could possibly do it but One who is Very God.*
- b. Question 39: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man? *It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace. ...Since it was man needing saving and God had set this up to have to be done by the perfect obedience of man, it was necessary for Christ to be truly human.*
- c. Question 40: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person? *It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person. ...The Savior I must have is the Savior who is able to reach me...and to reach God....and this is what Christ came to do.*
- d. Question 41: Why was our Mediator called Jesus? *Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins.*
- e. Question 42: Why was our Mediator called Christ? *Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.*

3. How do these catechism questions help clarify this position?

4. Can you think of at least 2 Creeds that make this point?

- a. **Apostle's creed**
- b. **Nicene Creed**
- c. **Athanasius Creed**

- C. WSC Q #23- What offices do Christ execute as our Redeemer? *Christ, as our redeemer, executes the office of a prophet, of a priest and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.*
1. Q and A #23- #28 constitute the section of the catechism that talks about Christ's Work in Salvation- **In the last section Q and A #20-22, we were taught that sinners may be saved. In this section we are taught the way in which our Redeemer works out salvation for His people.**
 2. How does Christ discharge His duties as our Redeemer? What do these offices tell us about our redeemer?
 - a. **As Prophet, Priest and King**
 - b. **He is the real deal...the full Redeemer...**
 3. Scriptures to support this assessment:
 - a. **Psalm 2:6- King**
 - b. **Acts 3:22- prophet**
 - c. **Heb. 5:6-priest**
 4. What do we know about these offices and why would it be important for Christ to be all three as our Redeemer?
 - a. **When we speak of these offices we must highlight them and their primary roles and what they counteracted after the fall:**
 - (1) **Prophet= knowledge... countered ignorance- prophecies in the Word and He is the Word.**
 - (2) **Priest= righteousness; offer sacrifices and pray.... countered guilt**
 - (3) **King= holiness...countered bondage**
 - b. **Jesus performed these duties here on earth and in His role as He reigns in heaven.**
 - c. **These are all things needed for our redemption and our perseverance in the faith and they are resident within Him and the exercising of His offices.**
- D. From the Heidelberg Catechism: Q #31 WHY IS HE CALLED "CHRIST," MEANING "ANOINTED"? A. *Because He has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who perfectly reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance; our only high priest who has set us free by the one sacrifice of His body and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal king who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom He has won for us."*
1. **Christ is our chief prophet and teacher (Acts 3: 22; Deut. 18: 15).**
 - a. **The word "chief" is important; it's what makes Christianity Christian.**
 - b. **Muslims laud Jesus as a great prophet, but He is not the last and greatest prophet like Mohammed.**
 - c. **Mormons worship Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (understanding these words differently than Christians), but listen to Joseph Smith as the prophet we all must reckon with.**
 - d. **Even many Jews will recognize Christ as a teacher sent by God, but not greater than Moses or Elijah and certainly not in fulfillment of Moses's and Elijah's ministries of lesser glory.**

- e. **By contrast, for Christians Christ is our chief prophet, the one and only who makes known the Father (John 1: 18) and reveals the exact nature of God (Heb. 1: 3).**
 - (1) As a prophet Christ came to show us the way and declare the will of God.**
 - (2) But as the Messiah, our chief prophet, He came not just to reveal the will of God but to fulfill it, and He laid down His life, not just an example of the way of God but as the way to God.**
 - 2. Christ is also our only high priest (Heb. 7: 17; Ps. 110: 4). Again, the adjective is important. Christ is our only high priest.**
 - a. There's a reason Protestants have pastors or ministers instead of priests. It's because of a conviction-one most Protestants are unaware of—about the cessation of the official priesthood.**
 - b. The main role of the priest under the old covenant was to offer sacrifices to God, and once a year to enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur and make atonement for the people.**
 - c. But according to the book of Hebrews, all that has ended. We need no more priests because we need no more sacrifices (Heb. 7: 27; 9: 12,25–26; 10: 10–18).**
 - d. The only priest we need is Jesus Christ because His sacrifice on the cross was the end of the sacrificial system.**
 - (1) High priests served two related functions-making atonement and making intercession for the people-both of which are accomplished for us in Christ.**
 - (2) Christ died for us (once for all, never to die again), and Christ prays for us (continually and repeatedly). This makes Him the greatest priest, the last priest, our only high priest.**
 - 3. Christ is our eternal king (Matt. 21: 5; Zech. 9: 9).**
 - a. As a king, Christ does two things: He governs and guards.**
 - b. The Catechism tells us Christ governs by Word and Spirit. Oh, how many theological stray cats have been sired by separating Word from Spirit! Word without Spirit is dead letter. Spirit without Word is hopeless relativism.**
 - (1) Christ governs us by Word, to give us a propositional revelation of His will and an objective set of external truths.**
 - (2) By Spirit, to give us a subjective experience of His presence and the inner power to obey.**
 - c. As king, Christ also guards. Kingship isn't all authority and fiats and gloomy threats. Good kings also protect their people.**
 - (1) In this case, Christ keeps us-not happy, healthy, and wealthy-but free.**
 - (2) He will not let us fall to the Devil (not ultimately), and He will not let us offer ourselves again to the worlds bondage (not finally).**
- E. WSC Q #24- How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? *Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God.***
- 1. How did Christ fulfill this role before His Death and Resurrection?-**
 - a. He spoke as no man had ever spoken....**
 - b. He Himself was the TRUTH...**
 - c. He was God's full revelation of Himself.**
 - d. In Him God's Word is complete.**

- e. **He dispelled ignorance with the TRUTH.**
- 2. How does Christ still do this today?
 - a. **II Tim. 3:14-18;**
 - b. **Hebrews 1:1-2--**
 - c. **Through His Word that never changes.**
- 3. What is the Spirit's role in this? **John 14: 26; 16:13**
- 4. If Christ alone is the prophet of the Church, of what use are ministers now?
Eph. 4:11-14; II Tim. 2:15 –
- F. WSC Q #25- How does Christ execute the office of priest? *Christ executes the office of priest, in His once offering up of Himself as a sacrifice, to satisfy Divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.*
 - 1. How did Christ fulfill this role before His Death and Resurrection?
 - a. **Col. 1:19-20**
 - b. **Hebrews 5:1-10**
 - c. **Heb. 9:28**
 - 2. How does Christ fulfill this role now?
 - a. **Heb. 2:16-18**
 - b. **Heb. 4:14-16**
 - c. **Heb. 7:23-25**
 - 3. Divine justice? What is that all about? Why did we need to be reconciled back to God?
 - 4. Was this reconciliation and plan “B” of God since Adam couldn’t remain without sin? Why or why not?
 - 5. For whom did the Redeemer die...all people everywhere or many people from every tribe and all nations?
 - a. **Let’s use a non-NT reference a minute. In Ex. 28:21 we read that there would be 12 stones on the priests breastplate standing for the children of Israel...probably the tribe names.**
 - b. **When the priest made atonement in the tabernacle he offered up a sacrifice for only those people...**
 - c. **So as with Christ ...He was sent to offer Himself as a once for all time sacrifice for His elect people only.**
 - 6. So if only the elect are to be saved why do we proclaim the gospel to all?
 - a. **There is no such thing as universalism...as in the system that says all people universally will be saved.**
 - b. **While this is not true, we are commanded to proclaim the gospel universally since God has not told us...thankfully ...who are His and who aren’t.**
 - 7. Why do we need Christ to continually intercede on our behalf?
 - 8. Are any more sacrifices ever needed again? Support your answer.

a. Heb. 9:24-28

G. WSC Q # 26- How does Christ execute the office of a king? *Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.*

1. How did Christ fulfill this role before His Death and Resurrection?
 - a. Sent out His disciples as His representatives.**
 - b. He commanded and miracles happened...people healed and such.**
 - c. He commanded demons.**
 - d. Sent His disciples to commandeer his “ride” into Jerusalem.**
2. What is the role of King Jesus now according to this catechism? Put them in your own words:
 - a. He makes us willing to obey Him**
 - b. He gives us laws for our guidance and safety**
 - c. He limits and finally does away with all who oppose us and Him.**
3. Scriptures to consider:
 - a. Matt. 11:29**
 - b. I Cor. 15:25**
 - c. II Cor. 10:5**
 - d. II Tim. 4:18**
4. What is Christ king of? Every sphere of life and each sphere the believer is directly responsible and accountable to Christ as their king and sovereign Is He currently ruling now? How do you know?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
November 29, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. WSC Q #23- What offices do Christ execute as our Redeemer? *Christ, as our redeemer, executes the office of a prophet, of a priest and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.*
2. WSC Q #24- How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? *Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God.*
3. WSC Q #25- How does Christ execute the office of priest? *Christ executes the office of priest, in His once offering up of Himself as a sacrifice, to satisfy Divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.*
4. WSC Q # 26- How does Christ execute the office of a king? *Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.*

5. What did we learn about these offices last week and why is it be important for Christ to be all three as our Redeemer?

d. When we speak of these offices we must highlight them and their primary roles and what they counteracted after the fall:

(4) Prophet= knowledge...

1. **Countered ignorance-**
2. **Prophecies in the Word and He is the Word.**
3. **As a prophet Christ came to show us the way and declare the will of God.**
4. **As Messiah and Chief Prophet, He came not just to reveal the will of God but to fulfill it, and He laid down His life, not just an example of the way of God but as the way to God.**

(5) Priest= righteousness; offer sacrifices and pray.... countered guilt

1. **The only priest we need is Jesus Christ because His sacrifice on the cross was the end of the sacrificial system.**
2. **Christ died for us (once for all, never to die again), and Christ prays for us (continually and repeatedly). This makes Him the greatest priest, the last priest, our only high priest.**

(6) King= holiness...countered bondage

1. **Christ governs us by Word, to give us a propositional revelation of His will and an objective set of external truths.**
2. **As king, Christ also guards. Kingship isn't all authority and fiats and gloomy threats. Good kings also protect their people. In this case, Christ keeps us-not happy, healthy, and wealthy-but free.**
3. **He will not let us fall to the Devil (not ultimately), and He will not let us offer ourselves again to the worlds bondage (not finally).**

- e. **Jesus performed these duties here on earth and in His role as He reigns in heaven.**
 - f. **These are all things needed for our redemption and our perseverance in the faith and they are resident within Him and the exercising of His offices.**
6. So for whom did this Redeemer die...all people everywhere or many people from every tribe and all nations?
- d. **Let's use a non-NT reference a minute. In Ex. 28:21 we read that there would be 12 stones on the priests' breastplate standing for the children of Israel...probably the tribe names.**
 - e. **When the priest made atonement in the tabernacle he offered up a sacrifice for only those people...**
 - f. **So as with Christ ...He was sent to offer Himself as a once for all time sacrifice for His elect/chosen people only.**
7. So if only the elect are to be saved why do we proclaim the gospel to all?
- c. **There is no such thing as universalism...as in the system that says all people universally will be saved.**
 - d. **While this is not true, we are commanded to proclaim the gospel universally since God has not told us...thankfully ...who are His and who aren't.**
 - e. **Because we may be instruments of God's will to carry out His expressed command to proclaim the Gospel universally...to everyone.**
- C. WSC #27- Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? *Christ humiliation consists in His being born and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death on the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.*
1. How would you define humiliation?
- a. **The act of humiliating or humbling choosing to coming down from a high rank to a lower one.**
 - b. **The state of being humiliated.**
2. How does this apply to what Christ did?
- a. **He choose to descend from His throne in heaven and became a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.**
 - b. **But it also consists of Him being humiliated:**
 - (1) **Godhead ordained His rejection and suffering.**
 - (2) **Being rejected and suffering at the hands of men.**
 - (3) **And He purposefully received this rejection and suffering.**
 - c. **Scriptures of support:**
 - (1) **Isaiah 53 is a rich description of what Jesus endured for us his people.**
 - 4. **Isaiah 53:3, "He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"**
 - 5. **Isaiah 53:6, "the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him"**

6. **Isaiah 53:8-10, “... He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked — but with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. ...”**
7. **Why would he go through all that?**
 - a. **Obedience to the will of His Father.**
 - b. **He did it to take up guilt that was not His own, to suffer and to experience the ultimate humiliation...execution as a criminal.**

(2)Matt. 27:46

(3)Gal. 4:4

(4)Phil. 2:5-9- “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name...”

8. **The present participle “being” in Philippians 2:6 means that Jesus has always been God. He didn’t stop being divine when He was born into this world. He remained an eternal member of the Triune God. In order to effectively pay for His people’s sins, He had to be both fully human and fully God at the same time.**
9. **He took on the form of a servant. Not just in name or in title. He actually served his creatures. He knelt down and washed the feet of the disciples. He patiently taught the ignorant, and took the insults of his enemies.**
10. **“...being found in appearance as a man...” - In his birth he took on a complete human nature, the characteristics of one of his own creations. He took on a true human appearance. That doesn’t mean he was just “playing human.” He really took on our nature. He is one person drawing from 2 natures (Human and Divine), a mysterious yet glorious union, “... yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)**
11. **He humbled himself to accomplish our salvation. The display of his glory, and the enjoyment of his heavenly environment were set aside. He took the place of depraved, convicted, and condemned moral criminals.**

3. **Since we are in Christ what does this say to us?**
 - a. **That we are to have the mind of Christ of humility. (Phil 2)**
 - i. **We need to humbly accept our part in God’s vast creation.**
 - **We see the vast power, intricacy, and wonder of all that God made.**
 - **Psalms 8:3-4 exclaims, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have**

ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?"

- **We see how little and weak we are compared with all the universe surrounding us. We each live in only a tiny dot on an astoundingly long time line that stretches out into eternity.**

ii. We are humbled as sinners.

- **In our fallen condition we can't appreciate the truth of our own condemnation, or of our need for redemption. Aside from our savior's supernatural work in us, we wander in a world we're unable to understand. We want a god — but not the God of the Bible. We crave a false god who's there to make us comfortable.**
- **When our hearts are brought to a true saving faith in Christ it humbles us as we see what we really are. We are a fallen race, blinded by our prejudices and excuses. We are unworthy of being in the presence of the all-holy God. We are not able to repair the infinite damage in our souls. The truth of our fallen condition humbles us before the Eternal Sovereign Lord.**

iii. We're humbled most by God's grace.

- ***Andrew Murray wisely said, "It is not sin that humbles most, but grace, and that it is the soul — led through its sinfulness to be occupied with God in His wonderful glory as God, as Creator and Redeemer, that will truly take the lowest place before Him."***
- **This is the message we have above in Philippians 2:5-9.**
 - **It's not when we look up and are awed by the distant stars and galaxies that humbles us the most.**
 - **It's not when we look down and see our own wicked thoughts and moral failures that humbles us the most.**
 - **It's when we look up at the Savior on the Cross, and appreciate how He humbled Himself for us as mere unworthy creatures that we're most humbled and bowed down in awareness of His most amazing and undeserved love.**

- b. True humility is to set aside self for the advance of God's Kingdom and Plan. We need to take time throughout every day, from when we first wake up until we go to bed at night, to consider the amazing love and grace that redeemed us and adopted us into God's eternal family. That's the focus our souls were created to have. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."**

- 4. Is there anything about Christ's humiliation in this catechism question that you didn't realize before? What?**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
December 6, 2020

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

12. WSC #27- Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? *Christ humiliation consists in His being born and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death on the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.*

13. As we saw last week, humiliation is an act of a person to purposefully humble themselves before other and the state of being humiliated. By whom was Christ humiliated and why?

- C. WSC #28- Wherein consists Christ's exaltation? *Christ exaltation consists in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.*

1. How would you define exaltation?-

- a. **Rising from meanness or commonness to greatness.**
- b. **Lively joy at success or victory...triumph**
- c. **Hebrews 12: 2!!! – "...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."**

2. What does the catechism Q&A presuppose about Christ's work in this exaltation?

- a. **He rose Himself. Christ did this by his own power and authority...he had authority to lay down His life and authority to take it up again.**
- b. **He ascended and He sits actively at the right hand of the Father.**
- c. **He will physically return at the appointed time.**

3. Let's look at this aspect of Christ's ascension for a moment. We don't spend much time of the benefits to us of His ascension, spending more time on His resurrection, which is appropriate to be sure. What does His ascension teach us? (multiple sources of old point out:

- a. **It teaches us heavenly-mindedness according to John Flavel-**
 - (1)**Since we are risen with Him, we must seek those things which are above, where Christ sits and we are to set of hope on these not on the things of the earth.**
 - (2)**"So heavenly minded you are no earthly good"- is a false statement. Since we are raised with Christ we are to be heavenly minded...with our eyes always on Him...not the world.**
- b. **It teaches us that His resurrection is a settled matter.**
 - (1)**Before Christ ascended it seems his disciples were still confused but afterwards they worshiped Him.**
 - (2)**They maintained a regular presence in the Temple preaching and teaching.**
 - (3)**They set out to proclaim Christ to the then known world.**

- c. It teaches us to that Jesus' Word is true.
- (1) He said He would die, rise again and go to His Father and send the Spirit to be our Comforter and Advocate.
 - (2) In fact, all the promises concerning the Spirit of God were being fulfilled and would be fulfilled for all His people.
 - (3) This is seen in their actions...
 - because of the Spirit's presence they were convinced of who Christ is so they preached Him as the One prophesied, the Messiah the Savior of His own.
 - They were convicted of the fact that Jesus had died for their sins.
 - They now were convinced the Jesus was still alive.
 - They had hope for a future with Christ.
 - (4) Finally, (maybe not exhaustively), it teaches us that Jesus empowered His Church to accomplish its mission to proclaim the truth in a dark and dying world.
4. How does Philippians 2:9-11 support what we just said? ***"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."***
- a. Verse 9 begins with the word, ***"Therefore"***. It was because of his humble suffering and death that Jesus Christ received his restored position. After he accomplished exactly what he came to do, he was ready to show his true glory again.
 - b. Hebrews 2:9, ***"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone."***
 - c. Since his mission was completed, Jesus was again ***highly exalted***. The word used in Philippians 2:9 means ***"Hyper-exalted"*** "hyper-ups-O-o" (ὑπερυψώθη). It is only used this one time in the whole New Testament.
 - d. Jesus' exaltation takes place in 3 phases:
 - (1) ***His Resurrection***. Early that Sunday morning He rose from the tomb victorious over the grave. Sin's penalty of death resulting in eternal separation from God was paid in full for all His people.
 - (2) ***His Ascension into glory***. Forty days after his resurrection Jesus was received back into the full display of his glory in heaven.
 - (3) ***His Session***. He returned to sit in His place by the Father where he shows His Sovereign Lordship over all creation. Hebrews 1:3, ***"After making purification for sins, (..... when He had by Himself purged our sins,) He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"***
5. How will/does His return actually point to His exaltation?
6. Since we are in Christ what does this mean for us at death and the Last days?
7. Why is having a good understanding of His humiliation and His exaltation necessary for us to grow in our faith?

D. WSC #29- How are we partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit?

1. What did our redemption cost Christ?

a. **It cost Him “momentarily” His place before the Father.**

(1)**Born of a woman.**

(2)**Born under the law.**

(3)**Taking on the form of a man/servant**

(4)**Became obedient to the will of His Father which included His death on a cross.**

b. **It cost Him His blood.**

(1)**To redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons and daughter.**

(2)**Heb. 9:12- “...He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.”**

2. How are we made partakers of this redemption? By the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit. What does effectual application mean?

a. **It has been securely applied by God Himself through the Work of the Spirit.**

b. **Since it is securely applied it cannot be removed.**

3. Who is the “we” in my last question? **God’s Elect alone.**

4. Why can’t we come to faith on our own?

a. **Rom. 3:10-18- “...as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.’”**

b. **John 1:12-13- “...to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

c. **John 5:21- “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will.”**

d. **John 10:27-30- “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”**

e. **Titus 3:4-7- “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”**

5. By what means does the Spirit normally use to effectually apply Christ to the elect?
 - a. **The Word.**
 - b. **His people bringing the Word.**
 - c. **The blessing and the power of the Spirit make it effective to the new believer. I Thess. 1:4-7- “For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers...”**

6. What do we learn from the work of the Spirit to effectually apply Christ to His elect?
 - a. **What a terrible thing it is to not be united with Christ. We should also understand this ourselves to remember how important and urgent it is to do as God commands in proclaiming and living by the truth.**
 - b. **This also teaches us of what wonderful benefits we, as believers, receive as Christ has been effectually applied to us then we have all that being a child of God...co-heirs with Christ entails. I Cor. 3:21-23- “So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”**
 - c. **Also, that this points to the fulfillment of another promise made to His people...namely the destruction of all unbelievers. John 3:18-21- “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”**

7. So to wrap up: How important are these 2 catechism questions (WSC #28 and #29) to a more complete understanding of our faith and practice as a believer?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
December 13, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. WSC #28- Wherein consists Christ's exaltation? *Christ exaltation consists in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.*
2. WSC #29- How are we partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? *We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit?*
3. How important are these 2 catechism questions (WSC #28 and #29) to a more complete understanding of our faith and practice as a believer?
 - a. **We are totally inadequate and incapable and we have a Savior who is totally majestic and sufficient!**
 - b. **Christ made us blameless and righteous...nothing within ourselves.**

C. WSC #30- How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? *The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and there by uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.*

1. What does the catechism mean when it says the Spirit works faith in us?
 - a. **In some way unknown to us He changes our nature to "desire" salvation (Irresistible Grace) when before we only desired our own way and will; warring against God even in the most benign way...**
 - b. **But warring nonetheless for we in no way would seek salvation on our own when in fact we were dead in our sins and had no power to do anything for ourselves...hence the term "rescued us".**
 - (1) John 3:5-6- Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."
 - (2) John 6:63- Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."
 - (3) John 14:16-17- Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."
 - (4) John 16:7-11- Jesus said, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

(5) Romans 8:9-11- “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him/Christ. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

(6) I Cor. 6:11- “And such were some of you. 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.”

(7) Titus 3:4-7- “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

2. What does the catechism mean when it speaks of us being united to Christ?

a. We become one with Christ...speaks of the intimacy of marriage...after all we are the Bride of Christ...oneness is a basic theme of the Scriptures...

b. What kind of Bride are we when we want to keep our identity?

D. WSC #31- What is effectual calling? *Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our will, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*

1. What is meant by “effectual” calling?

a. This means that it always accomplishes everything God intends.

b. Effectual calling refers to the creative power of God by which we are brought to a spiritual life in Christ.

c. God the Holy Spirit applies the Son’s work to all those redeemed. He infallibly and effectually applies all the benefits secured for them by Christ.

d. When God called the universe into being...it became because of the power and effectualness of His Word. God’s desired effect in creation came to pass.

e. When Jesus called Lazarus from the grave Lazarus immediately responded.

f. When God calls believers to Himself they come...irresistible grace! This call has its desired effect. It is regeneration.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
December 20, 2020

- A. Prayer
- B. Review and moving on- WSC #31- What is effectual calling? *Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our will, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*
 - 2. What is meant by "effectual" calling?
 - g. **This means that it always accomplishes everything God intends.**
 - h. **Effectual calling refers to the creative power of God by which we are brought to a spiritual life in Christ.**
 - i. **God the Holy Spirit applies the Son's work to all those redeemed. He infallibly and effectually applies all the benefits secured for them by Christ.**
 - j. **When God called the universe into being...it became because of the power and effectualness of His Word. God's desired effect in creation came to pass.**
 - k. **When Jesus called Lazarus from the grave Lazarus immediately responded.**
 - l. **When God calls believers to Himself they come...irresistible grace! This call has its desired effect. It is regeneration.**
 - 3. There are two kinds of gospel callings described in Scripture. When these are confused, God's truth becomes distorted.
 - a. **An outward call for all come to Christ.**
 - (1)**This is the gospel message, the invitation to believe God's work of redemption. God honestly and sincerely promises salvation to all who have faith in Christ and who come repentantly to Him.**
 - (2)**Of course fallen humans are neither able nor willing to obey this outward call to come trusting fully in the work of Christ alone.**
 - **In John 6:37-44-"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. So the Jews grumbled about Him, because He said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, I have come down from heaven?' Jesus answered them, 'Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.'"**

- Here we see Jesus talking about the irresistible grace by which the elect are effectually called.
 - Considering John 6:37- *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out....*...Nowhere does the Bible teach that a man can or will choose eternal life on his own. On the contrary Jesus Himself insists that whoever the Father gives to Him shall come because it is His will that they come.
 - Considering John 6:43-44- the word “draws” = compels...in the sense of drawing water out of the well...the bucket doesn’t put up a fight against the one drawing the water; the bucket can’t reject or obstruct the one drawing the bucket out of the well...in fact it can do nothing but have this task done....it is completely passive.
 - One translator goes so far as to speak of the root meaning of this word being used to describe one who is being drug into a situation “kicking and screaming”...compelled against their will if you will...because there may be friction as the bucket is brought up along the side of the well since not all wells had a center beam to keep the bucket from scraping the sides.
 - Then of course Jesus repeats Himself to make the point in John 6:65, Jesus said, *“...no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”*
 - And then there is this obvious picture- Acts 16:14- *“One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us.”* Who opened her heart to hear? What was wrong with her heart before the Spirit opened her heart?
- (3) An invitation to believe in Jesus Christ does not save anyone. Jesus warned in Matthew 22:14 *“many are called but few are chosen.”* Unless the Holy Spirit changes the heart, they will not come.
- b. An inward call from the Holy Spirit.
- (1) Paul wrote in Romans 8:30, *“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”* He is speaking of the same group of individuals in each of these stages of his work of grace. All those justified will be glorified. All those called will be justified. All those predestined by him to be his own are called in this special way.
- (2) The Holy Spirit never fails to complete the work of the Trinity. Those same ones predestined and called, are certain to be both justified and finally glorified. This is regeneration! For a person to have faith, he needs to be made alive spiritually. Colossians 2:13 says, *“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”*

(3) Once the heart is changed, nothing can possibly hinder his coming to Christ in repentance and faith. God does everything necessary to ensure that the sinner will most certainly come. This is why we say this inward call of the Holy Spirit is always “effectual.”

4. Just to be clear: Can this calling be resisted? Why or why not?
 - a. **As we have seen God and God alone does this work by His great mercy through the work of the Holy Spirit...so the God head makes effectual the salvation of those He chooses.**
 - b. **The Bible insists that salvation is based on the free will of God, and since God is omnipotent, His grace cannot be resisted.**
 - c. **The Arminian replies that salvation must be based upon the free will of man, who is capable of rejecting the sovereign will of God (even when wooed by the Holy Spirit). Man according to this view is powerful enough to obstruct or resist the grace of God who desperately wants all men to be saved.**
 - d. **Which God would you want to serve...the One who has predetermined all things the most perfect way or a god that could be obstructed by His own creation from accomplishing His hearts desires? Why?**
5. For the sake of our Arminian brothers and family members how is this not coercion on God's part...causing something to happen...in this case salvation ...against our will?
 - a. **Regeneration is NOT an act of coercion (forcing a man to act against his will), but rather it is an act of creation (born from above) creating in man a new will that he will be saved.**
 - b. **God does not make them do what they do not want to do. God changes people's hearts so that they desire to do what they did not and could not do before.**
 - c. **Interesting side note: The reformers and Puritans would not have looked as Arminians as possible weak brothers in Christ...they were all heretics.**
6. What exactly does this catechism say about how we are effectually called into God's family? What changes occur in us?
 - a. **We are convicted-convincing us of our sin and misery**
 - b. **We are enlightened- making the Way plain to us**
 - c. **We are renewed- there is a change in nature/will...re—newal a do over if you will!!!**
 - d. **Because we have been given faith- enabling us to trust in Jesus completely.**

(1) The attitude God calls us to have is not what the world thinks is best. He calls us to be patient, forgiving, honest, and kind even to those who are unkind to us. We need to overcome the rude and evil ways learned from our abductor. We need to observe and conform to the ways of our true Father.

(2) There is real promise and real power available to those Redeemed by Jesus Christ. We can learn to be what God calls us to be, and to overcome the leaned ways of our abductor. When we stop to appreciate the Redemption so graciously given in Christ, we are humbled and amazed. We exclaim in our hearts what Paul wrote in Romans 11:33, *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"*

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
January 31, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #31- What is effectual calling? *Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our will, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*
- 7. What is meant by "effectual" calling?
 - m. This means that it always accomplishes everything God intends.**
 - n. Effectual calling refers to the creative power of God by which we are brought to a spiritual life in Christ.**
 - o. God the Holy Spirit applies the Son's work to all those redeemed. He infallibly and effectually applies all the benefits secured for them by Christ.**
 - p. When God called the universe into being...it became because of the power and effectualness of His Word. God's desired effect in creation came to pass.**
 - q. When Jesus called Lazarus from the grave Lazarus immediately responded.**
 - r. When God calls believers to Himself they come...irresistible grace! This call has its desired effect. It is regeneration.**
- 8. What exactly does this catechism say about how we are effectually called into God's family? What changes occur in us?
 - e. We are convicted-convincing us of our sin and misery**
 - f. We are enlightened- making the Way plain to us**
 - g. We are renewed- there is a change in nature/will...re—newal a do over if you will!!!**
 - h. Because we have been given faith- enabling us to trust in Jesus completely.**
- (3)The attitude God calls us to have is not what the world thinks is best. He calls us to be patient, forgiving, honest, and kind even to those who are unkind to us. We need to overcome the rude and evil ways learned from our abductor. We need to observe and conform to the ways of our true Father.**
- (4)There is real promise and real power available to those Redeemed by Jesus Christ. We can learn to be what God calls us to be, and to overcome the leaned ways of our abductor. When we stop to appreciate the Redemption so graciously given in Christ, we are humbled and amazed. We exclaim in our hearts what Paul wrote in Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"**

- C. WSC# 32- What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?
They that are effectually called do in this life partake of Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.
1. Interesting way to begin an answer. What are the implications communicated by the catechism answer beginning this way; *"They that are effectually called..."*? **Obviously from the perspective of the divines there are some who are not "effectually called" and then there are the rest of us who are!**
 2. Basically what does this catechism wish to communicate to God's children?
 - a. **Again...it is all about God who chooses to grant these to His children by effectually calling us!**
 - b. **Faith in Christ INSURES certain blessings.**
 3. Has this message changed from the OT? If so, how? If not, then how are they the same?
 - a. **God's covenant guaranteed blessing when God's people lived in His prescribed will...in Christ today we have the ability to actually do the LAW... through Christ's finished work and the ongoing work of the Spirit we can live as God prescribes hence receiving the benefits of Christ.**
 - b. **The OT peoples experienced them in short spurts but since Christ's death and resurrection our ability to live for God has been insured through His work.**
 4. What are the specific benefits that the catechism speaks of?
 - a. **Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification...**
 - b. **Obviously, we will look at each one of these separately but for now what do you understand about them?**
 5. After talking about the BIG 3, the catechism says, *"...and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them."* What are some of these extra blessings?
 - a. **Multiple blessings highlighted in this section- Rom. 5:1-5- "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."**
 - b. **Free access to God- Eph. 3:12-14- "...remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility..."**

c. We are Heirs-

(1) Acts 20:32; “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

(2) Rom. 8:17- “...and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”

d. Union with Christ-

(1) John 17: 16-19-“They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

(2) John 17:22-23- “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

(3) Heb. 2:11- “For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.”

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 7, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- John 17:22-23- *"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."*

1. **John 17:8- *"For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me."***
2. **The Gospel...the Gospel of God Himself with all that is in it the doctrine, it's efficacy, its power, its usefulness for day to day...God gave this to the disciples and He gives it to all His disciples.**
3. **This Gospel was given for unity in the faith...it seems we have messed that one up big time...to be of one accord as Paul says...to be united in one faith, one baptism, one faith. A unity that ultimately leads to perfection as we remain united to one another in Christ. It seems that one of the instruments that God uses toward our perfection in glory is His Church as we stand together in unity.**
4. **And standing together will let the world know that God the father sent the Son and that He loves us in the same way He loves the Son.**
5. **So after considering this text...which statement is the "bigger" of the two...*"The glory that you have given me I have given to them..."* or *"...and that you loved them even as you loved me."* ... or can that even be qualified by our minds?**

C. WSC# 32- What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life? *They that are effectually called do in this life partake of Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.*

1. **Basically what does this catechism wish to communicate to God's children?**
 - a. **Again...it is all about God who chooses to grant these to His children by effectually calling us!**
 - b. **Faith in Christ INSURES certain blessings.**
2. **After mentioning the BIG 3 benefits of those who have been "effectually called", the catechism says, *"...and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them."* What are some of these extra blessings that we talked about last week?**
 - a. **Peace with God.**
 - b. **Access to God.**
 - c. **We can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.**
 - d. **Sufferings... suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.**
 - e. **The steadfast love of God.**
 - f. **Union with Christ.**
 - g. **An inheritance in Christ.**

D. WSC #33- What is Justification? *Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sin, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, ONLY for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*

1. What are the parts of justification highlighted in the catechism question?

- a. **The pardon of our sin- Acts 13:38-39- *"Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses."***
- b. **The acceptance of us as righteous in His sight- Rom.5:1-5- *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."***

2. Why do you suppose that justification by faith alone is the cardinal doctrine of the Protestant Church?

3. Why do you suppose this "one" doctrine caused so much stir within the church to cause the "biggest" church split in history? **Martin Luther stated, *"This is the one article/doctrine with and by which the church stands, without which it falls."***

4. Look at Romans 3:9-30. How does this passage answer the question; how is a person justified? The answer to this question is the one that split the church!!!

- a. **According to Rome it was baptism into the one true Church (Rome).**
- b. **According to the Reformers justification is by faith alone.**
- c. **The dispute came down to 2 different words, infusion and imputation. The difference between these 2 words is basically the difference between the RC view of sanctification and the Protestant view.**
 - (1)**For Rome the meaning of justification was to be found in the root of the word in the Latin which meant "to make just" or "to make righteous"= "a person was justified when a person was changed from being unjust to being just."**
 - (2)**In other words...a person cannot be declared righteous or just until they are righteous or just through baptism. What is the problem with this view? We must be sanctified first before we can be justified!!**
 - (3)**But Rome saw the flaw in this thinking as well so they came up with a solution.**
 - **Man does not have the capacity in and of himself to make himself righteous...so far so good...Rome does not want to be known as saying that they believe that men can work their way into heaven. Just to be clear, the Roman church does NOT believe in justification by works. They grant that we are fallen and unjust and that we do not have the power within ourselves to become good...HOWEVER, we can only receive the much needed grace through the sacramental system.**

- In baptism, the grace of justification sometimes called the grace of the righteousness of Christ, is poured into the soul. This is called infusion...without this a person cannot be saved...baptismal regeneration. A person must have the righteousness of Christ infused into our soul to be saved at baptism as an infant.
- In order to be saved in Catholicism several things must happen
 - First, you must cooperate with it *"... the inherent righteousness that men possess will cooperate with Christ."*
 - Second, we must work with it as we work with our own.
 - Lastly, we must agree with it to such a degree that the righteousness truly adheres within you.
 - When this happens you are declared by the Church to be in a state of justification and you remain there as long as you do not commit mortal sin.
 - If you die in mortal sin you go immediately to hell...however if you die in a lesser sin without paying all your penance then you neither go to hell or to heaven but...yep you guess it purgatory and you stay there until you have enough inherent righteousness or someone pays your way out through an INDULGENCE...
- The correct penance enables one to be reinfused with grace as long as you once again work with and agree to its application and the Church agrees...
- **ARE YOU THOROUGHLY CONFUSED YET?**

(4) Luther and the Reformers taught that...

- God transfers/ imputes Christ's righteousness from Christ to us.
 - Our sin is transferred/imputed to Christ on the Cross, and His righteousness is transferred/imputed to us.
 - So there is no inherent righteousness within us and so the righteousness we now have as believer came exclusively from Christ...His righteousness.
 - Christ's righteousness is perfect and complete and so once we have it imputed to us... ours is perfect and complete...it can never be lost because it is Christ's... given to us... *"Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* And I receive this righteousness through faith and not by the sacraments...
- In contrast to: The righteousness of Christ poured or infused in us co-mingling with what faith/righteousness that we have inherently and that we must accept that justifies us...it is the righteousness of Christ that He worked in His own life which now God counts toward us that justifies us. Now what is the difference? Is it just semantics?

d. Texts to consider:

- (1) Romans 3:20- 26—(vs. 20... *"For by works of the law no human being will be declared justified..."*)
- (2) Gal. 2:15-21- what does this text say to us? Look closely at this text.

5. Who has the authority...and who is the instrument of the justification in this catechism?
 - a. **It is the act of God... of God's free grace... for God is just and the Justifier...and He alone is the instrument of justification by faith alone through Christ alone.**
 - (1) **We often define grace as the unmerited favor of God toward us...and that is fine as far as it goes.**
 - (2) **But we also must consider that that statement is pretty man-centered.**
 - (3) **So we must also add that God is not compelled to save us...it is His choice because of His love for His Son and for us.**
 - b. **There is nothing man can do...ever...to justify himself before the eyes of God...in trying to do so man simply shows his rejection of God and Christ and what the accomplished on the cross for His elect.**
6. What does the catechism mean when it says that justification is an act of God's free grace?
 - a. **The word "act" signifies that this is a one time deal, completed in a moment...this is not a "work" on on-going process.**
 - b. **This is not something that we can earn, deserve, or are entitled to...God determines who will receive this gift...just as we determine who receives gifts in our own lives.**
7. How is Christ's righteousness imputed to us?
 - a. **The Godhead determined before the foundation of the world that Christ would go to the cross and that our sins...the sins of His elect... would be imputed to Him on the cross and that His righteousness would then be imputed to all who are His from eternity past. -**
 - b. **By application to us by faith in Christ.-Gal. 2:16- *"...yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."***
8. Why is a correct understanding of this basic principle so important to our faith and the foundation of the church?
 - a. **Only God has the right to declare anyone just...or acquitted.**
 - b. **Living in the world of a JUST Judge is a good thing for us...we see every day what happens when unjust judges...those who interpret the law for themselves or their political positions leave the world...in chaos.**
 - c. **We may not always like God's judgments but to know that all men are judged alike, by the same standard...that all men are judged by One who never changes... is comforting from the perspective of a thinking person.**
 - d. **It becomes bad news when we realize that we...ourselves are unjust and thus deserving of His full wrath.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 14, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #33- What is Justification? *Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sin, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, ONLY for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*
 - 9. Who has the authority...and who is the instrument of the justification in this catechism?
 - c. **It is the act of God... of God's free grace... for God is just and the Justifier...and He alone is the instrument of justification by faith alone through Christ alone.**
 - (4) **We often define grace as the unmerited favor of God toward us...and that is fine as far as it goes.**
 - (5) **But we also must consider that that statement is pretty man-centered.**
 - (6) **So we must also add that God is not compelled to save us...it is His choice because of His love for His Son and for us.**
 - d. **There is nothing man can do...ever...to justify himself before the eyes of God...in trying to do so man simply shows his rejection of God and Christ and what the accomplished on the cross for His elect.**
 - 10. Why is a correct understanding of this basic principle so important to our faith and the foundation of the church?
 - e. **Only God has the right to declare anyone just...or acquitted.**
 - f. **Living in the world of a JUST Judge is a good thing for us...we see every day what happens when unjust judges...those who interpret the law for themselves or their political positions leave the world...in chaos.**
 - g. **We may not always like God's judgments but to know that all men are judged alike, by the same standard...that all men are judged by One who never changes... is comforting from the perspective of a thinking person.**
 - h. **It becomes bad news when we realize that we...ourselves are unjust and thus deserving of His full wrath.**
- C. WSC #34- What is adoption? *Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.*
 - 1. How would you define adoption from a legal perspective? What is it?
 - 2. What does the word and act of adoption presuppose about the one being adopted?
 - a. **That they weren't part of the original or natural family.**
 - b. **A choice is being made between children.**
 - c. **Love and desire is shown before the child can do anything to prove their love for the one adopting.**

3. What does this act of God presuppose are some of the privileges of being adopted by God into His family?
 - a. **It confers upon us both the RANK and RIGHTS of children, legally.**
 - (1) **John 1:12-13- *"But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."***
 - (2) **Rom. 8:14- *"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are fsons6 of God."***
 - (3) **Rom. 8:16- *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..."***
 - (4) **II Cor. 6:18- *"...and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."***
 - (5) **In other words, it guarantees us that we have both a place and a portion as sons and daughters...an inheritance... in God's family.**
 - b. **It promises us to be disciplined...there will be afflictions...and we will suffer in this life.**
 - (1) **Hebrews 12:6- *"For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."***
 - (2) **Rom. 8:17- *"and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him."***
 - c. **It guarantees no condemnation for all who are in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1- *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."***
 - d. **We are given the assistance of the Spirit in prayer...Rom. 8:15- *"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"***
4. **Why would this act of God's free grace naturally follow justification? God could not accept anyone into His family unless and until we are made righteous in His eyes.**
5. **Are we somehow entitled to God adoptive action toward us? In other words, is God obligated to justify and adopt us?**
 - a. **This is somewhat of a loaded question...on one hand He is obligated to justify and adopt us because he promised His son a chosen people...**
 - b. **On the other the answer is NO, if we presuppose we have somehow earned this action.**
6. **What is it that moves God to adopt any man?**
 - a. **He doesn't adopt just any men or women ...only His elect.**
 - b. **What moves Him is His free and complete love from before the foundations of the world.**
 - (1) **I John 3:1- *"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."***
 - (2) **Eph. 1:3-6- *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In***

love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.”

7. As those who have been adopted how then should we live?
 - a. We should seek to follow and imitate Him.**
 - b. We should seek to be submissive to His will so that He is glorified.**
 - c. We should depend upon him as a small child to their Father for provision, protection...our everyday physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.**
 - d. In other words we should live up to the name we bear!**
8. WCLC- Question #74: What is adoption. *Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of His Son given to them, are under His fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.*
9. How does this catechism question further describe the relationship in adoption?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 21, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #34- What is adoption? *Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.*

1. What is comforting about this doctrine for the believer and why?

- a. **Counted as His Children.**
- b. **Guaranteed His loving Fatherly care.**
- c. **No Longer His enemies.**

2. WCLC- Question #74: What is adoption? *Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of His Son given to them, are under His fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.*

a. How does this catechism question further describe the relationship in adoption?

(1) in and for his only Son Jesus Christ,-

- **John 6:37-“All the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out”**
- **John 17:1-“Father, the hour is come. Glorify, Your son, that Your Son may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”**

(2) have His name put upon them-

- **Isaiah 43:6-7- “I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold: bring my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created, whome I formed and made.”**
- **Matthew 28:19- “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”**

b. How should this type of relationship motivate us day by day?

(1)Frees us up to strive to please the LORD.

(2)To please Him in the way that he has told us.

C. WSC #35- What is sanctification? *Sanctification is the WORK of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.*

1. In #33 and #34 we read that justification and adoption are acts of God's free grace, here we read that sanctification is a “work” of God's free grace. What is being communicated by the use of these words “act” and “work”?

