

Established in the Faith

A Catechism of
Grace Church of Orland

Dear Reader,

The purpose of this booklet is to establish you in the Christian faith. By God's grace you will spend the rest of your life reading the Bible, listening to sermons, and learning from other believers as you continually grow in your knowledge of God and Christ. In the New Testament, Christian growth is compared to the growth of an infant into a mature adult (1 Peter 2:2). In the Old Testament, the believer is compared to a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in its appointed season (Psalm 1:3). Both images imply that you will grow by degrees over many years, not all at once. Nonetheless, there are certain foundational truths and lessons which, if learned early, will protect you from many dangers and difficulties. For instance, every Christian should know the basics of the gospel, the law of God, and how to pray.

This booklet aims to teach these fundamental truths in the form of a catechism,¹ a series of questions and answers, each supported with Scripture references. The questions are grouped together by subject and divided into 52 weeks to aid those wishing to study it over the course of a year.

To those who may be skeptical of catechisms, it must be insisted that this is only a subordinate guide and should be placed in the same category as any other Christian book. Scripture alone is the infallible rule of our faith. Every creed, confession, and catechism is ultimately the product of a fallible mind. They are trustworthy only to the extent that they accurately interpret the revelation of God.

May the Holy Spirit guide you by His written word.

¹ For those familiar with historic confessions, you will recognize that this catechism closely resembles the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563. Our revisions are threefold: 1) it has been updated with modern English; 2) it teaches believer's baptism and the memorial view of the Lord's Supper; and 3) some of the Scripture proofs have been edited for further clarity. Also, some questions were added to expand on a few key points (the 4th Commandment, church discipline). Thanks is owed to the pastors of NorthCreek Church in Walnut Creek, CA, who provided the initial draft.

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The Believer's Comfort

LORD'S DAY 1

1. What is your only comfort in life and death?

That I am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven.

Romans 14:8 "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

1 Cor 6:19–20; Rom 14:7–9; 1 Cor 3:23; 1 Pet 1:18–19; John 6:39; Luke 21:18; Matt 10:30; Rom 8:28; 2 Cor 1:22

2. What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

Three things: my sin; how I am set free; how I am to thank God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 "You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Rom 3:10, 19; John 17:3; Eph 5:8–10

Our Sin and Misery

LORD'S DAY 2

3. How do you come to know your misery?

The law of God tells me.

Romans 3:20 "By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

4. What does God's law require of us?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets."

Matt 22:37–40; Luke 10:27

5. Can you live up to all this perfectly?

No.

Romans 3:10 "There is none righteous, not even one."

1 John 1:8; Rom 8:7; Titus 3:3

LORD'S DAY 3

6. Did God create man wicked and perverse?

No. God created man good, so that he might truly know God, love Him, and live with Him for His praise and glory.

Genesis 1:27 "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Gen 1:31; Gen 1:26–27; Eph 1:6

7. Then where does this corrupt nature come from?

From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise. We are born sinners.

Romans 5:12 "Through one man sin entered into the world."

Gen 3:6; Psa 51:5; Eph 2:3; Rom 5:12, 18–19

8. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined toward all evil?

Yes, unless we are born again.

Genesis 8:21 “The intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth.”

Gen 6:5; 8:21; John 3:5; Eph 2:5

LORD’S DAY 4

9. But doesn’t God do man an injustice by requiring in His law what man is unable to do?

No. God created man with the ability to keep the law. Man, however, robbed himself of these gifts.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 “God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.”

Rom 5:12

10. Will God permit such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

Certainly not. He is terribly angry about the sin we are born with as well as the sins we personally commit. As a just judge He punishes them.

Psalm 7:11 “God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day.”

Deut 27:26; 28:15; 29:27–28; Psa 5:5; Rom 1:18; Gal 3:10; Heb 9:27; 10:26–27, 30–31; Rev 6:17

11. But isn't God also merciful?

God is certainly merciful, but He is also just. His justice demands that sin be punished.

Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death."