- a. **We sometime think that the Westminster divines sought to complicate things with too many words...but what we have here is an economy of words to be sure.**
- b. **It is to communicate that an “act” is a onetime event ... and a work is a on-going work in this case until glory when we will be fully sanctified.**

2. What exactly do you understand occurs in sanctification?
 - a. **Basically speaking...it means making a person holy...**
 - b. **He renews us and enables us to live unto righteousness.**
 - c. What does that look like every day in your life?
 - (1)**Lots of theological stuff thrown out here...but my question had to do with the nitty gritty:**
 - **How does a purpose who works outside at a vineyard reveal God's sanctifying work, when no one is watching and there is no one to here you talk about your faith?**
 - **How does someone who works with "1's" and "0's" (computers) do this when no one is watching?**
 - **The answer to these and other scenario's I put out there is the very best job we can...that brings God glory and it reveals that we are different.**
 - (2) **Doctrine of vocation plays a big role in revealing to others that we are sanctified and being sanctified...living the life God has given us to live.**
 - d. **It is a work of grace because it proceeds from God's undeserved goodness, and is wrought in us from first to last by His own Spirit.**
 - e. **Again, He is not compelled to do so...it is out of His love for His Son and us that he does this.**
3. The catechism seems to indicate that sanctification has 2 parts...what are the 2 parts, if there is two parts?
 - a. **God's part renews us in the whole man after His image.**
 - b. **This enable us to, "...more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."**
 - c. We understands God's role more and more...but...what does is the catechism mean for us to die to sin and live unto righteousness? What does that look like day to day?
 - (1)**Mortification of our sin daily...a recognition of our sin and repentance as a part of our regular routine...daily.**
 - (2)**Living as God has prescribed- I Thess. 5:12-18- *We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.***
 - (3)**Rom. 6:10-14- *"For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."***

4. Who/what is the instrument of sanctification?
 - a. **Christ's initial work and the Word of God.**
 - b. **John 17:17- *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."***
 - c. **John 17:19- *"And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."***

5. What does the catechism then mean when it says that we are being renewed in the whole man after the image of God? Why do we need to be renewed after the image of God?
 - a. **We need to be made right with God again...relationship needs to be restored.**
 - (1) **Adam broke that relationship and Jesus the 2nd Adam restored and renewed that relationship.**
 - (2) **Rom. 6:17-21- *"...because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."***
 - b. **Then in our sanctification we can engage in the other process of mortification.... a feeling of shame, humiliation to the point of hating and ceasing from our sinfulness... a discipline of placing our sins before God daily in confession and because of the work of His Spirit physically turning us away from sin.**
 - c. **The work of sanctification purges our heart from the love of sin because the work of God can sanctify even the vilest offender.**
 - d. **We need to once again love and practice holiness and we can't do that in our un-justified and un-sanctified state.**

6. The catechism says that once we are renewed we are enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Given all the sin we commit on a daily basis how do we know this is certain for all believers?
 - a. **Rom. 6:14- *"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."***
 - b. **Eph. 4:11-16- *"And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint***

with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

- c. I John 5:4-5- “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”**

7. Since the Scripture seems rather emphatic about this, then why do we still fall into daily and regular sin?
8. How long does sanctification take? Why? What is its purpose? And why would God take so long? **Phil 1:6-** ***“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
February 28, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #35- What is sanctification? *Sanctification is the WORK of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.*
9. What exactly do you understand occurs in sanctification?
- f. Basically speaking...it means making a person holy...**
 - g. He renews us and enables us to live unto righteousness.**
 - h. What does that look like every day in your life?
 - (3) Lots of theological stuff thrown out here...but my question had to do with the nitty gritty:**
 - **How does a purpose who works outside at a vineyard reveal God's sanctifying work, when no one is watching and there is no one to here you talk about your faith?**
 - **How does someone who works with "1's" and "0's" (computers) do this when no one is watching?**
 - **The answer to these and other scenario's I put out there is the very best job we can...that brings God glory and it reveals that we are different.**
 - (4) Doctrine of vocation plays a big role in revealing to others that we are sanctified and being sanctified...living the life God has given us to live.**
 - i. It is a work of grace because it proceeds from God's undeserved goodness, and is wrought in us from first to last by His own Spirit.**
 - j. Again, He is not compelled to do so...it is out of His love for His Son and us that he does this.**
- 10. How long does sanctification take? Why? What is its purpose? And why would God take so long? Phil 1:6- "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."**
- C. #36- What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification? *The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace and perseverance therein to the end.*
1. When do we receive these benefits according to the catechism?
- a. IN THIS LIFE before we are perfected we receive them and we can experience them...**
 - b. But not completely until the day of Christ's return but they can be experienced in this life...now...not something we have to wait on.**
2. What are the blessings that are specifically spoken of here in this catechism question?
- a. Confidence/assurance of God's love for us-**
 - (1) Song of Solomon 6:3- "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies."**

(2) But we are commanded to strive after it so we will know it is real.

- **So, on one hand God's Word tells us it is real.**
- **God provides us with the means of grace with which we must avail ourselves to know experientially.**
- **But we are also to work out our salvation so that we will know it is real experientially.- 2 Peter 1:10-11- *"Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."***

- b. Peace of conscience- Freedom from a sense of guilt and fear of condemnation**
- c. Joy in the Holy Spirit- Gladness of heart in feeling that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us**
- d. An increase in grace...What does this mean? ...Look like?**
- e. Perseverance of the Saints in these graces to the end.**
- f. So when will these benefits cease?**

- 3. So what kind of things often get in the way of us experiencing these blessings given to us through justification, adoption and sanctification?
- 4. How would you describe the last one perseverance of the saints to the end to a friend...believer or non- believer?

D. WSC # 37- What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? *The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united with Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection.*

- 1. What are the specific benefits for the believer at death spoken of here in this catechism?
 - a. That the soul is immediately made perfectly holy or free from all sinful tendencies.**
 - b. That it is taken immediately to heaven...into the presence of God.**
 - c. That the body rests in the grave still united with Christ till the last day.**
- 2. Here is that word perfection again. What does the catechism mean here, do you suppose?
 - a. It seems to be talking about the perfect freedom we are granted from sin and misery. Eph. 5:27- *"...so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she (the church) might be holy and without blemish."***
 - b. It also seems to be talking about the highest measure or fullness of holiness that a creature can achieve. Eph. 4:12-13- *"...to equip (to perfect) the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..."***
 - c. And just so we are clear, this can't be had in this life?**
(1) 1 Cor. 13:12- *"...we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."*

- (2) 2 Cor. 5:6-7- "So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight."**
- d. One more thing on this theme of perfection, why must the soul be made perfect at death?
- (1) Because the purity of heaven admits nothing with blemish or stain.**
- (2) Rev. 21:27- "But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."**
3. Just as an aside: Let's think together on this a bit. When does death truly occur?
- a. **Death began when man ate of the fruit....**
- b. **Next death, according to science, begins sometime after conception as old cells die away and new ones come...**
- c. **So Man died in the Garden and have been dying ever since. And we will continue to die till Christ returns.**
- d. **A complete death will occur when body and soul are cast into hell...Matt. 10:28- "...do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."**
- e. **But for the believer God has delivered our souls from the power of death so we will never die. John 10:27-28- "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."**
4. Since our sins have been forgiven and death's curse lifted, why then do we still die and go to the grave?
- a. **Because where sin has been death by the law must follow.**
- (1) Rom. 5:12- "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and death spread to all men because all sinned..."**
- (2) Rom. 8:10- "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness."**
- b. **It is a privilege to be there united with Christ in life and in death... I Thess. 4:14- "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep."**
- c. **We do not stay in the grave forever...there will be a resurrection.**
- (1) Job 19:25-27- "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!"**
- (2) Psalm 16:9-10- "Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption."**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
March 7, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC # 37- What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? *The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united with Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection.*
1. What are the specific benefits for the believer at death spoken of here in this catechism?
 - a. **That the soul is immediately made perfectly holy or free from all sinful tendencies.**
 - b. **That it is taken immediately to heaven...into the presence of God.**
 - c. **That the body rests in the grave still united with Christ till the last day.**
 2. Since our sins have been forgiven and death's curse lifted, why then do we still die and go to the grave?
 - a. **Because where sin has been death by the law must follow.**
(1)Rom. 5:12- "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because wall sinned..."
(2)Rom. 8:10- "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness."
 - b. **It is a privilege to be there united with Christ in life and in death...**
I Thess. 4:14-"For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep."
 - c. **We do not stay in the grave forever...there will be a resurrection.**
(1)Job 19:25-27- "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!"
(2)Psalm 16:9-10-"Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption."
- C. WSC #38- What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? *At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the Day of Judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.*
1. What do you suppose is meant by being acknowledged and acquitted by Christ on that Day?
 - a. **"We"= believers being raised to glory...all those who have been elect from the foundation of the earth. Matt. 10:32- "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven..."**

- b. We are Christ's and He is ours. This statement recognizes the relationship that the Bible has told us about from the beginning. Matt. 25:34- *"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'*"**
 - c. The effect of this acknowledgment will put a full end to all doubts and fears that men carry with them throughout life.**
 - d. We will be fully cleared from all guilt and punishment because of the imputation of Christ's righteousness upon us when we first believed.**
 - (1) Rom. 5:1- *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, bwe1 have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."***
 - (2) Rom. 8:1- *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."***
2. What do you imagine is meant by, *"made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity."*-
- (1) In this life we cannot fully enjoy this but in the next for sure.**
 - (2) All believers will count themselves rich beyond all imagination...**
 - (3) There will be no more envy in the hearts of God's children we will all sense the unity we have in glorifying God...**
 - (4) We will have new bodies that will be disease and age free... Phil. 3:20-21- *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."***
 - (5) A true and complete oneness that our salvation is our ultimate reward.**
 - (6) We will spend eternity doing what we were created for glorifying and enjoying Him forever.**
 - I John 3:2- *"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see him as He is."***
 - Rev. 21:3-4- *"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'"***
3. Is it a sin to doubt the doctrine of the resurrection?
- a. It is not a sin to doubt, necessarily...but to deny it is heresy and a sin since the resurrection is such a fundamental article of faith.**
 - b. If there is no resurrection than our faith is futile. I Cor. 15:13-14-*"But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain."***

- c. **Rather we should strive in all our power towards our resurrection...living always as He directs. Phil. 3:10-11-*"...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."***
- d. **So believers should not fear death for the resurrection from the dead is a real thing...we will live eternally.**

D. WSC #39- What is the duty which God requires of man? *The duty which God requires of man is obedience to His revealed will?*

1. Having just seen in Catechism 1-38 what God has done, is doing, and means to do, we are now going to look at Q and A 39-107 and see what God requires man to do for Him.
2. So does this mean that obedience to God's will is the duty of everyman... believer and non-believer?
 - a. **It is unquestionably the duty of every man to obey the will of God, so far as it has been revealed.**
 - b. **Micah 6:8- *"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"***
3. Why are all men to obey God's revealed will?
 - a. **It is due Him, for He is the creator of all mankind.- Gen. 1:26-28- *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"***
 - b. **He is the one from who especially as His children, we all receive all our mercies.**
 - c. **Because He is Just and the Justifier.**
 - d. The answer says very simply, *"The duty which God requires of man is OBEDIENCE to His revealed will."* It would seem then that God's will is revealed, if the catechism is to be believed, and I am here to say that it is... So then, why do we so often hear from Christians that they don't know what God's will is? What are they/we really saying?
4. What are some things that God has revealed to us? How do these apply to our day to day wondering what God's will is for our lives on that day?
 - a. **I Thess. 5:12-21- *"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,***

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

- b. If we focus on what God clearly tells us in Scripture we are to be doing, and if we live accordingly we will bring Him glory.**
- c. When it comes to specific needs of knowing His will He will reveal it and it will be confirmed by a multitude of godly counselors.**
- d. Of course this requires that we stay in His Word so we can hear His voice as He speaks to us by His Word and Spirit.**
- e. When we are obedient to His revealed will from everything from worship to how we take care of His creation He will take care of the details of our individual lives.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
March 14, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #39- What is the duty which God requires of man? *The duty which God requires of man is obedience to His revealed will?*

1. What do people mean when they say that they are “out of the will of God”?

a. **They may be somehow referring to a sin that they are in...or their lack of pursuing God’s word in their life...or their lack of knowledge of what God’s will is for their life.**

b. **But what is really the bottom line of this thinking? They fret over every decision and circumstance thinking they might mess up God’s plan.**

(1)**The confusing part is that God does not tell us all that He plans to do.**

(2)**Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us that much of God’s plan is kept secret from us. It says, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”**

(3)**God’s decrees are unchangeable. Nobody can ever make a choice or do anything that makes God deviate from his eternal plan. Nothing can frustrate that eternal will of God.**

- **Job 42:2 “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.”**

- **Psalm 115:3 “But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.”**

- **Psalm 135:6 “Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places.”**

c. **The things He calls us to do are the things we need to be concerned about. He reveals what is right for us to do. When that is violated, it is called “sin.” While we can never change God’s eternal plan, His decreed will...we can and do at times violate this revealed will of God.**

2. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul reminded Timothy how we know God’s will for our lives: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

a. **It is profitable for teaching/doctrine: It offers us a complete curriculum of all God wants us to know. There He tells us about Himself and about how everything else relates to Him. Psalm 119 can guide us here:**

(1)**Psalm 119:24 says, “Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.”**

(2)**Psalm 119: 98-99 say, “You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.”**

b. **It is profitable for reproof: The Bible warns about errors and shows us the truth which exposes them.**

(1)**There is no other standard against which what we learn can be compared.**

- (2) Psalm 119:21 says, ***“You rebuke the proud — the cursed, who stray from Your commandments.”***
- c. It is profitable for correction: Once error is exposed, the proper path needs to be found. Only the Bible as God’s word can show a person that right path. This is also well summarized throughout Psalm 119 as well:
- (1) Psalm 119:9 ***“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”***
- (2) Psalm 119:11 ***“Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”***
- (3) Psalm 119:30 ***“I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me.”***
- (4) Psalm 119:105 ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”***
- d. It is profitable for training in righteousness: Righteousness is when we live according to the things that please God.
- (1) Deuteronomy 6:25 defines righteousness as obedience to God’s revealed will. It says, ***“Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.”***
- (2) Biblically, righteousness means innocence before God’s law. There is no other standard than God’s own Word for knowing what pleases Him.
- (3) Again we turn to Psalm 119 weighs in here: (This such an important psalm for the Christian)
- Psalm 119:40 ***“Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me in Your righteousness.”***
 - Psalm 119:116 ***“Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.”***
 - Psalm 119:117 ***“Hold me up, and I shall be safe, And I shall observe Your statutes continually.”***
 - Psalm 119:142 ***“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.”***
 - Psalm 119:160 ***“The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.”***
3. The Bible is a book of content. It is not just interesting reading material. We need to learn what it says while we are doing it what it says in order to live in a way that pleases our Redeemer. This is the only way to enjoy fulfilling what we were made to be. Remember Paul often says;
- (1) ***“We know...”*** which speaks to the Spirits work in us Spirit within us...there are certain things we know without reading them in the Bible because the Word is written on our hearts.
- (2) But we also ***“know”*** because of the Spirit revealing to us what god’s word means and requires of us.

- C. WSC # 40- What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of His obedience? *The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral Law.*
1. This an interesting answer to the question. Our normal answer would be simply God's Word. Why this answer?
 - a. **It focuses us on the part of the Word that we are to use to structure our lives for God's glory.**
 - b. **It is one thing to say we should live morally, obeying what God says is right and what truly satisfies our real needs. It is quite another thing to know which attitudes and behaviors are really moral.**
 - c. **There are many different views about morality.**
 - (1) **As we have said already today, some things are universally accepted as right and wrong. God built into our nature an awareness that it is evil to commit murder, and to steal. Most agree that it is wrong to be unfaithful in marriage, to be greedy, and to lie. Most agree that it is good to help others in need, to worship, and to be kind to others.**
 - (2) **However, there is a lot of confusion about when some of these things are binding upon us. There are many views about how worship should be done, and when ambition becomes greed.**
 - (3) **To clear up the confusion in our fallen nature God gave us His written Word. The Bible tells us what is good and acceptable in the eyes of God. These principles are called God's moral law.**
 - **This is not a set of baseless rules made up for us as tests, or for earning our way to heaven.**
 - **Moral law is the way things must be in a universe created by the one True God.**
 - **It is always wrong to worship other gods, to make physical images of God who is spirit, to use God's name without respect, or to forget honoring the Creator on the Creation Sabbath.**
 - **It is never right to show disrespect to those God puts in authority over us, or to murder. No one should be unfaithful in marriage, steal, lie, or covet.**
 2. What is the meaning of the term moral law?
 - a. **It is not a law to direct and order the way we go about living life....many of which may change with time and circumstance.**
 - b. **It is a law that is binding universally and perpetually.**
 - c. **This being true we ought to prize this law above all else. The word of God.**
 3. When did God first reveal the moral Law? **Genesis.** How can you prove this from Scripture?
 - a. **Gen. 1:28- "And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"**

- b. **Gen. 2:15-18- *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"***
- 4. How did Adam know he had sinned before God pointed it out?
 - a. Where did fear come from?
 - b. How did shame come into the picture?
 - c. **The only answers is that he knew God's laws before they were ever written down...they had been written into his DNA as the rest of the Bible tells us...on the hearts of all men. Remember Rom. 2:14-16- *"For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."***
- 5. What is the difference between God's law and man's law?
 - a. **We are always to obey God's law without question to the best of our ability in Christ.- I Peter 2:13-15- *"Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by Him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people."***
 - b. But what are we to do when man's law conflicts with God's law?
 - (1)**We must yield our obedience to the Lord, not to man no matter the consequence- Acts 4:15-20- *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, 'What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.' So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.'"***
 - (2)**We must do this for He is God the sovereign Lord suffering the consequences if we must. No one has power to command our obedience but Him.**
- 6. Again, who all is responsible to keep this moral law? Why?

D. WSC # 41- Where is the Moral law summarily comprehended? *The Moral Law is summarily comprehended in the 10 Commandments.*

1. **Exodus 20:1-17- “And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.’”**

2. **Deut. 5:1-22-“And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, awhile I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.**

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

And you shall not commit adultery.

And you shall not steal.

And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.'

These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me."

3. What is meant by the statement summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments?
 - a. **God made Himself known by giving us His word in the Bible. His basic character... His moral principles are summed up in the 10 Commandments.**
 - b. **Because everything is in there summarily in there...just like Prego... it's all in there.**
 - c. **Just like when the Bible talks about breaking one we break them all...it is not just the 10 but all God's commandments.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
March 21, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. WSC # 40- What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of His obedience?
The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral Law.
2. WSC # 41- Where is the Moral law summarily comprehended? *The Moral Law is summarily comprehended in the 10 Commandments.*
3. What is meant by the statement summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments?
 - d. **God made Himself known by giving us His word in the Bible. His basic character... His moral principles are summed up in the 10 Commandments.**
 - e. **Because everything is in there summarily in there...just like Prego... it's all in there.**
 - f. **Just like when the Bible talks about breaking one we break them all...it is not just the 10 but all God's commandments.**

C. WSC #42- What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? *The sum of the 10 commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.*

1. What does Jesus mean when He says, "...to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind..."
 - a. **We are to love Him purely and absolutely for Himself as Himself.**
(1) Song of Solomon 1:2-3- "For your love is better than wine; your anointing oils are fragrant; your name is oil poured out; therefore virgins love you."
(2) Psalm 116:1- "I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy."
 - b. **As we are created to bring the Godhead glory our love for Him is to affect all that we do to that end.**
(1) Rom. 14:7-8- "For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."
(2) I Cor. 10:31- "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
 - c. **This type of love causes us to deprecate all other things when we compare it to the Godhead.**
(1) Acts 20:24- "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

(2) Phil. 3:4-11- “If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

d. Only such a love is what is due the supreme creator and Father of His children.

2. What is it to love out neighbor as ourselves?

a. Some would say that the answer for this is summed up in the “Golden Rule- Matthew 7:12, *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

b. The Bible seems to define it as putting others first starting with the household of God and then moving out.

(1) Gal. 6:10- *“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”*

(2) Phil. 2:3-4-*“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

(3) I John 4:19-21-*“We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”*

3. What are we to understand when we see the words “sum of”?

a. The Bible regularly links love and obedience.

(1) This connection was made by Jesus many times in His ministry. For example, the Gospel of John records some of His direct comments about this.

- **John 14:21, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...”**
- **John 15:12, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”**
- **John 15:14, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”**
- **John 15:17, “These things I command you, that you love one another.”**

- **John 13:35** says, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - **1 John 5:2-3**, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”
- (2)** We were created to live morally, doing the things that show respect to our Creator.
- (3)** When we live that way, intent on truly honoring God and helping the people around us, we are being loving and therefore are keeping all His commandments inwardly as well as outwardly.
- b.** Love for God and others is expressed by keeping His moral commandments. In the commandments God defines what things are loving.
- c.** God’s summation of His moral principles help us remember and obey what honors Him. It is how we fulfill what we were created and commissioned to be. It is how we love. It is what real “love” looks like.
- d.** This summation by Jesus fits exactly with the order of the Commandments God gave through Moses.
- (1)** The Ten Commandments divide into these two main sections. **Matt. 22:34-40** *“But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”*
- (2)** The first section, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment* is about our loving God above everything else. Jesus quotes this from **Duet. 6:5-6** *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.”*
- This sums up the first 4 commandments. It is always wrong to worship other gods, to make images of God who is pure spirit, to use God’s name without respect, or to forget honoring the Creator’s work on the Sabbath.
 - These first 4 Commandments show us who God is, and how we should worship and live for him.
- (3)** As the second great commandment, Jesus said, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* Again he was quoting the words of Moses, this time from **Leviticus 19:18**. We must love our neighbor as we already look out for ourselves.
- This sums up the last 6 Commandments. It is never right to show disrespect to those God puts in authority over us, or to murder. No one should be unfaithful in marriage, steal, lie, or covet.

- **These last 6 Commandments show how God designed us to live together.**
- e. **Moral law is the way things ought to be in a place created by the one True God. They show that we submit to his lordship as our Creator and King, and they teach us how to live lovingly with those God puts around us in our lives.**

D. The Ten Commandments

1. Q and A # 43- What is the preface to the Ten Commandments? *The preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage/slavery." (Ex. 20:2)*
2. #44- What does the Preface to the Ten Commandments teach us? *The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us, that because God is the LORD, and Our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all His commands.*
3. The Preface is important.
 - a. **The Jews, Roman Catholics, and some Lutherans consider this to be the 1st commandment. They then combine the 2nd and 3rd commandments to become number 2.**
 - b. **Reformed believers often overlook the Preface and jump right to the commandments themselves. The structure of this statement does not lend itself to the style of a commandment.**
 - c. **The preface tells us who the author is, and what he intends to teach his readers, via historical narrative or declarative statements**
 - (1) **Revealing in the case of the Bible God's right to enact and obligate the people to His Law.**
 - (2) **To tell them why they are obligated to obey His laws**
 - **Because of who He is...the LORD their God.**
 - **And because He is their LORD and God He has provided so great a deliverance.**
 - **And Laws for them to cheerfully live by.**
4. Why do you suppose that this statement is so important that some would elevate it to commandment status? **It communicates that:**
 - a. **If the law comes from God, then the best place to begin understanding the law is with God himself.**
 - (1) **This is precisely where the book of Exodus begins its presentation of the Ten Commandments, also known as the Decalogue, meaning "ten words": "And God spoke all these words" (Ex. 20:1). To get a sense of who God is, it helps to remember the setting.**
 - **God was speaking to the Israelites as they were gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai.**
 - **Exodus 19 described how God descended on the mountain in great power and glory, with thunder and lightning, fire and smoke.**
 - **The Israelites were forbidden to come any closer, upon the pain of death. They had come into the presence of the awesome and Almighty God, who lives in unapproachable holiness.**

- (2) Obviously, whatever such a God has to say demands our fullest and most careful attention.**
- **What we received from Mount Sinai was not simply the law of Moses, but the law of *God*, spoken in the revelation of His glory.**
 - **As Isaiah was later to write, *“The LORD was pleased, for His righteousness’ sake, to magnify His law and make it glorious”* (Is. 42:21).**
 - **Although God revealed His glory in the fire and smoke on the mountain, He made a fuller disclosure of His deity when He began to speak. He said, *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery”* (Ex. 20:2). In it God defends His authority as the lawgiver.**
- b. God is our sovereign... *“I am the LORD”*...Yahweh—the great I AM...the Almighty One...supreme, self-existent, eternal and unchangeable, who bound Himself by promise.**
- c. He is the being whom we are to worship... *“I am the LORD YOUR GOD”*...our very own God...by using the second person singular He is making the point that He has a personal relationship with each and every one of His people.**
- d. That personal relationship is also a saving relationship...He is the One who has delivered us from bondage... *“...brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”*- Our Redeemer**
- (1) God gave them the 10 Commandments after He delivered them from slavery.**
- (2) Why is the recognition of timing important?**
- a. Some believe we have to be worth saving or that God looks ahead and sees who is worth saving and then based on that He saves.**
 - b. Well what we have here is that He delivers them and then gives them the 10 Commandments so they were not saved because they kept the 10 commandments...**
 - e. This was a summary of everything that had happened so far in Exodus. God was reminding the Israelites that He was not only their LORD and their God, but also their Redeemer. And it was on this basis that He laid down His law for their lives. It was Israel’s unique privilege to receive the law straight from God.**
- 5. Considering all that He has done, what is He communicating to His children with this statement?**
- a. Lest any of us forget from where our salvation/deliverance/rescue comes from.**
 - b. They could not get out of Egypt on their own any easier than we could get out of the bondage of our sin.**
 - c. It is of paramount importance to not only know who delivered us but to also to tell who delivered us and lest we forget both ...God reminds us.**
 - d. In the Passover they were required to give this history to look back upon their deliverance before they considered the Law.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
March 28, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- we have begun talking about the 10 Commandments.

1. Q and A # 43- What is the preface to the Ten Commandments? *The preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage/slavery." (Ex. 20:2)*
2. #44- What does the Preface to the Ten Commandments teach us? *The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us, that because God is the LORD, and Our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all His commands.*
 - a. When did God give them the 10 Commandments?
 - (1) **After He delivered them from slavery out of Egypt.**
 - (2) **The Exodus ...as R.C. Sproul says is probably the most important act of deliverance in the OT.**
 - (3) **Others have said, what one believes about Moses and the Exodus will dictate what one believes about Jesus and the Resurrection.**
 - b. Why is the recognition of timing important?
 - (1) **Some believe we have to be worth saving or that God looks ahead and sees who is worth saving and then based on that... He saves.**
 - (2) **But what we have here is that He delivers them and then gives them the 10 Commandments so they were not saved because they kept the 10 commandments...**
 - (3) **And bases on the fact that these commands are based in His love for His children then He has to save us ...changing our heart...so that we are able to keep them and to want to keep them...otherwise He would just be a cruel taskmaster maybe giving us an opportunity to promote up if we are good enough.**
 - c. You have to wonder out loud, If God really did look ahead to determine who could be saved based on keeping the 10 Commandments, how many would He ultimately end up saving?
 - d. Just as a quick summary of WSC# 44, accordingly what gives God the right to tell people what to do?
 - (1) **Because God is the LORD, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all His commandments.**
 - (2) **He is God and we are not.**
 - (3) **He chose us and He loves us and He knows how important it is for us that we have structure and form, just like the rest of His creation.**

C. The first commandment- WSC #45- What is the first commandment? *The first commandment is, "You shall have no other Gods before me."* Q and A #46- What is required in the first commandment? *The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify Him accordingly.* Q and A #47- What is forbidden in the first commandment? *The first commandment forbids the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due Him alone.* Q and A #48- What are we specifically taught by these words, "before me", in the first commandment?

These words “before me” in the first commandment, teach us that God who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

1. This is the first in a list of commands God has given physically to His people. The Hebrew grammar at the end of verse 2 leaves us with an implied “therefore” because God has redeemed Israel and made them His own, so they must walk in His ways....and to do that He gives this list. The Law does not create relationship. God commands Israel to keep the Law, not in order to BECOME God’s people but because they ARE already God’s people. One commentator put it this way, *“The law of God is not a system of merit whereby the unsaved seek to earn divine favor but a pattern of life given by the Redeemer to the redeemed so that they might know how to live for His good pleasure.”* (J.A. Motyer) Hence the Law is a further act of God’s love and grace. A gift to God’s people so that we are not left with any questions as to how we are to live before Him.
2. What does this commandment mean to you? Why do you suppose this commandment is first?
 - a. **It is here to acknowledge the existence or being of God...and consequently condemns all atheism- Heb. 11:6- *“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.”***
 - b. **We were created to worship. So it tells us who we are to worship.**
 - c. **Since the fall “the what or who to worship” has been confused by sin. But nevertheless we still seek to worship something and so we will.**
 - d. **Look at literally all cultures and the number of gods we have created so that we might worship something or someone because it is written into our DNA to worship.**
3. What is WSC #46 telling us in your own words?
 - a. **We were created to worship God ...and He is the Object of our worship. It puts a stop to polytheism. I Cor. 8:5-6- *“For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”***
(1) So God wants to set the stage for His chosen people... *“If you were wondering, because I created you, because I redeemed you from bondage now know I am the only God!”*
(2) God is saying here, “I am the only proper OBJECT of WORSHIP. Answers the whom we are to worship question.
(3) John Calvin stated about the 1st Commandment, *“The first commandment requires us to contemplate, fear and worship His majesty; to participate in His blessings; to seek His help at all times; to recognize and by praises to celebrate, the greatness of His works...as the only goal of all the activities of life.”*
 - b. **The commandment requires us to know and acknowledge His as our God, so, where is the catechism implying that we can go to know Him?**
(1) First of all, right here with these Laws.

- (2) Then we must accept the teachings OF THE Bible in its entirety. By the Bible and it alone, as God's own revelation of Himself, can we come away knowing and acknowledging God as God.**
- (3) Of course, the rest of the Bible tells us that we must be saved...changed ...redeemed so that we are able to know and acknowledge Him as God and worship Him appropriately.**
4. Next WSC #47 asks us what is forbidden in this commandment. What does it have in mind for our day and age?
- a. Raising up our leaders as messianic.**
 - b. All religions lead to the same place...any church that professes that the god of Islam, the god of Orthodox Judaism, the god of the Mormon and the God of Christianity are the same... is a false church...**
 - c. Masonic Lodge teaches that all roads lead to the God of the Bible....**
 - d. The teaching that a person can go to any church as long as they are in one...or that it doesn't matter who prays... God listens to all prayers with the same interest....**
- (1) Do you bow your head when a rabbi starts to pray in an ecumenical service? If so you are by that gesture to those around you that all prayers are the same.**
- (2) Do you take the Roman Catholic Mass if you are in their church and somehow the priest actually wants to give it to you? If you do, you legitimize this wrong understanding of the Lord' Supper.**
- (3) Or what about simply being neutral religiously...not being for or against any religion...governments may be able to take this position but not Christians. See Luke 11:23, Jesus said, *"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."***
- (4) Every area of our lives ought to somehow bring glory to Christ...to do any less is to deny Christ.**
- (5) To deny that Christ is the only way to the Father is to say that there are other gods. He is not one among many. In John 14:6 – Jesus says the He is the only Way! He is the Only Truth! He is the only Life! Just as God the Father is exclusive about His image so to is Jesus about who He is ... hence He claims exclusive rights to be worshiped. The Pharisees understood this ...that is why they wanted Him stoned.**
5. What specifically is WSC 48 talking about?
- a. Idolatry!**
 - b. Anything that we put before God is that which we love more than God and he will not have it. Jer. 44:2-4- *"Behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, because of the evil that they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to make offerings and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers. Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!'"***
 - c. Origen (3rd Cent. AD) asked the question; *"What do we love?"* Origen answered it this way... *"What each one honors before all else, what before all things he admires and loves, this for him is God."*—**

- d. Any time we serve other gods...pride, gluttony, sensualities, money, things...like having our "rights" protected...we do so before the face of God since He is everywhere.
 - e. So God is commanding that NOWHERE can this be done...we cannot worship these false gods of the heart anywhere. Is it any wonder that life is so tough since we do worship these false gods everywhere.
 - f. *"This commandment does in fact grant the existence of other gods, but only to declare them out of bounds, to deny them legitimacy, to undeify them. The people of God are to have no relations with them. Other gods do in fact have a certain existence... the existence we give them. You don't have to warn people against things that do not exist."*
– Michael Williams, professor at Covenant Seminary
 - g. That we must regularly denounce all false gods to which we are drawn. We have covenanted ...taken vows to worship God alone...the object of true worship. Luke 14:33- *"So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."*
6. This commandment is worded in a negative way, but what is the positive side of this for all God's children?
- a. **We know to whom we are to worship.**
 - b. **Our fallen dilemma solved. It is not only our duty to worship Him but also our privilege.**
 - c. **Yahweh is OUR God...He wants to make that clear. He made us...He saved us...He adopted us...we are His and He does not wish that we would waste our time on misplaced worship. He does not want us to be confused. He values us too much to see us wandering on this issue.**
 - d. **Interestingly, our allegiance, our worship, and our devotion is of worth to God.**
7. Questions to consider in the quiet.
- a. **What do we love...what do we desire?**
 - b. **When your mind is free to roam, what do you think about?**
 - c. **How do you spend your money?**
 - d. **What do you get excited about?**
 - e. **What do you trust?**
 - f. **Where do you turn in times of trouble?**
 - g. **Matthew Henry said this... *"Pride makes a god of self, covetousness makes a god of money, sensuality makes a god of the belly; whatever is esteemed or loved, feared or served, delighted in or depended upon, more than God, that (whatever it is) we do in effect make a god of."***
- D. The Second Commandment questions- WSC #49- Which is the second commandment? *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."*

1. How is the idolatry forbidden in the first commandment different from the idolatry forbidden in the 2nd Commandment?
 - a. **The idolatry in the 1st Commandment is a sin of respecting the object of worship...when we set up anything in the place of God to love and/or worship. Gal. 4:8- *"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods."***
 - b. **The idolatry in the 2nd Commandment is when we pretend to worship the true God, but do it by such means/methods as He has not prescribed decently and in order. Ex. 32:3-6-*"So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.' And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."***
 - c. **In other words...1st commandment tells us to worship the right God...2nd tells us to worship God as He Himself commands....1st speaks of the OBJECT of our faith...2nd speaks of the manner of worship...**
 - (1) **The 2nd Commandment speaks to the corruption of worship's form and structure and order.**
 - (2) **The 2nd Commandment speaks to the corruption of how God says He WILL be worshiped...men acting as if what God says is optional must not happen!**
2. Why is idolatry so bad? As believers, are we above this today?
 - a. **I John 1:5-2:6- *"This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 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 cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked."***

- b. Jer. 7:30-32- “For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the LORD. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it will no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth, because there is no room elsewhere. “**
- c. If we have a tendency to make anything an idol, what is the answer? Concerning certain games, movies on the occult or related to it in some way and video games? What can be the harm? “My friends just want me to see it so I can widen my understanding.”**
- d. How should we respond to these without becoming legalistic? A lot of this depends on what it is. There may be a place for this if you see it as an opportunity to help them see the LIGHT...but beware what you expose yourselves to unprepared.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
April 4, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #45- What is the first commandment? *The first commandment is, "You shall have no other Gods before me."* WSC #49- Which is the second commandment? *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."*
- 3. What is the difference between first commandment and 2nd Commandment?
 - d. **In other words...1st commandment tells us to worship the right God...2nd tells us to worship God as He Himself commands....**
 - e. **1st speaks of the OBJECT of our faith...2nd speaks of the manner of worship...**
 - (3) **The 2nd Commandment speaks to the corruption of worship's form and structure and order.**
 - (4) **The 2nd Commandment speaks to the corruption of how God says He WILL be worshiped...men acting as if what God says is optional must not happen!**
- 4. There are basically 4 parts to this Commandment...the rule, the reason, the warning and the promise.
 - a. **The Rule- no images/idols- Lev. 26:1- "You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it,... for I am the LORD your God."**
 - (1) **"Carved image"= Hebrew- "crafted by a tool"...cut and shaped by human hands into images of his choosing...manmade representation of something God has created.**
 - (2) **This is no way does away with art work Ex. 31:1-5- "The LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft..."**
 - (3) **The commandment makes a clear distinction... "...you shall not bow down before them or serve them..."...things made for the express purpose of worship. He is zealous for His own worship. In other words, He will not abide by any other forms than that which He prescribes...His way or the highway.**
 - b. **The Reason- A jealous God.**
 - c. **The Warning- children will be punished for their father's iniquities- "twisting God's truth"...**
 - (1) **If we do not teach our children correctly then they will not know and they will not love the LORD and will be subject to His wrath. When this commandment is violated it would appear that the ones who suffer most are the children.**

(2) It may appear to be VERY RELIGIOUS to worship idols...but since God forbids it is always wrong! Deut. 16:21-22- *"You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the LORD your God that you shall make. And you shall not set up a pillar, which the LORD your God hates."*—any form of idolatry is a form of actually hating God and what He says...

(3) The fathers hated the LORD by worshiping Him as they wanted and then training their children to hate the LORD by teaching them incorrectly about what God expects. Philip Ryken, *"An idol makes the infinite God- finite, the invisible God- visible, the omnipotent God -impotent, the omnipresent God -local, the living God-dead, and the spiritual God- material."*

d. The Promise- God's blessing unto thousands who love Him and KEEP His Commandments. The promise is more powerful than the warning...for it is a blessing that last for eternity...1000's of generation... rather than 3 or 4 generations of those who hate...

5. If we have a tendency to make anything an idol, what is the answer that these 2 commandments give to us?

C. WSC #50- What is required in the 2nd Commandment? *The 2nd Commandment requires the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed them in His Word.*

1. What are the implications of this question concerning what this commandment requires for God's Church through the ages?

a. That God and His Word are absolute in all applications designated by Him.

b. We are His...bought and paid for... and as such we are to do as he commands to please Him-

c. God is jealous for His Word to be carried out just as it is given...when it is not it can bring wrath- Lev. 10:1-2- *"Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD."*

d. That God may not be worshiped properly in any way invented by men...

e. What God commands in His Word then is sufficient to worship Him properly. Deut. 12:31-32- *"You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it."*

2. What are the benefits of worshiping God as He prescribes according to this Commandment?

a. The first benefit is LIFE...and fellowship with those around us who also have this life.

- b. **Second, that God Himself tells us what to do to please Himself...He doesn't seek to make this hard for us or to put us in a place where we would have to make it up on our own.**
 - c. **Third...the Commandment speaks of our children...if we worship Him as He prescribes then they will learn how to worship Him correctly and then be able to teach their children as well and all will be blessed...they will learn to know God as He actually is not learn to think of Him as men would have Him to be....**
- 3. How do these last 2 questions speak to our culture today and our contemporary worship styles?
- D. WSC #51- What is forbidden in the 2nd Commandment? *The 2nd Commandment forbids the worshiping of God by images or any other thing way not appointed in His Word.*
 - 1. Interestingly, Pope Francis recently commented on Idolatry, *"Idols exist...as a pretext for setting ourselves at the center of reality and worshiping the work of our own hands."*
 - 2. What kind of things is the 2nd commandment forbidding in our day and age?
 - a. **Images of Christ in printed or digital formats?**
 - b. **Stain glass windows of scene from the Bible?**
 - c. **Christian Renaissance painters painting depicting the acts of Christ?**
 - d. **Movies about Christ where someone is actually playing Him?**
 - e. **Christian graphic novels depicting Christ and His works?**
 - f. **Ex. 32:3-6-"So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.' And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."**
 - g. What about having a crucifix in a church, in our homes, in our hospitals, around our necks?
 - (1) A visual representation of Christ STILL on the cross is first of all a misrepresentation of where Christ is...**
 - (2) It is picking one person of the Trinity over another when all 3 are to be worshiped as One.**
 - (3) It easily becomes an idol...people kiss it, worship it...violating the 2nd Commandment.**
 - h. What about statues or necklaces for the saints—obvious examples to us of what God expects of His people?
 - (1) These are often blessed by a priest...implied infusing with "something".**
 - (2) They become "sources" of blessing/luck/fortune for people.**
 - (3) Bible clear there is only One who deserves veneration. "The saint will protect me."**

(4) Col. 2:20-23 applies to both situations- “If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.”

3. How does a piece of jewelry or a piece of art become an object of worship? **Because the heart of mankind is bent to this...to worship anything BUT the Creator and Redeemer.**
 4. Heidelberg Catechism #97. Must we then not make any image at all? *God may not and cannot be imaged in any way; as for creatures, though they may indeed be imaged, yet God forbids the making or keeping any likeness of them, either to worship them, or by them to serve Himself.*
- E. WSC #52- What are the reasons annexed to the 2nd Commandment? *The reasons annexed to the 2ND Commandment are, God’s sovereignty over us, His propriety in us, and the zeal He has for His own worship.*
1. WSC #49- Which is the second commandment? *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*
 2. So what are the reasons that is annexed to the 2nd Commandment mean for us today?
 - a. **God’s Sovereignty over us- “...for I the Lord your God...”***We are to remember God’s absolute power over us...He is sovereign...What does that mean to you day to day?*
 - (1) This shows that sovereignty belongs solely to God alone to institute His worship...to make it effectual...**
 - (2) To do anything more and anything less than what God prescribes is sinful and dangerous- Jer. 7:31- “They (the sons of Judah) have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.”**
 - b. **God’s propriety in us-**
 - (1) He is our God and we belong to Him and are required to do as our Master says always.**
 - (2) To do anything more or less than what God prescribes/commands will great aggravate our sin before Him.- Ex. 32:7-35- “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go down, for your**

people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.' But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, 'O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did He bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.' And the Lord relented from the disaster that He had spoken of bringing on his people. Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, 'There is a noise of war in the camp.' But he said, 'It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.' And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it. And Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?' And Aaron said, 'Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.' And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, 'Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me.' And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. And he said to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro

from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. And Moses said, ‘Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.’ The next day Moses said to the people, ‘You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’ So Moses returned to the LORD and said, ‘Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.’ But the LORD said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.’ Then the Lord sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.”

c. The zeal He has for His own worship-

- (1) This is the jealousy talked about in the commandment- “... (I) am a jealous God...”**
- (2) We are to keep Him and His worship as He prescribes.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
April 11, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #49- Which is the second commandment? *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."* WSC #50- What is required in the 2nd Commandment? *The 2nd Commandment requires the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed them in His Word.* WSC #51- What is forbidden in the 2nd Commandment? *The 2nd Commandment forbids the worshiping of God by images or any other thing way not appointed in His Word.*
1. What are some of the benefits of worshiping God as He prescribes according to this Commandment?
 - a. **The first benefit is LIFE...and fellowship with those around us who also have this life.**
 - b. **Second, that God Himself tells us what to do to please Himself...He doesn't seek to make this hard for us or to put us in a place where we would have to make it up on our own.**
 - c. **Third...the Commandment speaks of our children...if we worship Him as He prescribes then they will learn how to worship Him correctly and then be able to teach their children as well and all will be blessed...they will learn to know God as He actually is not learn to think of Him as men would have Him to be...**
 2. What kind of things is the 2nd commandment forbidding in our day and age?
- C. WSC #52- What are the reasons annexed to the 2nd Commandment? *The reasons annexed to the 2ND Commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, His propriety in us, and the zeal He has for His own worship.*
1. Keeping this in mind- WSC #49- Which is the second commandment? *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."*
 2. So what are the reasons that is annexed to the 2nd Commandment mean for us today?
 - a. **God's Sovereignty over us- "...for I the Lord your God..."We are to remember God's absolute power over us...He is sovereign...What does that mean to you day to day?**
 - (1) **This shows that sovereignty belongs solely to God alone to institute His worship...to make it effectual...**
 - (2) **To do anything more and anything less than what God prescribes is sinful and dangerous- Jer. 7:31- "They (the sons of**

Judah) have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.”

b. God’s propriety in us-

(1) He is our God and we belong to Him and are required to do as our Master says always.

(2) To do anything more or less than what God prescribes/commands will greatly aggravate our sin before Him.-Ex. 32:7-35- because of the calf incident...the people suffered by the Levites killing them and then God plaguing them to death.

c. The zeal He has for His own worship-

(1) This is the jealousy talked about in the commandment- “... (I) *am a jealous God...*”

(2) We are to keep Him and His worship as He prescribes.

3. What lessons are we to learn from this for today?

a. That it is sinful to neglect the worship of God as God prescribes for us to worship Him. Prov. 28:9- *“If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.”*

b. Pastors are not given license ...even those of us called to lead God’s people...to deviate from what God has given for us to lead His people. We have freedom within His commands concerning worship and we have the ability to stand firm in God’s Word when it clashes with the other parts of the church or the world.

(1)Deut. 4:1-2- *“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.”*

(2)Rev. 22:18-19- *“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”*

c. As we have seen from various passages it is not good for us innovate or prescribe any human authority new types of worship not sanctioned by God. Matt. 15:7-9- *“You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”*

d. One last thing that seems to be highlighted here...is the relationship of parents to children in following and making sure subsequent generations follow the LORD and do as He prescribes not deviating from it so that God will not judge them. “...visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

(1) For obedience brings blessings and disobedience brings curses.

(2) Ex. 34:14- "... (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)..."

(3) Just so we are clear on this word "jealousy" as pertaining to God who cannot sin. A holy jealousy is one that guards someone's rightful position. No husband who truly loves his wife could ever endure seeing her in the arms of another man. It SHOULD make him intensely jealous...for she is his wife. God's love is that exclusive and intense. He is jealous for His honor and He is jealous for our allegiance to Him and Him alone.

D. WSC # 53- Which is the 3rd commandment? *The 3rd Commandment is, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain".* WSC #54- What is required in the 3rd Commandment? *The 3rd Commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's name, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and works.*

1. Just at first glance, what is God saying about His Name?

- a. **His name is the only name that matters. It is to be the most honor possession He has since His name defines all that He is.**
- b. **He is requiring a holy and revered use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.**
- c. **That is every that is associated with Him. In fact the whole world and cosmos the whole world are a revelation of God's name. Psalm 8:1-2- "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger."**

2. If the first commandment teaches us who the object of our worship is to be. The second commandment teaches us the manner in which we are to worship God...as He prescribes. What then does the 3rd commandment seem to be teaching us?

- a. **What our attitude in worship ought to be...with a sincere heart that recognizes the who and the how of worship.**
- b. **Just as it is wrong to worship a false god and to worship the true God in the wrong way so it is also of no avail to worship Him in the "right way" unless we have a sincere heart.**

3. Besides His personal name, what other names or titles does He give to describe Himself that we can use? **Lord, Father, King, Deliverer, God, Refuge, Hightower, Ancient of Days, Helper, Comforter, Light, Life, Truth, Goodness...**

4. Why is it important to know the names, title and attributes we can use of God?

- a. **They help us to truly know Him.**
- b. **If we only call people by "Hey man...or that girl...or those ones over there" we are purposely trying to stay separate and our knowledge of them would be limited...but the moment we know someone's names and their respective "titles" things become more personal and we are often led then to know more about them.**

E. WSC #55- What is forbidden in the 3rd Commandment? - *The 3rd Commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes Himself known.*

1. What are we usually talking about when we talk about taking the name of the LORD in vain? Profanity...

a. **What is wrong with this answer according to the catechism? It is only ONE way we take God's name in vain.**

b. **The word "vain"= carelessly or without thought, in other words, to use a very important word, name, or title as if it has no importance or in this case no holy meaning.**

(1)Mal. 1:6- "If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name."

(2)Mal. 3: 13-15-"Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"

2. Let's look at **Lev. 24:10-16- "Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be clear to them. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying, 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death.' All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.'"**

a. What does it mean to blaspheme the name of the LORD?

b. What does this text tell us about the applicability of God's law on non-believers?

c. Is this form of cursing different than what goes on every day? If so, how?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
April 18, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC # 53- Which is the 3rd commandment? *The 3rd Commandment is, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain".*
1. If the first commandment teaches us who the object of our worship is to be. The second commandment teaches us the manner in which we are to worship God...as He prescribes. What then does the 3rd commandment seem to be teaching us?
 - a. **What our attitude in worship ought to be...with a sincere heart that recognizes the who and the how of worship.**
 - b. **Just as it is wrong to worship a false god and to worship the true God in the wrong way so it is also of no avail to worship Him in the "right way" unless we have a sincere heart.**
 2. Why is our attitude important? If we are in Church... or we are praying... or we are reading our Bible...if we are doing these things already what does the attitude matter?
- C. WSC #55- What is forbidden in the 3rd Commandment?- *The 3rd Commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes Himself known.*
3. What are we usually talking about when we talk about taking the name of the LORD in vain? Profanity...
 - c. **What is wrong with this answer according to the catechism? It is only ONE way we take God's name in vain.**
 - d. **The word "vain"= carelessly or without thought, in other words, to use a very important word, name, or title as if it has no importance or in this case no holy meaning.**
 - (3)Mal. 1:6- *"If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name."*
 - (4)Mal. 3: 13-15-*"Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evil-doers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'"*
 4. When we misuse it or hear it misused and do nothing, what does that say about our devotion to His Name?
 5. 3 ways God's name was often used in vain as shown in the Scriptures:
 - a. **In sorcery- Deut. 18:10-12- "There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD."**

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of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. “

b. What is the remedy to this on-going problem according to this text?

E. WSC #57- Which is the 4th Commandment? The 4th Commandment is:

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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.”

1. Interesting that the Commandment begins with the word ***“Remember”***...what does that communicate?

a. That it was not instituted here for the first time...the Sabbath principle has been understood by the people long before.

(1) Perhaps it is the “oldest” of all the commandments!

(2) How is that possible? By God’s example in creation...Gen. 2:2-3...

(3) How can I say this? Because it is a creation ordinance that was understood by virtue that the Genesis passage is referred to in the Commandment.

(4) Also on the way to Mount Sinai God provided for His people manna for 6 days and none on the 7th...reiterating the creation principle that they may have come to forsake during their time in Egypt.)

b. This word also demands our total engagement in what is remembered...in this case the Sabbath.

(1) One author put it this way...“Remembering the Sabbath is like remembering one’s anniversary... It is not good enough just to say, I remember my anniversary and then proceed to do nothing about it. It takes some action like a card, dinner, flowers or maybe jewelry...to show that we remember our anniversary...that it means more than just another day. In much the same way, remembering the Sabbath means using the day to show our love for God in a special way.”

2. Some definition of terms:

a. “Sabbath” = to cease or to rest from doing one thing but it does not mean rest as in inactivity... relaxation and recuperation.

b. “not do any work”= in the Hebrew... “not do any regular work”-

(1) God recognizes that we work when we breath, when we move, when we eat, when we relax ...when we do something/anything...it is a form of work...

(2) The point is that while there is a prohibition it is not an absolute prohibition against all work but a prohibition against doing with regularity that which we normally do for 6 days. Hence Jesus’ definition of the Sabbath concerning getting a stuck critter out of the mud on the Sabbath...

c. “to keep it holy”?

(1) Keeping it holy=

- Protecting its holiness...dedicate it exclusively for worship**
- Cultivating the day in such a way to bring God glory...**

- (2) This is all a definitely interesting concept for such a lowly people, don't you think?**
3. Let's look at the commandment a bit deeper than maybe we have in the past. What special marks of honor has God set upon this particular commandment?
 - a. It is the largest command...to emphasize its importance in worshiping God!?**
 - b. It is the only one that commands us to remember...as we have said above.**
 - c. It is delivered positively and negatively which the others are not.**
 - d. And it has more explanations of why it is important than any of the others.**
 4. Why would you say the Sabbath is so important?
 - a. God will have a Sabbath to honor Himself- Is. 58:13-14- *"If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."***
 - (1) This is the definitive passage that the colonial church determined that one could do no recreation of the Sabbath.**
 - (2) But the Hebrew word...here translated "pleasure" has a more develop meaning of *"pleasure in your work"*. So the command here is don't turn away from the Sabbath to continue to make profit/pleasure in making money by working on the Sabbath for those non-Jews who will buy your goods.**
 - (3) One reason why many pastoral candidates take the exception to this in when being examined...but also because it was written in direct contrast to the Stewart- Tudor games that had a MANDATED Sunday attendance.**
 - b. But also as the above passage says...it is for the good of the souls of God's children-**
 - (1) Mark 22:27-*"And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'"***
 - (2) Heb. 10: 23-25- *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and ball the more as you see the Day drawing near."***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
May 2, 2021

A. Prayer

- B. Review- WSC #57- Which is the 4th Commandment? The 4th Commandment is:
"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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."

1. Why did we say the **"Remember"** is there? Why are we called upon to remember this one when none of the others begin this way?

- c. **That it was not instituted here for the first time...the Sabbath principle has been understood by the people long before.**

(5)How is that possible? By God's example in creation...Gen. 2:1-3-

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation."

(6)How can I say this? Because it is a creation ordinance that was understood by virtue that the Genesis passage is referred to in the Commandment.

(7)Also on the way to Mount Sinai God provided for His people manna for 6 days and none on the 7th...reiterating the creation principle that they may have come to forsake during their time in Egypt.)

- d. **This word also demands our total engagement in what is remembered...in this case the Sabbath.**

2. Why would you say the Sabbath is so important?

- c. **God will have a Sabbath to honor Himself- Is. 58:13-14- *"If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."***

- d. **But also as the above passage says...it is for the good of the souls of God's children-**

(3) Mark 2:27-*"And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'"*

- **As a gift from God it should be a day we seek to do His will as He has prescribed.**
- **And a day that we should enjoy in the way the He has prescribed.**

(4) Heb. 10: 23-25- “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

- C. WSC # 58- What does the 4th Commandment require? *The 4th Commandment requires us to set apart to God the times He has established in His Word...specifically one whole day out of every seven as a holy Sabbath to Him.*
 WSC #59- Which day of the week has God designated as the Sabbath? *From the beginning of the world until the resurrection of Christ God established the 7th day of the week as the Sabbath. From that time until the end of the world the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath.*
1. What is God communicating to us by spelling out what we are to do with the time He gives to us?
 - a. We are to recognize that the LORD set aside the Sabbath day as a day wholly for Himself... and a day for us.**
 - b. We are to work...it is a creation ordinance... for 6 days.**
 - c. God is reminding us in this commandment to remember to do an honest week's worth of work.**
 - d. God governs our work as well as our rest. And He has given us 6 whole days to do the work He has called us to.**
 2. Does this commandment have the whole day in mind or just part of the day? And why does it matter?
 - a. The whole day is to be given to the Lord. All days are His but He only requires one of 7 to be devoted wholly to Him.**
 - b. It seems a dangerous thing according to the command to try and share this day with the Lord as far as worshiping for half the day and then doing what you want the rest of the time with no consideration of His command.... “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”**
 3. Interesting question to consider: When does the Christian Sabbath begin?
 - a. Our days are no longer seen like the days of old from evening till evening.**
 - b. But rather morning to morning because the Christian Sabbath must begin when the Jewish Sabbath ended which would have been before dawn of the 1st day of the week when Christ rose.-**
 - c. Matt. 28:1-“Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.” And of course the tomb was empty just as He said it would be.**
 - d. Acts20:7- “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.” This would have been a work day so they would have had to meet at least in the afternoon or evening after the work day.**

- e. So what does that tell us about what these early Christians may have thought of the old the Sabbath restrictions?

(1) Actually the early Jewish/Christian church may have actually met Saturday night according to early church history...some actually celebrating the Jewish Sabbath and then that evening celebrating the resurrection. In the Jewish /Christian community they struggled over this dilemma concerning continuing the Sabbath according to the Law and/or celebrating the resurrection day of our Lord. Think Galatian controversy and the letter to the Hebrews what the Judaizers were requiring.

(2) History tells us that it is not going to be long before they started meeting on Sunday...by the 2nd Century (115 AD) according to Justin Martyr people (mostly Gentile believers) were meeting for worship on what our calendar calls Sunday and they called the first day of the week doing away with the Jewish Sabbath all together. They gathered to sing, pray take up the tithe, receive and study God's Word and to participate in the sacrament. By 361 it was mandated as a weekly occurrence.

4. If we are to be true to Scripture how then can we say what the catechism affirms about the Sabbath of God being changed from the 7th day to the 1st day?

- a. **Read the Commandment again. WSC #57- Which is the 4th Commandment? *The 4th Commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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."***
- b. **Does it tell us which day we are to worship or does it say, 6 days you are to work and the 7th day is mine?**
- c. **G. I Williamson in his commentary on the Catechism puts it this way: *"It would be like having 7 apples in a basket and You tell your children 6 of these are your and one is mine. Saying he will keep the 7th simply means he will keep one of the 7."***
- d. **The commandment does not say we are to keep the last day of the week as the Sabbath. It only really says we must keep one in 7 holy to the LORD.**
- e. **The commandment doesn't fix the order of days. God did that when He created...**
- f. **But then God again fixed the order in a new way when He raised His Son on the first day of the week...and began to call His Church to worship on that day. Jesus was the fulfillment of this commandment ...lest we forget that point.**

(1) Acts 20:7- *"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked/preached with them..."*

(2) I Cor. 16:2- *"On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come."*

(3) Rev.1:10- “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...”- The apostles and the early church constantly set the first day of the week apart for worship.

5. What was the reason to change the day? The early church gave 4 reasons.
- a. The resurrection of Christ on the 1st day of the week. Mark 16:9- “Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene...”**
 - b. This was the first day of the new creation- II Cor. 5:17- “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is ja new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” It was reasoned that since believers are identified as new creations in Christ, the first day after the Sabbath would according to Genesis, have been the day of the new creation.**
 - c. Sunday was also the 8th day,**
 - (1) John 20:26- “Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’” This is the first day of the week that is referred to as the 8th day.**
 - (2) A day related to circumcision where we are given a new beginning....the old and useless is cast away.**
 - d. The practice of the apostles ...the messengers of God. Ignatius toward the end of the 1st century reports: “Christians no longer observe the Sabbath, but direct their lives toward the Lord’s Day, on which our life is refreshed by Him and His death.”**
 - e. One last thing: among the early church is seems they saw Sunday as a day full of symbolism.**
 - (1) Physical rest akin to the Mosaic Law, however, was not a part of that symbolism...instead resurrection and new creation took its place in defining the day...in fact, this seems to be true until the time of Constantine.**
 - (2) Before Constantine Roman citizen’s had to work on the first day of the week.**
 - f. By Constantine’s day – The first mention of Sunday rest comes around 321AD by Constantine, “On the day of the Sun let magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all the workshops be closed... This was for the purpose of Sunday worship and a day of rest. So it was Constantinian Christianity that initiates the practice legally of keeping the Lord’s Day on Sunday as a day of worship and rest.**
 - g. In the early church, the Lord’s Day celebrated Christ’s resurrection and the dawn of a new creation; but by the Middle Ages the law of Moses seems to have been reenacted.**
 - (1) Sunday worship became more like a funeral. Sunday worship lost its joyful tenor and was driven by “fear of excommunication” or worse.**
 - (2) The priests urged prayerfulness on this day but in reality dances and other forms of “play” exploded. Many would celebrate the Mass in the morning and then party the rest of the day making for a day of pray and play.**

- (3) By the Reformation, many church historians, even those favorable to the Reformation, noticed how some of them did not recover the early churches emphasis on resurrection and new creation joy...instead they wanted to emphasize that no human work can merit the grace of God or they wanted all partying to stop, or they wished to oppose realm mandated games or they wanted a day of rest so that workers would not be exploited...so they applied the “ideas” of the original Sabbath to the Lord’s Day**
- (4) Other Reformed pastors and scholars tried to re-emphasize that emphasis of the early church in reminding us that the Lord’s Day is not a rule that messes up our weekend, but it is actually a gift from God that actually supports and structures our lives in a healthy way that we can actually walk in God’s way.**
- **Consider the Heidelberg Catechism on the 4th Commandment-#103. What does God require in the fourth commandment? *In the first place, that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church to learn the Word of God, to use the Holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian alms. In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath. In other words...it is because of the Lord’s Day that I will be able to live as God prescribed, experiencing the blessings He has given to all of His own.***
 - **J. C. Ryle said: *“Never be absent from God’s house on Sundays, without good reason,—never to miss the Lord’s Supper when administered in our own congregation,—never to let our place be empty when means of grace are going on, this is one way to be a growing and prosperous Christian. The very sermon that we needlessly miss, may contain a precious word in season for our souls. The very assembly for prayer and praise from which we stay away, may be the very gathering that would have cheered, and established, and quickened our hearts.”***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
May 9, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC # 58- What does the 4th Commandment require? *The 4th Commandment requires us to set apart to God the times He has established in His Word...specifically one whole day out of every seven as a holy Sabbath to Him.* WSC #59- Which day of the week has God designated as the Sabbath? *From the beginning of the world until the resurrection of Christ God established the 7th day of the week as the Sabbath. From that time until the end of the world the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath.*

1. What do these 2 catechism questions require of us?

- a. **To listen to God's word and do what He says...specifically concerning setting aside one day in the week as a holy Sabbath to Him...to tithe one day in 7 for His honor and glory.**
- b. **And this day is normally Sunday...the first day of the week since Christ's resurrection.**

2. How would you support the transition from a Saturday Sabbath...the 7th day of the week to a Sunday Sabbath...the first day of the week as the catechism says?

C. WSC #57- Which is the 4th Commandment? *The 4th Commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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."*

D. WSC #60- How do we keep the Sabbath holy? *We keep the Sabbath day holy by resting the whole day from worldly affairs or recreations, even ones that are lawful on other days. Except for necessary works or acts of mercy we should spend all our time publicly and privately worshipping God.* WSC # 61-What does the 4th Commandment forbid? *The 4th Commandment forbids failing to do or carelessly doing what we are supposed to do. It also forbids treating the day as unholy by loafing, by doing anything in itself sinful, or by necessarily thinking, talking, or working on our worldly affairs or recreations.* WSC #62- What are the reasons for the 4th Commandment? *The reasons for the 4th Commandment are these: God allows us six days of the week to take care of our own affairs; He claims the seventh day as His own; He set the example; and He blesses the Sabbath.*

1. What is the catechism saying here?

- a. **This rest that it speaks of is not merely natural and/or civil, but an already holy rest that we have been given in Christ Jesus...that we may or may not fully comprehend or live in...much to our dismay if we do not.**
 - (1) **A rest that began on the 7th day and will never end for those who are in Christ. A rest that we have every day that enables us to experience God's presence and grace every day.**
 - (2) **It is a holy rest because it comes from God ...who is holy...to us who He made holy in our union with Christ and making us holy in preparation for us to enter into His eternal kingdom.**
- b. **Our mind is to be engaged, especially on this day in the desire for worship of our good and gracious God along with His children who are seeking to do the same thing...this is why preparation for this day is so important. Pious Jews would begin preparing for the their Sabbath on Wednesday...the middle of their week... so as to be ready and prepared to meet with God.**
- c. **So in conclusion there ARE three Sabbath principles that remain for us today:**
 - (1) **The Lord's Day is a day to gather for worship...it is fitting for us to set aside one day in 7 for worship to the Lord. This command still exists for the New Testament believer. It is not optional.**
 - **What are we teaching our children...that Sunday is the day we go to church to worship God...or that Sunday is the day we squeeze God into our busy schedule?**
 - **From the earliest we are to establish patterns with our children that reflect consistency and importance to them.**
 - **We must be careful to show them as they grow that being in worship with God's people is more important than anything thing else they may want to do.**
 - **I remember because of our habit of being in the church as often as the doors were open our children determined from an early age how important it was to be a part of the church family to the point that they missed going when we had to.**
 - (2) **It is a day to rest from our normal labor.**
 - **We ought to trust God enough to do as He says and leave the results to Him.**
 - **It was meant to be a day of gladness not a day of gloom just to get through so we can get back to our lives. The people asked in Amos 8:5- *"When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances..."***
 - **The Church has made the Lord's Day a restrictive day to be sure through the years...In New England there were 39**

pages written in small print of Sabbath laws in the days of the Pilgrims... John Owen said of the church of his day, *“A man can scarcely in 6 days read all the duties that are proposed to be observed on the 7th.”*

- Kevin De Young says this about rest on the Lord's Day- *“If the Sabbath principle is rooted in creation, taught in the Ten Commandments, and reasserted by Jesus, maybe we ignore the day to our peril. Not because God is frowning over us every time we break a sweat on Sunday, but because He means to smile over us with the blessing of worship and rest. After all, God made the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath.”*

(3) And by its institution by Christ and His disciples, it instructs us by example that we are to find our spiritual rest in Christ every day of the week.

- There is a Sabbath rest that remains and is to find its weekly expression in the Lord's Day showing that we actually trust in Christ, believe in Christ and rely on Christ rather than our own strength.
- Hebrews 4 speaks of this, Heb. 4:1-3- *“Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as He has said, ‘As I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest,’ although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.”* But for those who believe... Hebrews 4:9-10- *“So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His.”*

(4) So, the obeying the fourth commandment is not optional for us today.

- Jesus said that He didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it- Matt. 5:17.
- Jesus fulfilled the civil, ceremonial and moral portions of the Law by transforming it ...like the Passover...for Christ gives us the substance...Himself...instead of the shadow.
- The Sabbath principles have always pointed us to trusting in God for all things and the “tithing” of one day in 7 helps put that into focus. Can we trust God to take care of everything? Can the world actually do without us one day a week? Are we so important?

- **As we have said it points to how we should look at everyday as God's and can we trust Him with the outcome or is it truly up to us?**
 - **We are always complaining about how overwhelming life is and we often cry out to God to give us a break...He did! The Lord's Day. It is like He said...I made this day for you...not to keep you in bondage but to set you free by giving you the gift of rest ...one day in 7 and every day of the week because we can only find our rest in Christ.**
2. Having said all of this, does it go beyond the actual meaning of the text? Why or why not?
- a. Sabbath = "a ceasing...a ceasing day" ...to rest and relax...do no regular work...but works of necessity...**

(1) A passage that is often referred to support this idea is Matthew 12:1-7 *"At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, 'Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.'* He said to them, *'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.'*"

- (2) This passage tells us of works of necessity...or does it?**
- (3) This passage also speaks to the legalism of the Pharisees and could be used against what seems to be an overreach of Sabbath restrictions by the Westminster Divines who were being influenced by many of the games, the government and licentiousness of the people of the day.**
- b. There is nothing within the commandment that even speaks to the idea of recreation.**
- c. It seems to be saying that the entire day each week is separated for worship entirely and acts of mercy...even to the point of a prohibition of thoughts and words about our weekly stuff.**

d. Labor and the Sabbath Ordinance—the Fourth Commandment.

Most confessional churches, teach what some have called a "Puritan" (or even "pharisaical") view of the Sabbath (see Ex. 20:8-11-). That is emphasizing often what is forbidden on the Sabbath over what is allowed.

(1) Breaking of the Sabbath with regular weekly work or by not keeping it properly was punishable by death. In Israel, it was forbidden even to kindle a fire on the Sabbath Ex. 35:2-3- *"Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any (regular) work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day."*

(2) Ecclesiastical and Civil authorities do not exact such punishment today.

3. How might this diminish what God requires by way of obedience to His law since Christ did not come to lower God's standard (Matt. 5), but to uphold it?

a. When Israel was given the Law they were children in the faith...and children in the covenant...

(1) They were still being taught how to walk... in God's ways.

(2) There were appropriate punishments for disobedience...for breaking the Law... because as children we needed to know how important and how necessary do as God says is.

(3) After Christ's coming, death, resurrection and ascension we had matured. But we need to still be held accountable by one another...and the elders of the church have been vested with church discipline for the good of the body and the glory of God.

b. Once we were like little children...we go to church because our parents say so and then along the way we learn to feel part of the family and then when we leave the house we want to stay going to church...our hearts desire is to be a part of God's family in worship, service and fellowship.

4. Let's consider this again. Jesus says the Sabbath is for man...what did He mean?

a. Keeping the Lord's Day promotes worship of God which brings with it many side benefits such as restoration spiritually and physically.

b. It is good for children and good for us according to the commandment.

c. Theologically; God made the earth in 6 days, and then He rested. His activity in creation sets the pattern for our lives as well....

- d. Also, the Sabbath was for everyone to enjoy...by virtue of naming all that He does in the commandment, He is telling us that this commandment and the resting and relaxation that it carries with it have implication for the wider community but specifically for the family.
 - e. This commandment then really is a day to also spend with family. The commandment is not a straitjacket for the Christian.
 - f. So, it begins with working hard for His glory the rest of the week.
 - g. We must remember also that the work week actually begins with the Lord's Day which obviously then is not a day of inactivity.
 - h. The commandment does say, *"You shall not do any work..."* or as we said before, *"you shall do no regular work..."* as in a regular work day work.
 - (1) God recognizes we work when we breathe, move, eat, relax...even worship all of this is a form of work.
 - (2) The point is we are prohibited from doing the work we do the other 6 days that is done to make us profit
 - (3) Neh. 13:15-18- *"In those days I saw in Judah people treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of loads, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them on the day when they sold food. Tyrians also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of goods and sold them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah, in Jerusalem itself! Then I confronted the nobles of Judah and said to them, 'What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day? Did not your father's act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Now you are bringing more wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.'" This is during Nehemiah's 2nd term as governor of Judah (444 BC) when he returns he sees multiple ways the people have not kept their promise to live as God had prescribed so he is calling them out because of their sinfulness before the face of the Lord.*
 - i. And God commands us not because he is punishing us but because He knows our need for rest and reflection and service and for recreation.
5. Again, what about this word recreation?
- a. Maybe, this was an appropriate point for the time but not so much any longer...for it doesn't forbid recreation as we understand it today as long as it is recreation that doesn't persuade us to sin.

- (1) Look again at - Is. 58:13-14- ***"If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."***
- (2) This passage has tripped people up through the years because in the early days they did not have a good definition of the Hebrew word since most translation work was actually done from the Vulgate Version...the Latin transliteration of the Bible...
- (3) But the actual Hebrew word translated "pleasure" here actually is not talking about the recreations of the Sabbath but rather, "the pleasure in your work" as in the pleasure they derived from making money and that type of work was specifically denied them on the Sabbath according to this commandment.
- b. Remember this day seems to be appropriately a family day so certain recreations surrounding family things would obviously be acceptable especially those things that can't be done with family on any other day because of work.
- c. When the Pharisees read that God's people couldn't work on the Sabbath they set about wanting to know exactly what that meant, so they developed their own guidelines that eventually became so elaborate that the true purpose of the Sabbath was entirely lost. The Pharisees maintained, ***"...that if a wall fell on someone on the Sabbath, only enough rubble could be removed to find out how badly the person was injured. If he was not injured too badly he must be left until the Sabbath was past, then the rescue could be completed."***
- d. In keeping the 4th Commandment there seems to be room for Christian freedom,
- (1) It obviously requires the wise exercise of godly judgment...to know whether what we want to do after worship does not break the expressed will of God in any way...does not do harm to His honor or the honor of the day.
- (2) However, if we are seeking to discover what we can do simply to increase our earthly pleasures we will miss out on the greatest pleasure of them all fellowship with our God.

6. Our standards teach what could be called an unattainable Sabbath!
 - a. **WCF 21-8 says- The *"Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men ... not only observe a holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy"* (WCF, XXI:8).**
 - b. What does this add to our discussion?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
May 16, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #57- Which is the 4th Commandment? *The 4th*

Commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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."

1. What is the specific prohibition that God emphasizes in the text and why?

- a. **No regular work on the Sabbath because He commands it.**
- b. **But also, by emphasizing creation and the work of creation He gifts us a "life cycle" for our health...spiritually, emotionally, and physically. For the Sabbath was created for man...not man for the Sabbath. God gives us rest.**
- c. **The practice of remembering the Sabbath/Lord's Day requires Israel and us to remember what God has ordained for His children from the earliest moments of human existence: a pattern of work followed by rest as set forth in the creation account of Gen. 1-2.**
- d. **Our patterns of work and rest reveal what we believe to be true about God and ourselves.**
 - (1) **God requires no limits on His activity.**
 - (2) **But rest acknowledges that we humans are limited by design.**
 - (3) **We were created for rest just as surely as we were created for labor...both are good and God honoring when done in the way He prescribes.**
 - (4) **An inability or unwillingness to cease from our labors is itself a confession of unbelief...an admission that we view our ways as better than God's ways.**
- e. **The people of God then, reflect God when they observe this pattern of rest after labor or rest from our labors...both things provided by God for our good and His glory.**

2. We talked through a lot of things concerning the Sabbath commandment. What does it mean for us today to keep the Sabbath holy?

- a. **The same as it did for them...to listen and do what God commands.**
- b. **To make sure everything we do on the Lord's Day enables us to do just that...bring God glory by especially being in worship with other believers.**

- c. **It is intended for worship as much as it is intended for our well-being.**
 - d. **We didn't have time to talk about this but Sabbath rest is distinct from idleness:**
 - (1) **Idleness... can be best defined as resting without first laboring...**
 - (2) **Sabbath rest is for self-denial (not for personal rest/self-care, material gain or even a feeling of accomplishment that derives from a job well done) and remembering God's provision of both in the sequence that God commanded...work then rest.**
 - e. **If the 3rd Commandment charged us to honor God with our words and attitudes, then the 4th Commandment charges us to honor God with our time.**
3. If the Lord's Day is for us rather than the other way around, then why is it not optional for us as believers?
- a. **He wishes to show His love and concern for us by gifting us with this day to worship with His people and rest which represents the rest we have in Christ. Psalm 62:5- "Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him."**
 - b. **He delights in us experiencing the blessings He has given us...and why would we not want to be with Him and His people as He prescribes unless we think something or someone else is more important.**
 - c. **Because He says so and it is for our good!**
 - d. **This is a great opportunity to witness our faith as we submit to Him in this way.**
- C. WSC# 63- What is the fifth commandment? *The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and mother; for thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives to you.* WSC # 64- What is required in the fifth commandment? *The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.* WSC #65- What is forbidden in the fifth Commandment? *The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongs to everyone in their special places and relations.* WSC#66- What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment? *The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.*
1. Traditionally, the first 4 Commandments are distinguished from the last 6.
- a. **The first table of the Law consists of the 4 commandments that govern our response to God.**

- b. **The second table of the Law consists of the 6 Commandments that govern the way we treat one another.**
 - c. **Obviously, our human relationships cannot be separated from our relationship to God, but there is a distinction: The first 4 Commandments teach us to love God, while the last 6 teach us to love our neighbor.**
2. The first word in the commandment is “honor”.
- a. **“Honor” in the Hebrew literally is the word “KAVOD”...if said correctly sounds out its meaning= “heavy or weighty”...it is the word the OT uses for the glory of God, for the weightiness of God’s divine majesty.**
 - b. Since this is true of God what is God communicating in this word concerning children to their parents?
 - (1) We are to give due weight to their position...**
 - (2) We are to give them the recognition they deserve for their God-given authority.**
- (3) We are to listen and give great weight to their advice and encouragement when it is reasonable, according the word of the Lord.**
- **Ex. 18:24- *“So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.”***
 - **Prov. 4:1-2- *“Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching.”***
 - **Prov. 5:1-2-*“My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge.”***
 - **Interesting story: Martin Luther excelled at school earning his baccalaureate and Master’s degree easily. Then much to his father’s delight...who was a miner all of his life hoping for Martin to become wealthy to be able to take care of them in their old age...Luther went to Erfurt to pursue a law degree. One night coming back from campus a great thunderstorm struck and Martin Luther was knocked to the ground in the storm and cried out to St. Anne...thought to be Mary’s mother, the saint of miners and the saint of comfort during storms... *“Help me, St. Anne! I will become a monk.”* Obviously he survived the storm and he entered an Augustinian monastery. He wrote to his father to tell him of the thunderstorm and his vow and his father was livid. One day he asked his father why he was so angry about him joining the church...his father said immediately, *“Don’t you know that it’s written,***

Honor your father and mother?" Luther then wrote to his father after much contemplation saying, "You so quickly came back with a reply so fitting and so much to the point that I have scarcely in my entire life heard any man say anything that stuck me so forcibly and has stayed with me so long." Luther believed that his decision to become a monk was wrong because it was made against his father's will and out of fear, but he admitted later, "How much good the merciful Lord has allowed to come of it." For it was his experience as a monk that God used to convince him that this life was not a sure path to heaven, as many people believed.

- c. It is a command to respect, to revere, to obey, and when necessary to care for and about our parents with grateful kindness to them. We are called to bear with their infirmities, when aged and widowed.**

(1) Gen. 9: 2-23- "Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness."

(2) I Tim. 5:3-4- "Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God."

- 3. Why a commandment dealing with the parent/child relationship?
 - a. Obviously, loving our neighbor begins at home.**
 - b. How does a child's relationship with his or her parents affect the way he or she relates to others throughout life? How does this affect society as a whole?**
 - c. See II Tim. 3:1-5- "But understand this that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people."**

4. The Old Testament is often negatively called the “patriarchal” testament... meaning that it obviously demeans the position of women... But, what is this commandment actually saying about mothers?
 - a. **That they are due equal respect with the father.**
 - b. **This commandment was without parallel in the Old Testament time where women were thought of as property.**
 - c. **This is reiterated many times:**
 - (1) **Lev. 19:1-3- “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.’”**
 - (2) **I Kings 2:19- “So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her and bowed down to her. Then he sat on his throne and had a seat brought for the king’s mother, and she sat on his right.”** Solomon showed his mother respect...respect above and beyond the other nations and peoples at the time...not only by giving her a place but listening to her advice.
 - (3) **Prov. 1:8-9- “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.”**
 - (4) **Prov. 23:22- “Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” ...even after we have grown and left the house we are called to still show our parents honor and respect.**

5. What responsibilities do the parents have in helping their children obey this commandment?
 - a. **Parents are called on to give their children many other things besides proper discipline.**
 - (1) **We are called to pray with them, encourage them, counsel them, correct them, protect them, and provide for their daily needs to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord along with the *doctrines of Scripture*.**
 - a. **Eph. 6:4- “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”**
 - b. **We wish that this can be said of our children-II Tim. 3: 14-15- “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it**

and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

(2) We are called to set a godly example, for although children don't always listen to their parents, **THEY NEVER FAIL TO IMITATE THEM!!!**

(3) We are to encourage them in the Lord concerning the gifts and callings....even employments and marriage.

- **Gen. 4:1-2- *“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, ‘I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.’ And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.”***
- **Speaking as a father figure to “his children” in Corinth, Paul says, I Cor. 7: 25-28- *“Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present⁸ distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman⁹ marries, she has not sinned.”***

(4) If children are supposed to obey their parents, then obviously parents are supposed to give them proper love, encouragement and discipline so that they can and they want to obey.

b. As God loves His children we are to love the children that God gives to us...another form of stewardship of what God has entrusted to us and empowered us to do.

6. What is the promise the Commandment gives that is reiterated in the NT for those who obey this commandment? *“...that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving to you.”* Why unlike all the other commandments is their a promise given?

- a. One author put it this way... *“God knows how hard it is, because of the Fall, for little children to obey their parents. He also knows that children find it easier to obey when they are promised a reward; so the 5th Commandment comes with the promise of long life in God’s land for His little children.”* This was actually a serious consideration for many years...But how would you answer this question?**
- b. How do you suppose that honoring their parents would ensure their keeping the Promised Land and what is its application for us today?**

- (1) We aren't waiting for the Promised Land but if we are Christ's He has gone to prepare a place for us...eternity is a long time.**
- (2) But obeying God brings with it its own reward...and "long life" could be also fulfilled life. Obeying God, doing what we were created to do, can be its own reward.**
- (3) "*Live long in the land*" is a Hebrew phrase seeking the fullness of God's blessing. It means to have an abundant life in the Lord...much like "Live long and prosper!" The point is, the way of obedience is the way of blessing**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
May 23, 2021

A. Prayer

B. WSC# 63 continued- What is the fifth commandment? *The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and mother; for thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives to you.* WSC # 64- What is required in the fifth commandment? *The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.* WSC #65- What is forbidden in the fifth Commandment? *The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongs to everyone in their special places and relations.* WSC#66- What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment? *The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.*

1. Just a reminder: In Exodus 31 we “see” Moses descending Mt. Sinai with 2 stone tablets. Even though we refer to them as the 2 tablets of the Law, they were almost certainly copies of the same thing. This was typical practice for covenants in the Ancient Near East...one copy for each party....In this case one copy went into the Ark of the Covenant (The LORD), the other was for their use.

a. **Traditionally, the first 4 Commandments are distinguished from the last 6.**

(1) **The first side of each stone tablet of the Law consists of the 4 commandments that govern our response to God.**

(2) **The second side of each stone tablet of the Law consists of the 6 Commandments that govern the way we treat one another.**

b. **Obviously, our human relationships cannot be separated from our relationship to God, but there is a distinction: The first 4 Commandments teach us to love God, while the last 6 teach us to love our neighbor.**

2. Why a commandment dealing with the parent/child relationship?

d. **Obviously, loving our neighbor begins at home.**

e. How does a child's relationship with his or her parents affect the way he or she relates to others throughout life?

(1) **See what happens when we don't follow God's commands.**
II Tim. 3:1-5-

(2) **This command is bigger than your parents telling you “no” and expecting you to listen and abide...civilizations , societies, cultures and countries cease to flourish when the social order is taken away...think Pandemic isolation...there is a reason now why this is so political...**

(3) Interesting fun fact that's not so fun: Totalitarian regimes throughout history have sought to exert control over people and one of the chief ways they do this is by severing the family tie...

- **By redefining family...**
- **By making your family suspect in some way...**
- **Making the allegiance to the state the building block of society rather than dependence upon family...especially parents.**
- **The power of the state always rises as the power of the family is diminished.**

f. John Calvin said this: *"Nature itself ought to teach us this, those who abusively and stubbornly violate parental authority are monsters not men."* And of course he had his own story similar to Luther about how His dad wanted him to pursue law which he did but then he pursued the ministry.

g. R. C. Sproul spoke to this years ago saying, *"A person who can be consistently sassy and irreverent in their speech to parents or to one of these in authority over them has a deep moral and spiritual problem. A person, who can, without the slightest qualm of conscience, disobey and deceive those in authority, has a deep moral and spiritual problem to be dealt with."*

3. This commandment is different...it comes with an expressed promise.

a. Why unlike all the other commandments is there a promise given?

(1) It is a gift to do God's Will.

(2) It is a sign of our sanctification that we wish to do God's will and just like everything else in this life in the Lord there is rewards that have been promised that when we actually do as God commands that we readily experience them.

b. How do you suppose that honoring their parents would ensure their keeping the Promised Land and what is its application for us today?

(4) We aren't waiting for the Promised Land but if we are Christ's He has gone to prepare a place for us...eternity is a long time.

(5) But obeying God brings with it its own reward...and "long life" could be also fulfilled life. Obeying God, doing what we were created to do, can be its own reward.

(6) *"Live long in the land"* is a Hebrew phrase seeking the fullness of God's blessing. It means to have an abundant life in the Lord...much like *"Live long and prosper!"* The point is, the way of obedience is the way of blessing.

c. Consider Eph. 6:1-4-*"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.'* Fathers, do not provoke

your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. What does this passage add to our understanding of this command? **Don't give them a reason to disobey...your attitude and your actions.**

- d. What about this one? **Col. 3:20-*"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."*** This is yet another warning to fathers because fathers have a tendency to be too harsh on their children or the warning wouldn't be here. For most warnings in Scripture actually address an on-going sin.
 - e. And then there is this one: **Luke 2:51- *"And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart."*** He was perfect...they were not but His example was to do always do what pleased the LORD.
4. Can holding our parents accountable for their behavior be a form of honoring them? How? In other words, are their limits to honoring parents?
- a. **This, of course, is hard to do as a child...for we don't have the experience or the position to know what or how to hold adults accountable.**
 - b. **As we grow into adulthood the relationship goes from one of obedience to being peers to a certain degree now requiring our respect and honor not our obedience.**
 - (1)**Gen. 2:24-25- *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."***
 - (2)**Jesus reiterates this in His teaching in Matt. 19: 4-6- *"He answered, 'Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.'"***
 - (3)**Even then, when many of them lived under the same roof it was still understood that a new unit ...a oneness of husband and wife...was established in marriage that diminishes the absolute obedience to the parents.**
 - c. **By pointing out the sin in their behavior we are seeking their best because authority can be abused...but we are seeking to preserve their honor...so that they don't continue to go down the same path.**

- (1) See I Sam. 19:4-5- *“And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, ‘Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?’”*...prior to this Jonathan had warned David of his father’s plans and then he interceded with his father so that his father would not continue to dishonor himself by his behavior.
- (2) There were times that Jonathan and David had to disobey King Saul, but in so doing they were not breaking the 5th Commandment, but actually kept it by honoring their higher commitment to obey their Father in heaven which also commands us to also hold one another accountable.
- d. We see in Acts 5 a passage dealing with the government but it is also appropriate for our parents as a general biblical principle as well, Acts 5:25-29-*“And someone came and told them, ‘Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’ Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, ‘We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.’ But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”*
- (1) If parents command you to do something that God forbids or they forbid what God commands, you cannot and must not obey your parents.
- (2) The first “tablet” of the Law takes precedent over the 2nd.
- (3) But even in this we should find a way to show respect for their position and, if Christians themselves, win them back to the Lord.
- (4) Parents should NOT expect the same obedience.
- e. But we must always check our motives and our influences...
- (1) Our culture goes out of its way NOT to honor those of the older generation. The thinking is that as we age the older ones ought to take a back seat and realize we are not as useful...that older people just stand in the way of younger.
- (2) Another misconception is this ...the culture tells us that it is normal and should be considered a rite of passage for young people to rebel...because after all that is just what they do. But it is unacceptable in God’s eye for that rebellion is sinful!
- (3) But the Bible teaches us to respect and honor the aged as long as their words and life still imitate the Lord and His Word.

- f. I personally have benefitted immensely from older Christians and pastors through the years...now I have become one of those and my past counselors are in heaven but God has replaced them with a younger group that is maturing in the Lord and I get to see and experience their leadership.**
5. Okay we get the implication concerning parents. But why then does the catechism seem to stress even more concerning those in authority in general?
- a. One of our rules of interpretation speaks of how each commandment stands for a whole category of sins and duties...not just the one spoken of as we see defined for us in the NT by Christ Himself.**
 - b. By implication then, when God tells us to respect our parents, He is telling us to respect anyone who has legitimate authority over us.**
 - c. Who would that be?**
 - (1) We are all to submit to one another in Christ- Eph. 5:21- *"...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."***
 - (2) Wives are to submit to their husbands in Christ- Eph. 5:22-24- *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, bas to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit fin everything to their husbands."***
 - (3) Elders in church- Heb. 13:17- *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."***
 - (4) Employers- I Peter 2:18-21- *"Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."***
 - (5) Government officials and those vested with carrying out the laws of the land. Rom. 13:1-2- *"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment."***
 - (6) Even the young is to show some deference and gratitude toward the older especially in the church...I Peter 5:5-**

***“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.”
...but as a rule in society as well...showing respect for those
who have lived longer and experienced more.***

(7) Then there is this: I Peter 2:17- *“Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”*

(8) All of this is important especially in our day and age when we may not have parents any longer or we never knew our parents we can still please God by observing these things we have just talked about and honoring God’s family...Jesus said, Luke 8:21- *“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”*

6. Side notes concerning WSC # 64- What is required in the fifth commandment? *The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.”* What is required of us with these... *“inferiors, or equals.”* ?

a. Initially this word “inferior” stood for children, but as time went on it also stood for the elderly, the infirmed and the disabled.