Ex 34:6–7; 20:5; Job 34:10–11; Psa 5:5–6; Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23

Our Redemption in Christ

LORD'S DAY 5

12. According to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both in this world and forever after: how can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

God requires that the claims of His justice must be paid in full.

Psalm 33:5 "He loves righteousness and justice."

Ex 20:5; Deut 24:16; 2 Cor 5:14–15; Heb 10:30

13. Can we pay this debt ourselves?

Certainly not. Actually, we increase our guilt every day.

Romans 2:5 "You are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath."

Job 9:2–3; Job 15:14–16; Matt 6:12; Isa 64:6

14. Can another creature, any at all, pay this debt for us?

No. No mere creature can bear the weight of God's eternal anger against sin.

Psalm 49:7 "No man can redeem his brother."

Rev 5:3; Psa 49:7–9

15. What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?

He must be truly human and truly righteous. He must also be true God.

Romans 9:5 “Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed forever.”

1 Cor 15:21; Rom 8:3; Isa 7:14

LORD’S DAY 6

16. Why must He be truly human and truly righteous?

God’s justice demands it: man has sinned, man must pay for his sin.

1 Corinthians 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

Rom 5:15; 1 Pet 3:18; Isa 53:11

17. Why must he also be truly God?

So that by the power of His divinity He might bear the weight of God’s anger in His humanity.

Acts 2:24 “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”

1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 1:2; 2 Tim 1:10; John 6:51; 19:30

18. And who is this Mediator who is truly God and at the same time truly human and truly righteous?

Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 2:11 “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Matt 1:23; 1 Tim 3:16

19. How do you come to know this?

The holy gospel tells me. God Himself began to reveal the gospel already in Paradise; finally, He fulfilled it through His own dear Son.

John 5:46 “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.”

Gen 3:15; 22:17–18; Rom 1:2; Heb 10:7–8; Rom 10:4

LORD’S DAY 7

20. Are all men saved through Christ just as all were lost through Adam?

No, only those who are saved by true faith.

Hebrews 10:39 “But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.”

John 1:12–13; Rom 11:20

21. What is true faith?

True faith is not only knowledge and conviction that everything God reveals in His Word is true; it is also to receive Christ as a perfect Savior from sin.

John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

Heb 11:1, 3, 6; Matt 1:21; Acts 16:31; Rom 5:1; Gal 2:20; Phil 3:9

22. What then must a Christian believe?

Everything in the gospel summarized in the articles of our Christian faith.

John 20:31 “These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

23. What are these articles?

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting.

LORD'S DAY 8

24. How are these articles divided?

Into three parts: God the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Spirit.

25. Since there is but one God, why do you speak of three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Because that is how God has revealed Himself in His Word: these three persons are one God.

Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Deut 6:4; Isa 44:6; 1 Tim 2:5; John 1:1, 3; 5:18; 8:58; 10:33; 20:28–29; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15–20; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8, 10; 2 Pet 1:1; Gen 1:2; Psa 139:7; Acts 5:3–4; 2 Cor 3:17–18; Matt 3:16; Isa 61:1; John 14:16–17; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4–6

God the Father

LORD'S DAY 9

26. What do you believe when you say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth”?

That the eternal Father, who out of nothing created heaven and earth, who still upholds and rules them by His providence, is my God and Father because of Christ. He will provide whatever I need, and He will turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me.

Matthew 6:26 “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

Gen 1:1; Psa 33:6; Matt 10:29–30; Heb 1:3; John 5:17; John 1:12, 16; Rom 8:15–16; Eph 1:5; 1 John 3:1; Psa 55:22; Rom 8:28; Matt 7:9–11

LORD'S DAY 10

27. What do you understand by the providence of God?

Providence is the power of God by which He upholds, as with His hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that all things come to us not by chance but from His fatherly hand.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”

Acts 17:25–28; Heb 1:3; Acts 14:17; John 9:3; Prov 22:2; Job 1:21; Matt 10:29–30; Eph 1:11

28. How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us?

We can be patient in our suffering, thankful in our prosperity, and for the future we can have good confidence that nothing will separate us from His love.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 “In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Rom 5:3; James 1:2–4; Deut 8:10; Rom 8:38–39

God the Son

LORD'S DAY 11

29. Why is the Son of God called “Jesus” meaning “Savior”?

Because He saves us from our sins. Salvation cannot be found in anyone else.