(1) We are to protect, honor and care for ...in all ways possible.

(2) We are to aid them, if possible, to fulfill their God given day to day.

b. “Equals”-before the LORD all are equal...neither Greek nor Jew nor male or female...

(1) To live in peace to show sincere love one to another, preferring each other’s honor to our own. Rom. 12:9-13- *“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”*

c. To care for and ready to promote one another’s good as we rejoice together. I Peter 3:8-9- *“Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.”*

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
June 6, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #67- Which is the 6th Commandment? *The 6th Commandment is thou shall not kill.* # 68- What is required in the 6th Commandment? *The 6th Commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.* #69- What is forbidden in the 6th Commandment? *The 6th Commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.*

1. What is the simple meaning of this commandment?
2. How has society and the church sought to re-interpret this text? Why?
3. How is it detrimental to our society to re-interpret this command or disregard it all together?

C. WSC # 70- Which is the Seventh Commandment? *The Seventh Commandment is, Thou shall not commit adultery.* WSC #71- What is required in the 7th Commandment? *The 7th Commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.* WSC # 72- What is forbidden in the 7th Commandment? *The 7th Commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.*

1. As we begin on this one: What all can you think of that God may even remotely commanding us NOT to do?
 - a. **Adultery- physical and spiritual**
 - b. **Lustful thoughts**
 - c. **Sexual Jestings and speech...**
 - d. **Homosexuality...and all deviant forms that do not abide by the standard God has set for sexual relations between a man and a woman in marriage. I Timothy 1:8-11- *"Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted."***
- (1) **"Arsenloitis" is Greek for "men who practice homosexuality" a word that God gave to Paul in this context and in I Corinthians 6) to make a differentiation from "sexually immoral" when speaking of the 7th Commandment in this text.**
- (2) **This seems to be a deliberate throwback to Lev. 18:22 and Lev. 20:13- *"...whoever shall lie with a male as with a***

woman". This phrase is coined as a blanket disapproval...as was evident in the Old Testament... of all same-sex intimate relationships. And a direct violation of the 7th Commandment.

- e. Rape**
- f. Immodest dressing.**
- g. Anything that can be defined as harassment...that is not treating each other with absolute respect and purity.**
- h. Pornography. Pornea - Mark 7:21-23- *"For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."* So "pornea" was a broad term as are most Hebrew terms that define behaviors for it stood for any sexual sin prohibited by the law of Moses...even sin committed with eyes and heart .**
- i. I have often heard some guys say...and girls as well...there is nothing wrong with looking... (most scholars will say that looking is not the problem...not being a scholar I am more prone to say given the oversexed nature of our culture...at least for the guy there is, because if we remember it later our minds have a tendency to lead us in places we don't need to go...women as a rule can differentiate...or at least they used to be able to.)**
 - (1) Matt. 5:27-30- *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."***
 - *"...with lustful intent"*= epithumeo- which means to desire, to covet or to long for. Noticing beauty in another person is not a sin but when it becomes epithumo...desirous, covetous, lingering, and lustful then it becomes adultery. So we can still be guilty of this sin with our minds.**
- j. Lev. 20:10- *"If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."* These last 2 passages tell us God's heart concerning this sin...he hates it so much...He recognizes its destructive nature so much to make it a capital crime...Is this punishment just? Some have answered this way; *"Certainly an adulterer is worthy of death; a man who will betray his wife will betray anyone and anything. Adultery is treason against family and God."***

k. Eph. 5:3- *“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”* Or as the NIV says here, *“But among you there must not be even a HINT of sexual immorality...”* What is the message here?

2. What is the first duty of this commandment?

a. The preservation of our own chastity/purity of heart, lip and life...and that of others. But this is harder to do than say.

(1) These subjects are hard to discuss.

(2) We do not trust anyone enough to be this open with them.

(3) If we expose ourselves we are uncertain how people will respond...will they reject me...will they treat me differently...it might just be better not to say anything than to take the chance.

(4) Because we do not have the type of “friendships” that the Bible talks about. The type of “friendship” that we have with Jesus.

b. Eph. 4:29-*“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”* Given the topic at hand...purity and honor in our relationships, how does this passage apply?

(1) The thoughts we have concerning others.

(2) The words we use...the descriptive language that our culture seems comfortable with.

(3) If you were to make a list of what words kind of words this would be talking about what would you put on that list? Which words do you need to stop using yourself?

c. I Thess. 4:1-8 *“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”*

(1) Interesting the way he puts it... *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification...”* The work of sanctification that he speaks of here is that we abstain from sexual immorality, that each of us would know how to control ourselves in this area...in holiness and honor...

- (2) This means that this is something we will have to constantly work on...and fight to maintain. This sin causes the fall and destruction of so many...it has since the beginning.**
3. Why must we seek to preserve our own chastity...our own purity and honor?
- a. **God commands it! I Thess. 4:4-5- *"...that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God..."* We are to be different from the world around us that is consumed by such things.**
 - b. **Our bodies are or ought to be the temple of God- I Cor. 6:15- *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!"* And I Cor. 6:19-20- *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."***
 - c. **Because when we don't it can causes injury against the body and our witness as Christians-**
 - (1) Prov. 6:32-33- *"He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away."***
 - (2) I Cor. 6:18- *"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body."***
 - d. **It is a sign of our love and honor of one another- It is a sanctified choice- I Peter 1:22- *"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart..."***
4. Church's response to this subject through the ages.
- a. **Prior to the Reformation the church generally regarded sexual relations...even within the bounds of marriage ...as a necessary evil.**
 - b. **Tertullian (an early Christian father- 160-220 AD) regarded the extinction of the human race as preferable to procreation.**
 - c. **Ambrose (337-397 AD Church father of the 4th Century) said that married couples ought to be ashamed of their sexuality.**
 - d. **Augustine (354-430 AD) was willing to admit that sexual relations might be lawful in marriage but taught that sexual passion was always a sin.**
 - e. **Many priest in later years counseled couples to abstain from sex altogether.**

- f. The Catholic Church gradually began to prohibit sex on certain holy days, so that by the time of Martin Luther, the list had grown to 183 days a year.**
- g. Thank God for the Reformation; this began to restore the sanctity of relations between a husband and a wife.**
- h. *"The Puritan doctrine of sex was a watershed in the cultural history of the West. The Puritans devalued celibacy, glorified companionate marriage, affirmed sex as both necessary and pure, established the ideal of the wedded romantic love, and exalted the role of the wife."*- Leland Ryken- Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were**
- i. While they elevated to sanctity of marriage and exalted the role of women as the Bible does they also protected marriage with a passion.**
 - (1) In John Calvin's Geneva there were literally hundreds of people brought before the consistory for discipline concerning adultery, fornication, and marital discourse leading to dishonoring and disrespecting one another.**
 - (2) There were in this church over 20 different offenses that were subject to church discipline with the top 2 being household conflicts and sexual sin. No matter what generation this has plagued the church.**
 - (3) The Reformers considered sex and marriage to be 2 of God's greatest gifts to His children...to mankind really so the Church must protect and preserve it at all cost as God has defined it.**
 - (4) They taught then and we see evidence of it today that it is God's best gifts...life, sex, marriage...that are most apt to be twisted and perverted by the world, our flesh and the devil.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
June 13, 2021

A. Prayer

B. WSC # 70- Which is the Seventh Commandment? *The Seventh Commandment is, Thou shall not commit adultery.* WSC #71- What is required in the 7th Commandment? *The 7th Commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.* WSC # 72- What is forbidden in the 7th Commandment? *The 7th Commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.*

5. What is the first duty of this commandment?

e. The preservation of our own chastity/purity of heart, lip and life...and that of others. But this is harder to do than say.

(5) These subjects are hard to discuss.

(6) We do not trust anyone enough to be this open with them.

(7) If we expose ourselves we are uncertain how people will respond...will they reject me...will they treat me differently...it might just be better not to say anything than to take the chance.

(8) Because we do not have the type of "friendships" that the Bible talks about. The type of "friendship" that we have with Jesus.

f. Eph. 4:29- "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Given the topic at hand...purity and honor in our relationships, how does this passage apply?

(4) The thoughts we have concerning others.

(5) The words we use...the descriptive language that our culture seems comfortable with.

(6) If you were to make a list of what words kind of words this would be talking about what would you put on that list? Which words do you need to stop using yourself?

6. Why must we seek to preserve our own chastity...our own purity and honor?

d. God commands it! I Thess. 4:4-5- "...that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God..." We are to be different from the world around us that is consumed by such things.

e. Our bodies are or ought to be the temple of God- I Cor. 6:15- "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!" And I Cor. 6:19-20- "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you

have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

- f. Because when we don't it can cause injury against the body and our witness as Christians-**

(3) Prov. 6:32-33- *"He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away."*

(4) I Cor. 6:18- *"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body."*

- g. It is a sign of our love and honor of one another- It is a sanctified choice- I Peter 1:22- *"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart..."***

- 7. What would you say are some of the causes of us so easily falling into the sins of the world in this matter?**

a. Not in the Word. James 1:21- *"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*

b. We are succumbing to the same temptations over and over again.

c. In Ezek. 16:49-50- *"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it."*

(1)Pride, prosperity...that is ease of life so much that you start thinking that you are providing for yourself and you forget to give thanks to God for whatever you have, too much leads to false conclusions and arrogance.

(2)We *"cling too closely to the dust"* (Ps. 119:25) rather than to God and His Word.

d. Loose thinking and speaking, - Eph. 5:3-5- *"But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."* Why is what we say and how we say it so important to God?

- 8. What remedies does the Bible offer for us to battle this sin?**

a. Repentance and then on-going confession. I John 1:9-*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

- b. God gives us a way to escape- ***"I Cor. 10:13-*'No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.'*"***
- c. God gives us the Holy Spirit- Gal. 5:16- ***"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."***
- d. We need to keep a strict watch over our heart, eyes, lips...actions-
 - (1) Prov. 4:23- ***"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."***
 - (2) Job 31:1-4- ***"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does not He see my ways and number all my steps?"***
- e. The fear of the Lord- Hebrews 13:4- ***"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."*** What does this mean for the Christian?
- f. Prayer- Psalm 119:37- ***"Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways."***
- g. The Word of God itself- Matt. 5: 3-8- ***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."***
- h. One more, important one...Marriage... a biblical understanding of it that is...for a contemporary understanding gives no solace of permanence or fidelity.
 - (1) Gen. 2:18-25- ***"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because***

she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

- **Think about this a minute: The first thing God said that WASN'T good was, *"It is not good that the man should be alone"*.**

- **God saw that man was not yet complete...like the other creations were complete when God said it is good. But it is not good until they are brought together by God. Gen. 1:31**

- **Marriage provides an answer to human loneliness.**

- **God created marriage in such a way that man and woman uniquely fit together as compliments of the other.**
- **Marriage is ordained, regulated and instituted by God not man. Here and in Gen. 1:28-31.**
- **Adam called her woman (Ishshah) because she was taken out of man (Ish). And she alone is considered a suitable helpmate for the man.**
- **Adam and Eve were literally made for each other. It is only through this complimentary understanding that monogamy has any logic at all.**

(2) Mal. 2:13-15- *"And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, 'Why does he not?' Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth."*

- **In verse 14 the marriage relationship is described as a covenant bond. *"...companion and your wife by covenant."***
- **Within marriage there are 2 things that constitute and ratify the covenant.**
 - **The verbal oath constitutes the solemn promise...the vows before God and these witnesses.**
 - **The ratification oath is consummating the relationship physically. The kiss is the public ratification during the wedding ceremony representing the intimacy that is to come.**

- From this God expects children...God designed us so that in marriage our relationship would result in new life.
- There seems to be a deliberate echo to the creation account here.
- So while it would be wrong to say that marriage only exist for reproduction ...it would also be wrong to downplay the command to be fruitful and multiply especially in this day and age with so many choosing not to have children or waiting until later in life.
- With just these texts we could define marriage this way: Marriage by nature, design and aim is a covenant between 2 persons whose one-flesh commitment produces children, if that be God's will.

(3) Eph. 5:22- 25, 31-33- *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."*

- This passage tells us that marriage is hard for us...even us who have been redeemed for this calls for an almost perfect lifestyle to live up to this...and of course, we cannot unless we are both submissive to Christ in our walk and our desires for marriage.
- You see the relationship between Christ and his Church is a paradigm for the relationship between a husband and a wife.
- The mystery is that the union between Christ and His Church finds expression in a man and a woman becoming one flesh in Christian marriage.
- Marriage here is defined this way:
 - The man loves, leads, and sacrifices as Christ did.
 - The woman submits and respects as the church to Christ.
 - Paul did not foresee two individuals of any sex acting as Christ and the church but only the man/husband and the woman/wife. There is no way to reinsert 2 men or 2 women in this equation...or any other deviation of God's original plan.

- **Some have said that the link Paul makes here in this text means that the gospel itself is at stake in our definition of marriage. Paul deliberately links the gospel of Christ and the church to the expression/manifestation of a godly Christian marriage, which can only find fulfillment in God's design for marriage.**
- (4) A clear understanding of God's design for marriage enables us to fully understand why the 7th Commandment is even here and part of God's divine design for His people.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
June 20, 2021

C. Prayer

D. WSC # 70- Which is the Seventh Commandment? *The Seventh Commandment is, Thou shall not commit adultery.*

1. What did we say last that were some of the causes of us so easily falling into the sins of the world in this matter?
 - a. **Not in the Word. James 1:21-*“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”***
 - b. **We are succumbing to the same temptations over and over again.**
 - c. **Pride, prosperity...that is ease of life so much that you start thinking that you are providing for yourself and you forget to give thanks to God for whatever you have, too much leads to false conclusions and arrogance. *“My soul cling too closely to the dust”* (Ps. 119:25) to this life... rather than to God and His Word.**
 - d. **Loose thinking and speaking, -**
2. What remedies does the Bible offer for us to battle this sin?
 - i. **Repentance and then on-going confession. I John 1:9-*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***
 - j. **God gives us a way to escape- I Cor. 10:13-*“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”***
 - k. **God gives us the Holy Spirit-**
 - l. **We need to keep a strict watch over our heart, eyes, lips...actions-**
 - m. **The fear of the Lord-**
 - n. **Prayer-**
 - o. **The Word of God itself-**
 - p. **One more, important one...Marriage... a biblical understanding of it that is...for a contemporary understanding gives no solace of permanence or fidelity.**

E. WSC# 73- Which is the 8th Commandment? *The 8th Commandment is, Thou shall not steal.* WSC #74- What is required in the 8th Commandment? *The 8th Commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering of wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.* WSC #75- What is forbidden in the 8th Commandment? *The 8th Commandment forbids whatsoever does or may unjustly hinder our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.*

1. What forms of “stealing” are considered “okay”, even by Christians?

- a. **When asked for the last 20 plus years over 90 percent of Christian say they do not steal.**
 - b. **When asked over 90 % of non-Christians say they do not steal.**
 - c. **We will talk about lying next time!!!**
 - d. **Why is this commandment universally understood by all people in all cultures?**
2. What would you say is a simple definition of stealing?
- a. **To take something that doesn't belong to you or to appropriate someone else's especially a brother's, property unlawfully...**
 - b. **The Hebrew term "ganaf" means to carry something away, as if by stealth. This terms cover all forms of theft:**
 - (1) **Burglary (breaking and entering to commit theft);**
 - (2) **Robbery (taking property by force or intimidation);**
 - (3) **Larceny (taking something without permission and not returning it):**
 - (4) **Hijacking (using force to take goods in transit or seizing control of a cart, a caravan, or a bus, train, or plane);**
 - (5) **shoplifting (taking items from a marketplace or store during business hours without paying for them);**
 - (6) **Pick pocketing and purse snatching.**
 - (7) **Embezzlement (fraudulent taking money or goods entrusted to one's care...pencils, paper, staplers. Tape, drugs from the hospital, spoons or towels from hotels, not paying taxes, filling in false time cards, calling in sick when we are not, personal phones calls, shopping on line during work hours, idle away our time at work not making the best of our time for the employers sake...we know this ploy...**
 - (8) **So many do or have done this...taking things from familiar places thinking they won't be missed, no one will know...no one will be hurt...without asking for them...(some reports say as much as one third of the expense of a product is for the recovery of the cost of such items and time wasted...it is called a "theft surcharge.")**
 - (9) **Extortion (getting money from someone by means of threats and misuse of authority....employers demanding longer hours than contracts allow, not paying for job improvements, not paying for classes expected by employees to take to enhance company performance):**
 - (10) **Racketeering (obtaining money by any illegal means...deficit spending is really a way of stealing from future citizens...companies manipulating securities by providing false information...Enron.):**
 - (11) **By waste of money and misuse of it investments and other schemes.**
 - (12) **Exorbitant rates of interest for credit.**

(13) Price gouging, false advertising, deceptive packaging, exaggeration of the product you sell, trying to sell people things they don't need!

(14) Idleness and laziness is also included in this ...just to name a few!

3. The Heidelberg Catechism:

- a. #110- What does God forbid in the eighth commandment? *"God forbids not only outright theft and robbery, but also such wicked schemes and devises as false weights and measures, deceptive merchandising, counterfeit money, and usury(interest); we must not defraud our neighbor in any way, whether by force or by show of right. In addition God forbids all greed and all abuse or squandering of His gifts."*
- b. HC #111- But what does God require of you in this commandment? *That I further my neighbor's good, where I can and may; deal with him as I would have others deal with me; and labor faithfully, that I may be able to help the poor in their need.*

4. Bottom line: Why is stealing wrong?

- a. **As His children, we misrepresent Him.**
- b. **Every theft is a failure to trust in God's provision.**
 - (1)When we take something that doesn't belong to us we deny that God has given what we need and or desire...and we deny that He is able to do these things.**
 - (2)We are not content with who God is and what He has given us.**
 - (3)Stealing flies in the face of our mandate to be good stewards of what God has given us.**
- c. **It is an assault on God's providence for others.**
 - (1) It robs what He has provided for others.**
 - (2)It is NOT loving our neighbor...in fact, it harms our neighbor?**
- d. **The Commandment then assumes the right to personal property otherwise the whole concept of stealing would fail to make sense.**
- e. **Why do I make this last statement? There are many more socialistic people that the Bible would say we must share the wealth or that we can't own anything because it puts others at a disadvantage.**
- f. **Zechariah 5:3-4- "Then He said to me, 'This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side. I will send it (Fire) out, declares the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.'"**

5. If the 7th commandment was focusing on the virtue of purity, what virtue does this commandment seem to focus on?

a. Stewardship

b. By extension...Contentment...

F. WSC #76- Which is the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment is, Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.* WSC #77- What is required in the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment requires that maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbors good name, especially in witness bearing.* WSC #78- What is forbidden in the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own neighbor's good name.*

1. Why do you suppose we were created with the capacity to speak?

Bottom line: Praise God and bless others!

2. What is speaking most often used for? Why? According to the Bible what is the most dangerous part of our bodies?

a. Our tongues.

b. James 3:6-10-*"And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so."*

3. Back in 2010 a poll was done that said,

a. Of 3 million job applicants, nearly 50% of American résumé's contain one or more falsehood.

b. A columnist for Time magazine once wrote: *"On the one hand everybody condemns lying and the liar, but on the other, nearly everyone does it every day. How many of the 10 Commandments can be broken so easily and with so little risk of detection over the telephone. "*

4. The immediate context of this commandment is a court of law;

a. It governs the legal testimony a witness gives in a public trial before a jury.

b. The word "neighbor" suggests a trial that takes place within the covenant community- Lev. 19:11-18 covers a lot of ground here- *"You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so*

profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”...

- c. But it is not limited to that since Jesus taught that everyone is our neighbor.
- d. What then is God specifically condemning in the commandment?
 - (1) A lying witness...testifying falsely against anyone, especially a brother, accused of a crime.
 - (2) People in the culture of the time were considered guilty until proven innocent...not a lot of grace, but it does save time...where we say people are innocent until proven guilty.
 - (3) There were few standards for the presentation of evidence, and sometimes the accused didn't even get the chance to mount a defense.
 - (4) Most ancient courts were willing to convict someone on the strength of one witness. Hence, the need for this commandment and places like “refuge cities” where you could go if you were “innocent” of a premeditated crime. But more was expected of the covenant community towards itself and outsiders by God.
 - Deut. 17:6-7- ***“On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.”***
 - Deut. 19:15-20- ***“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his***

brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you.” This last line is there to help us understand that God’s ways actually deter crime!

- ***Zech. 8:16-17-“These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord.”***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
June 27, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review - WSC# 73- Which is the 8th Commandment? The 8th Commandment is, *Thou shall not steal.*

6. What were some of the reasons we said last time for why stealing is always wrong?

g. As His children, we misrepresent Him.

h. Every theft is a failure to trust in God's provision.

(4) When we take something that doesn't belong to us we deny that God has given what we need and or desire...and we deny that He is able to do these things.

(5) We are not content with who God is and what He has given us.

(6) Stealing flies in the face of our mandate to be good stewards of what God has given us.

i. It is an assault on God's providence for others.

(3) It robs what He has provided for others.

(4) It is NOT loving our neighbor...in fact, it harms our neighbor?

j. The Commandment then assumes the right to personal property otherwise the whole concept of stealing would fail to make sense.

k. Why do I make this last statement? There are many more socialistic people that the Bible would say we must share the wealth or that we can't own anything because it puts others at a disadvantage.

l. Zechariah 5:3-4- "Then He said to me, 'This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side. I will send it (Fire) out, declares the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.'"

7. If the 7th commandment was focusing on the virtue of purity, what virtue or virtues does the 8th commandment seem to focus on?

c. Stewardship

d. By extension...Contentment...

C. WSC #76- Which is the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment is, Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.* WSC #77- What is required in the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment requires that maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbors good name, especially in witness bearing.* WSC #78- What is forbidden in the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment*

forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own neighbor's good name.

5. The immediate context of this commandment is a court of law, but as we talked about it last time, it is bigger than that. In what ways?

e. It governs the legal testimony a witness gives in a public trial before a jury.

f. The word “neighbor” suggests a trial that takes place within the covenant community- Lev. 19:11-18 covers a lot of ground here- *“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”...*

g. But it is not limited to that since Jesus taught that everyone is our neighbor.

h. What then is God specifically condemning in the commandment?

(5) A lying witness...testifying falsely against anyone, especially a brother, accused of a crime.

- **People in the culture of the time were considered guilty until proven innocent...not a lot of grace, but it does save time...where we say people are innocent until proven guilty.**
- **There were few standards for the presentation of evidence, and sometimes the accused didn't even get the chance to mount a defense.**
- **Most ancient courts were willing to convict someone on the strength of one witness. Hence, the need for this commandment and places like “refuge cities” where you could go if you were “innocent” of a premeditated crime. But more was expected of the covenant community towards itself and outsiders by God.**
- **Deut. 17:6-7- *“On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one***

witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So, you shall purge the evil from your midst."

- (6) NOT loving are neighbor...in fact going out of our way to harm are neighbor.**
- (7) Swearing by anything false...or taking an oath you never intend to keep...simply living a life based on lies!**
- (8) Zech. 8:16-17- *"These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord."***

- 6. What does this commandment require of us then?
 - a. To tell the truth...always and in every case.**
 - b. I love this quote from George "1984" Orwell, *"In a world of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act."***
 - c. This Commandment refers to our words!!!! It commands us to be careful to speak the truth at all times, to stand up for it when it is assailed, and to seek to advance it by all means in our power.**
 - d. Telling the truth then, means thinking and saying the best about people.**
 - e. Telling the truth also means defending people when they are unfairly attacked.**
 - f. As a rule we stand by in silence. William Barclay used to say, *"It is an important principle that a cowardly or careless and irresponsible silence can be as senseless a crime as false and lying speech. The sin of silence is as real as the sin of speech."***
 - g. Eph. 4:25- *"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."***

- 7. Let's summarize what we have learned a minute:

- (1) The greater context tells us in its simplest form this commandment can be read, *"You shall not lie."* Because God HATES it!!!**
 - Prov. 6:16-19- *"There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers."* Two of the 7 are directly about lying...the others requiring lying in one form or another.**

- **Prov. 12:22- *“Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are His delight.”*** How bad are they if they are ***“an abomination to the LORD”***?
 - **Rev. 21:8- *“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”***
- (2) It is not just about the false testimony that people will give in court, but also about the lies they tell their neighbors in the backyard and the rumors they whisper in the pews.**
- (3) It also deal with our personal witness and testimony before God and others.**
- (4) We are expected to preserve the good name of those around us.**
Where does gossip fit in here? What is gossip?
- **According to Scripture gossip is talking about people (especially fellow believers) in a way that damages their reputation with others.**
 - **Victims of gossip...slander...or libel...never really get to defend themselves for the questions have already been put in place...even if you are allowed to talk... you are looked at as being desperate.**
 - **If the speaker is trying to cut down the character of another even in the nicest way... usually to people that can't do anything about it except get upset...this is being malicious...and should not be listened to.**
 - **Lev. 19:16- *“You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people...”***
 - **We need to be quick to tell others that if you have an issue with someone that they need to go and talk to them first. Martin Luther once said, *“Reputation is quickly stolen, but not quickly returned.”***
 - **Some reminders about gossip:**
 - **Is what I am about to say true?**
 - **If so, does it really need to be said to this person?**
 - **Would I put it this way if the person I'm talking about were here to listen?**
 - **Is what's being said hurtful to someone's...especially another believer's... character?**
 - **If our words fail any of these tests, then it will be better not to speak at all.**
 - **What about listening to gossip? Rabbinic saying says; *“Gossip kills three: the one who speaks it, the one who listens to it, and the one about whom it is spoken.”***
 - **Most of us like to listen to gossip...Prov. 18:8-*“The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down***

into the inner parts of the body.” It is often none of our business...unless God has made it our business.

8. There is one thing for sure that God hates, it is the lies that Christians tell to make themselves look more righteous than we really are.
 - a. ***Just a reminder: Zechariah 5:3-4- “Then He said to me, ‘This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side. I will send it (Fire) out, declares the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.’”***
 - b. **What is true of us all?**
 - (1) **We are unrighteous, and no way we could have ever been saved apart from the grace of God in Jesus.**
 - (2) **We are so guilty that God the Father had to give up His Son to be crucified in our place so His truth could be upheld and our sins dealt with.**
 - (3) **We are sinners saved by grace and to pretend otherwise is a great and damning lie!!**
 - c. **Look up John 8: 31-36- “Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’” What does this tell us about truth and its purpose for our lives?**
9. HC #112- What is required in the ninth commandment? *That I bear false witness against no one; wrest no one's words; be no backbiter, or slanderer; join in condemning no one unheard and rashly; but that I avoid, on pain of God's heavy wrath, all lying and deceit, as being the proper works of the devil; in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs love, honestly speak and confess the truth; and, so far as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.*
10. What are some of the most prominent societal lies being pushed today and how do these affect us?
 - a. **“Abortion isn’t murder”**
 - b. **Same- sex marriage is real marriage.**

- c. **Love is love.**
- d. **Redefining marriage and the family to meet our individual desires and that is okay.**
- e. **Devaluing people and becoming desensitized to it.**

11. What are some of the lies we live within our daily lives?

12. How do we evaluate the truth and a lie? (not how should we, but how DO we?)

13. Why do we compromise so often with the lie?

D. WSC #79- What is the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment is, you shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's.* WSC #80- What is required in the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment requires full contentment with our condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.* WSC #81- What is forbidden in the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.*

1. Since most of us may not care about our neighbor's wife, men-servants, maidservants, ox or donkeys what kind of things do we covet?

- a. **Ralph Waldo Emerson said this about possessions, "*Things are in the saddle and they ride mankind.*"**
- b. **We usually call it "chasing the American Dream", or "keeping up with the Jones" or simply wanting what our neighbor has and thinking we are entitled to it even more so than they...but the Bible simply calls it coveting.**
- c. **There is nothing necessarily wrong with noticing what other people have, but most of us don't just stop and notice so that we can give thanks to God for what He has given to them. Too often we notice and then begin to wonder why we can't have these things...or worse yet...how can they have them?**

2. Look at **Luke 12:15- "*And He said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'*"** How does this passage run opposite of the ways of the world...or even the way we think much of the time?

- a. **The world and our own social networks often judge us by the stuff we have...the size of the TV...the type and size of our truck...the type of car we drive...the type of job we have...house, property, etc.**

- b. **This is a completely different way of looking at things. Especially Americans...we do believe that life is measured by our abundance and that includes many within certain sections of the church.**
- 3. Since we for the most part do not use this term any longer; what does it mean to covet?
 - a. **To crave, to yearn for, (as an idiom...to hanker after) ... something that belongs to someone else...because we are discontent with what God has given to us... or the place in which He has placed us...or we are discontent with how we look or how we feel.**
 - b. **This is something that you can't and/or shouldn't have.**
 - c. **It is not simply wanting something we don't have; it is rather wanting something that someone else has. Puritan Thomas Watson defined it this way, "*an insatiable desire of getting the world.*"**
 - d. **It is even further wanting something someone else has because you believe they don't deserve such things...and only you would know what to do with it best.**
- 4. When is the first account of coveting in the Bible?
 - a. **Gen. 3:6 – "*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*"**
 - b. **What did Eve actually covet? The fruit...okay... but she didn't admire the fruit for its beauty or its taste since she had never tasted it before...she coveted what the devil told she would get when she ate of the fruit...making her wise like unto God Himself. She wanted to be a god. And people have sought to make themselves more than they are ever since.**
- 5. Where do we see this behavior today?
 - a. **Step into the nursery some Sunday or at your own home where children are playing. What does YOUR child want? Whatever the other child has.**
 - b. **Then we also see another commandment get broken. Because what happens when one child wants the other child's toy...they usually crawl over and take it or steal it from the other. Coveting in a child turns almost immediately to stealing.**
 - c. **What about us adults? How do you feel when someone gets the promotion you wanted and worked for? How do you feel when your roommate finds a mate and you haven't? How do you feel when a friend goes to your favorite vacation spot and you can't?**

- d. **We are almost always comparing ourselves to others even if it is only for a moment, and frankly we often resent it when we don't get what they have.**
6. How does **James 4:1-5** support what we have been saying? - ***“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”***
- a. **The passage is pretty clear on the problem to be sure.**
- b. **It is the broader conclusion that often causes me pause. We quote the first 3 verses and usually stop. But what is this telling us even further than what we know at first blush? *“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
July 4, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #76- Which is the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment is, Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.* WSC #77- What is required in the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment requires that maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbors good name, especially in witness bearing.* WSC #78- What is forbidden in the 9th Commandment? *The 9th Commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own neighbor's good name.*

14.HC #112- What is required in the ninth commandment? *That I bear false witness against no one; wrest no one's words; be no backbiter, or slanderer; join in condemning no one unheard and rashly; but that I avoid, on pain of God's heavy wrath, all lying and deceit, as being the proper works of the devil; in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs love, honestly speak and confess the truth; and, so far as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.*

15.What are some of the most prominent societal lies being pushed today and how do these affect us?

- a. **“Abortion isn’t murder**
- b. **Same- sex marriage is real marriage.**
- c. **Love is love.**
- d. **Redefining marriage and the family to meet our individual desires and that is okay**
- e. **Devaluing people and becoming desensitized to it.**

16.What are some of the lies we live within our daily lives?

17.How do we evaluate the truth and a lie? (not how should we, but how DO we?)

18.Why do we compromise so often with the lie?

C. WSC #79- What is the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment is, you shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's.* WSC #80- What is required in the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment requires full contentment with our condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.* WSC #81- What is forbidden in the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment forbids all discontentment*

with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

7. Since most of us may not care about our neighbor's wife, men-servants, maidservants, ox or donkeys what kind of things do we covet?
 - d. **Ralph Waldo Emerson said this about possessions, *"Things are in the saddle and they ride mankind."***
 - e. **We usually call it "chasing the American Dream", or "keeping up with the Jones" or simply wanting what our neighbor has and thinking we are entitled to it even more so than they...but the Bible simply calls it coveting.**
 - f. **There is nothing necessarily wrong with noticing what other people have, but most of us don't just stop and notice so that we can give thanks to God for what He has given to them. Too often we notice and then begin to wonder why we can't have these things...or worse yet...how can they have them?**
8. Look at **Luke 12:15- *"And He said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"*** How does this passage run opposite of the ways of the world...or even the way we think much of the time?
 - c. **The world and our own social networks often judge us by the stuff we have...the size of the TV...the type and size of our truck...the type of car we drive...the type of job we have... house, property, etc.**
 - d. **This is a completely different way of looking at things. Especially Americans...we do believe that life is measured by our abundance and that includes many within certain sections of the church.**
9. Since we for the most part do not use this term any longer; what does it mean to covet?
 - e. **Answers:**
 - (1) **Prideful desires**
 - (2) **Jealousy**
 - (3) **idolatry**
 - f. **To crave, to yearn for, (as an idiom...to hanker after) ... something that belongs to someone else...because we are discontent with what God has given to us... or the place in which He has placed us...or we are discontent with how we look or how we feel.**
 - g. **This is something that you can't and/or shouldn't have.**
 - h. **It is not simply wanting something we don't have; it is rather wanting something that someone else has. Puritan Thomas Watson defined it this way, *"an insatiable desire of getting the world."***

- i. **It is even further wanting something someone else has because you believe they don't deserve such things...and only you would know what to do with it best.**
10. When is the first account of coveting in the Bible?
- c. **Gen. 3:6 – “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”**
 - d. **What did Eve actually covet? The fruit...okay... but she didn't admire the fruit for its beauty or its taste since she had never tasted it before...she coveted what the devil told she would get when she ate of the fruit...making her wise like unto God Himself. She wanted to be a god. And people have sought to make themselves more than they are ever since.**
11. Where do we see this behavior today?
- e. **Step into the nursery some Sunday or at your own home where children are playing. What does YOUR child want? Whatever the other child has.**
 - f. **Then we also see another commandment get broken. Because what happens when one child wants the other child's toy...they usually crawl over and take it or steal it from the other. Coveting in a child turns almost immediately to stealing.**
 - g. **What about us adults? How do you feel when someone gets the promotion you wanted and worked for? How do you feel when your roommate finds a mate and you haven't? How do you feel when a friend goes to your favorite vacation spot and you can't?**
 - h. **We are almost always comparing ourselves to others even if it is only for a moment, and frankly we often resent it when we don't get what they have.**
12. How does James 4:1-5 support what we have been saying? - ***“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”***
- c. **The passage is pretty clear on the problem to be sure.**
 - d. **It is the broader conclusion that often causes me pause. We quote the first 3 verses and usually stop. But what is this telling us even further than what we know at first blush? “You**

adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
July 18, 2021

A. Prayer

- B. Review- WSC #79- What is the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment is, you shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's.* WSC #80- What is required in the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment requires full contentment with our condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.* WSC #81- What is forbidden in the 10th Commandment? *The 10th Commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.*

13. How does **James 4:1-5** support what the catechism is saying? - ***“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”***

- e. **The passage is pretty clear on the problem to be sure.**
- f. **It is the broader conclusion that often causes me pause. We quote the first 3 verses and usually stop. But what is this telling us even further than what we know at first blush? *“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”***

14. Why is it always wrong to covet what someone else has?

- a. **It shows a lack of contentment with God's provision.**
- b. **It shows a lack of recognition of what we have been given and what we should be doing with what we have.**
- c. **We are saying our neighbors are not good enough for it.**
- d. **We are saying we are more deserving than them.**

15. So, what is required of us according to this commandment?

- a. **Contentment with our condition.**
- b. **A Charitable attitude toward our neighbor.**
- c. **So what is contentment with our condition? What is the basis for true contentment?**
 - (1) **Discontentment comes from an inadequate understanding of God's wisdom and providence. If that be true then the**

opposite is true...the more we know of God the more content we will be.

(2) 1 Tim. 6:6-7- *"But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world."*

- Interesting play on words. Coveting is about gaining. Isn't that what we covet...what we do not have and desperately want?**
- So God essentially says *"Good! You want gain? I want you to have gain because I want you to have joy and blessing. But you can't get it by coveting only in contentment with me and what I give will godliness come which brings with it joy and blessing."***

(3) Heb. 13:5-6-*"Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'"*

(4) Our relationship with the Lord. When we are close to Him we realize we have no need, when we are not... nothing is good enough.

(5) Wanting what God wants not what we want. Contentment with our condition then, is thoroughly theological. What we believe and know and experience about God is what dictates how content we are.

(6) Michael Horton puts it this way, *"It is not poverty or wealth that leads to contentment and trust in the Lord, but the confidence that if God provided so richly for our salvation by choosing, redeeming, calling, adopting, and justifying us, and by sending His Spirit to cause us to grow up into Christ's likeness, then surely we can count on Him for the less essential matters of our daily existence."*

d. So with that in mind how would you define this, *a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his...* in your own words?

16. Why is coveting so destructive?

- a. Because it is like a drug you don't stop with desire, the person who covets goes beyond simply wanting something to plotting how to get it....**
- b. Because as we have said it leads to envy and envy destroys relationships among brothers specifically and our witness to the watching world. James 3:16-*"For where jealousy (envy) and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice."***
- c. See Josh 7:21-*"Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a***

beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”...

(1) This means, like Eve, that there was more to it than wanting what the other person had it also meant that he schemed a way to have it and how to hide it from others. Once he came up with the plan he carried it out.

(2) Achan allowed the sinful desire of his covetousness to take over and he didn't stop until he got his hands on someone else's stuff...forbidden stuff, by the way, and he knew that too.

d. It is a sign of worldliness. Rom. 1:28-31-“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”

e. Coveting is idolatry - Col. 3: 5-6- “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.” This is saying that we cannot live without that person, place or possession. It makes a god out of our desires.

f. James 1:14-15- “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

17.If, as it is stated in the New Testament that breaking one commandment breaks them all then how does this one break all the rest?

a. The tenth commandment makes explicit what the others imply- obedience is a matter of the heart, which often makes a proper diagnosis hard for us personally.

b. So how do we know? How can we assess ourselves?

(1) If we are hurting others to get more for ourselves. A do whatever it takes to get ahead, kind of attitude.

(2) If we are preoccupied with making and accumulating more...stuff.

(3) We might be coveting if we are unwilling or unable to give up what we have.

- (4) We might be coveting if we frequently are grumbling about our house, our spouse, the quality and quantity of our possessions and the general state of life.**
- (5) Listening to those around us who are pointing these things out about our behavior.**

18. Francis Schaeffer said about this topic, *"Thou shalt not covet" is the internal commandment which shows the man who thinks himself to be moral that he really needs a Savior. The average such 'moral' man, who has lived comparing himself to other men and comparing himself to a rather easy list of rules, can feel, like Paul that he is getting along all right. But suddenly, when he is confronted with the inward command not to covet, he is brought to his knee."*

- a. Rom. 7:7- *"What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness."***
- b. Is this Paul giving an excuse for his bad behavior? Why or why not?**

C. WSC #82- Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? *No mere man since the fall is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but does daily break them in thought, word and deed.* WSC # 83- Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous? *Some sins, in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.* WSC #84- What does every sin deserve? *Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.*

- 1. What does the answer to #82 mean when it says *"no mere man..."*?
 - a. The answer declares the truth...all the rest of us break the commandments in thought, word, and deed every day.**
 - b. Only Jesus since the Fall has kept the commandments perfectly.**
- 2. So...how bad is post-Fall man?
 - a. Gen. 6:5-8- *"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to his heart. So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."***

- b. Eccl. 7:20- *“Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.”***
 - c. Rom. 3: 10-18- *“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”***
3. Charles Spurgeon speaking of how the people at Sinai were afraid of God speaking and how they sent Moses off in their place because of their fear of God asked this question, *“If simply hearing the law was such a frightful experience, then how terrifying will it be to meet God after breaking the law?”*
- a. What do you suppose the general response to such question would be today?**
 - (1) Many people in the church and outside of it believe that God will accept them because they generally play by the rules.**
 - (2) Ironically, most of them would have trouble even naming the 10 Commandments, let alone keep them.**
 - (3) Nevertheless, they assume that because they have never murdered anyone or committed perjury, God will be pleased enough to let them into heaven.**
 - b. Why is it that most people do NOT fear God?**
4. How can the catechism qualify sins as it does in Q and A # 83? What kinds of sins of sins are more heinous than others? In fact, who are held more accountable and why?
- a. Prov. 6:16-19- *“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”***
 - b. As R.C. Sproul says, *“If loving the LORD our God with all our hearts, our minds and our strength and our neighbor as ourselves are the greatest commandments. Then what is the greatest sin?”***
 - c. They have been distinguishable this way:**
 - (1) Sins committed against God are more heinous than sins against man. Sins against the first table of the law are always considered worse than the second. I Sam. 2:25- *“If someone***

sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?"

- (2) The first heinous sin against God was Adam and Eve choosing themselves over God.**
- (3) The next was murder...destroying the image of God when Cain kills Abel.**
- (4) Idolatry- Ezek. 6:9- *"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen all the disaster that I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, because of the evil that they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to make offerings and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers. Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!'"***
- (5) Blaspheming the Holy Spirit- Matt. 12:31- *"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."***
- d. Rom. 3:19-20- *"Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."***
- e. James 2:8-13- *"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not murder. If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment."***
- f. Rom. 2:22-32- *"Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men***

likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."

5. Westminster Larger Catechism #151- Question 151: What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others? *Sins receive their aggravations, from the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them, or any other, and the common good of all or many. From the nature and quality of the offense: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, wilfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.*
6. What does "every" sin deserve?
 - a. **Death and the eternal wrath of God. Rom. 6:23- *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."***
 - b. **It has been said, *"Most people find a skunk's odor sickening. But other skunks don't. Our sins are offensive to a holy God but they don't seem so bad to other sinners."***

7. How do we explain away sin today?
 - a. **Mental illness...**
 - b. **Drug addiction...**
 - c. **Abusive parents...**
 - d. **Tough breaks in life in general...**
 - e. **The welfare state...**
 - f. **They don't love themselves for some reason or another...**
 - g. **It is often said that criminals need treatment rather than punishment...**
 - h. **What are we saying when we make excuses rather than hold each other accountable for our behavior with the laws of the land and of God?**
 - (1) **That all law is wrong and that none of it is absolute.**
 - (2) **That each sentence depends on many other factors than whether a person is guilty or not.**
 - (3) **We have no fear of God or His Word.**
8. What is the wrath of God? **Some believe God's wrath defines Him.** But what do the commandments show actually defines Him? **His love for His own!**
9. Since all of this is true about fallen men, how then can King David say with a straight face, ***"I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering."*** (Ps. 25:1)
10. How many sins are required to receive God's wrath and curse? **Just 1...Adam's...because of that 1 sin we are all cursed.**
11. What does this absoluteness reveal about God's character?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
July 25, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #82- Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? *No mere man since the fall is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but does daily break them in thought, word and deed.* WSC # 83- Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous? *Some sins, in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.* WSC #84- What does every sin deserve? *Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.*

1. What are these catechisms Q and A's seeking to communicate to believers about the law?
 - a. **That we are not as "GOOD" as we think ourselves to be...that we are law-breakers even as we children of God.**
 - b. **Some sins are more heinous than other sins.**
 - c. **But that ALL sin deserves the same thing...death...save for the finished work of Christ applied to His Elect from all time.**
2. What did we say made some sins more heinous than others as the catechism points out?
 - a. **Sins committed against God are more heinous than sins against man. Sins against the first table of the law are always considered worse than the second. I Sam. 2:25- *"If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?"***
 - (6) **The first heinous sin against God was Adam and Eve choosing themselves over God.**
 - (7) **The next was murder...destroying the image of God when Cain kills Abel.**
 - (8) **Idolatry- Ezek. 6:9- *"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen all the disaster that I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, because of the evil that they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to make offerings and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers. Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!'"***
 - (9) **Blaspheming the Holy Spirit- Matt. 12:31- *"Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."***

- b. Rom. 2:22-32- *“Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”***
- c. Rom. 3:19-20- *“Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”***
- d. James 2:8-10 *“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”***

3. Heidelberg Catechism:

- a. 114. Can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly? *No; but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with earnest purpose they begin to live, not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God.***
- b. 115. Why then doth God so strictly enjoin upon us the ten commandments, since in this life no one can keep them? *First, that all our life long, we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ; secondly, that we may continually strive, and beg from God the grace of the Holy Ghost, so as to***

become more and more changed into the image of God, till we attain finally to full perfection after this life.

4. What does this absoluteness reveal about God's character?

C. Ending thoughts on the 10 Commandments

1. See Exodus 20:18-19- *"Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.'"*

a. The people are terrified...the smoke was awesome...like standing there witnessing a volcano and knowing there is nowhere to hide...too much for their senses. And all of this because, as they were told back in chapter 19, *"because the LORD had descended on Mount Sinai in fire."*

b. So before and after the giving of the 10 Commandments there were thunder and lightning and smoke. First, to tell them not to come near and then to show us how they responded...in an appropriate fear of the LORD for perhaps the first time. So they stood far off.

c. So what did they fear?

(1) The Law itself...

- **And they could see God was demanding total allegiance...not their "free will" but total allegiance and obedience...no options.**
- **God was making an absolute claim on their whole life from worship to recreation.**

(2) They were frightened by the threat of God's judgement ...

- **What they knew to be true was now codified by God Himself which meant to them they see clearly their sinfulness. They were guilty before a holy God...what would He do?**
- **Fire and smoke...thunder and lightning and loud blasts of the trumpet were all signs of judgement and the final judgment.**

d. They also feared dealing with God directly so they chose the One God had chosen as Mediator...Moses to stand before God and them.

(1) Many people claim that they want an unmediated encounter with the Holy God but when you are in His presence even in the manifestations of thunder and lightning and smoke and trembling we would all cower away afraid that we would be wiped off the face of the earth.

(2) For He is a majestic and powerful and Holy God which is a terror to sinners.

(3) God had chosen Moses for this task and they recognized now their need for a mediator. Recognizing their sinfulness they needed a mediator. Mediators do 2 things:

- **1st, Speak to the people for God...like he does immediately in vs. 20- *“Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin.’”***

■ **Speak to them of the Law’s purposes:**

- **The Law restrains our sin by threatening punishment...in human society the law is a deterrent.**
- **The Law reveals our sin by proving we cannot live up to God’s standard.**
- **The law shows us, who have been saved by grace, how to live in a way that brings God glory and we are able to enjoy Him. It continues to restrain us from sin and reveal to us our need for God’s grace and it also instructs us in righteousness.**

■ **But Moses says *“Do not fear...”* It was not God’s intention to destroy them...at the time...for this law is given you unto righteousness. It was given for their obedience and it was the mediator’s job to encourage them in their keeping the law in joy and obedience that God would do such a thing for the people He had just delivered and then later for their children as they go into the Promised Land.**

- **2nd, speak to God for the people. Ex. 20:21- *“The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.”* Moses entered God’s presence to speak for the people to God as their mediator.**

2. Now if simply hearing the Law was such a frightening thing, then how terrifying will it be to meet God after breaking His law all our life if we are not His?

- a. **Again many people think that God will accept them because they generally play by the rules. Ironically, most would have trouble even naming many of the Commandments let alone the laws of their land.**
- b. **But since they haven’t done any of the big ones...like murder or lie in court (which we have seen we all lie) that God will be pleased enough to let them into heaven. God doesn’t really have a holy standard...just a standard like guidelines really.**
- c. **But the reality is that anyone who thinks they can keep God’s law in its fullest ought to go ahead and try because they will soon discover the real impossibility of it. As the next Catechism question will substantiate, *No mere man since the fall is able, in***

this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but does daily break them in thought, word and deed.

- d. If we cannot keep it then it becomes a threat to us...a deadly threat. And no one can keep it as God defines.**

(1) Rom. 3:20-*"For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."*

(2) James 2:10-*"For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it."*

- e. We all now what we have to do. God has told us and He has written His law on our hearts. The problem is that we can't do it and when we discover that we should be dismayed and terrified....for the law only condemns us in the end.**

- 3. So just like Israel then we need a Mediator to speak for God and to speak to God. Who is our Mediator now? **Jesus, the Son of God.****

a. Rom. 8:1-4-*"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."*

b. I Tim. 2:5-6-*"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time."*

c. Hebrews 8:4-7-*"Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, 'See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.' But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second."* Christ is the better/best mediator...Moses simply was a shadow ..a type...looking forward to Christ's fulfillment of the covenant of grace.

d. In fact the Bible assures us as Christians from Heb. 12:18-20-*"For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, 'If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be*

- stoned.’ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I tremble with fear.’ But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”***
- e. Jesus, our mediator, teaches us God’s law for our righteousness. It teaches us, His children, how we are to live and prepares us for heaven.**
- (1) Thomas Watson, Puritan pastor explains, “*Though a Christian is not under the condemning power of the law, yet he is under its commanding power.*”**
- (2) So Jesus teaches us the requirements of God’s moral law ...the eternal standards of God’s righteousness. Matt. 5:17-18- “*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. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*”**
- (3) Rev. Samuel Bolton, another Puritan pastor says this, “*The law sends us to the gospel that we may be justified; and the gospel send us to the law again to inquire what is our duty as those who are justified.*”**
- f. So as Christians in Christ we now keep the 10 Commandments ...not so much because we have to but because we “GET” to ...because in Christ we are able to! Because we love Jesus we get to...we want to...we live to keep His commandments. John 14:15- “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*”**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
August 1, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Did you learn anything new about the 10 Commandments after going through these rather extensively? If so, what?
2. If you learned nothing new, what has been re-affirmed in you since spending out time together with the Catechism on these commandments?
3. What does this type of absoluteness reveal about God's character?

C. WSC# 85- What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin? *To escape the wrath and curse of God due us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ...repentance unto life...with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.* WSC #86- What is faith in Jesus Christ? *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.* WSC # 87- What is repentance unto life? *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby the sinner...out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ...does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.* WSC #88- What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? *The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances; especially the Word, Sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.*

1. If you were to put WSC #85 into your own words what would you say?
 - a. **Man cannot keep God's law on his own, but thankfully God is merciful to His children and has provided a way by which we may be saved.**
 - b. **The way consists in faith and repentance, which are INWARD means of salvation, along with the diligent use of all the OUTWARD means that we will talk about.**
2. Just so we are clear, according to WSC #85, what things are required of us to escape God's wrath and curse due all of us for our sins?
 - a. **Faith in Jesus Christ- Acts 16:29-31- "And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"**

- b. **Repentance for sin-** Acts 3:19- ***“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.”***
 - c. **Diligent striving in the use of all the appointed means.** Luke 13:24- ***“And someone said to Him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’ And He said to them, ‘Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.’”*** Striving has in its meaning...to strive according to God’s will...this is not simply exerting your strength and your will but striving within the strength and will of God through God’s appointed means. Phil. 2:12-13-***“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”***
 - d. So, pop quiz? What are the appointed means of grace that we can use?
3. Why is WSC #85 such a crucial question to ask?
- a. What does it mean when it says “require of us”? **Not optional!** Is there some form of work that is required that we might be saved? Why or why not given the language?
 - (1) **Just because it says we are required to have something does not mean that we can get it on our own.**
 - (2) **Sometimes we are given what we are required to have for our job...like authority, or equipment or an office or a vehicle is given to us because we need it...it is sometimes not something we can get on our own when we work for someone else who supplies these things. So the idea that God gives faith and brings about repentance is not a foreign concept when we think about it.**
 - (3) **Though these are our duties, the Bible makes it abundantly clear we cannot in our fallen nature perform them. They come solely by the good pleasure and power of God. II Cor. 3:5- “Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient...”**
 - (4) **God’s work in us by faith which brings about repentance, however, does not exclude our working afterwards to experience these more and more to God’s glory.**

- **Phil. 2:12-13-“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”**
 - **I Peter 1:5-10-“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”**
- b. So just to be clear, is there any other way to escape God’s wrath?**
- (1) For as the Bible makes clear so the catechism confirms it is impossible to escape God’s wrath without faith and repentance...no matter how “good and moral” someone may seek to live their life. This knowledge should cause us more and more to want to make sure we live to God’s glory...and tell others about this wonderful God that commands all men to repent.**
- **Matt. 5:20-“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”**
 - **John 3:18-“Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”**
 - **Titus 3:4-5-“ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...”**
 - **Heb. 2:3-“For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?”**
- (2) It also confirms that all repentant and believing sinners do escape God’s wrath.**
- **Rom. 8:1-2-“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of**

life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” There is no clearer and more comforting and encouraging verses!

- **Col. 1:9-14-***“ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

4. WSC #86 defines for us faith. Where does faith come from?
 - a. **John 1:12-13-***“But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*
 - b. **Gal. 5:22-***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*
 - c. **Eph. 2:8-9-***“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*
 - d. **It is a Trinitarian gift granted to the elect alone.**
5. What is the true character of or description of a believer?
 - a. **He is one that, who has been convinced of His sin and misery, and of his own and all other human beings inability to save themselves.**
 - b. **He is one who now knows the ability and willingness of Christ to save him, and he lets go or yields all his dependence on the flesh and his own perceived righteousness and casts himself on Christ.**
6. Does having faith remove fear and doubt?
 - a. **No, true believers are plagued by these all our lives...however, they should causes us to run to God for protection and encouragement and strength.**
 - b. **Mark 9:24-***“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’”*

- c. II Cor. 1:3-4- *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”***
- d. II Cor. 1:8-10- *“For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will deliver us again.”***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
August 1, 2021

D. Prayer

E. Review

4. Did you learn anything new about the 10 Commandments after going through these rather extensively? If so, what?

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7. If you were to put WSC #85 into your own words what would you say?

c. Man cannot keep God's law on his own, but thankfully God is merciful to His children and has provided a way by which we may be saved.

d. The way consists in faith and repentance, which are INWARD means of salvation, along with the diligent use of all the OUTWARD means that we will talk about.

8. Just so we are clear, according to WSC #85, what things are required of us to escape God's wrath and curse due all of us for our sins?

e. Faith in Jesus Christ- Acts 16:29-31- "And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"

- f. **Repentance for sin- Acts 3:19-** ***“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.”***
- g. **Diligent striving in the use of all the appointed means. Luke 13:24-** ***“And someone said to Him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’ And He said to them, ‘Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.’”*** Striving has in its meaning...to strive according to God’s will...this is not simply exerting your strength and your will but striving within the strength and will of God through God’s appointed means. Phil. 2:12-13-***“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”***
- h. So, pop quiz? What are the appointed means of grace that we can use?
9. Why is WSC #85 such a crucial question to ask?
- c. What does it mean when it says “require of us”? **Not optional!** Is there some form of work that is required that we might be saved? Why or why not given the language?
- (5) **Just because it says we are required to have something does not mean that we can get it on our own.**
- (6) **Sometimes we are given what we are required to have for our job...like authority, or equipment or an office or a vehicle is given to us because we need it...it is sometimes not something we can get on our own when we work for someone else who supplies these things. So the idea that God gives faith and brings about repentance is not a foreign concept when we think about it.**
- (7) **Though these are our duties, the Bible makes it abundantly clear we cannot in our fallen nature perform them. They come solely by the good pleasure and power of God. II Cor. 3:5- “Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient...”**
- (8) **God’s work in us by faith which brings about repentance, however, does not exclude our working afterwards to experience these more and more to God’s glory.**

- **Phil. 2:12-13-*“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”***
 - **I Peter 1:5-10-*“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”***
- d. So just to be clear, is there any other way to escape God’s wrath?
- (3) For as the Bible makes clear so the catechism confirms it is impossible to escape God’s wrath without faith and repentance...no matter how “good and moral” someone may seek to live their life. This knowledge should cause us more and more to want to make sure we live to God’s glory...and tell others about this wonderful God that commands all men to repent.**
- **Matt. 5:20-*“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”***
 - **John 3:18-*“Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”***
 - **Titus 3:4-5-*“ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...”***
 - **Heb. 2:3-*“For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?”***
- (4) It also confirms that all repentant and believing sinners do escape God’s wrath.**
- **Rom. 8:1-2-*“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of***

life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” There is no clearer and more comforting and encouraging verses!

- **Col. 1:9-14-**“ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

10.WSC #86 defines for us faith. Where does faith come from?

- e. John 1:12-13-**“*But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*”
- f. Gal. 5:22-**“*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*”
- g. Eph. 2:8-9-**“*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*”
- h. It is a Trinitarian gift granted to the elect alone.**

11.What is the true character of or description of a believer?

- c. He is one that, who has been convinced of His sin and misery, and of his own and all other human beings inability to save themselves.**
- d. He is one who now knows the ability and willingness of Christ to save him, and he lets go or yields all his dependence on the flesh and his own perceived righteousness and casts himself on Christ.**

12.Does having faith remove fear and doubt?

- e. No, true believers are plagued by these all our lives...however, they should causes us to run to God for protection and encouragement and strength.**
- f. Mark 9:24-**“*Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’*”

- g. II Cor. 1:3-4- *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”***
- h. II Cor. 1:8-10- *“For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will deliver us again.”***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
August 8, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC# 85- What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin? *To escape the wrath and curse of God due us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ...repentance unto life...with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.* WSC #86- What is faith in Jesus Christ? *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.* WSC # 87-What is repentance unto life? *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby the sinner...out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ...does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.* WSC #88- What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? *The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances; especially the Word, Sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.*

1. What did we say last time was some of the reasons why WSC #85 is such a good question and answer for us...especially in this day and age?
2. Since these were originally written for our children, what is required of us as parents a, elders and church members concerning our covenant children?
3. Just as a point of comparison...and extra:
 - a. WLC #72: What is justifying faith? *Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.*
 - b. WLC #73: How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God? *Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and his righteousness.*
4. WSC #86- What is faith in Jesus Christ? *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He*

is offered to us in the gospel. WSC # 87-What is repentance unto life? Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby the sinner...out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ...does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

5. For comparison look at- WLC# 76- What is repentance unto life?
Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

6. William S. Plumer, 19th Cent. American Presbyterian pastor/theologian said once of his day concerning faith in Jesus Christ, *"In the wars of opinion the greatest contests ever known have been on the question, whether Christ is the sole and sufficient cause of salvation. Strange that any, who have God's word, should be at a loss on such a matter. The language of Scripture is clear, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Rom. 10:4) This is the sum of inspired teachings on the subject. This doctrine is quite beyond the suggestion of reason. The gospel is not the progeny of human wisdom."*

7. Why are both of these- faith (WSC#86) and repentance (#87) considered to be "saving graces"?
 - a. **If a saving grace is defined as the act of believing...then it would be a work... but it comes only from God to His elect that leads to salvation and it cannot be refused or taken away.**
 - b. **Both of these are gifts from God...saving faith and repentance unto life! God does require something for salvation, but He also provides that "something" for His own.**
 - c. **This saving grace is that we are saved from outside ourselves by faith in opposition to all our works which are only filthy rags before salvation...and faith is the instrument used to apprehend and apply Christ's righteousness alone to God's elect.**
 - (1) **Jesus said of Himself, "I am the way...no man comes to the Father except through me." The only way is through faith in Christ Jesus that leads to repentance.**
 - (2) **Acts 16:31-"And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"**
 - (3) **Rom. 3:21-25- "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is**

no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith."

(4) Eph. 2:4-10- "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

- d. We have to be given them in order to be saved, because these belong to someone else...namely God's.**
- e. How would you define "repentance unto life"?**
 - (1) Repentance in short form is seeing a true view of our sin and a clear view of God's mercy, and then turning completely to God with an anxious desire to love and serve Him.**
 - (2) Nothing should grieve us more than the fact that we are sinners and we have purposefully sinned against the Holy God.**
 - (3) There is nothing more terrible than to sin, to rebel, to offend our Holy God.**
 - (4) It is called repentance unto life because it leads to eternal life highlighting that God is the one who provides all that we need for salvation.**
 - Is. 55:7- *"...let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."***
 - Prov. 28:13-*"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."***
 - II Cor. 7:9-10-*"As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."***
 - Just so we are clear, again this is not a team effort between God and man as some in the Church are inclined to say. The triune God does it all. It is monergistic in**

nature...in that salvation is the work of the One true and living God alone.

8. Why is grief for our sin needful in repentance?
- a. **God's requires it and He has promised mercy to those who mourn their sin.**
 - b. **Because it further works the heart into a willingness to leave sinful behavior behind. This grief and hatred in other words, causes us to flee from sin....to turn away from it and turn toward the most Holy and loving God.**
 - c. **Repentance is not just deep sorrow for our sins it also includes action an action that turns us to live ... with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.**
- (1) **Jeremiah 31:17-20-*"There is hope for your future, declares the LORD, and your children shall come back to their own country. I have heard Ephraim grieving, 'You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the LORD my God. For after I had turned away, I relented, and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh; I was ashamed, and I was confounded, because I bore the disgrace of my youth.' Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the LORD."***
- (2) **James 4:9-10-*"Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."***
- (3) **II Cor. 7:10-11- *"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."***
- **What is the difference between godly grief over our sin that leads to repentance and worldly grief over errors that produces death?**
 - **John Colquhoun says, from Evangelical Repentance, *"Penitential sorrow settles more deeply, and continues more firm than any other grief. It is also a lively sorrow, a grief that quickens the soul. The sorrow of the world works death; it indisposes a man for activity in duty. But godly sorrow, quickens a man to the spiritual performance of duty (2 Cor 7:11). The former arises from slavish dread, which chills and stiffens the soul, and so renders it unfit for action, the latter from faith and love, which warm the heart, and dispose it to be ardent and active (Luke 7:47). It is a universal sorrow. The evangelical penitent is grieved in heart not only for his***

own iniquities but for those of others (Psa 119:136). It is moreover an operative sorrow. It "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of" (2 Cor 7:10). Godly sorrow and turning to God are inseparable. Evangelical sorrow in the heart is a spring which, as it runs, works out the love, power, and practice of sin. In a word, it is sorrow which continues in the heart as long as sin remains in it. The grief of the legal penitent is like a summer-flood, which is soon over, but the sorrow of the evangelical penitent is like a living spring, which, in a greater or lesser measure, always sends forth water."

- d. We don't do this to maintain our salvation, but rather, because our salvation has already been accomplished we do this for God glory just as we were created to do.***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
August 15, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC # 87-What is repentance unto life? *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby the sinner...out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ...does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.*
- 9. Why is grief for our sin needful in repentance?
 - e. **God's requires it and He has promised mercy to those who mourn their sin.**
 - f. **This should be a natural consequence of loving God...when we dishonor Him so easily. No grief= no true love for God.**
 - g. **Because it further works the heart into a willingness to leave sinful behavior behind. This grief and hatred in other words, causes us to flee from sin....to turn away from it and turn toward the most Holy and loving God.**
 - h. **Repentance is not just deep sorrow for our sins it also includes an action that turns us to live ... with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.**
 - i. **We don't do this to maintain our salvation, but rather, because our salvation has already been accomplished we do this for God's glory just as we were created to do.**
- 10. What does the catechism mean...what does the Bible mean... about us hating our sin? What does that look like?
 - a. **This is an inward deep disgust, repugnance or revulsion of the sin...it makes you sick to think about it kind of hatred.**
 - b. **Then a recognition that we are this disgusting and sickening when we sin before a holy God and depending upon the sin to others believers as well. Ezek. 36:3-32-*"Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the LORD God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel."***
 - c. **John Colquhoun (Reformed minister with the Church of Scotland 1748-1827)- *"It is the eye of faith, contemplating sin in the cross of the adorable Redeemer, that affects the heart with bitter repentance and with true abhorrence of all iniquity."***
 - d. **Hatred is necessary because no other condition of the heart will enable us to want to actually act against that sinfulness.**
 - e. **The prayer of a Puritan from The Valley of Vision -
*"May I there see my sins as
the nails that transfixd Him,
the cords that bound Him,
the thorns that tore Him,
the sword that pierced Him."***

11. What does the catechism mean about a “with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.”?

a. **Psalm 119:59-60-“When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.”**

(1) The psalmist “*thinks on his ways*” realizing that he is NOT living up to God’s expectations/ commands.

(2) We are expected to make a conscience sanctified choice to turn and walk in God’s ways. ...daily!

b. Obviously, the new obedience that is outlined in the gospel.

(1) **Luke 7: 37-48- “And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind Him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.’ And Jesus answering said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he answered, ‘Say it, Teacher.’ ‘A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?’ Simon answered, ‘The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.’ And He said to him, ‘You have judged rightly.’ Then turning toward the woman He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.’ And He said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’”**

(2) **Rom. 7:6-“But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.”**

(3) Thinking of these 2 texts, what are some of the changes that have occurred in these repentant believers that reveal their penitence?

- **In the Luke text, that fact that she did what she did... “she loved much”... is Jesus’ explanation as to why her sins are forgiven. The love she reveals in her heartfelt actions reveals a changed heart.**
- **The conjunction, “for” in the Greek, does not always denote the cause of a thing, but sometimes the effect and evidence of it. Many commentators point out, that the woman’s love, is here pointed out as the effect of the pardon of her sins, is evident from the whole discourse.**
- **In the Roman text, we see that the result of faith and repentance that we have been released from the condemnation of the Law enabling us to turn and to continue to turn away from sin and walk as God has described for us to walk.**

- c. Again, just because we don't always exhibit life in this obedience doesn't mean it is not there...another aspect of this new obedience is that we sense guilt and desire to turn from our sin.
12. Just so we are clear is repentance a one and done or is it an abiding principle for the Christians? How would you support your answer?
- a. It is an abiding principle, since even as we have been justified we still have the fallen nature within us and we sin...so we must continually be mourning our sin, confessing it before the Lord and turning from it.
- (1) Because of sin and our need for God daily Isaiah says- Isaiah 38:14-16- *"Like a swallow or a crane I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety! What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. Oh restore me to health and make me live!"*
- (2) I John 1:9- *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
- (3) I John 2:1- *"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if (when) anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*
- b. This is to be viewed as a permanent grace, as much a habitual state of mind, enabling those of us who have been privileged with it to mourn daily for our sins till God wipe away every tear from our eyes (Rev. 21:4).
- c. The good news is this, John 16:7-8- *"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."* The Holy Spirit...our Helper... God defines Himself that way in the Old Testament it has always been true. He is our helper. To do what?
- (1) The Holy Spirit helps us by convicting our hearts of the sin that is in us, the righteousness that is of God, and the judgement that is to come. When these realities grip our consciences, they bend our knees before God and turn our hearts to Jesus...in repentance. It is a super-natural gift given only to the Elect.
- (2) Jesus said that the ultimate job of the Holy Spirit was not only to tell the truth about us, but to *"bear witness/testify about me"* (John 15:26). The Spirit helps us by revealing our sin and our Savior – doing one without the other would be no help.
13. With all of this in mind, which comes first faith in Jesus Christ or repentance unto life? Why?
- a. Faith must precede or repentance will not and cannot follow...since unlike what some may say we are dead and have nothing within us that would move us to repent or even allows us to move in that direction...we are dead in our sins...the dead don't move...they simply stay where they are and rot.

b. Augustus Toplady (author of Rock of Ages) said once- *“True repentance is the “tear of faith”; and as such the eye must exist previously to the tear it sheds; so must faith be wrought in the heart it is then true repentance weeps.”*

14. With all the benefits that we have been given for repenting why don't we do it more often and why is it seemingly, from our perspective, not working, since we seem to have a propensity to keep doing the sins we do?

15. WSC# 88- What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? *The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances; especially the Word, Sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.* This speaks of the OUTWARD means where by Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption. What makes anything to become a divine ordinance?

a. The institution of it by God...who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

b. Confirmed or affirmed in Scripture as such are the Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

(1) Romans 10:14-17-*“And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

(2) Matt. 28:19-20-*“ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

(3) I Cor. 11:1,2, 23-26-*“ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions/ordinances even as I delivered them to you... For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, 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.’ In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”*

c. Some would also say fellowshiping with other believers and mercy ministries...perhaps evangelism and discipleship...but sitting under the correct preaching and teaching of the Word along with personal study ought to cause great desire to rise up among us to meet together in fellowship with one another and mercy ministries, evangelism and discipleship ought to also flow naturally from the first so a new category is not necessary.

16. What does the answer of #88 mean when it calls these ordinances “ordinary”?
- a. The ordinances are called ordinary because :**
 - (1) They are ordinarily seen, felt, smelled, heard and tasted.**
 - (2) The Lord has not completely limited Himself to these. He can if He chooses to use extraordinary means to affect a growing salvation in us.**
 - (3) But these are the most common and usual way to effect salvation’s growth as means of grace.**
 - b. For there is nothing extra-ordinary or miraculous in and of themselves the extraordinary is what God does with and through them as means of grace.**
 - c. And these ordinances are only made effectual to the elect. Acts. 2:46-47- *“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”***
17. Since there is a divinely established relationship between God’s inward graces and His outward means of grace for us, is one dependent upon the other? Does the outward need to be evident to prove the inward work of God on a person?
- a. No...God is not tied to these means of grace...ORDINANCES as the catechism calls them...**
 - b. God uses these to provide us with tangible blessings because of the inward saving graces. Hence “means of grace”.**
 - c. These strengthen our faith, they bring us peace in the storm, they provide us with a place and an identity from God as we participate...but they don’t prove our faith neither do they have to be present to secure our faith.**
 - d. They remind us to thank God for His goodness towards us.**
18. Having said this, the OUTWARD means of grace are of obvious import for us as Christians not to be neglected. The catechism speaks of “*the diligent use of*” them. What is it communicating to the Christian?
- a. It is not up to us to just decide not to be under the authority of the Word...it is a slam against God and His church.**
 - b. Baptism should not be denied to our children or anyone who believes for that is to deny God’s covenantal promises and His signs and seals to His people.**
 - c. The only time one should not receive the Lord’s Supper is if they are unrepentant of sin in their life...or when one is under discipline even if they have repented for in this life we often have to prove our words.**
 - d. These added to an aid our “fear of the Lord”. Ps. 89:5-7-*“Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around Him?”***

- e. Also, we are to greatly prepare before the Lord before we engage in them.

(1) Job 11:13-14- “If you prepare your heart, you will stretch out your hands toward him. If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not injustice dwell in your tents. Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure and will not fear.”

(2) I Chron. 29:18- Asks God to prepare our hearts aright- “O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you.”

19. WSC# 85- What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin? *To escape the wrath and curse of God due us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ...repentance unto life...with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.* WSC #86- What is faith in Jesus Christ? *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.* WSC # 87-What is repentance unto life? *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby the sinner...out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ...does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.* WSC #88- What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? *The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances; especially the Word, Sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.*

- a. What is the main lesson for us to learn from Q and A #85-88?

(1) God has determined how His people will be saved and how we will grow.

(2) We do not have a choice in our salvation. But we do have choices concerning our growth in grace...the ways and means by which the Lord provides. His ways work...why wouldn't we want to do it His way?

(3) God provides the how, and the will, and the command to do it! And He also provides the way we will grow and the ability for us to repent and begin again when we sin before the face of God which is also part of our growth.

- b. What are the outward means of grace that God gave to the Church and that He uses to keep us growing in the faith?

(1) The Word

(2) The sacraments

(3) Prayer

- c. Given all of this from #85- #88, why then is church membership and regular attendance so important for the believer?

(1) You cannot receive and participate in the OUTWARD means of grace when you don't become a member and regularly attend.

(2) Membership signifies a particular commitment that you are publicly making.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
August 22, 2021

A. Prayer

- B. Review- WSC# 85- What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin? *To escape the wrath and curse of God due us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ...repentance unto life...with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.* WSC #86- What is faith in Jesus Christ? *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.* WSC # 87-What is repentance unto life? *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby the sinner...out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ...does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.* WSC #88- What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption? *The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances; especially the Word, Sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.*

1. What is the main lesson for us to learn from Q and A #85-88?

- a. **God has determined how His people will be saved and how we will grow.**
- b. **We do not have a choice in our salvation. But we do have choices concerning our growth in grace...the ways and means by which the Lord provides. His ways work...why wouldn't we want to do it His way?**
- c. **God provides the how, and the will, and the command to do it! And He also provides the way we will grow and the ability for us to repent and begin again when we sin before the face of God which is also part of our growth.**

2. Given all of this from #85- #88, why then is church membership and regular attendance so important for the believer?

- a. **You cannot receive and participate in the OUTWARD means of grace when you don't become a member and regularly attend.**
- b. **Membership signifies a particular commitment that you are publicly making.**
- c. **You're in a conversation and someone says, "I'm a Christian but I don't go to church because I don't get anything from it." Or you are talking to them about your faith and they say, "Oh I know, I Am a Christian." Then you ask the next question, "Oh, where do you go to church?" And they say something like, "Nowhere right now and it is not affecting me one way or another." What would you say?**
 - (1) **Many Christians practice a do-it-yourself faith. While a majority of the population still claims to be Christian, church attendance is at a historic low.**
 - (2) **Clearly, a lot of people think they can follow Christ without the Church. But in reality, they're misunderstanding what the Church is and why it's important, and they ignore the Bible's command that we gather for corporate worship.**

- C. WSC # 89- How is the Word made effectual to salvation? *The spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of*

convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

1. What does the catechism mean by “the word”?
 - a. **Of course, this is the very word of God consigned to the writings in the books of the Old and New Testament which is to be ministered to man and is to be received as God’s Word.**
 - b. **1 Thessalonians 2:13a- “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us...”**
2. How is the Word effectual...in your own words?
 - a. **God’s Word is all by itself the power of God unto salvation.**
 - (1) **John 13: 17-“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them”** Of course, there are commands in Scripture. But Sinclair Ferguson reminds us as well... **“Obedience is essential. But we must never lose sight of the fact that the Word itself does its own work in us.**
 - (2) **Jesus had said: “You are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you” (15: 3). Later on, His prayer takes up the same theme: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (17: 17). The central lesson? Growth in holiness involves our doing what God’s Word tells us. But more fundamental than our doing God’s Word is what God’s Word is doing to us! Yes, we are called to be “up and doing” for Him. But that is possible only when we have let the Word of God do its own work in us.”**
 - (3) **1 Thess. 2: 13b- “...not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers”**
 - **Sinclair Ferguson again weighs in-“This is why it is so important for us to sit under a steady ministry of the Word of God,**
 - **We should also encourage those who preach to us to feed us well, and to pray for God’s blessing on their expositions.**
 - **He also says any preacher worth his salt will delight in having hearers whose disposition says: “Feed me more! I want the Word of Christ to dwell in me richly, in order that my fellowship and union with Christ may bear more fruit.”**
 - **If this is lacking, we become anemic. But we may not notice our weakness for some time. We adjust to the spiritual diet we are being fed and become accustomed to it as though it is normal—and then we tend to assume we are living normal Christian lives. Only if we find ourselves in a situation where the Word of God is expounded well and fully does it dawn on us that we have been surviving on a starvation diet. Don’t allow that to happen to you!”**
 - (4) **John Owen said concerning the important and effectiveness of God’s word, “So ought we to look upon the word with a holy awe and reverence of the presence of God in it.”**
 - (5) **In his Judgment of Scripture, Cranmer says: “I would advise you all, that come to the reading or hearing of this book, which is the word of God, the most precious jewel, and most holy relic that**

remaineth upon earth, that ye bring with you the fear of God, and that ye do it with all due reverence, and use your knowledge thereof, not to vain glory of frivolous disputation, but to the honor of God, increase of virtue, and edification both of yourselves and others."

- b. And this Word of God is made effectual by God Himself through the work of the Spirit on the hearts of His elect....and unless the Spirit enlivens us it won't happen.**

(1) Eph. 1:13-14- "In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory."

(2) John 5:39- "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me..."

- This on one hand speaks of how the leaders searched and searched and searched for how to be saved, sincerely thinking it is in there (and it is!)...**
- But on the other hand they have missed the point because Jesus...the incarnate Word... is in front of them and they refused to acknowledge that He is the One the Scriptures testify too.... The Savior of His people.**

(3) John 6:39- "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all."

- 3. What is the catechism talking about here when it speaks of "salvation"?**

- a. God uses the Word to convict, convince and to convert the unbelieving elect from all time.**
- b. God uses the word as a work of on-going sanctification unto glory.**
- c. Our salvation literally began when God redeemed us but it won't be complete until Christ returns. Phil. 1:6- *"And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."***

- 4. By putting the answer the way the divines do, are we left to believe that simply reading and hearing the Scriptures are a means of salvation and of grace for the believer?**

- a. Yes, it is.**

(1) Is. 55:3- "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."

(2) Speaking of the coming kings...but also to us Moses says in Deut. 17:18-20- "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel."

(3) We see this same type of command given to Joshua, Josh 1:7-8-
“Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.”

(4) And then again from Rev. 1:3- “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.”

b. Why? Rom. 1:16-17-“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”

5. Having considered the reading of the word as a means of salvation and means of grace, why do you suppose they put such a “high premium” on the preaching of God’s Word using the word “especially” to make their point?

a. Obviously, the Spirit could and does move men to salvation only by reading...and obviously matures believers by the use of reading the word of God...

b. But men being men cannot on their own understand the Word ordinarily unto salvation...that is why the catechism stresses with the word “especially”. Most people need to be led and that is the ordinary means God uses for us to proclaim the Word or to help people walk through the word.

(1) Rom. 10:14-17-“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

(2) Acts 8:29-39-“And the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over and join this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: ‘Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.’ And the eunuch said to Philip, ‘About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they

came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing."

6. This is such an uplifting catechism question, but does the Word read and preached convince and convert all who read and hear it?

a. In the context of the rest of the catechism and the Scriptures the answer, of course, is no.

(1) To the non-elect Jesus said in Matt. 25:45-46- "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. 4 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

(2) Acts 13:48- "And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed"

- D. WSC# 90- How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation? *That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.*

1. Why do you suppose this question even needed to be asked?

a. Because we are NOT diligent in these:

(1) Preparation

(2) Prayer

(3) Piety

(4) Practice

b. These are crucial in the effectualness especially for our growth in grace after we are saved. ...and we neglect these.

c. To emphasize that people who prepare to receive and hear the Word give evidence of the faith in the One who desires to save them until the end.

(1) Psalm 10:17- "O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more."

(2) Heb. 12:28-29- "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

d. To make sure we train our children up in the habits of the faith.

(1) That that training is more than catechizing...and it is not less than this either.

(2) But we must train them in spiritual/worshipful habits of preparation. We train our children in many things concerning life...but this training is of the upmost importance and it must be taught and shown to them as an important habit for us or it won't be for them.

(3) After all... after writing the Confession of Faith they set out to write these catechisms so our children could be trained well... so they asked questions that would also help the parents in training their children.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
August 29, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC # 89- How is the Word made effectual to salvation? *The spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.*
 - 1. How did we say last time God uses His word effectually in our lives today?
 - 2. What is our responsibility as believers in this process?
- C. WSC# 90- How is the Word to be read (and heard), that it may become effectual to salvation? *That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.*
 - 2. Why do you suppose this question even needed to be asked?
 - e. **Because we are NOT diligent in these:**
 - (5)Preparation
 - (6)Prayer
 - (7)Piety
 - (8)Practice
 - f. **These are crucial in the effectualness especially for our growth in grace after we are saved. ...and we neglect these.**
 - g. **To emphasize that people who prepare to receive and hear the Word give evidence of the faith in the One who desires to save them until the end.**
 - (3) Psalm 10:17- *“O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.”*
 - (4) Heb. 12:28-29- *“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.”*
 - h. **To make sure we train our children up in the habits of the faith.**
 - (4) **We are doing it ourselves... and they witness what we are doing.**
 - (5) **We are bringing them along with us...no option on this.**
 - (6) **We are explaining, instructing and training them from the beginning in what we are doing and why we are doing it.**
 - (7) **That that training is more than catechizing...and it is not less than this either.**
 - (8) **But we must train them in spiritual/worshipful habits of preparation. We train our children in many things concerning life...but this training is of the upmost importance and it must be taught and shown to them as an important habit for us or it won't be for them.**
 - (9) **After all... after writing the Confession of Faith they set out to write these catechisms so our children could be trained well... so they asked questions that would also help the parents in training their children.**

- (10) Think with me a minute: What happens to your faith when you teach it to your children?
- **It becomes clearer to yourself.**
 - **You develop better ways to teach your children which will enable you to be able to better teach others.**
 - **You grow in your faith for God's glory and the good of all those around you.**
3. What more do you suppose the divines had in mind when they said we are to be diligent in preparation, prayer, piety and practice?
- a. **Prov. 10:4- *"A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."***
 - b. **To consider the majesty of God. Acts 10:33- *"Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."* This speaks to our attitude and mind set...our expectations.**
 - c. **Once we consider God's majesty, they expected the next thing would be that we examine ourselves to consider our sin and lay it aside before even attempting to go before the Lord.-**
(1)Ps. 26:6-7-*"I awash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds."*
(2)James 1:21-*"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*
 - d. **Then after this, they supposed, we would enter into prayer before reading or hearing the Word asking for the Godhead's assistance in making it effectual to us...**
(1)Asking the Godhead to open our eyes/hearts to understand-
 - **Ps. 119:34-*"Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart."***
 - **Prov. 1:23-*"If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit to you; I will make my words known to you."*****(2)Asking that the Lord that He would enable us to long for its power, comfort and hope- I Peter 2:2-3-*"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good."***
(3)And also to bless the preacher/teacher, as well.- II Thess. 3:1- *"Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored..."*
 - e. **All of this presupposes that we acknowledge the authority of God's word and our need for it.**
(1)Rom. 15:4- *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*
(2)II Tim. 3:16-17- *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

- f. We are also required and should want to love it as God's love revealed to us.
 - (1) Job 23:12-*"I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my portion of food."*
 - (2) Psalm 119: 97- *"Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day."*
 - (3) Psalm 119:140-*"Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it."*
 - g. They also had in mind for us to consider as to why we want to practice what we have learned. For this preparation nets us fruit that brings glory to our God.
 - (1) Col. 1:5-6-*"Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth..."*
 - (2) James 1:22-25-*"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."*
 - h. McCheyne says: *"Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you are reading the first Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, 'O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. Let me not stand in the way of sinners. Let me not sit in the seat of the scornful.' This is the best way of learning the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray."*
 - i. Now a last thing that was highly publicized interestingly enough. *"All of this serves to reprove our formal and dead hearing of the Word, and to excite us all to evidence and exercise more faith, love, and obedience in hearing it."*
4. Given all the fears, struggles that come with this life how important is it for us to not forsake the meeting together with God's people and be found sitting under the Word preached and taught along with participating in the sacraments? Heb. 10:23-25- *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."*
5. What do you say to those who are struggling that won't go to church... and submit themselves to the Word? Or do you say anything at all? And why?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Sept. 5, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review – WSC# 90- How is the Word to be read (and heard), that it may become effectual to salvation? *That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.*
6. Based on all that we have talked about up to this point, what are some of the things the divines had in mind when they said we are to be diligent in preparation, prayer, piety and practice?
- j. **Obviously since this is the Children's catechism...they had in mind that we would teach and train our children accordingly.**
- k. **Being diligent brings reward. Prov. 10:4- *"A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."***
- l. **They also expected that we would be about examining ourselves and training our children to do the same...to consider our sin and lay it aside before even attempting to go before the Lord.-**
(3)Ps. 26:6-7-*"I awash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord, proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds."*
(4)James 1:21-*"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*
- m. **Then after this, they supposed, we would enter into prayer, showing and teaching our children how to prepare our hearts, before reading or hearing the Word asking for the Godhead's assistance in making it effectual to us...**
(4)Asking the Godhead to open our eyes/hearts to understand-
 - **Ps. 119:34-*"Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart."***
 - **Prov. 1:23-*"If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit to you; I will make my words known to you."*****(5)Asking that the Lord that He would enable us to long for its power, comfort and hope- I Peter 2:2-3-*"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good."***
- n. **They expected the we would show to our children a measure of love for God's Word.**
(4) Deut. 6:5-9- *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* By doing these last things we show our children what we have just taught them of the foundation of God's word in our lives and how it affects their lives.

(5) Even in difficult times we teach- Job 23:12-*"I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my portion of food."*

o. They also had in mind for us to consider as to why we want to practice what we have learned. For this preparation nets us fruit that brings glory to our God.

(3) Prov. 3:1-4- *"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you."*

(4) Eph. 6:1-3- *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

(5) James 1:22-25-*"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."*

p. Robert Murry McCheyne says that our personal and family practice ought to be- *"Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you are reading the first Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, 'O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. Let me not stand in the way of sinners. Let me not sit in the seat of the scornful.' This is the best way of learning the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray."*

7. How do we minister to those who say that Church is not necessary for their spiritual growth? How do we lovingly seek to hold them accountable to be under the Word of God?