Matthew 1:21 “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Acts 4:12

30. Do those who look for their salvation and security in saints, in themselves, or elsewhere really believe in the only Son Jesus?

No. Although they boast of being His, by their deeds they deny the only Savior and Deliverer, Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:13 “Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

1 Cor 1:31; Gal 5:4; Rom 7:24

LORD’S DAY 12

31. Why is He called “Christ,” meaning “Anointed”?

Because He has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief Prophet and Teacher; our only High Priest; and our eternal King.

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of Lord Yahweh is upon me because Yahweh has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted.”

Heb 1:9; Acts 3:22; Matt 23:10; Heb 8:1; Rom 8:34; Psa 2:6; Luke 1:33

32. But why are you called a Christian?

Because by faith I am a member of Christ and so share in His anointing. I am anointed to confess His name, to present myself to Him as a living sacrifice, and to strive against sin and the devil.

1 Corinthians 6:15 “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”

1 John 2:27; Joel 2:28; Matt 10:32; Rom 12:1; Eph 6:11–12; 1 Tim 1:18–19

LORD'S DAY 13

33. Why is He called God's "only begotten Son" when we are also God's children?

Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God. We, however, are adopted children of God.

John 1:18 "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

John 1:1; Heb 1:2; Rom 8:15–17; Eph 1:4–5

34. Why do you call Him "our Lord"?

Because with His precious blood He has bought us, body and soul, to be His very own.

1 Corinthians 6:20 "You were bought with a price."

1 Pet 3:18–19

LORD'S DAY 14

35. What does it mean that He "was conceived by the Holy Spirit" and "born of the virgin Mary"?

That the eternal Son of God took to Himself, through the working of the Holy Spirit, from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, a truly human nature.

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:1; Col 1:15; Rom 9:5; 1 John 5:20; Gal 4:4; Matt 1:18; Luke 1:35

36. How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you?

He is our Mediator who, with His innocence and perfect holiness, removes my sin from God's sight.

Hebrews 7:26 "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens."

Heb 2:16–17; Psa 32:1; 1 Cor 1:30; Rom 8:34

LORD'S DAY 15

37. What do you understand by the word "suffered"?

That during His life on earth, especially at the end, Christ sustained the anger of God, that He might set us free from eternal condemnation.

1 John 2:2 "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins."

1 Pet 2:24; Isa 53:12; Rom 3:25

38. Why did He suffer "under Pontius Pilate" as judge?

So that He, though innocent, might free us from the judgment of God.

Galatians 3:13 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us."

Luke 23:14; John 19:4

39. Is it significant that He was "crucified" instead of dying some other way?

Yes, since death by crucifixion was accursed by God.

Deuteronomy 21:23 "Cursed of God is he who is hanged."

Gal 3:13

LORD'S DAY 16

40. Why did Christ have to go all the way to death?

Because God's justice and truth demand it: only the death of God's Son could pay for our sins.

Hebrews 9:22 "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Gen 2:17; Heb 2:9–10; Phil 2:8

41. Why was He "buried"?

His burial testifies that He really died.

Acts 13:29 "And when they had finished all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb."

Mark 15:43, 46

42. Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

Our death does not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, it is our entrance into eternal life.

Philippians 1:21 "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

John 5:24; Phil 1:23; Luke 23:43

43. What further advantages do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

Through Christ's death our old selves are crucified.

Romans 6:6 "Our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin."

Rom 6:12; 12:1

LORD'S DAY 17

44. How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

He has overcome death, and we are already now resurrected to a new life.