C. WSC #91- How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation? *The sacraments become effectual means of salvation...not from any virtue in them, or in him that does administer them...but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them.* WSC #92- What is a sacrament? *A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.* WSC# 93- Which are the sacraments of the New Testament? *The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.*

1. What would you say is the main point the divines were trying to make with this Q&A?

a. *Anti-Roman Catholicism which speaks of the water being holy and even the priest being holy much like the Old Testament priest, because the Church says so...so if the sacraments are sanctioned and done in the RC Church they are blessed.*

b. *Christ and Christ alone sanctioned the sacraments for the Church.*

- c. **They were given to the Church by Christ as a gift to work grace in believers by the Holy Spirit.**
 - d. **“Salvation” here means the final deliverance from sin and misery of the Elect.**
 - e. **The sacraments are a means of grace whereby God promotes and accomplishes His design of saving souls...bringing the Elect home through the journey of faith.**
2. How do the word and the sacrament differ as means of salvation?
- a. **The Word was appointed to be the first means of giving birth to faith- I Cor. 3:5-8- *“What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”***
 - b. **Sacraments are to seal, confirm and grow the believer in the faith- Rom. 4:9-11- *“Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.”***
3. Why are they only effectual to them that by faith receive them?
- a. **They are only given to the Church and as such to those who by faith receive them...the Elect.**
 - b. **So they are only effectual in those for whom they were intended to be effectual...those who are united into Christ into the one body.**
 - c. **Other:**
 - (1) **I Cor. 11:27-32- *“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.”***
 - **There are those in the church that are unworthy because they are in rebellious sin. In open public sin allowing sinful people to stay in their midst...or in open sin of prejudice as these adult believers were.**
 - **There are those who are lazy in their life and do not examine themselves hence not repenting of the sins that plague them and weigh them down...even sins of omission.**
 - **Only true believers can judge themselves rightly, recognizing that the consequences that the Lord sends our way are to keep us from condemnation.**
 - (2) **I Cor. 10:1-6- *“For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same***

spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did"

- **There are those in the church who are not of the Elect.**
- **An unbeliever cannot have any hope in the sacrament...**
 - **When we take the Lord's Supper, for instance, they cannot examine themselves the way God commands. All he will find is unbelief, if he finds that. They...not having the Holy Spirit...cannot judge their own hearts except to determine its emptiness with no hope of change on their own.**
 - **The nonbeliever cannot discern the body of Christ which means to grasp the utter uniqueness of Christ and His relationship with His Church.**
 - **But a non-believer by partaking of God's grace without acknowledging Him will at some point perish in their sin.**
- d. **It is the Spirit of God that makes them effectual.**
 - (1) **John 6:39-*"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all."***
 - (2) **I Corinthians 12:13- *"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."***
 - (3) **Eph. 1:13-14-*" In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory."***
 - (4) **Sooo...their efficacy depends on the operation of the Holy Spirit in and by and through the Word, and to this is also presupposed the blessing of Christ as we have said before, since the Holy Spirit does not work independently from the Son's blessing.**
- e. **Question was once asked John Piper, "My church is considering letting known unbelievers take the Lord's Supper thinking that this would point them to the Lord's work on the cross and His future return as outreach. What do you think? You gotta love his answer: "If your pastors are thinking of welcoming non-believers to eat the Lord's Supper as a way of pointing them to Jesus. You are probably in the wrong church."**

D. WSC #92- What is a sacrament? *A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.* WSC# 93- Which are the sacraments of the New Testament? *The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.*

1. **The word sacrament comes from a type of vow made between generals in the military and their soldiers...a blood vow of sorts that the general would oblige himself to be faithful to his soldiers and the soldiers vowed the same unto death.**

2. The church has held these to be important:
 - a. **From the First century the Church maintained that the sacrament had to be commanded by Christ to be a sacrament...**
 - (1) **Matt. 28:19-20- *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."***
 - (2) **Matt. 26:26-29- *"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'"***
 - (3) **I Cor. 11:23-24- *"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, 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.'"* (etc.)**
 - b. **NEXT, it must be a sign (that is an outward visible representation of an inward and invisible work of God's grace)...**
 - c. **NEXT, we must be able to show from Scripture that the ordinance was perpetual (that is that Christ's commanded that His church do this until He returns...**
 - d. **FINALLY, it must be shown that the ordinance is also a seal intended to confirm and strengthen the faith of those who receive it.**
 - e. **Baptism and the Lord's Supper alone meet these qualifications.**
3. What are the Old Sacraments and are they still in effect? Why or why not?
 - a. **Circumcision and the Passover- They have passed away because of the work of Christ as our final sacrifice on the cross.**
 - b. **The Lord's Supper takes the place of the Passover- I Cor. 5:7- *"Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed."***
 - c. **Baptism takes the place of circumcision- Col. 2:11-12- *"In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead."***
4. The Roman Catholic Church has 7 sacraments (baptism, confirmation, penance, matrimony, the mass, ordination, and extreme unction...anointing of the extremely sick and/or dead... Reformed Churches (most Protestant Churches) have only 2 Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Given the breakdown of truths the Church has held we know which 2 are the true sacraments of the New Testament. What is the problem with 7 instead of 2?
 - a. **It goes against God's expressed will...making the word of the Church supreme.**

- b. Rev. 22:18-19- *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."***
5. What does the catechism mean by defining these signs and seals as "sensible"?
- a. It means that the sacraments impress the 5 senses...sight, sound, feeling, taste and smell.**
 - b. Since God made man a physical as well as spiritual being, He gave physical, "sensible" sacraments for us to partake in and relate to with all our senses.**
6. How are the sacraments a "sign" and "seals"?
- a. They are signs... a picture or a symbol...a visible "sensible" representation... water, wine and bread...of something we cannot see...which are Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace.**
 - b. They are seals for by their application they attest and confirm the work of God on our hearts and the benefits that come with God's work on our hearts.**
 - c. They are also seals of the covenant of grace, whereby the Lord obligates Himself to fulfill the promise of His covenant and by our receiving the seal, we oblige ourselves to be true and faithful to the Lord's and do as He commands till death... all the days of our lives.**
 - d. Rom. 4:11- *"He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised."*
(1) This is a "circumcised heart" circumcision symbolized and seals the work of the Holy Spirit and having a renewed heart

 - Grammatically in the Hebrew this word/term is a metaphor for God doing surgery on our hearts ...the control center for the whole being, according to biblical teaching.**
 - This surgery "cuts away" the sin that so weighs down our desires so that we have a new heart after God is done.**
 - Which enable us to combine now... what we ought to do with what we want to do. Because of God's work done in love we are now able to do what he commands because it is the desire of our renewed heart to want to do His will.****
 - e. They also ratify and confirm God's covenant with believers. I Cor. 11:26- *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Sept. 12, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #92- What is a sacrament? *A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.* WSC# 93- Which are the sacraments of the New Testament? *The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.*
1. What is the main thing(s) that the Divines wanted to communicate in these questions?
 - a. **They are of Christ,**
 - b. **Blessed by Christ**
 - c. **Given to the Church by Christ to grow us in His grace.**
 - d. **The Lord's Supper and baptism represent these best.**
 2. How are the sacraments a "sign" and "seals"?
 - f. **They are signs... a picture or a symbol...a visible "sensible" representation... water, wine and bread...of something we cannot see...which are Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace.**
 - g. **They are seals for by their application they attest and confirm the work of God on our hearts and the benefits that come with God's work on our hearts.**
 - h. **They are also seals of the covenant of grace, whereby the Lord obligates Himself to fulfill the promise of His covenant and by our receiving the seal, we oblige ourselves to be true and faithful to the Lord's and do as He commands till death... all the days of our lives.**
 - i. **Rom. 4:11- "*He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.*"**
(2) This is a "circumcised heart" circumcision symbolized and seals the work of the Holy Spirit and having a renewed heart
 - **Grammatically in the Hebrew this word/term is a metaphor for God doing surgery on our hearts ...the control center for the whole being, according to biblical teaching.**
 - **This surgery "cuts away" the sin that so weighs down our desires so that we have a new heart after God is done.**
 - **Which enable us to combine now... what we ought to do with what we want to do. Because of God's work done in love we are now able to do what he commands because it is the desire of our renewed heart to want to do His will.**
 - j. **They also ratify and confirm God's covenant with believers. I Cor. 11:26- "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*"**

3. What are some of the benefits of the sacraments?
 - a. **Baptism signifies our union into Christ and communion with Him in His death and resurrection-**
(1) Rom. 6:3-4-“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”
(2) Gal. 3:26-29-“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”
 - b. **The bread and the wine signify Christ’s body and blood, broken and poured out for us, with all the blessings of remission of sin, peace and salvation purchased by his blood. I Cor. 10:16-17-“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”**
4. How would you say that these benefits show themselves in the life of the believer? Here are just 3:
 - a. **Our desire to be closer to the Lord in life and practice. Phil. 3:2-3-“Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh (the Judaizers). For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh...”**
 - b. **An open desire and an active work to mortify our sin daily- James 4:9-10-“Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”**
 - c. **A public desire to be with God’s people.- Hebrews 10:23-25-“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”**
5. These are the children’s catechism of the 17-19th Century. This is what we use for this section now?
 - a. **First catechism #126- How many sacraments are there? Two.**
 - b. **FC #127- What are they? Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.**
 - c. **FC #128- Who appointed these sacraments? The Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - d. **FC #129- Why did Christ appoint these sacraments? To distinguish his people from the world, and to comfort and strengthen them.**

6. Where is the proper place to receive these sacraments and why?
 - a. **The practice we see in the NT is these are received in the midst of worship when the church gathers for worship set in a particular ceremony.**
 - b. **Since they are given to His Church, they are to be administered rightly within the “boundaries” God has established for the church.**
 - (1) **When a person comes to the Lord’s Table at a true church, they will obtain either blessing or judgment.**
 - (2) **If the sign and seal is taken out of its proper context it becomes null and void. This is why baptism is not a something that can be privately administered within the family unit or the Lord’s Supper is not proper if it is done in a home setting separate from the church.**
 - c. **A sacrament ceases to be a sacrament when it is separated from the church...from the preached word and the congregation of God’s people.**
- C. WSC #94- What is baptism? *Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing of water... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... does signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.* WSC #95- To whom is baptism to be administered? *Baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.*
 1. What does Q and a #94 mean in your own words?
 - a. **Baptism is the sacramental sign and seal of the one Covenant of Grace.**
 - b. **It is a sign by which God seals His pledge to the elect that they are included in the covenant of grace.**
 2. The First Catechism that we are teaching our children.
 - a. **FC #130- What sign is used in baptism? Washing with water.**
 - b. **FC #131- What does this washing with water represent? That we are united to Christ and cleansed from sin by his blood.**
 - c. **FC #132- Into whose name are we baptized? Into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**
 - d. **FC #133- Who are to be baptized? Believers and their children.**
 - e. **FC #134- Why are we baptized even as little infants? Because God includes the children of believers in his covenant and marks them in baptism.**
 - f. **FC #135- What did Jesus say about little children? “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”**
 - g. **FC #136- What does baptism call you to be? A true follower of Christ.**
 3. What does baptism as an outward act signify? (It doesn’t and can’t do these things on its own...it signifies the work of Christ on our behalf.)
 - a. **cleansing and remission of our sins,**
 - b. **being regenerated by the Holy Spirit,**
 - c. **being engrafted/ adopted into the family of God,**

- d. **being sanctified by the Holy Spirit and having a renewed heart...a "circumcised heart"**
 - (3) **Grammatically in the Hebrew this word/term is a metaphor for God doing surgery on our hearts ...the control center for the whole being, according to biblical teaching.**
 - (4) **This surgery "cuts away" the sin that so weighs down our desires so that we have a new heart after God is done.**
 - (5) **Which enable us to combine now... what we ought to do with what we want to do. Because of God's work done in love we are now able to do what he commands because it is the desire of our renewed heart to want to do His will.**
 - e. **However, the outward sign does not automatically convey the realities that it signifies. Though it signifies regeneration it does not automatically convey rebirth. The power of baptism is not in the water or the one administering the sacrament...but in the power of God.**
 - f. **Before we move on to consider what baptism symbolizes, we need to reflect on the fact that circumcision in the Old Testament symbolized the blessings that come to believers (like Abraham) by faith in Christ: cleansing and transformation of heart, forgiveness of sins, right standing before God, all through the sacrifice of Jesus. This symbol was applied to adult Gentile converts when they abandoned their idolatry and confessed faith in the God of Israel; but it was applied to the children (well, just the sons) of Israel 8 days after they were born--before Mom or Dad or priest or rabbi could tell whether that baby would later receive, through his faith, the reality symbolized in circumcision.**
 - g. **Water baptism symbolizes the same spiritual blessings that circumcision symbolized: renewal and transformation of our hearts (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:23; etc.) by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), who brings us into a community of faith, a Body (1 Cor. 12:13).**
 - h. **Baptism speaks of being united to Christ, clothed with Christ, right with God by faith, Abraham's seed, and heirs of God's promises (Gal. 3:26-29).**
 - i. **Baptism speaks of being united with Christ in his death and resurrection, so that his death for us is counted as our death before the justice of God (Romans 6:3; Col. 2:11-12). All passages we will consider in greater depth.**
- 4. **The age old question is: Immersion or pouring/sprinkling? How would you support your position?**
 - 5. **Think with me a minute: How would you say that circumcision relates to water baptism?**
 - a. **Just as circumcision was a sign and seal of the Christ who was to come, so baptism is a sign and seal of the Christ who came.**
 - b. **Circumcision looked forward in history, and Christian baptism looks back in history, but they both testify to the same Christ, the same Lord of the Covenant.**

- c. Neither circumcision nor baptism primarily testifies concerning the inward state of the individual who bears the sign and seal; they testify of Christ.

(1) But outward circumcision did not guarantee circumcision of Heart.

- Now, receiving external circumcision did not guarantee that an Israelite boy had received spiritual circumcision, or would later receive spiritual circumcision. *“The days are coming, declares the Lord, ‘when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh—Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab—and all who live in the desert in distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart”* (Jer. 9:25-26).
- How shocking for an Israelite to hear these words, to be grouped among the uncircumcised, unclean Gentiles! But only if they never understood that circumcision was a sign pointing to their heart’s need for cleansing by the gracious Spirit of God!

(2) Thinking of Paul’s word from Rom. 4:9-12- *“Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”*

(3) It would be hard for Paul to make his point any more clearly.

- Abraham was declared righteous in the eyes of God through his faith.
- Abraham then received the sign of that righteousness, circumcision.
- Thus, we see that when Abraham was declared righteous by God, his heart was circumcised.
- Years later, he was physically circumcised as a sign.
- Paul says that Abraham received the sign of circumcision, which was also a seal of the righteousness he had by faith.
- This was a seal, not of Abraham’s faith, but of the righteousness which he had by faith.
- Abraham’s righteousness was not his own personal faith; his righteousness was Christ, whom he appropriated by faith.
- Thus, the seal of circumcision was not a seal given as a personal testimony. The seal was God’s seal of the promised and coming Christ, in whom Abraham believed.
- So Paul says that Abraham is not only the spiritual father of uncircumcised Gentile believers (4:11b), but also 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”* (4:12).

- **Circumcision symbolized the righteousness that believers (like Abraham) receive by faith, just as it symbolized cleansing and renewal of heart by the Holy Spirit. Yet God commanded that it be administered to Israelite baby boys at 8 days old, before anyone could tell whether God had changed or would change their hearts by his Spirit, whether he would enable them to trust his promises!**
 - **The meaning of Abraham's circumcision was not, "Abraham got saved." Rather, it was, "Salvation will come to the world!" It is true that Abraham was personally saved, and that he was saved by faith. But he was saved because he believed in the objective promise—that is, in the coming Christ. This is really quite important, because our tendency is to think that the seal is of something entirely subjective (personal faith) rather than objective (the saving Christ). Therefore, we think nothing can be sealed unless we have ascertained with our own eyes that it may be sealed.**
 - **This means, some think that we should not circumcise or baptize anyone until we can guarantee that they have professed faith and evidenced the true fruit of it. We all too often baptize by sight, and not by faith.**
- (4) Afterword's Abraham was commanded by God to circumcise Isaac and Ishmael....placing the sign and seal of the covenant of grace upon them. What did their circumcision signify?**
- **The same thing that Abraham's signified.**
 - **It was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham...and Abraham's seed.**
 - **But was it also a seal of their righteousness which they had by faith? The answer, of course, depends upon which on we are talking about right?**
 - **None of them decided to have this sign and seal placed upon themselves since they were only 8 days old.**
 - **It was also the same to Jacob and Esau who had the same sign and seal placed on them ...It was a seal of the coming righteousness of Christ...that God had commanded to be placed on all covenant children for the expressed reason of obedience and for the reason it sealed and signified...Christ's righteousness for all who are His like Isaac and Jacob...not Ishmael and Esau.**
 - **The Jews of Jesus' day thought their circumcision was a sign and a seal of their own righteousness...but it was not...it was a sign of a covenant made with sinners, and a seal of the Lord's righteousness on those who are His.**
 - **We must always reject the natural tendency to make the covenantal signs into a seal of our own righteousness.**
 - **This is why Paul can say in Rom. 4: 11-12-*"The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the***

footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.” The father of believing Jews (who would be circumcised at the time they believed and into the 1st Century and believing Gentiles who were not required by law or tradition to be circumcised by Apostolic decree. At the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.

■ See Also Gal. 5:6-***“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”***

(5) See Acts. 11; 15-17-***“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”***

(6) Obviously it is possible to be forgiven and sanctified before undergoing water baptism (just as Abraham was forgiven and sanctified before he was circumcised).

d. It is important to reiterate these things:

(1) That water baptism is not a picture of the believer’s own personal death, burial and resurrection.

(2) It is a sign of the believer’s union with and in the death, burial, and resurrection of Another.

Rom. 6:1-5- “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”

(3) Paul mentions this same point in connection with baptism in Galatians 3: 26–27: ***“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”*** This true baptism may be called a baptism of union. The union is with Christ, and the effects of it are eternal.

(4) How is this baptism accomplished? 1 Corinthians 12: 13 gives an answer: ***“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”***

- In this verse, Paul says that we are baptized into a body. Contextually, that body is the body of Christ.
- The Person who does the baptizing is the Holy Spirit.
- Just as an elder baptizes into water, so the Holy Spirit baptizes into Christ.
- And water baptism points to that baptism into Christ.
- The baptism of union with Christ is performed by the Spirit of God.

(5) Douglas Wilson says, “On the basis of what has been established already, we can say that water baptism is not sacred in itself; it signifies a holy Christ. It is not an automatic means of imparting grace, it is a sign of grace that has been proclaimed and displayed in the covenant of grace. It is not a means of removing sins, but shows that the Spirit can wash cleaner than the purest water. In other words, water baptism is not a part of the gospel. It accompanies the gospel as a sign. And as such a sign, it displays the same essential things that were displayed by circumcision under the economy given to Abraham. And all those things find their center in Christ.” I Cor. 1:14-17 “I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

6. Ok, we get this how believing adult should receive baptism, but the catechism goes on to speak of covenant infants, WSC #95- To whom is baptism to be administered? *Baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.*
7. The Westminster Confession of Faith defines visible members of Christ's church this way: *II. The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*
8. The Book of Church Order defines members in the Church this way:
 - a. Chapter 1-3. *The members of this visible Church catholic are all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and promise submission to His laws.*
 - b. Chapter 2-1- *The Visible Church before the law, under the law, and now under the Gospel, is one and the same and consists of all those who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children.*
 - c. Chapter 4-1- 4-1. *A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their children, associated together for divine worship and godly living, agreeable to the Scriptures, and submitting to the lawful government of Christ's kingdom.*
9. Why the exception for the covenant baptism of covenant infants before they are able to make a public profession of faith?
 - a. **It was commanded that we place the sign and seal of the covenant on our children in Gen. 17 and that command was never rescinded. There does not need to be a new command because their (our covenant children) privilege had been settled many ages ago and never reversed by Christ or the apostles.**

- b. **The covenant infants of old received the sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace and to change that now without biblical injunction from God would change the character and definition of the signs and seals. If we had to wait to make a “decision” for ourselves then that the whole dynamic of this being from God would change and it would become dependent upon our own righteousness. God doesn’t leave anything up to chance so just like the covenant infants in the OT were commanded to be given the sign and seal of the Covenant so too are the covenant infants in the NT and beyond until Christ returns.**
- c. **Even if the understanding of this is misunderstood or misused or even does not see fruit this is not reason enough not to keep doing as God commands.**
- d. **However, the first century Jewish families would have still circumcised their sons per the covenant act as still seen as a requirement and tradition... and in fact they did ...even Jewish Christians.**
- e. **Jewish Christians continued to circumcise their children after the advent of Christ and we don’t see any waiting until their children made a profession of faith before being circumcised.**
- f. **Circumcision by adult males still occurred so that people like Timothy who would be ministering to both Jew and gentile could be recognized as an ethnic Jew.**
- g. **But circumcision of Gentiles was opposed by those who understood the gospel of grace...and as well because they knew the old was fading away. Galatians 3: 26–29: *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”***
 - (1) **As Paul states here, water baptism included the Gentiles in the visible community of the New Israel, created by the New Covenant with Israel and the house of Judah.**
 - (2) **Water baptism was also the emblem of the Spirit’s work in joining the faithful Jews—the faithful remnant of Old Israel—to believing Gentiles in the commonwealth of New Israel, creating one new man out of the two.**
 - (3) **Now history tells us that believing Jews continued to circumcise their sons, while graciously not insisting that the Gentiles start circumcising their sons but by this time baptism had begun for all believers, Jew and Gentile, by Christ’s command.**
 - (4) **The debate in the early church was not whether the Jews should stop circumcising their sons; it was whether the Gentiles had to start. The decision of the Jerusalem council was that individual Gentiles did not have to be circumcised.**
 - (5) **If circumcision had been required of them, it would have obligated them to live as Jews under the Mosaic Law—which included the circumcision of all subsequent generations.**
 - **So if the Lord had chosen to make this change of excluding infants from the covenant, He would have taught us on it.**

- **And if He had taught it, there would have been considerable turmoil throughout the pages of the New Testament in the apostolic attempts to get the saints to understand and accept it. But the New Testament is silent on both counts.**
 - **According to the Baptist understanding, a profound change in the conditions of the covenant was made, a change which for the very first time excluded children, without any instruction from God on it, and without a ripple of protest from any professing Christians. But the Bible says that not even human covenants can be changed or added to in such a fashion .Gal. 3: 15-*“To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.”***
 - **The modern supposition that the believers of the first century were so astonishingly docile on such an issue reveals how far removed we are from their covenantal presuppositions.**
 - **The modern individualistic mindset does not comprehend the critical scriptural importance of faithful covenantal children, and faithful covenantal descendants.**
 - **We can see throughout the New Testament the controversy caused by the inclusion of believing but uncircumcised Gentiles (Gal. 2: 11–12). Where is the controversy caused by the exclusion of the circumcised infants of believing Jews? There is no such controversy. But is it reasonable to suppose that those who so loudly objected to the inclusion of uncircumcised Gentiles would somehow not object at all to the exclusion of their own circumcised children?**
- h. **Actually there is no hint in the New Testament that circumcision ceased to have religious significance among the people. Now Paul begins to speak of the significance about something more a circumcised heart and the washing away of the sin.**
- i. **In Jewish churches/meetings/synagogues they circumcised infants which automatically made them part of the covenant community.**
 - (1) **So circumcision of a Jewish infant meant that he was, as a result, a member of the local synagogue. So when baptism was instituted the Jewish girls would have been baptized making them members of the assembly as well.**
 - (2) **So believing Jews continued to practice circumcision and baptism, which placed their sons into membership in a visible assembly of Christian saints—the Christian synagogue.**
 - (3) **Col. 2:10-12-*“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.”***
- **Since the blessings of the New Birth and righteousness by faith came to Abraham and other Israelites (BC) and come to us (AD) only as a result of Jesus' sacrifice, we could even say that**

circumcision symbolized union with Christ in his death—his being *“cut off from his people”* for us (Gen. 17:14; see Isaiah 53:8), even though he didn't deserve the curse, since he was circumcised both in flesh (Luke 2:21) and in heart.

- Christ was cut off for us, put to death for us; so his death for our sins is counted by God as our own death. Circumcision symbolizes this reality of Christ suffering as our substitute, and so does baptism.
- (4) So if there was Christian circumcision (and there was), and if there were Christian synagogues (and there were), and if the Christians who went to these synagogues were the same believers who circumcised their sons (and they were), then the necessary conclusion is that we know with certainty that some first century Christian churches had infant members.
 - (5) But the Jews were also to be baptized. We know this because the New Israel, Jew and Gentile alike, had one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph. 4: 5).
 - (6) When Peter preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, he told them that they needed to repent and be baptized, because the promise was for them and their children -Acts 2: 38-39- *“And Peter said to them, ‘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. For the promise (of the covenant) is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’”*
- j. Circumcision does begin to fade as the new century dawned and as the Church began to understand that Christ had changed the sign and seal to water baptism.
- k. So these things are true:
- (1) Circumcision was administered once to believers and their sons picturing the cleansing of sin and the engrafting into God's people in the coming Messiah.
 - (2) Baptism is to be administered once to believers and their children picturing the cleansing from sin and engrafting into God's family because of the Savior who has come.
 - (3) Since we no longer need blood sacrifices like the ones performed in circumcision because Christ was the ultimate sacrifice...circumcision is no longer the sign and seal of the covenant and has been replaced by baptism.
 - (4) This connection alone maintains the integrity of the Covenant thus not requiring a “new command” in the NT as to infant baptism.
 - (5) In neither dispensation were the children to wait until profession of faith to have the sign and seal placed on them. If at any point this was a requirement then the church would have been split on the application of baptism since the children of the Jews would grow up already being members of the church by virtue of their circumcision.
 - (6) As it is all believers were expected to live in harmony bearing the same mark, badge...sign of a Christian....baptism.

(7) This passage needed to be addressed as well- 1 Cor. 7:14- *“For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.”*

- **Because of this text it seems that it was a foregone conclusion that infants were to be included in the covenant and receive what had become the sign and seal of that covenant.**
- **How are they clean, if not by baptism that looks forward to the day that they respond and claim Christ as their personal savior as per the biblical mandate and expectation of the signs and seals.**

10. But what are some express indications of their continued and ongoing inclusion in the covenant?

- a. The first Christian sermon cut the listeners to the heart. They cried out, seeking what to do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized, and that the promise (of the covenant) was to them and to their children (Acts 2: 39).**
- b. We are also taught that children of at least one believing parent are holy. The word used by Paul is “*hagia*”, which when applied to persons is almost always translated saint (1 Cor. 7: 14).**
- c. Little children and infants are included by Christ in the kingdom of God (Luke 18: 16).**
- d. Children constitute one of the recognized subgroups of the church, to be taught along with the rest of the saints in the church (Eph. 1: 1; 6: 1; Col. 1: 2; 3: 20).**
- e. Little Gentile children are taught that the covenant promise made at Sinai applied to them, just as it had to Israelite children from infancy on (Eph. 6: 1-3).**
- f. We are taught that one of the features of the New Covenant was to be the restoration of the covenantal father/ child relationship, not the dissolution of the covenantal father/ child relationship (Luke 1: 17).**
- g. Ephesian children were commanded to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph. 6: 1).**
- h. We also know that, in the New Testament, circumcision continued to be a sign of a true evangelical relationship to God (Rom. 2: 29). Christian Jews continued to apply that sign to their infants (Acts 21: 21). Such circumcision meant that such children were members of their parents’ synagogue, and we know believing Jews assembled in Christian synagogues (Jas. 2: 2). These were also considered Christian churches (Jas. 5: 14). Therefore we know that certain first-century churches had infant members.**
- i. The gospel, we are taught, is for the families of the earth (Acts 3: 25). It is therefore not surprising that the normal mode of evangelism and baptism in the New Testament was household by household. Acts 16: 14-15- *“One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well....”***

- j. The point is not that such are narratives of infant baptisms. The point is that they are narratives of household or family baptisms. 1 Cor. 1: 16- *"I did baptize also the household of Stephanas"*.**
- k. And last, one of the most precious doctrines of Scripture for believing parents is the teaching of covenantal succession from one generation to the next. Ps. 102: 28- *"The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you."***
 - (1) Faithful parents are promised that their children will follow the Lord. Deut. 7: 9-*"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations..."***
 - (2) Moreover, the blessings of this covenantal succession were prophesied as coming into a glorious fulfillment under the New Covenant (Ezek. 37: 24-26; Isa. 59: 21; 65: 23; Jer. 32: 38-40).**
 - (3) The responsibility for the reverence and faithfulness of children is therefore quite properly delegated to parents (Eph. 6: 4; 1 Tim. 3: 4; Titus 1: 6).**
 - (4) Under the New Covenant, our children's children are truly included (Ps. 103; Luke 1: 48-50).**
- 11. With all of this information, how would you define the difference between infant baptism and baby dedication?**
 - a. A Biblical Case for Infant Dedication in the New Testament Is Far Weaker than the Case for Infant Baptism.**
 - b. Baptism speaks to God's promise and dedication speaks to the parents promise.**
 - c. Baptism focuses on what God promises to do with this child as a covenant child.**
 - d. Dedication focuses on the commitment the parents make to raise children up till they are old enough to make a profession of faith for themselves.**
 - e. Infant baptism communicates through Word and symbol (water) that a decision has been made by God from the foundation of the world that a way be provided for all His children and their children to be in relationship with God.**
 - f. When an infant is baptized the water that is poured upon them symbolizes God's grace and how even before we are capable of making any decisions, God has given His covenant people from the earliest of age, an opportunity to be in relationship with Him.**
 - g. Long before we were even here, or thought of, even while helpless like an infant, the Lord knew our need, and has already done what is necessary for our spiritual life. The hope in infant baptism is that as the infant matures they will choose to accept God's offer of forgiveness and eternal life.**
 - h. In that sense infant baptism looks forward to what God will do just as it recognizes His authority over our lives now.**

12. One passage that many paedobaptists refer to when trying to “prove” the NT’s support for infant baptism... **Acts 16:25-34**-*“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, ‘Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.’ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.”*

a. What do we see here? **Household baptism.**

b. What justification would paedobaptists have for using this text as a support? What justification would credobaptists have in saying that it proves nothing? **A couple of things to consider:**

- (1) **There is no need to prove infant baptism from obscure NT references for the Covenant of grace is one covenant transcending time... so there was no need to establish a new command or a proof text...what was commanded in the OT as to placing the sign and seal on all God’s children along with their children remains in place...even without any obvious or obscure references in the NT.**
- (2) **Really the best support in this passage for the paedobaptist is not the “whole household” argument but rather the fact that the only expressed “confession” that is spoken of is the jailers and then the rest of the household was baptized. The churches still understood the command to place this sign and seal on those who believed and those children of non-believers so there was no need to ask for professions of faith.**
- (3) **It really proves nothing of significance as to the argument...but then they are asking the wrong question. It is not: Where in the NT do we find confirmation for infant baptism? But rather: Where in the NT does God say to stop placing on our covenant children the sign and seal of the covenant? If one wishes to be true to the Scriptures that covenantal perspective has to be in mind.**

13. Back to the questions specifically. What do you think about such language as “our engagement to be the Lord’s”? What do you suppose they are getting at with this?

a. **To me it is so cool...because we can connect with that language can’t we. Our engagement period was one of bliss joined with great anxiety.**

- b. But the engagement period that is spoken of here is more of the one of biblical times. Once one was betrothed/engaged all the questions were basically answered and they began getting to know each other well in every area except physical intimacy... the man joined the girls family on outings and vice versa...the 2 were never alone together because they were being brought into a family not doing something completely on their own. So even after they began their “own” home they still knew of their familial connection.**
- c. So we are engaged...betrothed to the Lord as his Bride. The decision is a done deal with Him. There is no getting out of this engagement/betrothal. He has paid the bride price...the surety...and as the Bridegroom He will come and get His Bride taking us into our new home in the New earth.**

14. The larger catechism adds an interesting question: WLC #167: How is our Baptism to be improved by us? *The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body. What does this mean?*

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Sept. 19, 2021

A. Prayer

- B. Review- WSC #94- What is baptism? *Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing of water... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... does signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.* WSC #95- To whom is baptism to be administered? *Baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.*

1. What does baptism as an outward act signify? (It doesn't and can't do these things on its own...it signifies the work of Christ on our behalf.)
 - a. **cleansing and remission of our sins,**
 - b. **being regenerated by the Holy Spirit,**
 - c. **being engrafted/ adopted into the family of God,**
 - d. **being sanctified by the Holy Spirit and having a renewed heart...a "circumcised heart"**
 - (1) **Grammatically in the Hebrew this word/term is a metaphor for God doing surgery on our hearts ...the control center for the whole being, according to biblical teaching.**
 - (2) **This surgery "cuts away" the sin that so weighs down our desires so that we have a new heart after God is done.**
 - (3) **Which enable us to combine now... what we ought to do with what we want to do. Because of God's work done in love we are now able to do what he commands because it is the desire of our renewed heart to want to do His will.**
 - e. **However, the outward sign does not automatically convey the realities that it signifies. Though it signifies regeneration it does not automatically convey rebirth. The power of baptism is not in the water or the one administering the sacrament...but in the power of God.**
2. Why the exception for the covenant baptism of covenant infants before they are able to make a public profession of faith?

- C. WSC # 96- What is the Lord's Supper? *The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth; and worthy receivers are... not after corporal and carnal manner ...but by faith made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.* WSC #97- What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper? *It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's Body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.*

1. It is regrettable that divisions have grown up in the history of the Church with regards to the meaning of the Lord's Supper...more specifically the meaning of the words "This is my Body"...and the words, "This is my blood." 4 major views put simply:

- a. **Roman Catholics** hold to a view that has been called **Transubstantiation** which means from their understanding of these words that the bread and the wine actually become the body and blood of the Lord. As the elements are blessed in the mass there is according to this view a complete change into actual flesh and blood of Christ. Christ is then sacrificed over and over again with each mass for the sins of His people.
 - b. **The Lutheran Church** holds to what is called **Consubstantiation**. They teach that Christ is bodily present in, with, under and along side of the elements of the bread and wine. This view requires the belief that Christ is in His human form is present on the earth at the time of the sacrament. This is contrary to the Scriptures which state that Christ ascended bodily into heaven and now reigns and will remain there until He returns bodily in power and glory.
 - c. **The memorial view.** Many churches today hold to this view. The Lord's Supper is merely a memorial. They emphasize the words; *"Do this in remembrance of me."* The supper reminds us of His death...not His life, not His miracles, not His teachings, but His death. The Lord's Supper then, in this view, is simple a symbol, a representation of Christ's body and blood. The broken bread represents His broken body. The wine represents His shed blood. He tells us why His body was broken and His blood shed. In this understanding...all we see is Christ dying in our place... paying the penalty for our sin.
 - d. **Reformed View.** The Lord's Supper is a sign and a seal of God's covenant of grace. *"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* (Matt. 26:28) He applies the external emblem of His blood to assure us that all who partake by faith shall surely have fulfilled God's promises of grace and salvation. The Lord's Supper is fellowship. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many partake of the one bread." (I Cor. 10:16-17)
2. So with these views being present and representative of a large part of the Church...what is the meaning of "is" anyway? *"This is my Body..." "This is my blood"*
- a. In correct context the language of the Scriptures tell us that Christ never intended the verb **"is"** to be used literally in the sense of Him bodily being present in the Supper.
 - b. On one occasion Jesus said, **"I am the vine"**...on another He said, **"I am the door."** Certainly he did not mean to say that he is the same as a vine or a door but that He represented these things.
 - c. The grammar does not allow this understanding...if it did in those places where Jesus stated things like I am the door...I am the true vine.....where is the actual door...He merely represents a **"doorway"** into heaven He doesn't change His physical appearance.
 - d. **"Is"** does not have to mean and is not meant to mean, in this case, **"equivalent to"** or **"same as"**. Christ gave them bread...not His body...and He gave them wine ...not His blood that was still in His veins at the time.

- e. **Augustine wrote: “Judas ate bread with the Lord, but did not eat the Lord with the bread.” He speaks clearly of the spiritual significance of the Supper over some carnal and corporal connection.**
3. So with everything about baptism settled. ☺ ☺ Now explain to me in your own words what the Lord’s Supper is. What do the elements symbolize? What are they a sign and seal of?
 - a. **It is a feast instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ on the night He was betrayed.**
 - b. **The outward act is eating bread and drinking wine according to the method and command of Christ, with the inward meaning of it as being the sacrifice of Christ...the broken bread symbolizing His broken body and the poured out wine symbolizing the pouring out of his blood.**
 - c. **In itself it is of no value whatsoever, but when received in faith it gives life to our love to God, it deepens our faith in Christ, and promotes the welfare of our souls.**
 4. The First catechism that we teach our children says:
 - e. **FC #137- What sign is used in the Lord's Supper? *Eating bread and drinking wine to remember the suffering and death of Jesus.***
 - f. **FC #138- What does the bread represent? *Christ's body sacrificed for our sins.***
 - g. **FC #139- What does the wine represent? *Christ's blood shed for our sins.***
 - h. **FC #140- Who may rightly partake of the Lord's Supper? *Those who repent of their sins, trust in Christ, live a godly life, and profess their faith before the Church.***
 - i. Are these communicating the essential to our children? What are they not saying?
 5. 4 accounts of the Lord’s supper specifically in NT:
 - a. **Matt. 26:26-29-“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”**
 - b. **Mark 14:22-25-“And as they were eating, He took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’ And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”**
 - c. **Luke 22:17-20-“And when the hour came, He reclined at table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, ‘I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He said, ‘Take this, and divide it among**

yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

- d. ***I Cor. 11:23-26-“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, 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.’ In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”***
- 6. So how is Christ present in the Lord’s Supper?
 - a. **First, in the same way He is present every day ...he is omni-present Wherever the divine nature of Christ is He is in that sense “truly/ really present” but not physically present at least for the time being.**
 - b. **So we celebrate the Lord’s Supper as more than a memorial as Zwingli did and we celebrate with Christ present in worship.**
 - c. **He, then is not physically present in the elements He is with us in the Supper. No physical presence like the Catholics and the Lutherans but a “real” presence...as he is always with us.**

D. Q and A #97- What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord’s Supper? *It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord’s Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord’s Body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.*

- 1. What does the catechism say is required for one to worthily receive the Lord’s Supper?
 - a. **Knowledge sufficient to understand what is represented**
 - b. **Faith sufficient to believe**
 - c. **Repentance from known sin**
 - d. **Love to God and man**
 - e. **To endeavor to act upon every known duty.**
- 2. Who fits these qualifications? We have stated time and time again no one can fully attain to this amount of perfection in this life. So if we cannot fully attain these in this life, what is the use for this injunction established by the catechism here?
 - a. **To keep us mindful of our unworthiness on one hand, but to also remind us that as Christ has accomplished salvation for His people this sacrament is for us as we grow into Christ likeness more and more...can you say... “SANCTIFICATION?”**
 - b. **Some people to struggle too much with this injunction. We are told that perfection is our ticket into heaven and the truth is we are perfect and yet to be made perfect. Nowhere does the Bible say that we have to perfect these qualifications before we can receive...for that would be a work.**

- c. Paul even admitted how wretched he was ...he recognized how short he fell from this perfection and yet because of his faith, the fact that he was part of God's family and while he was a sinner Christ alone was his hope and comfort.
 - d. So we are to come knowing that we don't deserve this grace and the benefits that flow from them and at the same time this is where we need to be to receive God's grace and the assurance we are His.
3. Now let's look at **I Cor. 11: 17-34**.-***"But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, 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.' In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come."*** Who is he speaking to? **The Church in Corinth...specifically to the adults...Let's read verses 1-16 for more context if need be...**
4. What is the issue at hand in verses 17-22?
- a. **The misuse of the Supper...**
 - (1)**They know what they are to be doing but they are doing something else...indulging their own selves...not being unified as had been commanded...no love for one another...not sharing with others.**
 - (2)**There are divisions between them still.**
 - (3)**Actually they seem to have been putting together a fellowship or agape meal where they all got together to eat...**
 - **Everyone bringing for themselves and their families without bringing for others...no pot-providence to be sure...**

- **Simply an individual family meal in the place with others together but not really... because they appear to be unwilling to share with those in need...thus rejecting unity as well as the meaning of fellowship.**
- b. Having just pointed out their error...what then is the immediate purpose for verses 23-34?
- (1) To remind them of what the Lord commanded of His people to do in receiving the Supper he had given for the good of all in the Church as a means of grace.**
 - (2) To remind them of what the Lord required for them to be worthy to receive the sacrament by examining their hearts, their unity, their confession, their place in the body of Christ...in other words ...their motivation for participating...all the things they were neglecting as Paul pointed out.**
- c. What does it mean to discern the body of Christ? Can it possibly mean to discern the Church...the family of God? How? (See I Cor. 10: 14-22)
- (1) Recognizing our worthiness in it. How do we recognize our worthiness in it? When we are not in any rebellious sin we desire to be with God's family...just like in our earthly families if we are wrought with guilt and shame about something we have done to others we sense the separation.**
 - (2) We need to be continuously reminded how our actions will affect the body...constantly called to repent of our sins...we need to keep short accounts of our sins at all times.**
 - (3) Reasons not to come to the table:**
 - **Being under discipline in the church (I Cor. 10)**
 - **Knowingly being unrepentant of some on-going sin.**
 - **But even with this it is helpful to know that how much knowledge, how well we can scrutinize our sin are not prerequisites to be able to come to the table...all that is a prerequisite is baptism and faith.**
15. Let's look at minute at a couple of other issues that the Larger catechism takes on:
- a. WLC #172: May one who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper? *One who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account has it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.*

- b. WLC #173: May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it? *Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ has left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.*
- c. According to WLC # 173 who are the only ones to be kept from the table? **The ignorant and scandalous! Who are these? Those who are not members in the church has been the standard answer through the years. So in my thinking this cannot apply to the children of members of the church until such time as they prove themselves ignorant and scandalous!**
- d. Also interesting, that the Larger Catechism ends the section on the Lord's Supper with this. WLC #177: Wherein do the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ? The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that Baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves. How does this fit with the one above and what we see in Scripture?
- (1) **I have done a lot of research on this on why it is here.**
 - (2) **It is widely understood that children are required; it seems to many, by the I Cor. 11 passage, to discern the body of Christ, without any specifics as to what that means...and as such young children cannot do this... then they must be of an age to examine themselves.**
 - (3) **In fact, I actually got 2 of my professors to say if I Cor. 11 wasn't there ...there wouldn't be any reason to exclude the children the way the catechism does here. In fact, there is no proof text to support this I Cor. 11 idea that it prohibits children in anyway... the text and the context actually support wayward believing and non-believing adults misusing the privilege and the sacrament for their own purposes.**
 - (4) **But I Cor. 11 does not speak to children like other passages do. It say nothing of children so to include them in this discussion of examining themselves is to equate them with the "ignorant and scandalous" (WLC) which cannot be done since the Bible says that child of at least one believing parent is holy...certainly not ignorant or scandalous...and being a covenant child it was expected that they would be catechized and treated like a member of God's Church until they proved themselves not to be.**
 - (5) **And on the issue of examination...how do any of us examine ourselves well... except that we be told and taught by the elders to do so and then by each other holding the one another accountable... then by the Bibles own teaching ...all things a parent is required to do with their children no matter their age.**

16. So it is interesting that the shorter catechism doesn't speak about covenant children concerning this sacrament?
- What about children...when should they be allowed to participate in the Supper?
 - Does, this text actually speak to children at all?
 - How do these texts concerning examination and discernment apply to them as well?
- (1) This text does NOT speak to the children in their midst ... really!**
- (2) But it does give general and specific qualifications for the adults as they train their children into this family celebration.**
- (3) The only exclusion from participating in the Passover for Hebrew children were whether they could eat solid food or not.**
- (4) Ex. 12 speaks of everyone in the household is to receive the solid food of the Passover (it would have been implied that infant who are have not been weaned would have been exempt)... Where it says *"And when your children say to you, What does this mean?"* The Hebrew can also be interpreted as *"When the father's told them to ask..."***
- **The youngest child was to ask this question before Passover began...the youngest was usually as young as 2 or 3. The youngest meant the one that had just stopped nursing.**
 - **Jewish tradition tells us that even if the child wasn't old enough to conceptually ask this question the question could be repeated after the father. Understanding was not a prerequisite for the child to participate. Not requiring a faith "action" on the part of the child...**
 - **So the father's fed them the question before they ever understood the meaning. The point is that they as covenant children were involved in the OT sacrament as early as was possible for them to eat the food of the Passover and speak the question.**
 - **What was required was they were to have been circumcised (if a male child), eating solid food and able to speak were the only requirements.**
- (5) Again children have not been excluded by command of God just like with receiving the other sign and seal.**
- (6) The session and I generally believe that when the child starts asking why they are not able to receive communion when the rest of the church does, is the place for the parent to begin to check some things out for the child "may be" beginning to "discern the Body" from a child's perspective.**
- (7) Having just said that though, the parents ought to be explaining to their children from the earliest possible time about the "specialness" of the Lord's Supper and how we look forward to the day when they want to receive...explaining regularly why we do it and what the benefits are for us and the Church.**

(8) Think about these questions:

- Are they selfishly seeking to be a part of the things going on around them? To answer this dilemma: this is seen in the same way as not wanting to share stuff at home with other children or being upset because someone got something they didn't get.
 - Or are they genuinely desiring to participate like wanting to give "tithes" or has a desire to be at Sunday School. (Not all the time....but a lot of the time)...really misses it when not there...beginning to interact with their church family adult and children?
 - These are things that can help demonstrate a heart's desire from a child's perspective... This is what *"discerning the Body"* can look like for the young child.
- d. The examining part of the warning is easy enough taken care of if we consider that this is to be going on all the time and we have to teach our children how to do this any way.
- (1) We never come to the table free of sin...but in faith we always come to the table with Christ and He accepts us because of His Cross work.
- (2) As parents we are to be teaching our children about the continual need to be asking God for forgiveness for their sins.
- (3) We need to be training in the catechism early and continuously in their early childhood years.
- (4) We must understand that faith for a child may only be exhibited as it was in the Hebrew children for the Passover...the desire to know... which really equated with a desire to be a part of what God's people were doing.
- (5) Then when the parents believe they are ready they come before the Session to talk about what they know to be true from a child's perspective.
- e. Consider Eph. 6:4-*"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*
- (1) The word that we translate *"... bring them up..."* is usually translated "to nourish" which stands in opposition to "exasperate" this word to nourish is to concentrate on giving them everything they need to grow up into the faith.
- (2) Next we have the words *"discipline/training and instruction"*.
- The first word "discipline or training= physical, hands on training...on-the job training if you will...personal physical involvement as a form of training...
 - The next word is instruction...an academic/spiritual training of our children as they grow into the faith.
 - So from the earliest we can, we are to be including them in the activities of the church...
 - First, in their baptism
 - Then by their being with us and watching the things we do...

- **Then, as they get older teaching them at their level what these things mean along with how to ask for forgiveness of their sins so they too can participate at their level in the church worship...**
- **Next, when they begin to ask why they aren't receiving and participating more we seek out the elders...**
- **Finally, after elder approval we begin helping them to receive...teaching them by hands on as well as further spiritual teaching until they reach an age where they are no longer under your control...**
- **All along EXPECTING that they will grow up into their faith in Christ.**

17. The shorter catechism doesn't give much instruction but the Larger Catechism does.

- a. WLC #174: What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it? *It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.*
 - (1) So what is the catechism saying about our posture in receiving the sacrament?
 - (2) What is required of us to be able to exhibit such a posture?
- b. WLC #175: What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? *The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider: How they have behaved themselves therein, and with: What success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.*
 - (1) So what is our duty ...in your own words?
 - (2) What blessings does this tell us we will receive?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Sept. 26, 2021

D. Prayer

E. Review- WSC # 96- What is the Lord's Supper? *The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth; and worthy receivers are... not after corporal and carnal manner ...but by faith made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.* WSC #97- What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper? *It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's Body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.*

1. What according to the catechism is required for one to worthily receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?
2. Who meets these qualifications? **Christ alone.** How then do we meet those qualifications? **In Christ by faith alone.**
3. One part that wasn't covered last time...and is actually extra to the teaching of the catechism... in that the shorter catechism doesn't cover it...is a section I had on how soon children should become active participants in the Lord's Supper. It is a section that describes how we as a session look at this issue. If you want to know more it is up on the website.

F. WSC #98: What is prayer? *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.*

1. Some other definitions of prayer.
 - a. **Richard Pratt- "A believer's communication with God."**
 - b. **Steve Brown- "The communion, communication, and the contact between creature and Creator. It is an expression of a relationship between two persons; One who is infinite and one who is finite."**
 - c. **Westminster Larger Cat Q?A 178- "What is prayer? Prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of His Spirit, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies."**
2. Quotes on prayer:
 - a. **"The Christian's trade is prayer."** Martin Luther
 - b. **"Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness."** Phillips Brooks
 - c. **"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men and women. Do not pray for a task equal to your power. Pray for power equal to the task."** Phillip Brooks
 - d. **"...and these two things, prayer and the study of the Word of God, always go hand-in-hand, for there is not true prayer without the study of God's Word, and there is not true study of the Word of God without prayer."** R.A. Torrey

3. Is that how you think of prayer? What would you add...or delete?
 - a. **God designed prayer for our good...for His glory...and to enable us to know who He is and what His will is for us.**
 - b. **Prayer is an intimate form of communication because, when done right, we are humbled before our maker in love and fear...fear that we might let Him down...fear from the fact that we know we let Him down...but love as well in the knowledge that is Christ we have been forgiven in our justification and we will continue to be forgiven when we confess our sins and keeps our sins short before God. I John 1:9- *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."***
4. Prayer is one of the easiest hard things to do! Why? Well, for a number of reasons it is hard.
 - a. **First, we have our fallen nature that tells us that there are so many others things to think about, do and enjoy which keeps us from praying. And if that is not enough this same fallen nature causes us to wonder... is God even there...is He listening...or even why would He bother with me?**
 - b. **Second, Satan and the world do in fact entice us with many other things to consider.**
 - c. **Thirdly, the Church has not taught clearly about its significance and its importance and so we are left to wonder just like these followers of Christ.**
 - d. **Distractions make prayer hard...the thought that I can get to it later when I finish what I want to do....or let me try it my way then if it doesn't pan out then I will pray... or when all else fails...then I will pray. Prayer is one of the easiest hard things to do.**
5. What are some reasons that God may not "hear" our prayers?
 - a. **Ps. 66:16-18-*"I cried to Him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the LORD would not have listened. But truly God has listened; He has attended to the voice of my prayer."***
 - b. **Prov. 15:29- *"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."***
 - c. **James 4:3- *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."***
6. The Puritan pastor Thomas Vincent asked this question: "How must we pray unto God, that our prayers may be acceptable unto Him, and answered by Him?"
 - a. **We must pray with sincerity- Hebrews 10:19-22- *"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water..."***

- b. **We must pray with humility- Psalm 10:17-*“O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted/humbled; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear...”***
 - c. **We must pray with true faith- James 1:6-*“...let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”***
 - d. **We must pray with fervency- James 5:16-*“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”***
 - e. **We must pray with perseverance- Luke 18:1-*“And He told them a parable (of the persistent widow) to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”***
 - f. **And then he added this: *“We must look after our prayers, and wait for their return.”*- Micah 7:7-*“But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.”***
 - g. **The larger Catechism put it this way. WLC #185: How are we to pray? We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon Him, with humble submission to His will.**
 - h. **Should these cause us...believers...to pause in our daily lives and reassess what we do? Why or why not?**
7. What does WSC #98 seem to be emphasizing with its opening words; *“Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will...”*?
- a. **As an offering to God is something that is required of us...that is to be given in obedience and from the heart. *Matthew 6:5-8-“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”***
 - (1) What does “when you pray...” communicate about prayer?
 - (2) What does this passage tell us about prayer?
 - b. **We want to do this above all other disciplines because it is a desire of our heart...**
 - (1) **Psalm 42:1-2-*“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”***
 - (2) **Psalm 62:8- *“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”***
 - c. **We are to pray only for those things that are within God’s perfect will for us...**
 - (1) **Jer. 29:13- *“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. “***
 - (2) **I John 5:13-15-*“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.”***

- d. WLC #184: For what things are we to pray? *We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the church, our own or others good; but not for anything that is unlawful.*
8. In WSC #98, what 4 things are spoken of that we are to take notice of and include in our prayers?
- a. **We are to pray in Jesus name...**
- (1) **What does the catechism mean when it says to pray in the name of Christ?**
- **Some would say that it is not a proper prayer unless it is either prefaced as being in Jesus' name or ended that way.**
 - **But that isn't what the divines had in mind only.**
 - **It is NOT emphasizing that we have to always publicly preface our prayers or end our prayers in Jesus name...**
 - **What it is emphasizing it this: that when we come to God ... to ask of God... that we come in our hearts with recognition of our utter dependence upon the work of Jesus Christ.**
 - **The prayer then is offered up to God out of our faith in Jesus Christ.**
 - **Though it is not essential to begin or end the prayer actually in Jesus name... since we don't see any prayers in Scripture offered up that way. I would go so far as to recommend that we do for the sake of an uneducated audience because in this way we acknowledge Jesus as our sovereign and our High Priest because they and we need the reminder.**
 - **But this should never be done to be so legalistic which could border on Hypocrisy. That is if we are only trying to make a point... "I will pray this way just to show them or I won't pray"...**
 - **Having said that I have confronted people before who questioned the validity of praying in Jesus name for a public function. I have even declined to pray when I have been told to remove Jesus from my prayers.**
- (2) WLC #181: Why are we to pray in the name of Christ? *The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access into his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.*
- (3) **John 14:12-14- "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."**
- b. **Our prayers are to include confessions of sin and of faith...**
- (1) **Ps. 32:5- "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD', and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."**

(2) Daniel 9:8-9 “To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him...”

- c. A thankful acknowledgement of His mercies...as we see throughout the Scriptures a thankful heart is a blessed heart no matter the circumstances or situation. Phil. 4:4-7-“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

G. 1st Catechism Questions on prayer:

- 1. #105. What is prayer? *Prayer is asking God for things which he has promised to give.***
- 2. #106. In whose name should we pray? *Only in the name of Christ.***
- 3. #107. What has Christ given us to teach us how to pray? *The Lord's Prayer.***

H. WSC #99: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer? *The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called The Lord's Prayer.*

- 1. So then what can we say about how the Word of God directs us in our prayers?**
 - a. *We have many examples of style/form, tone, and substance within Scripture to teach us how to shape our prayers and what to include in them...but mostly they show us what our heart attitude is to be.***
 - b. *Also, God has prescribed that we pray and He has even gone so far as to give us many examples so we are not at a loss as to what He expects these prayers to look like.***
 - c. *Rom. 8:26-“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”***
- 2. With all the other examples of prayer in the Bible, why do you suppose that Jesus gave His disciples and us the Lord's Prayer as well?**
 - a. *As a reminder...which He does a lot...***
 - (1)*He delighted in answering His disciple's requests.***
 - (2)*Of the fact that they can and should talk to God as Father.***
 - (3)*Of what a true prayer should look like, include and how it should be formed as well in most instances.***
 - b. *An example was once given: The purpose of a model home is not to be lived in...rather its purpose is to aid us in building our house. It is a pattern. Certain elements of the building will go into our new home but where they go may change. But we are to build our prayer life after this pattern.***

- c. **The Larger Catechism speaks to this as well; WLC #187: How is the Lord's Prayer to be used? *The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer. So it was to be a “model” prayer in that not every prayer offered up in the NT is the Lord’s Prayer but all the elements are there.***
3. Why do you suppose that the catechism calls the Lord’s Prayer the special rule of direction... for our prayers given all the other prayers in Scripture? **Because it was directly given by Christ.**
 4. If there is time, let us consider together this thought. If we have prayers in Scripture and if the Lord’s Prayer is to be our special model prayer what are some things this tells us about prayer?
 - a. **Prayer is important to God and should be important to His people.**
 - b. **Prayer begins with God. It comes from Him as all things that please Him come from Him...its parts, its form and its substance. We know nothing about God...how to worship Him or commune with Him on our own.**
 - c. **Prayer begins with God to initiate a relationship with His children.**
 - d. **Prayer establishes parameters for our communication to our sovereign...and those parameters are given to us in the prayers of the Bible.**
 - e. **Prayer requires humility on our part...a real recognition of who God is based on His being revealed to us in Scripture. We can make no demands of God.**
 - f. **Prayer is a discipline that we need as much as a discipline we should desire.**
 - g. **Prayer actually shows God’s love for us by providing a means and a method for us to commune with Him.**
 5. So how well are we doing? Since this is written to teach our children...what are we doing as parents to instill the need and desire to pray to God in our children?

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Oct. 3, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #98: What is prayer? *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.* WSC #99: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer? *The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called The Lord's Prayer.*

1. If we take this definition (WSC #98) at face value, we might come away thinking that prayer is merely asking God for things (it's "*an offering up of our desires unto God*"). But is this all that the authors of the Shorter Catechism intended?
 - a. **No, and we know this because of the Scripture proof text that they added to support and confirm their assertion—Psalm 62: 8, which says, "*Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*"**
 - b. **Of all the passages the writers of the catechism could have chosen to demonstrate that prayer is "*an offering up of our desires unto God,*" Why didn't they choose Revelation 5: 8, which likens "*the prayers of the saints*" in heaven to "*golden bowls full of incense*"? That would certainly seem to capture the idea of prayer as an "offering" better than Psalm 62: 8 does.**
 - c. **Why not Philippians 4: 6-7- "*The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*"...which refers to prayer in terms of requests that we present to God? These passages would also seem to do a better job at proving that prayer is "*an offering up of our desires unto God.*" Why Psalm 62: 8?**
 - (1) **I believe the divines chose Psalm 62: 8 because they were thinking of prayer as something more than simply making requests to God.**
 - (2) **This proof text tells us that the authors of the Shorter Catechism regarded prayer primarily as "*pouring out our hearts before God.*"**
 - (3) **The word that has frequently been used to communicate this idea is the word "*pleading.*" We plead with God in prayer when we pour out our hearts before him. We earnestly implore Him to hear us and to answer from heaven. We do this not just with our words but also with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.**
 - (4) **If prayer involves pouring out our hearts to God= "*pleading*", then we can see immediately why we should be engaging in it. We should do so precisely because it involves our hearts.**
 - **The Bible everywhere teaches us that God is concerned chiefly about matters of the heart. This is especially true in regard to the Christian life.**

- **We not only are told that the "great and first commandment" is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts (Matt. 22: 37-38)**

but also see that if we do anything in the Christian life without engaging our hearts, then we do it “in vain” and are guilty of the same kind of hypocrisy that Jesus accused the Pharisees and scribes of in Matthew 15: 7–9.

(5) We can do this because we are to trust in Him at all times...and we will confide in the one whom we trust! That is what the authors of the Shorter Catechism meant.

2. Does this definition of prayer square with yours? How does your definition of prayer affect how you pray?
 3. Why do you suppose that the catechism calls the Lord’s Prayer the special rule of direction... for our prayers given all the other prayers in Scripture?
- C. WSC #100- What does the preface of the Lord’s Prayer teach us? *The preface of the Lord’s Supper (which is, Our Father who is in heaven), teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.*
1. The first thing Jesus told His disciples when they asked Him how to pray was to pray to the One who deserves our prayers
 - a. **Jesus often uses the endearment-“Father”...(using this term at least 165 times in the gospels to drive the point home that this was the name God preferred from His children). Jesus teaches us that this is NOT simply A way to address God but THE way to address God our Father.**
 - b. **Only 15 times on the OT is God referred to as Father specifically...but there are many references to this position...as Israel is constantly being referred to as His children...His people.**
 - c. **Paul uses the title over 40 times in his epistles, reinforcing the teaching of Jesus.**
 2. What do the words “Our Father” communicate and teach us?
 - a. **“Our Father...” speaks to the fact that He deserves all recognition and respect as we reverently fear the LORD like a son to his father. Mal. 1:6- “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts.”**
 - b. **Teaches us to draw near to Him intimately with our heart with confidence... Rom. 8:15- “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”**
 - c. **He is OUR Father...He created us...He chose us...He redeemed us...He adopted us into His family...
(1) “We are His offspring.”- (Acts. 17:28)
(2) “Have we not all one Father?” (Mal. 2:10)**
 - d. **“Father”...God could have only been known by His other titles, Sovereign, Almighty One...
(1) He has chosen more intimate forms...family forms like His personal name Yahweh...and His more personal title “Father” as an expression of His love for His children.**

- (2) It also communicates His approachableness...as a good father would be.
- e. **"Father"** reminds us that we are children and we have been adopted and we need direction, care and love as all children do...we can't do it on our own! So it stands to reason that He would want to be known as our Father...the Father of His children.
 - f. **"Our Father..."** this might seem too formal in this laid back society where we would prefer "daddy" or "dad" or something less formal. We must remember that **"Abba"** means in Aramaic- **"Father"** not daddy.
 - (1) **"Father"** is the most common term Jesus uses of His Father and He is teaching us to do the same.
 - (2) The word **"Abba"** has in its meaning two parts...which is common with many of the words in Scripture...and they are intimacy and obedience. In that, **"Father, I will trust and obey you."** You are my father and you love me and I will obey you...kind of thinking. **"Abba"** might actually be better translated **"Sir"** in our language...designating reverence and loyalty but then there is the intimacy part in that this is your father...not just some abstract authority figure.
 - (3) Only a true **"son or daughter"** of the king has the privilege and the understanding to use this. **"Abba, Father"** is Jesus' and Paul's way of emphasizing this relationship of closeness and our need to trust and obey Him as our Father.
 - (4) It is important to NOT be too relaxed in the presence of the God and Father of all or we begin to take Him for granted.
 - g. **"Our Father..."** speaks to our understanding that we are part of a family and He is our Father so as we pray we remember we are part of that family, and that we are to pray with and for our brothers and sisters. Eph. 6:18- ***"...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."***
 - h. But also, as **"Our Father..."** we can also pray for all others. Because He is our Father we take all our requests through to Him first and foremost. I Tim. 2:1-3 ***"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior..."***
 - i. Interestingly even our enemies, Matt. 5:44-48 ***"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Oct. 10, 2021

- A. Prayer
- B. Review- WSC #100- What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us? *The preface of the Lord's Supper (which is, Our Father who is in heaven), teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.*
 - 3. What were some of the things we said, last week that the words "Our Father" communicate and teach us?
 - j. **"Our Father..." speaks to the fact that He deserves all recognition and respect as we reverently fear the LORD like a son to his father. Mal. 1:6- "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts."**
 - k. **Teaches us to draw near to Him intimately with our heart with confidence... Rom. 8:15- "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"**
 - l. **He is OUR Father...He created us...He chose us...He redeemed us...He adopted us into His family...**
 - (3) **"We are His offspring."- (Acts. 17:28)**
 - (4) **"Have we not all one Father?" (Mal. 2:10)**
 - m. **"Father"...God could have only been known by His other titles, Sovereign, Almighty One...but He has chosen more intimate forms...family forms like His personal title "Father" as an expression of His love for His children. It also communicates His approachableness...as a good father would be.**
 - n. **"Father" reminds us that we are children and we have been adopted and we need direction, care and love as all children do...we can't do it on our own! So it stands to reason that He would want to be known as our Father...the Father of His children.**
 - o. **"Our Father..." this might seem too formal in this laid back society where we would prefer "daddy" or "dad" or something less formal. We must remember that "Abba" means in Aramaic- "Father" not daddy.**
 - (1) **"Father" is the most common term Jesus uses of His Father and He is teaching us to do the same.**
 - (2) **The word "Abba" has in its meaning two parts...which is common with many of the words in Scripture...and they are intimacy and obedience. In that, "Father, I will trust and obey you." You are my father and you love me and I will obey you...kind of thinking. "Abba" might actually be better translated "Sir" in our language...designating reverence and loyalty but then there is the intimacy part in that this is your father...not just some abstract authority figure.**

- (3) Only a true “son or daughter” of the king has the privilege and the understanding to use this. *“Abba, Father”* is Jesus’ and Paul’s way of emphasizing this relationship of closeness and our need to trust and obey Him as our Father.
- (4) It is important to NOT be too relaxed in the presence of the God and Father of all or we begin to take Him for granted.
- p. *“Our Father...”* speaks to our understanding that we are part of a family and He is our Father so as we pray we remember we are part of that family, and that we are to pray with and for our brothers and sisters. Eph. 6:18- *“...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...”*
 - q. But also, as *“Our Father...”* we can also pray for all others. Because He is our Father we take all our requests through to Him first and foremost. I Tim. 2:1-3 *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...”*
 - r. Interestingly even our enemies, Matt. 5:44-48 *“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*
4. What do we mean when we say, *“Our Father who is in heaven....”*?
- a. He is NOT the Temple as the religious leaders taught. Another contrast to the thinking of the hypocrites.
 - b. And it is NOT as if He is only resident in heaven...I Kings 8:27, *“The heaven of heavens cannot contain you...”*
 - c. That we must raise our minds up to God when we pray. He is always above us in all things. He dwells and inhabits all eternity...space and time. But our minds are too small to grasp this so Jesus gives us a singular place for our benefit... *“When you pray to God think of Him in heaven.”*
 - d. It is from the heavens that God governs all the universe and orders and directs all things that are moving toward His consummation.
 - e. It is in heaven not the earth which is where God primarily lives.
 - f. It is to remind us of His sovereign power and dominion over all.
 - g. It adds to the fear and reverence we have of Him. Eccl. 5:2- *“Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.”*

- h. **It does not mean that God is so high that we cannot reach Him. A common feature in false religions. In fact...Heb. 4:14-16- *"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."***
 - i. **In fact, when a sinner repents through Jesus' work in their life we are adopted into God's family and we can go into God's presence boldly as His child...no obstructions for us. ...and at death we immediately to His presence because He is our father. God is still God first though He is our Father...He is not safe...in the way we define safe today...but He is good. ...to paraphrase C.S. Lewis. So we can come to Him anytime walking directly into His throne Room boldly.**
- C. WSC #101- What do we pray for in the first petition? *In the first petition...(which is Hallowed be your Name)... we pray, that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He makes Himself known; and that he would dispose all things to His own glory.*
- 1. The catechism speaks of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. A petition means "something asked for." The Lord's Prayer is made up of 6 petitions...the first 3 being about God, and the last 3 about ourselves.
 - a. *Preface: "Our Father in heaven*
 - b. *1st Petition: Hallowed be Your name*
 - c. *2nd Petition: (May) Your Kingdom Come*
 - d. *3rd Petition: (May) Your will be done, (in) on earth, as it is in heaven*
 - e. *4th Petition: Give us this day our daily bread*
 - f. *5th Petition: Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*
 - g. *6th Petition: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (the evil one).*
 - h. *Conclusion: For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever, Amen.*
 - 2. Jesus told them to pray specifically that the name of God be regarded as holy. In Matthew and in Luke it is a petition that we need to make daily to remind and teach us that our #1 priority in prayer is God's honor...the honor of His name.
 - 3. Why is it necessary to remind ourselves of our number 1 priority?
 - a. **So that we remember our purpose of always glorifying God....because we think too much about ourselves.**
 - b. **To remind us from whom these good works come from that we have been called upon to do to glorify His holy name.**
 - c. **If we haven't been doing as God commands and shows us this will remind us how to get back on track.**
 - 4. What have you been taught that the word "hallow" means?
 - a. **Holy or literally *"Let your name be sanctified/revered/ regarded as sacred"* but that is not all...God's name is hallowed or glorified by God Himself...He is "to separate, to set apart"... "To hold as sacred"...God is to hold Himself sacred...since we will not.**

- (1) It is asking God to MAKE His own name holy! Interesting request...something we cannot do.**
- (2) Having said that though, we are to pray to that end so that He is magnified in the world he created as He does all thing to bring Himself Glory.**
 - **II Samuel 7:26- *"And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you."***
 - **John 12:28- *"Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven: 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.'"***
 - **John 17:1-5- *"When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given Him. And this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."***
- (3) We do this not because we can influence God...but because our Holy God delights in worship that He prescribes... which enables us to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.**
- b. God's name is to be hallowed or glorified by all men, specifically His people...and He has actually made us to glorify His Holy name.**
 - (1) We do this by confessing and forsaking our sin which seeks to rob Him of His glory.**
 - (2) We do this by adoring Him and His titles, attributes and perfections.**
 - (3) We do this by believing and actually walking in His expressed will by attending corporate weekly worship and sacraments and prayer.**
 - (4) We do this by being good stewards of all that He has given us so that we can promote His honor and glory in and with all that we are.**
 - a. Ps. 67:1-3- *"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, (Selah) that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. (Selah) Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!"***
 - b. Ps. 83:16-18- *"Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek your name, O LORD. Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever; let them perish in disgrace, that they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth."***
 - c. Ps. 96:8-9- *"Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth!"***

- c. **God will be hallowed or glorified by all events... and as true followers of God we want to tell and point out to everyone His awesome works...those done and going to be done. We desire to participate with Him in this work as he has called us to do.**
5. Why is it so important for us to sanctify... "Hallow" God's name?
 - a. **That is what we were created for and it ought to be our main endeavor to live in such a way...to walk in His way which brings Him glory.**
 - b. **I Peter 2:9- *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."***
 - c. **To do otherwise would be to dishonor God. Ex. 20: 7- *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."***
 6. Just a thought...Why do you suppose the Lord used the term "hallowed" or Holy rather than say, glorified...as in glorified is your name...with such an emphasis through our Scripture on us glorifying His Name?
 - a. **Because His holiness is the central definer of who He is. His greatness appears in His holiness.**
 - b. **Is. 6:3- *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"*** The three fold "HOLY" emphasizes all that He is above all other attributes and definition.
 - c. **Is. 12:6- *"Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."***
 - d. **Luke 1:49- *"...holy is His name."***
 7. What's in a name, specifically His name?
 - a. **The name by which He has made Himself known first is "I AM"...Yahweh. Ex. 3:14- *"God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' And He said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: I am has sent me to you.'"***
 - (1)**By giving us His personal name this signifies for us His reality...in opposition to names given to idols. The phrase, grammatically speaks of His 'being' I am...He is...the supreme of being!**
 - (2)**His name speaks of His perfection and eternity. There is neither beginning nor end...He is. And He is perfect.**
 - (3)**His name encapsulates who He is...and His attributes- Ex. 43:5-6- *"The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."***
 - b. **Phil. 2:9-11 *"Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."***

8. How does following this pattern keep us from breaking the 3rd Commandment Ex. 20:7- ***“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”***?
- a. **By hallowing His name from the beginning we are less likely to take His name in vain if we begin with lifting His name up as high, exalted and holy...**
 - b. **By hallowing His name we are putting His name and honor first before our own.**
 - c. **By hallowing His name it keeps us from being presumptuous.**
 - d. **By hallowing His name we set our focus and our actions on the right path. Just starting here sets the stage for the rest of the prayer.**
 - e. **Always putting Him above and before ourselves put us in the proper place of submission to Him in all things enables us to actually honor His holy name.**
9. David Brainerd, missionary to American Indians once said when answering a question about how following this pattern will help us to fulfill even in part our purpose according to the 1st catechism question? *“My heaven is to please God, and to glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory: that is the heaven I long for, this is my religion, and that is my happiness, and always was, I suppose, ever since I had any true religion; and those that are of that religion shall meet me in heaven. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honor to God.”*

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Oct. 17, 2021

A. Prayer

- B. Review- WSC #101- What do we pray for in the first petition? *In the first petition...(which is Hallowed be your Name)... we pray, that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He makes Himself known; and that he would dispose all things to His own glory.*

10. Why is it necessary to be reminded of our number 1 priority to honor God as this first petition indicates?

- d. So that we remember our purpose of always glorifying God....because we think too much about ourselves.**
- e. To remind us from whom these good works come from that we have been called upon to do to glorify His holy name.**
- f. If we haven't been doing as God commands and shows us this will remind us how to get back on track.**
- g. To remind us that He is far above us and must be honored above all.**

11. With all of this in mind, how are we to go about "hallowing" God's name?

- a. On one hand only God can hallow His own name...**
- b. One the other, we are called upon as His people to glorify Him which means we are to treat His name as holy in what we do.**
 - (1) We do this by keeping His name pure...Ex. 20:7- *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."***
 - (2) We do this by loving His name...as in a marital love...He has given us His name as a husband gives his bride his name and she truly loves her new name.**
 - (3) We do this when we profess His name...when we profess that He is God and that He is our God and we are His children... but it is not enough just to profess...It must also be a reflection of our heart...remember Matt. 7:23- *"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"***
 - (4) We do this when we live as we are possessed by Him and His glory...when we live as holy as He is holy...which reveals our absolute trust in Him and our adoration of Him. Augustine once said... *"We imitate whom we adore!"* In praying hallowed be your name we offer adoration to God our father in and through our imitation of God the Son.**
 - (5) We do this every time we attribute to Him what He has done, is doing or will do according to His Word...in our lives, in the church and in the world. We can add nothing to His name but we honor Him when we lift His name up in the eyes of our children, our spouses and the world.**

- (6) We do this every time we honor His name before the other things we hold dear...our own good name... our own profit and interests...business...family...friends ...Heb. 11:24-26- *"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."*
- (7) We do this when we worship Him as He has prescribed. All the regulations of Lev. show us the importance of worshiping God as He prescribes...the structure of this prayer does as well.
- (8) When we keep His Lord's Day as holy...Ex. 20:8-11
- (9) We do this when we read His Word and shape our lives by His Word and hold His Word as holy...since it is His Word.
- (10) We do this when we stand up...no matter the cost...for His Word. Athanasius is said to have said something like, *"It is better to have truth without peace, than peace without truth."*
- (11) We do this when we submit to His sovereign royal rule...which leads us to the next petition... *"Your kingdom come."*

C. WSC #102- What do we pray for in the second petition? *In the second petition, (which is YOUR KINGDOM COME...) we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed: and that the kingdom of Grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it: and that the kingdom of Glory may be hastened.*

1. What is the kingdom of God?

- a. It is NOT political or earthly in any way...John 18:36- *"My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."*...

- (1) Many people, Jewish and Christian alike are actually looking for Christ to come and reign on an earthly throne in Jerusalem and to reinstitute the sacrifices of the Temple...once the temple is rebuilt...and Jerusalem will be the center of all political and earthly rule overseen by Christ.

- (2) Even the Apostles still wondered about this as do men today...Acts 1:6- *"So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'"*

- b. As we have said...a King implies naturally a kingdom. A king's kingdom extends to the limits of his realm. Since God is Creator of all things and He reigns omnipotent overall then His realm is everywhere...God's is King over everything seen and unseen.
- c. In one sense, the kingdom of God has been around and Christ ruled with God His Father from the beginning...in another, the kingdom became known when Christ came and inaugurated it on this earth with clear references to His reign...no longer represented by men... He now reigns again with His Father at His ascension. So He is King now...reigning now...this is not something we have to wait for.

- d. **All too often we assume a dichotomy that is not there when it comes to the scriptures.**
 - (1) We look at the Old Testament and New Testaments as two separate stories or events.**
 - (2) But the reality is that God's has only had one plan of redemption... one covenant of grace... and that began in eternity past.**
 - (3) While there is only one covenant of grace that spans all of time until the End, we can and do speak of two general periods of time in the life of the covenant people of God: the old covenant...BC- Before Christ, the new covenant that follows Christ...AD...after Christ's death, resurrection and ascension.**
 - (4) With this in mind when we think covenantally we read and understand the Bible as one book that tells one overarching story of promise about one Savior's coming to reconcile one people to the one true God.**
 - e. **And we are all citizens of this kingdom by virtue of being adopted by God into His family...Phil. 3:20-21- *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself. The kingdom is the family of God all under the rule of our God and King!***
2. In your own words, what according to the catechism are we praying when we say these 3 words... *Your Kingdom Come?*
- a. **God's kingdom is His rule and reign, the areas where people are living in obedience to the king. When we ask for His kingdom to come, we are asking for an extension of this rule, by the preaching and teaching of the kingdom...the gospel for people from every nation, tongue and tribe ...His elect...to live in obedience to the good king. We ask that the kingdom that was inaugurated by Jesus's earthly ministry be extended and enlarged by the Holy Spirit as God promised it would until Jesus returns. Is. 2:2-4- *"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD (the kingdom of God) shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations..."***
 - b. **We are also asking the God would grow us and His people in sanctification and grace. Acts 26:28-29- *"And Agrippa said to Paul, 'In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?' And Paul said, 'Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.'"***
 - c. **The future state of glory is also in mind here, of course. I Cor. 15:50- *"I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."* So we pray for ourselves and all who are Gods in our journey to glory.**

3. What is required of us as subjects of the King? In other words, how do we make God's kingdom obvious to the world around us? (All of this plays into the petition... *may your kingdom come* especially if we are kingdom citizens.)
 - a. **We must be His servants...envoys, representatives, ambassadors...speaking and acting on behalf of the King only communicating what He has told us to communicate.**
 - b. **We must trust Him...kings took a vow to protect their people with their very lives...the people understood the rules...the king would protect them and they would serve the king and they would all prosper.**
 - c. **We must fear the King...we are to be in awe of Him, His Word, His Will revealed in His Word and we are to be obedient to Him submitting to His every Word....**
 - (1) ***Jer. 5:21-22-“Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. Do you not fear me? Declares the Lord. Do you not tremble before me?”***
 - (2) ***Luke 12:5- “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear Him who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him!”***
 - d. **We must love the King...there is no reason not to and every reason to love Him considering that He has kept EVERY promise ever made...**
 - e. **And we do this by living under His kingship...by being in His Word that reveals what a “good citizen” of His kingdom looks like and how we are to act bringing His glory in all we do...so we manifest this kingdom with our lives...show that it exists until that day when Christ does return...**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Oct. 24, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review - WSC #102- What do we pray for in the second petition? *In the second petition, (which is YOUR KINGDOM COME...) we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed: and that the kingdom of Grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it: and that the kingdom of Glory may be hastened.*

1. How would you describe God's Kingdom to your children?
2. What is required of us as subjects of the King? In other words, how do we make God's kingdom obvious to the world around us? (All of this plays into the petition... *may your kingdom come* especially if we are kingdom citizens.)
 - f. **We must be His servants...envoys, representatives, ambassadors...speaking and acting on behalf of the King only communicating what He has told us to communicate.**
 - g. **We must trust Him...kings took a vow to protect their people with their very lives...the people understood the rules...the king would protect them and they would serve the king and they would all prosper.**
 - h. **We must fear the King...we are to be in awe of Him, His Word, His Will revealed in His Word and we are to be obedient to Him submitting to His every Word....**
 - (3)Jer. 5:21-22-*"Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. Do you not fear me? Declares the Lord. Do you not tremble before me?"*
 - (4)Luke 12:5- *"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear Him who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him!"*
 - i. **We must love the King...there is no reason not to and every reason to love Him considering that He has kept EVERY promise ever made...**
 - j. **And we do this by living under His kingship...by being in His Word that reveals what a "good citizen" of His kingdom looks like and how we are to act bringing His glory in all we do...so we manifest this kingdom with our lives...show that it exists until that day when Christ does return...**
 - k. What things do you tell your child(ren) about what this looks like in their day to day lives?

C. WSC #102 continued:

1. Children catechism question #117- What does it mean to pray, "Thy kingdom come?"- *We are asking God to bring more and more people to hear, believe and obey the gospel.*
2. The catechism speaks of Satan's kingdom. What kingdom does Satan rule?
 - a. **This statement recognizes that mankind in general is ruled by the kingdom of Satan because of our sin and rebellion against God.**
 - b. **Basic answer: only that which God directs he can rule. See Job 1**

3. How will Satan's kingdom be destroyed?
 - a. **Ps. 68:1- *"God shall arise, His enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate Him shall flee before Him!"***
 - a. **II Cor. 10:3-6- *"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete."***
 - b. **Christianity interestingly enough conquered Rome without resorting to violence but rather through love and kindness.**
 - c. **But then centuries later the Church became powerful and corrupt and began wielding the weapons of this world...inquisition...the Crusades...indulgences...fear of Hell... and look at where that has gotten us... See also Rev. 12:12- *"But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"***

4. What is the catechism communicating in the phrase; "...and the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it..."?
 - a. **This is the universal Church. This is the kingdom of Grace that the catechism is referring too.**
 - b. **This is an imperfect distinction between the rule of God now and the rule of God in eternity.**
 - c. **The Bible says that God already rules over all things. See Daniel 4:34-35- *"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and He does according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"***
 - (1) **So we never are praying with hopes that God will one day get control of all things... He already does.**
 - (2) **We are praying that the Spirit of God will work in the hearts of men to enable them to will and do that which is pleasing to God our Father.**
 - (3) **All men are ruled by God by God's absolute sovereignty... But His children are ruled by God also from the inside by God's Spirit...it is His church. Luke 17:20- *"Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them, 'The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.'"***
 - (4) **What did Jesus mean in John 18:36-37- *"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.'"***
 - **As we said before it opposes all other kingdom paradigms...open and regular conflict warfare...**

- **It opposes the things of the world because the world's sole purpose is to oppose God...there are no neutral arenas...not education, not science, not philosophy...all areas that aren't devoted to Christ are opposed to Christ in some way and must be called to account on a regular basis.**
- d. **See John 17:10-23-*"All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."* Obviously, He has a plan that only includes His children...and all of His children are guaranteed to get in before His eschatological kingdom ...the kingdom of glory...comes.**
- i. But it is not enough to ask *"May your kingdom come"*... this petition must be followed up by the next, *"May you will be done in earth as it is in heaven."*
- D. WSC #103- What do we pray for in the 3rd petition? *In the 3rd petition...(which is, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven...") we pray, that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to His will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.*
1. When we say, *"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven..."* what are we saying about what we know about how God's will is done in heaven?
- a. **It starts out as a confession of sorts even though we are asking for His will to be done.**
- (1) This is a confession of sorts...**
- **We are saying we know that He is the only One who can reveal His will ...**
 - **He is the only One that can bring His will about...**
 - **He only reveals His total prescriptive will to His own for only we can understand His Word...I Cor. 2:14-16- *"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of***

God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.” ...

(2) Given that God often carries out His will through His people we are praying:

- **For active obedience to His will...that we may actually do his revealed will...what He commands.**
- **For passive obedience...that we may submit to God’s will patiently...no matter what his will may be...**
- **We are then confessing... “I can do nothing without You...so since you delight in using your own...use me to make your will known.”**
- **That God will enlighten us to His will, so that it may be done. For we must know His will before we can do it. Since we are the main instrument that He uses to make His will known.**

b. By the angels- Ps. 103:20- *“Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word!”* The angels do His will speedily, cheerfully, humbly, thankfully, constantly and all knowingly without reserve or question.

c. By the saints (elders and people) in heaven:

(1) As they serve God in heaven readily, with great worship and delight-

- **Rev. 4:10-11- *“the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who is seated on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.’”***
- **Rev. 7:15- *“Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence.”***

(2) As they watch and cheer us on which is God’s will-Heb. 12:1-3- *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”* By their being there doing what they do somehow it affects what we do here.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Oct. 31, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #103- What do we pray for in the 3rd petition? *In the 3rd petition...(which is, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven...") we pray, that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to His will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.*

2. What is meant by the will of God here? Theologians have given us at least 5 types to consider:

- a. **There is the Sovereign Will of God which basically means that God needs no one's permission to do whatever He wishes...and He will do whatever He wishes for His own glory and the good of His children. He created... which brings Him glory... and He redeemed His own ...bestowing His grace on the ones He chose before the foundations of the earth...which brings Him glory. This expression of God's will focuses on the fact that God sovereignly ordains everything that comes to pass. In other words, there is nothing that happens that is outside of God's sovereign will.**
- b. **There is also the Prescriptive Will of God which is revealed in His precepts and commands. Jesus was not telling His disciples and us later to pray for God's sovereign will because we do not need to pray for that...it is done on earth as it is in heaven. Obviously Jesus is teaching us to pray that God will carry out His prescriptive will...His revealed will through us...that we will obey this will as those in heaven do.**
- c. **There is also God's Preferential Will.**
 - (1) **This has to do with what gives God pleasure, and what does not. We know that God loves to show mercy, and yet He will execute judgment -Exodus 34:6-7-*"The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.'*"**
 - (2) **For example, while it is clear that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, it is also clear that He wills or decrees their death.**
 - (3) **This expression of God's will is revealed in the many verses of Scripture which indicate what God does and does not take pleasure in. For example, in 1 Timothy 2:4 we see that God desires all His people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, yet we know that God's sovereign will is that *"no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:44).**
- d. **Then there is what we might call God's Permissive Will.**
 - (1) **This is what God allows, even though it is sin.**

- (2) God allowed Joseph's brothers to betray him, and to deceive their father, so that He might bring the Israelites (few in number) to Egypt, where God would spare them, and they would greatly multiply (Genesis 50:20).
- (3) God's permissive will is never outside His sovereign will. It is said that God "permits" those things which will lead to the accomplishment of His sovereign will.
- e. There is also God's Directive Will. This is God's personal guidance in our lives. It does not violate any of the "wills" above. There are times when God wants us at a certain place, doing a certain thing. The Bible most often will not provide us with this direct and personal revelation of His will.
 - (1) I can think of God's directive will being revealed in the "Macedonian call" (Acts 16:6-10).
 - (2) I can see it in the direct guidance of Philip (Acts 8:26) and of Peter and Ananias (Acts 10:1-23).
 - (3) God does guide us personally and directly, but it seems that this is not as common as some would like. This seems to be required at certain points of our life, when specific guidance is needed. See 1 Timothy 4:14- *"Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you."* Timothy had a particular calling by God that has been confirmed by the church as he is ordained and he is under obligation to God to carry out that calling...God's directive that has come through the other elders.
- f. In conclusion (if that is possible)... What we should seek to know is the prescriptive or revealed will of God since God does not reveal the hidden will of God...with the understanding and motivation that however we define God's will ...it is His sovereign will...no one else's and He does whatsoever he wills!
 - (1) We must live in daily repentance, in daily dependence on the atoning death of Christ. Our constant prayer should be, *"Show us our sin, and show us our Savior."*
 - (2) Which then enables us to desire to know and live according to the will of God as revealed in Scripture, and that can be summarized as *"be holy for I am Holy"* (1 Peter 1:15-16).
 - (3) Our responsibility is to obey the revealed will of God and not to speculate on what His hidden will for us might be.
 - (4) While we should seek to be *"led by the Holy Spirit,"* we must never forget that the Holy Spirit is primarily leading us to righteousness and to being conformed into the image of Christ so that our lives will glorify God. God calls us to live our lives by every word that proceeds from His mouth. His Spirit directs us all day every day!
 - (5) Living according to His revealed will should be the chief aim or purpose of our lives. Romans 12:1-2 summarizes this truth, as we are called to present our *"bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

(6) To know the will of God, we should immerse ourselves in the written Word of God, saturating our minds with it, and praying that the Holy Spirit will transform us through the renewing of our minds, so that the result is what is good, acceptable and perfect—the will of God.

(7) Solomon and David his father, encourages us accordingly-Prov. 4:1-9- *“Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.’”*

3. According to the catechism we are to, “...to know, obey and submit to His will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.” Why then are we to pray that God’s will be known and done by us?

a. **Knowing it is to do it...But we must pray for this for it is a special gift of God’s grace to all who are His through His Word and the work of His Spirit.**

(1) Gal. 1:15-18- *“But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.”*

- He knew the Word already...
- The Spirit of God opened him to Christ and to the meaning and knowledge of Christ for the work He was calling him to.

(2) Eph. 1:17-19- *“...remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might...”*

b. **We must pray for it because we can’t do it on our own or by our own will. Because as many of the puritans used to say, our will is not humble enough! Our will, even our redeemed will is stubborn and prideful so we must actually pray for God to grant this for us.**

(1) Ezek. 36:25-27- *“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your*

flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

(2) Phil. 2:12-13- *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*

- c. And we pray this so like the angels we will do God's will speedily, cheerfully, humbly, thankfully, constantly and all knowingly without reserve or question. Psalm 119:97-100- *"Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts."***
 - d. In order for us to pray this way the catechism expects that we will be full of repentance of everything that contradicts God's will otherwise it would be in vain to pray such a petition. Gal. 6:14- *"But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."***
 - e. Long before the catechism Luther would spend hours in repentance and confession because he realized that everything thing in us is tainted with sin and as such must be confessed and repented of continually...if we wish to receive absolution...for the Law demands complete and perfect confession and repentance to receive absolution...but God's Spirit was wonderful to Luther changing his heart and helping him to know that there was no way that he alone could ever receive the absolution required by the law...no matter how hard he tried...but through Christ alone the righteous live by faith...hence the Reformation and the battle cry of "justification by grace alone!"**
 - f. It is for our glory and happiness. Psalm 19:7-11- *"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."*The Hebrew word translated "clean" speaks of as we fear the Lord in our worship and work keeping and doing His will we are cleanse by Christ unto our perfection in Christ. Another way to think of it would be, *"the fear of the Lord is sanctifying."***
 - g. This keeps us in line, if you will. Eccl. 12:13- *"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."***
- 4. 1st Children's Catechism #119- What does it mean to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"? *WE are asking God to make us able and willing to serve Him on earth just as He is served in heaven.***

5. In summary...in what manner are we to do God's will?
 - a. **We are to do His will as a matter of fact...**
 - b. **And we must do it in the manner He prescribes...as it is done in heaven...And how is that?**
 - (1) **Without question or hesitation. One might assume that the angels do not have a will to do whatever they want unless it is like our revealed will where we desire to do what God wants. But wherever they are on this will thing...it is clear throughout Scripture that they never question God's will...they just carry it out...and so are we to do so in joy and gratefulness for God grace. They do it out of duty we do it out of the grace shown us for the gift of eternal life.**
 - (2) **Willingly without complaint....the angel's desire is to honor and glorify God...there seems to never be a moments struggle with anything God commands. See Rom. 12:1- *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."* Zeal has been described by the rabbis as a love that can't sit still...comparing it to a child that is always moving discovering and delighting. Fervent angels are given the name "seraphim" – "burning ones"...they are truly on fire for the Lord...and we should be as well...**
 - (3) **Continuously and our best. Numbers 28:9-10- *"On the Sabbath day, two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering: 10 this is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering"*....first born without blemish...for it is considered to be the best...that is why we are to give our first fruit for our tithe and offerings...we give the best...not what's left.**
 - (4) **Without adding to or taking away from what God has revealed. He reveals clear how things are to be done and we are not at liberty to change that to meet our own fancy.**

C. WSC #104- What do we pray for in the 4th petition? *In the 4th petition... (Which is, "Give us this day our daily bread"...)* we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy His blessing with them.

- a. Benjamin Keach's Catechism Commonly known as The Baptist Catechism in use in 17th through 19th Cent. (a Particular Baptist...what we would call a Reformed Baptist today...Calvinistic but not paedobaptistic so not truly Reformed. He was a big proponent of the 1689 London Baptist Confession that Spurgeon brought back into vogue when he pastored) #115. What do we pray for in the fourth petition? In the fourth petition, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray that of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life and enjoy His blessing with them. (Matt. 6:11; Prov. 30:8,9; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; 4:4,5) (Same as above answer from WSC)

- b. What does this petition require that we recognize about ourselves?
 - a. **That we can't provide for our own needs...without God sovereignly enabling us to. Deut. 8:17-18- *"Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."***
 - b. **That we are praying this not just for ourselves but for all who believe ...specifically those under our charge...teaching our children to pray for others that they too would receive God's good provision.**
 - c. **And we should pray this daily.**
 - d. **And pursue the Lord's will in providing this bread- Ps. 128:1-2- *"Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you."***
- c. What does this tell us about God's provision and what He will give us?
 - a. **We can't be satisfied in and of ourselves...**
 - b. **All that we need comes from Him...God's benevolence...He will, "will" good to us as well as provide for us good things.**
 - c. **That God has said that He will provide for us but it also shows us our need to ask for His provision...a sufficient portion for the day...and God's blessings to come with it...**
 - d. **Stresses the importance of simple things.**
 - e. **He always stands ready to supply our every need.**
 - f. **He delights in giving good gifts...bread is just one of many ways to feed His people... Also...by His own Word... bread... is an essential element for our continued existence...as in:**
 - (5) **Matt. 4:4- *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."***
 - (6) **Deut. 8:3- *"And He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."***

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Nov. 7, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC #104- What do we pray for in the 4th petition? *In the 4th petition... (Which is, "Give us this day our daily bread"...) we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy His blessing with them.*

1. Think about the fact that at the very center of this prayer, Jesus so quickly switches the emphasis from something as wonderful as the will of God to something as mundane as earthly bread? What does this communicate to us?
 - a. **This is just like Him... since He sees no distinction between what we compartmentalize as secular and spiritual....it is all the same to Him.**
 - b. **We uphold one part of life as more important than another but Scripture makes the point that all things are from God and as such are all spiritual in nature.**
 - c. **One reason why we give thanks for our meals...recognition that we wouldn't have it if it wasn't from God.**
 - d. **Fun fact: Anyone know the history behind this statement: "Daily Bread"? It seems to have been a saying that referred to the daily rations of a soldier. This would suggest, just as in the military, our food is given out to us a portion at a time...day by day...maybe exactly at the time predetermined.**
2. The word "daily" in the Greek carries with it the additional meanings
 - a. **Of "necessary" or even "future...or the next day's bread"- as in the manna that needed to be collected for the Sabbath since there would not be any manna collected on the Sabbath.**
 - b. **This also is used to spur the reader and prayers concerning "the coming meal of the kingdom."**
 - c. **And the word for "bread" here has had 4 basic theological understanding attached to it over time:**
 - (1) **Christ the bread of life.**
 - (2) **Communion bread...that represents the body of Christ.**
 - (3) **It is physical food that God provides for His own with good things....**
 - (4) **It symbolizes life in the coming kingdom so that this petition becomes an extension of your kingdom come...**
 - d. **It is all of these to be sure...**
 - (1) **Matthew 6:25-27- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"**

(2) John 6:31-35- “Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to Him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’”

3. What does this passage tell us about the spiritual contentment that is gained by us when we trust God for our daily provision? **Ecc1. 5:18-20- “Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions land power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.”**
 4. It has been said, “We are what we eat.” If we then, feed our body and soul on what God has provided...physically and spiritually through Christ it follows then that is what we will become...more like Christ...which explains why Jesus included such an earthly petition in this prayer.
- C. WSC#105- What do we pray for in the 5th petition? *In the 5th petition... (which is, “...And forgives us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...”)*, we pray, that God, for Christ’s sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.
1. Where are we? **Matt. 6:9-12- “Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”**
 2. Have you ever considered the sentence structure in this prayer and noticed that these two are connected... “Give me this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...”? As we begin this catechism question, what are your thoughts, knowing that these 2 go together?
 - a. **To teach us that even temporary and good things are of no account without special and spiritual graces attached.**
 - b. **To teach us, that that even with good earthly things without God’s continual forgiveness of sins we are not able to enjoy even the good earthly things. Luke 12:16-21- “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the**

things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

3. Now that we have considered how they go together, let look more intently at both halves of this petition. What does the first half of this request tell us to acknowledge?

a. That we are sinners...

- (1) Guilty...not one is innocent not even God's redeemed children...we owe a debt that cannot be paid by us in any way. Ps. 49:7-8- *"Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice..."***
- (2) There was a belief at the time if you were a Jew you were God's child by virtue of being a Jew and everyone else then was guilty and you were covered...**
- (3) Think Rom. 2:17-24- *"But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know His will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'"***
- (4) And in reality most "Christians" today don't see themselves as debtors to God.**

b. That we are sinners in need of forgiveness...as often as we pray...daily, moment by moment...regularly.

- (1) Unrest, dissatisfaction are often spoken of as the human condition. And those who speak this way are correct. For this unrest or dissatisfaction notes that something is missing...something is not quite right.**
- (2) We say it is because we don't have what we want...job, marriage, family, fast car...but what bothers all men is the separation that exist between them and the God who created them.**
- (3) We are made in His image and as such our souls can only find rest when they find rest in Him...and outside of His forgiveness there will never be any real rest or satisfaction.**

c. That we are sinners and we are indebted to someone...and that someone is God...that we owe God something we cannot repay.

- (1) Jesus says in Luke, *"Forgive us our sins..."*...which testifies that our sin is the debt.**
- (2) This is hard for us...because we by default can't fathom being guilty in need of forgiveness. I have heard people in seminary say something like, *"But what if I don't feel like I have done anything wrong? What if I don't feel in need of forgiveness?...or as has been said recently by a President of the United States, 'I have done nothing I need to be forgiven for.'"***

- (3) The only answer to such questions is that it is possible that this person has never had a genuine encounter with God.
- d. That we are sinners know we will be forgiven...
- (1) Rom. 5:1- *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
- (2) Rom. 8:1- *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
- (3) I John 1:8-9- *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
In this text we see both ...the need to seek forgiveness and the reality that we will obtain forgiveness when we ask with the right heart.
- e. Daily bread will satisfy the stomach but forgiveness of sin satisfies the soul eternally.
4. What is being said according to the 2nd half of this phrase?
- a. Of course, when we say this statement the first question that should come to mind is? Have we forgiven others who have wronged us? Do we really have a clear conscience in our relationships with others?
- b. The little word "as" says so much here in explanation.
- (1) "As" is not a note of "equity"...that is forgiving in the same way as God grants forgiveness...but rather "similarity" to God...we are to imitate His action of forgiving... see Matt. 6:14-15-*"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*
- (2) Every Christian is required/ charged with forgiving his brother in Christ. Col. 3:12-13- *"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."*
- (3) In Matthew 6:12 it says, *"forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"* and we are tempted to turn that "as" into a cause or instrument of our forgiveness, as if, in the Lord's Prayer, we are placed on a legal, conditional, works footing before God.
- That is not at all what our Lord is teaching here.
 - If the forgiveness we receive is proportional to the forgiveness we give, then we are all damned because none of us has forgiven perfectly. Rather, we forgive because we have been forgiven.
- c. He who knows he is forgiven is more willing to forgive....Eph. 4:32- *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*
- d. See Prov. 19:11- *"Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense."* it is better to bury an injury than to revenge it...
- (1) This does not necessarily mean that we are required to trust as before...buy only to forgive...

- (2) If you are self-focused you will get upset immediately and want revenge... but “good sense” dictates something better... if practicing forgiveness then, it is easier to forgive sins done to us...**
5. Given where this petition is placed in this prayer where it is, what does this tell us about the importance of forgiveness?
 - a. **Real food- “Bread” which we have seen means all our spiritual, emotional and spiritual needs placed together with needing daily forgiveness and daily forgiving others must mean something significant.**
 - b. **Just like bread is needed for our basics to living so isn’t forgiveness.**
 - (1) Without God’s forgiveness we have no hope.**
 - (2) Without the ability and desire to forgive others we reveal that we have not been forgiven thus we have no hope.**
 - (3) Both are essential for our life...spiritually, emotionally and physically...this is something we actually know for when we harbor ill against someone else we are often physically ill ourselves and emotionally distraught...and spiritually dry.**
 6. If that is true, then why do we find it so hard to forgive when we are wronged?
 - a. **Our pride won’t let it go. If that is true, then how can we not forgive since that kind of pride is sinful?**
 - b. **But what if someone has broken my trust multiple times?**
 - (1) The truth of vss. 14-15 is still true but extremely hard...but once again...trust will have to be rebuilt if possible.**
 - (2) Our example: Christ on the cross saying, “Father forgive them for they know not what they are do...”. On one hand they did in fact know what they were doing...taking an innocent man’s life...on the other they didn’t know Whose life it was they were taking....but they were still guilty on both counts so Christ prayed.**
 - (3) This is an example to us...if Christ can pray these things on the cross, then we can to and must.**
 7. Okay, some versions and some churches use trespass and others, like ours uses the actual Greek word most often translated “debt”. What is the difference and does it matter? Well, let’s look at the simple theological definitions
 - a. **“Debt”- Greek word means debt (an impossible debt), a wrong that cannot be overcome, a sin that cannot be rectified, a guilt that cannot be relieved in and of our self.**
 - (1) In the Scriptures it is that which we owe, for which we must suffer punishment unless payment is made or satisfaction is rendered by ourselves or another with the knowledge that we and what we bring is not sufficient.**
 - (2) In this case sins are called debts which makes us liable to the arrest of death and misery because we are unable to pay the debt and we keep on sinning as do others.**
 - b. **“Trespass”- Greek word means “a sin or a wrong doing” which means a deviation from the path of truth and righteousness.**
 - c. **All men, even believers, are “debtors”...and every sin deserves death so it is proper to speak of debt so that we recognize the obligation we have to seek payment of that debt... and as debtors God has forgiven us**

so we are to forgive our brothers and all other men as far as we are able. The word for “men” here is men in general “Anthropos”= “human beings.”

- d. In Matt. 6:14-15, Jesus uses the word “trespass” usually speaks to specific sins we and others commit.**
 - e. So forgiveness for our debts and the debts of others speaks to the force of our condition...trespass speaks to the action we are to take as others sin against us per sin.**
- 8. In the process of trying to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation, even with a brother in Christ, does the entire obligation rest upon the person who has been sinned against? Does not the offender also have an obligation?**
- a. Indeed, he does.**
 - b. He must repent and display contrition and with the message of repentance he must seek to remove the offense from the one he has offended. He is to be praying this daily as well.**
 - c. But this does not remove the requirement of the one offended to do all in their power to seek reconciliation...but if there is no cooperation from the other side, the blame will rest not on the offended party but the offender.**
 - d. But if he is outwardly false and continually sinful in his behavior towards us or others...and there is no change, as verified by others in the church, namely the elders, we are not bound to trust them and if they remain in their wickedness we should not have anything to do with them. Ps. 26:4-5- *“I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.”***
- 9. Now why should we pray daily for forgiveness, since through Christ’s atonement we are already cleansed/justified from every sin?**
- a. The Bible says so!**
 - b. It is true we are justified and nothing can add or take away from Christ’s work on our behalf.**
 - c. But since we sin daily we need because of our on-going sanctification to seek forgiveness of our daily sins a forgiveness that is guaranteed but one that we need to recognize to keep us humble before the LORD.**
- 10. How does this praying daily for God to forgive us our sins enable us to want to forgive others for their sins? For it is only when we understand our need to be forgiven and that our debt has been fully paid that we can then forgive.**

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Nov. 14, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- WSC#105- What do we pray for in the 5th petition? *In the 5th petition... (Which is, "...And forgives us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...")*, we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

1. This is where we are right now in the Lord's Prayer: **Matt. 6:9-12- "Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."**
2. Petition 4 and 5 are actually one sentence, "Give me this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors..." What things did we learn about these two being together?
 - a. **To teach us that even temporary and good things are of no account without special and spiritual graces attached.**
 - b. **To teach us, that that even with good earthly things without God's continual forgiveness of sins we are not able to enjoy even the good earthly things. Luke 12:16-21- "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."**
3. How does this praying daily for our daily bread and for God to forgive us our sins enable us to want to forgive others for their sins?
 - a. **For it is only when we understand our need to be dependent upon God and His forgiveness ...that our debt has been fully paid by someone else that we can then forgive.**
 - b. **Is. 55:1-2- "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food."**
 - c. **Matt. 11:27-30- "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

- C. WSC #106- What do us pray in the 6th petition? *In the 6th petition...(which is, "...and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil or the evil one...")... we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.*
1. What is a good working definition of temptation?
 - a. **Anything that would induce us to sin... James 1:14-15-*"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.this has been our basic definition since the 17th Cent...."***
 - b. **But, interestingly enough, the same Greek word can be used in a positive sense as well "testing"...James 1:12- *"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."* - The word is capable of both sense depending upon its context.**
 - c. **Theologian and Pastor John Owen- *"Always remain alert to temptation's initial advice, so that you may know when it is upon you. Most men do not perceive their enemy until they are wounded by him. Others, while noticing all around them those deeply involved in temptation, remain utterly insensible to their own danger. They stay fast asleep, heedless of danger, until others come and tell them that their house is on fire."***
 - d. **Theologian J.I. Packer has said- *"Temptation is not sin, for Christ was tempted as we are, yet remained sinless. Temptation only becomes sin when and as the suggestion of evil is accepted and yielded to."* What do you think of this statement in light of the James passages?**
 2. Given that we have seen that each of these petitions mean a whole lot more than the simple surface reading...what all comes to mind when you read or say the word is in the first half of this petition?
 - a. **Psalm 1 comes to mind as to what we should be thinking of.... concerning temptations and influences. *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."* (Ps. 1:1-6)**
 - b. **The forgiven pray this because they trust God and distrust themselves. We are not to think too highly of ourselves to be sure...for when we do ...we fall. Matt. 26:41- *"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."***
 - c. **We need to strike a balance between the knowledge that we are forgiven and presumption...for we are forgiven to act as God prescribes or there will be consequences...**

- d. **Just like we see in the example of Jesus (Matt. 4:1; See also Duet. 8:2)**
 - (1) **In this passage God the Father does in fact lead Jesus into this temptation...and He had nothing to prove on one hand...because He was sinless...but because God had covenanted that Jesus would endure all that we endure He leads Him into this temptation.**
 - (2) **In His wisdom the Father may seek to prove us by exposing us to testing...some of which may be severe so that we may resist and grow stronger...**
 - (3) **But we must always remember He does not and cannot entice/solicit us to sin (James 1:13-18).**
 - e. **And He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to withstand and overcome- I Cor. 10:13- *"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."***
 - f. **This could be read- *"Keep me ahead of the temptation..."*...**
 - g. **Not praying not to send temptation but praying that when they come that He will be there to lead us through them. *"When temptations come...help me not to fall into them..."***
 - h. **Can't keep ourselves from falling...only by God's grace and mercy can we stand in the face of temptation and...stand up again when we do fall.**
3. **According to James 1:13- *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He himself tempts no one."* This being true, why does Jesus teach us to pray to the Father, *"...lead us not into temptation..."*?**
- a. **This could easily be translated... *"Lead us not into the place of temptation."* Or *"Allow us not to be led into temptation."***
 - (1) **Jesus seems to be saying to us that it is okay to pray to God that He will never put us in a place where we will have to undergo a severe test of our faith or obedience.**
 - (2) **A place like the temptation in Eden...or the temptation of Job or the test of Abraham concerning the sacrifice of His son....or the place of testing like the wilderness that the Spirit drove Jesus into in Matthew 4.**
 - b. **Because according to James we can and do fall into temptation by our own desires. Let's look at the example of our first parents. Gen.3:1-8**
 - (1) **Gen. 3:1-3- We live in a world full of desires. We are daily tempted with the question... *"Did God really say?"* Most of the time we know the answer...just like Adam and Eve knew the answer but we to get along or we don't want to appear too much different than those around us...we fudge what we know to justify even thinking about what we know we shouldn't be thinking about.**
 - (2) **Gen. 3:4. Satan led Adam and Eve to believe that eating the forbidden fruit would not really have serious consequences...after all they were God's children.**
 - (3) **Satan presents a picture that arouses some passion or a desire in our personality. Gen. 3:4-5. Satan presented the picture to Adam and Eve that they could become as gods, knowing good and evil, if they ate the forbidden fruit.**

- (4) A deep seated appeal comes with this desire. Gen. 3:6. This idea had a tremendous appeal to Adam and Eve. It aroused a desire to become great and wise. It seemed pleasant and reasonable at the time.
 - (5) We begin to toy with the temptations...we entertain it. Gen 3:6. They looked at it and saw that appear to be good and then they reached and took the fruit.
 - (6) We don't just entertain the idea any more we act just like they did. Gen. 3:6. They accepted it. They ate it. They took it right in. Self-will was exerted here to stand against God's will. This was the sin actually occurred.
 - (7) The moment of shame. Gen. 3:7. The result was they sensed at once that they had been taken in. They were ashamed and embarrassed.
 - (8) They attempt to hide their sinfulness from one another. We attempt to excuse our behavior or conceal it. Gen. 3:8. They attempted to hide from God their Heavenly Father...which brought about a separation from the open relationship they had had with God.
 - (9) So this is why Jesus wants us to pray *"lead us not into temptation..."*
 - c. Because we are tempted to sin by the devil and His minions-
 - (1) I Chr. 21:1-*"Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel."*
 - (2) Matt. 4:1-3 *"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.'"*
 - d. Because we are tempted by the world when our desires align with the worlds.
4. Why does God allow us, His children, to be tempted?
- a. As I mentioned before to try us...Duet. 8:2- *"And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not"....*
 - (1) It has been said that he who is never tempted is never tested...and the one not tested never knows for sure God is with him.
 - (2) Each test ...each discipline strengthens us against the next...Job's sincerity of faith was tested...each time the devil comes tempting us with something and we look him in the eye and walk on it is a severe test of our love for the Father...and he tests our courage as well...
 - (3) So it is part of our ongoing sanctification...it is part of drill, drill, drill...completely the drill that God has set before us for His glory and our good.

- b. He also allows us to be tempted that we may be kept from pride. Think Paul II Cor. 12:7- *"So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited."*
 - c. God lets us be tempted so we can speak to others about such temptations and how to overcome them.
 - d. God lets us be tempted so that we long all the more for heaven.
5. Now as we consider the second half, "...but deliver us from evil or the evil one..." What are we asking God to do for us?
- a. **The evil or evil one...**
 - (1) Sin and /or the devil.
 - (2) Ps. 97:10- *"O you who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the lives of His saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked."*
 - b. **To help us understand and deliver us because the fact has become evident that we can be led into temptation and be made conscious of 2 enemies: the flesh and the cursed world...**
 - (1) Satan will use, as God allows, the world and flesh to tempt us.
 - (2) Part of our calling is to contend with the devil...it is the battle that we engage in every day.
 - (3) We grow weary of this battle...Satan never does.
 - (4) This contending is an encouragement and a warning to us.
 - (5) Every Christian who's desire is to live for the Lord can expect to meet with opposition personally.
 - c. **If God sees it appropriate to permit us...Like a Job... to be tempted or tested by Satan and the wicked around us, or by our own hearts, by His providence He will not leave us but will deliver us...so we are asking Him to do what He has promised to do in His covenant just like the Psalmist.**
 - (1) Ps. 19:13- *"Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!"*
 - (2) Ps. 51:10-12- *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit."*
 - (3) Ps. 141:4- *"Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deed in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!"*
 - (4) II Tim. 4:14-18- *"Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."*

- d. If it is also to be understood and read as “evil one”...
- (1) **It personifies a specific enemy...one who is seeking to undo us personally. I Peter 5:6-8-*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”***
 - (2) **It lets us know that there is one who has his hands in every truly evil event in history.**
 - (3) **That this one is more powerful than we....that he hinders good and provokes even more evil... that he is restless.**
 - (4) **We are reminded as Jesus reminded Peter that Satan wants us and we need Him to pray for us to be delivered...and when we fall to be delivered for better service.**
 - **Luke 22:31-32-*“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”***
 - **John 17:15-*“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”***
 - (5) **That we can only resist him through Jesus as the only one who can give is the strength to resist him...or resist the evil in this world.**
 - **I Peter 5:9-11- *“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”***
 - **I John 3:8- *“The reason the Son of God appeared was rto destroy the works of the devil.”***
 - **But we need, by God’s grace to be convinced that we will succeed in faith. Just like the Seal Team that took out Usama ben Laden (10 years ago) (May 1, 2011) they were convinced of success before they ever went. They did not go into the battle even entertaining the thought of possible failure.**
 - **Failure was not an option.**
 - **When we say we have in our hands the assurance that our heavenly Father is pleased to deliver us from the evil one we need to be mindful of the victory.**
 - **If we are left with wondering about what God can do and will do and what we are supposed to do, we are always susceptible to that voice that says, *“Did God really say?”***
- e. **We are asking God to enable us to all we can to keep temptations at bay, and to engage the grace of God with us in temptation, by prayer, by pleasing the Spirit of God by Looking to Jesus...the author and finisher of our faith.**
- f.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Nov. 21, 2021

A. Prayer

- B. Review- WSC #106- What do we pray in the 6th petition? *In the 6th petition...(which is, "...and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil or the evil one...")... we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.*

1. Matt. 6:9-12-*"Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."*

2. Did we talk about why the "and" is here tying this statement with the last statement?

a. Because it will be of no advantage to have our debts forgiven on one hand and then left wide open to continue on the other.

b. Ezek. 18:26-*"When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die."*

3. What did we say were some of the reasons for this line in the prayer?

4. Many want to translate the last word here "evil one" which seems to best translate the word used. Why would it be best for us to translate it this way?

a. It personifies a specific enemy...one who is seeking to undo us personally. I Peter 5:6-8-*"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."*

b. It lets us know that there is one who has his hands in every truly evil event in history.

c. That this one is more powerful than we are on our own....that he hinders good and provokes even more evil... that he is restless.

d. We are reminded as Jesus reminded Peter that Satan wants us and we need Him to pray for us to be delivered...and when we fall to be delivered for better service.

(1) Luke 22:31-32-*"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*

(2) John 17:15-*"I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."*

e. That we can only resist him through Jesus as the only one who can give us the strength to resist him...or resist the evil in this world.

(1) I Peter 5:9-11- *"Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in*

Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

(2) I John 3:8- "*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*"

(3) But we need, by God's grace to be convinced that we will succeed in faith. Just like the Seal Team that took out Usama ben Laden (10 years ago) (May 1, 2011) they were convinced of success before they ever went. They did not go into the battle even entertaining the thought of possible failure.

- **Failure was not an option.**
- **When we say we have in our hands the assurance that our heavenly Father is pleased to deliver us from the evil one we need to be mindful of the victory.**
- **If we are left with wondering about what God can do and will do and what we are supposed to do, we are always susceptible to that voice that says, "*Did God really say?*"**

f. We are asking God to enable us to do all we can to keep temptations at bay, and To engage the grace of God with us in temptation, by prayer, by looking to Jesus...the author and finisher of our faith. - I Cor. 10:13- "*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*"

5. Just to be clear; what do you think about Satan? Real or not real? Support your answer.

6. After asking for God to deliver us from the evil one...does anything else need to be said? What?

a. **Ps. 27:1- "*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*"**

b. **Rom. 8:31- "*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*"**

c. **Cyprian says in his ending of his treatise... "*After we have prayed this we stand secure and safe against all the devil and the world can do. For what fear can he have of the world, who has God for his protector in the world.*"**

C. But there is more though it is not in most manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel (it is not even referenced to in Luke's version as a side note or anything)...so The Shorter Catechism deals with it. WSC #107- What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us? *The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer ... (which is, "...for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.)...teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God ONLY, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to Him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, AMEN!*

1. What should we do about the fact that it is NOT in the Bible?

a. **The concluding line of the Lord's Prayer (like the concluding verses of Mark's Gospel), "*For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*" is missing from most manuscripts that are available to us.**

- (1) **Having said this, Christians should not be under the impression that they cannot trust their Bibles: less than 3% of the New Testament is in dispute, and no major doctrine is ever in question.**
 - (2) **Professor F. J. A. Hort, the nineteenth century Greek scholar put it this way: *"The amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation...can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the whole text."***
 - (3) **Of course, no original manuscript of any part of the biblical canon has survived; what we have are copies, some citing a few verses only, dating from as early as the 2nd century.**
 - (4) **However, this is a whole lot closer in time than many of the great secular books.**
 - **For example, we can only get as close as a thousand years to Julius Caesar's Gallic War**
 - **1300 years is the closest we can get to the writings of Herodotus and Thucydides.**
 - **The closest we can get to the History of Tacitus, is 700 years. And these are considered definitive texts of history and literature.**
 - b. **The most reliable manuscript Codex Vaticanus does not include these words.**
 - c. **Most scholars agree that this was not in the original text but was added because it was customary among the Jews to conclude a prayer with a doxology.**
 - (1) **It was found in copies as early as the first half of the 2nd Century...**
 - (2) **It was also found in the teaching tools written by the church; like the Didache and the teaching of the 12 Apostles.**
 - (3) **It seems to have been picked up by the church as a way to transition out of the prayer that Jesus gave.**
 - (4) **Neither Matthew or Luke refer to this doxology in the most reliable manuscripts but it certainly does reflect and conclude the prayer well.**
2. What 3 things are highlighted in this question to teach us?
- a. **That we should look to God ONLY for help and encouragement in prayer...**
 - b. **That we should give all praise to Him who alone answers our prayers...**
 - c. **That we should end all our prayer with such a word as "Amen" which means, "May it be so"...or ... "may our prayers be heard."**
3. Some of the divines asked an interesting question (at least interesting to me): Why is this conclusion joined to the particle "for" as in "*...for thine is the kingdom...*" which means we ask for all of these "because" or "according to"?
- a. **To teach us that there are reasons to press God this way and to prevail upon Him for these things.**
 - b. **Number 14:19-*"Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."***

- c. We do this as the Psalmist expecting God to fulfill His covenantal promises. Ps. 5:2- *"Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray."*
 - d. Also in Daniel we read, Dan. 9:18-19-*"O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive. O LORD, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."*
4. What is the significance of the phrase, "...thine is kingdom and power..."?
- a. That we are to revere ...honor Him... "Thine" is the formal use of a personal pronoun...more formal than "yours" which can in our mind bring God down to our level.
 - b. "Thine" also reminds us that of what God possesses...thine is the kingdom...it all belongs to Him...no one can take credit for any of it. God does not rule by the consent of the governed...God rules by His sovereign authority.
 - c. It denotes God's all-embracing control of God over all of His universe- His Kingdom. God's universal, essential and absolute Kingdom.
 - d. But even more particularly, God's design to fulfill His covenantal/redemptive purposes in redeeming a people for Himself by overthrowing the rule and dominion of Satan.
 - (1) So we pray to the end of the growth and perfection of His kingdom.
 - (2) The destruction of all His enemies within His kingdom.
 - (3) And the completion of His kingdom...looking to the end.
 - e. The kingdom is His to do with as He has planned by His power. Matt. 20:15- *"Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?"*
 - (1) We are reassured that the power is God's, too. He can do whatever He has purposed to achieve.
 - (2) It reminds us of His power that is received through His Word...not programs or methodology ...and it is His power...no one else's...and He gives this power to whom He chooses to use as He wills.
 - (3) Phil 3:20-21- *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."*
 - (4) Eph. 3:20-21- *"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*
5. What of His glory?
- a. His glory is never ending.
 - b. Glory was understood as that which defined God's essential being.

- c. Thus, whenever John wants to tell us that Jesus is none other than the God of the Old Testament, he can find no better way as a Jew than to say, John 1:14- ***"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."***
 - d. Paul says in II Cor. 4:6- ***"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."***
 - e. John says again in Rev. 21:23- ***"And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there."***
 - f. Glory then becomes synonymous with who and what God is.
 - g. We are reminded that it is His glory...For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever...and we need to be reminded of this fact....***Soli Deo Gloria= to God alone the glory...***
 - h. The doxology is therefore attributing, not only rule and might to God (kingdom and power), but also, divinity... as in divine glory. To say that all glory belongs to Him is synonymous with saying, **HE IS THE LORD!**
6. How do we give Him glory?
- a. By worshiping Him...Ps. 50:23-***"The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!"***
 - b. By Trusting in His promises...Talking of Abraham, Paul says, Rom. 4:20-21-***"No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised."***
 - c. By confessing Him as LORD...Phil. 2:11- ***"...every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."***
 - d. By our obedience to God's law...Phil. 1:9-11-***"And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."***
7. What does "forever" communicate to us at the end of this prayer?
- a. That none of these are not temporary but are all eternal... they last forever...
 - b. Our relationship with God as his children will never change, because God will never change.
8. What does the "Amen" communicate, when we say it?
- a. **"Amen" is the essential and acceptable way to end prayers and praises.**
(1)Ps. 41:13- "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen."

(2) Rom. 16:27- *"...to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen."*

- b. Amen ...says it is so! God is faithful to do as He says! Not because I believe it but because God has said it...it is so!**
- c. This asserts our conviction that this prayer is my prayer.**
- d. These petitions express the longings of my heart. And my desire to be granted my prayer. And my trust that I am heard.**

(1) Rev. 1:5-6- *"To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

(2) Rev. 7:11-12- *"And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.'"*

(3) Just like John in Rev. 22:20- says after Jesus says, *"Surely I am coming soon."* John says, *"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"*

- e. This prayer also communicates that our prayers must be full of our desires and longing for God to do for us as He has promised.**
- f. Also, this should lead us to understand and find hope in the fact that when we pray for things that are agreeable to God's will that we can be confident that we shall succeed in our requests as they would be according to God's will as well.**

(1) Matt. 21:22- *"And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."*

(2) John 14:13- 14- *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."*

(3) John 16:23-24- *"In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*

(4) Col. 3:17- *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*

- g. This is my confession of faith, my record to what is essential and true.**

(1) I want to give reverence to the name of God.

(2) I want God's kingdom to come.

(3) I want God's will to be done above everything else and no matter what the cost.

(4) I need bread to live (both physical and spiritual), and I believe God will supply it because he is the Creator.

(5) I need daily forgiveness, and the grace to forgive others, because God pardons through Jesus my Lord.

(6) I need help against temptation and the Tempter.

(7) And I pray in the confidence that all resources to give me these things are His, because He is the Sovereign Lord of glory.

(8) I want God to have all the glory, just as the Shorter Catechism says it" Man's chief end is to glorify God..."

- h. So its inclusion in the text or not is one of those mysteries that does not really seem to matter in the end since this doxology has been sustained by the church as an appropriate response to all that Jesus has said in this prayer.**
9. The Lord's Prayer, thus, takes us full-cycle: having started with God, the prayer now ends with God so we can glorify His name. And He wants us to know that our praying is not in vain. He intends to answer us from the riches of His resources so that we can glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

Lessons from Westminster Shorter Catechism
Nov. 28, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What did we say the purpose is of catechisms? (We began this study in January 2020)
 - a. **Our forefathers thought it a necessary tool to teach each generation so they put together a concise and systematic approach to study the Scriptures...creeds, confessions, catechisms.**
 - b. **They saw that one of the weaknesses...if not the greatest weakness... is that while we may study the Scriptures; we do not study how it all fits together. What we call doctrine. I Tim. 4:6 says, “*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourselves and your hearers.*”**
 - c. **The church is full of ignorance about what God's word means...creeds, confessions, and catechisms are a step in the understanding process... we all use mathematics but we don't all understand or even know why mathematics is important...we are okay in our ignorance until we get put in a place to answer some question we can't answer or have some knowledge we need but never took the time to properly study it.**
 - d. **These creeds, confessions and catechisms actually reflect the teaching of The Church not a particular part of the Church.**
2. How did we say that studying through the catechism would help us and our children understand the Scriptures better?
 - a. **The catechisms stated purpose is to teach what we are to know and believe about God and then to teach us what we are to do as kingdom citizens.**
 - b. **It also helps us with an extra standard that enables us to be on the same page. Catechisms do not even come close to the level of Scripture but they have been received by the Church as a competent explanation of the Scriptures to be commended to the people of the Church.**
 - c. **Therefore the catechism teaches through the major areas of faith. The catechism is a handbook, if you will, made up of questions and answers to “quiz” us and we in-turn quiz our “little ones” in an on-going discipleship of knowing, believing and doing as God commands.**
 - d. **See II Tim. 1:13-14-“*Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*”**
 - (1) **How might this passage aid our case to study the catechism as we study the Scriptures?**
 - (2) **Sound/healthy words-good deposit= sound doctrine...biblical teachings.**
 - (3) **Men seem to learn best when the teaching is systematized...hence a programmed approach...lesson plans.**
 - (4) **This has been the case since the beginning. Ex. 12, 13; Deut. 4, 6, 11 speak of teaching these things to our children but also we need to be learning them so we can teach them.**

3. Children's First Catechism
 - a. #1- Who made us? **God**
 - b. #2- What else did He make? **God made all things.**
 - c. #3- Why did God make you and all things? **For His own Glory!**
 - d. #4- How can you glorify God? **By loving Him and doing what He commands.**
 - e. #5- Why are you to glorify Him? **Because He made me and takes care of me.**

4. WSC #1- What is the chief end of man? *Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.* What do the words "chief end" mean?
 - a. **Chief purpose...the main purpose for which we were created.**
 - (1) **Example- What is the main reason a window is made? To let in light.**
 - (2) **What is the main purpose for which a hammer was constructed?**
 - b. **What happens when we use something for a purpose other than its real purpose?**
 - (1) **Say a glass instead of a hammer to nail a nail?...**
 - (2) **Or if you want whiter teeth what about using white shoe polish or white paint? Why not?**
 - c. **So what does the answer to the question say is the chief purpose for ALL men?**

5. How can you glorify God?
 - (1) **By loving Him and doing what he commands.- This is the simple answer.**
 - (2) **To esteem God above all other things. Ps. 92; Ps. 97:9- admire His work, speak of His actions, his attributes and what he has done for us...praise and honor Him above all others.**
 - (3) **To worship God as He prescribes. Ex. 25:40; Lev. 10:1; Ps. 29:2; Neh. 8:6...we are not allowed to make it up as we go ...we are not allowed to worship Him differently in each generation.**
 - (4) **To love God. Duet 6:5; Matt. 22:13...To delight in the Lord, His Word, and His ways...Ps. 1. Since He is the chief reason for our blessing then He should have the chief of our affections.**
 - (5) **To submit to God. John 14:15, 21, 23-24...to do what is spoken of in this catechism...communing with Him...understanding Him and Honoring Him.**
 - b. Why are we to glorify God?
 - (1) **Because He made me and takes care of me.**
 - (2) **He gives us life.**
 - (3) **He has made all things for His glory. Psalm 19:1-6**
 - (4) **Because our hope is in His glory. Ps. 39:7; Ps. 62:5; Ps. 87:7.**
 - (5) How is the truth of this actually reflected in creation?
 - **They glorify Him naturally because that is what creation was created to do.**
 - **They do ONLY what comes naturally...that is what they were created to do. Prov. 16:4; Isaiah 43:21; I Peter 2:9-12.**

- (6) What makes us different? Better or worse?
6. What does it mean to enjoy Him forever?
- c. **Since He gives us reason to glorify Him we then should live our lives to do just that.**
 - d. **Ps. 1: 1-2; Psalm 16:11-*"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* ...This speak to the joy, pleasure, and continual blessing we have in God when we follow His purposes...His will...His plan...His Way!**
 - (4) **Psalm 73:25... *"What is there in heaven I desire to enjoy but you?"* (Hebrew translation)**
 - (5) **Luke 24:32...*"They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?'"***
 - (6) **II Cor. 3:18... *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."* interesting in its present day applications.**
 - **If we are not enjoying Him we do not know Him correctly.**
 - **Other words communicate the same meaning of "enjoy", since sometimes using the word to enjoy God may not make sense to us, since we cannot physically be with Him and we are such a physical people...words like; Contentment, delight, blessed...**
7. Who glorifies GOD more a preacher or the man who works the oil field who is seeking to live for GOD in all that he does? Explain.
8. What does the catechism teach concerning where we learn of God's will?
- a. **The Bible.**
 - b. So what is the answer to the "dilemma" of many Christians when they say they don't know the will of God for their lives? **They obviously aren't reading the Bible...if they are they are not taking the time to listen to God speak...they are not listening to their preacher...life is too busy to hear.**
 - c. Is this too simplistic of an answer? Why or why not?
 - d. What does the Bible tell us regarding God?
 - (1) **It tells us who and what God is...what He has done for us and what He requires us to do.**
 - (2) **Also with regards to man? What to believe and what we are to do.**
9. In what situations of life might this format of questions and answers be helpful?
- a. **When people around us question the validity of the Bible.**
 - (1) **Amos 8:11-12- *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it."***

- **We are in this day right now. Obviously there have been multiple times in history where this is true...**
- **God has taken it away and then there will come a time when people will go looking for something that they have lost ...just unsure what it was. Think: We used to do things differently in the old days. Life was so much simpler back in the old days...what was it that made it so?**
- (2) Even in churches today there is very little Scripture expounded...it may be read but then we hear the “preachers” opinion...which is not preaching....Preaching is the declaration of God’s Word...it is expository in nature.**
- b. Christians around us who lack assurance of their faith.**
 - (1) We need to disciple our people the best we can.**
 - (2) Encourage Bible reading.**
 - (3) Daily devotional time which includes reading, praying and meditating on God’s Word...even if it is only 15 minutes a day...or every other day.**
 - (4) As we search the Word the Spirit will cause in us a desire to read it and hear it more.**
 - (5) And then to encourage others not to keep what they are learning to themselves but to share it with others ...that is when it becomes real**
 - (6) Lastly, to encourage them to do what is written there. Practice does equate desire...Psalm 119:1-8- *“Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in His ways! You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!”***

10. What does the catechism tell us about why the doctrine of the Trinity is so important to Christianity?

- a. WSC Q#6- How many persons are there in the Godhead? *There are 3 persons in the Godhead- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these 3 are ONE God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.***
- b. The catechism says this because the Bible is clear that the One God exists in 3 persons from Genesis to Revelation.**
- c. The word “persons” does NOT mean a distinction in essence but a difference in the work done by each member of the Trinity.**
 - (1) While we can say things like God the Father-Creates...God the Son- Redeems ...and God the Spirit- Sanctifies...we can’t really make that clear of a distinction since all are involved with each aspect of these things while at the same time have a distinct work in making their parts happen.**
 - (2) Another way that their separate roles have tried to be described with great difficulty is that the Father initiates creation and redemption; the Son redeems the creation and the Spirit regenerates.**

- (3) But once again this is limited showing how our ability to describe the “persons” of the Godhead is difficult for limited humans.**
- d. The catechism also says that they are “...the same in substance...” which speaks of their essence...**
- (1) In their substance/essence as the catechism says and as the Confession states there is no difference...while they may have different functions they are God!**
- (2) All the divine essence, perfections and prerogatives belong to each in the same sense and degree.**
11. Why, according to the catechism and the Bible for that matter is sin such a big deal? They just took a piece of fruit off a tree and ate it?” So what is the big deal?
- a. The transgression was just taking the fruit and eating it...the action of disobeying God’s expressed Law... when God had given Adam and Eve... Eden...the whole fruitful garden along with perfect rest and peace and purpose with God,**
- b. He had also given them the liberty and the ability to choose...so Adam was fully aware of what he was doing...and God had also told them what would happen if they transgressed His Law...death would come physically and spiritually. It seems the Adam rationalized that the consequence would not be all that bad to be like God...much like mankind today.**
- c. Look at the consequences for such a “little sin”:**
- (4) The relationship with God was marred...**
- (5) The relationship with one another was marred...and**
- (6) The relationship to the rest of creation was marred...until Christ, the 2nd Adam came to make all things new.**
- d. The same reason hold for every sin...every transgression of God’s expressed will and law.**
12. What was God’s response to the Fall according to this catechism?
- a. Trick question...will anyone get it?**
- b. God’s grace was not His response to the Fall...as if He waited for man not knowing what was going to happen.**
- c. The catechism makes it abundantly clear that this was God’s plan... to show grace and mercy to His elect.**
- (1) “...from all eternity”. The elect were chosen before the foundation of the world...**
- (2) So God knew the Fall would occur since He decreed it before the foundations of the earth as well...and He knew He would provide a Redeemer for His elect.**
13. WSC #33- What is Justification? *Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardons all our sin, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, ONLY for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.* Why is this particular doctrine absolutely foundational to our faith?
- a. Martin Luther said in his commentary on Galatians; “Without the doctrine of justification there can be only ignorance of God. Those who refuse to be**

justified by Christ are idolaters. They remain under the Law, sin, death, and the power of the devil. Everything they do is wrong.”

14. Why are the 10 Commandments important to the Christian? What do they reveal about God and what do they reveal about us?
- a. **Exodus 20:1-17- “And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”**
15. WSC #42- What is the sum of the Ten Commandments? *The sum of the 10 commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. (WSC #42-#83)*
- a. How does this statement by Jesus sum up the whole of the Law?
- b. How according to the Bible and the catechism are we able to keep the law?
16. Why were the sacraments given and what do they reveal about God? What do they reveal about our need?
17. The last section of the Catechism deals with the rule or direction God gives in prayer? (SC #98-107) Why do they make such a big deal about this activity?
18. As we come to a close we read, WSC #107-*The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer ... (which is, “...for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”)...teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God ONLY, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to Him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, AMEN!*
- a. **We began with God’s glory- Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.**

- b. **And we end with God's glory... *for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***