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

1 Cor 15:16; Col 3:1; Rom 8:11

45. What do you mean by saying, "He ascended into heaven"?

That Christ, while His disciples watched, was lifted up from the earth into heaven and will be there for our good until He comes again.

Acts 1:9 "He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

Heb 4:14; Rom 8:34; Eph 4:10

LORD'S DAY 18

46. But isn't Christ with us until the end of the world as He promised us?

In His human nature Christ is not now on earth; but in His divinity, He is not absent from us for a moment.

Matthew 28:20 "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 3:21; John 16:28

47. If His humanity is not present wherever His divinity is, then aren't the two natures of Christ separated from each other?

Certainly not. His divinity is not limited, and is present everywhere, and remains personally united to His humanity.

John 17:11 “And I am no longer in the world.”

Compare with Matthew 28:20 “I am with you always.”

Jer 23:24; Acts 7:49; John 17:11

48. How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

First, He pleads our cause in heaven in the presence of His Father.

Second, we have our own flesh in heaven. Third, He sends His Spirit to us on earth.

Hebrews 9:24 “For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, mere copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

1 John 2:2; Rom 8:34; Eph 2:6; John 14:16; 2 Cor 1:22; 2 Cor 5:5

LORD'S DAY 19

49. Why is it added, “and sits at the right hand of God the Father”?

To show that He is head of His church, that the Father rules all things through Him.

Matthew 28:18 “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

Eph 1:20–22; Col 1:18; John 5:22

50. How does this glory of Christ our head benefit us?

First, through His Holy Spirit He pours out His gifts from heaven upon us; second, by His power He defends us and keeps us.

John 10:28 “They will never perish—ever; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”

Eph 4:8

51. How does Christ’s return “to judge the living and the dead” comfort you?

All His enemies and mine He will condemn to everlasting punishment. But me and all His chosen ones He will take along with Him into the joy and the glory of heaven.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 “These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

2 Thess 1:6–9; Matt 25:34, 41

God the Holy Spirit

LORD’S DAY 20

52. What do you believe concerning “the Holy Spirit”?

First, He, as well as the Father and the Son, is eternal God; second, He has been given to me so that He makes me share in Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:16 “The Spirit of God dwells in you.”

Gen 1:2; Isa 48:16; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 1:22; Gal 3:14; Eph 4:4

53. What do you believe concerning “the holy church”?

I believe that the Son of God through His Spirit and Word, gathers, protects, and preserves for Himself a community for eternal life.

John 10:16 “And I have other sheep, which are not from this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”

1 Thess 1:5; John 10:11; Rom 9:24; Eph 1:10

54. What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?

First, that believers share in Christ and in all His treasures and gifts. Second, that each member should use these gifts for the service of the other members.

Romans 12:5 “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

John 1:3–4; Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 12:13; 1 Cor 13:5; Phil 2:4–6; Eph 4:16; 1 Pet 4:10–11

55. What do you believe concerning “the forgiveness of sins”?

I believe that God because of Christ will never hold against me any of my sins nor my sinful nature which I need to struggle against all my life.

Rather, in His grace God grants me the righteousness of Christ.

Romans 8:1 “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

1 John 2:2; 2 Cor 5:19, 21; Jer 31:34; Psa 103:3–4, 10–12; Rom 8:1–3

LORD'S DAY 22

56. How does “the resurrection of the body” comfort you?

That my body, being raised by the power of Christ, will be reunited with my soul and made like Christ's glorious body.

1 Corinthians 15:52 “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.”

Job 19:25–26; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2

57. How does the article concerning “life everlasting” comfort you?

Even as I already now experience in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, so after this life I will have perfect blessedness in which to praise God eternally.

Revelation 21:4 “God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain.”

John 17:3; 2 Cor 5:2–3, 6; Rom 14:17; Psa 16:11; 1 Cor 2:9

LORD'S DAY 23

58. What good does it do you, however, to believe all this?

In Christ I am right with God and heir to life everlasting.

1 John 5:11 “And the witness is this, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

59. How are you right with God?

Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me and even though I am still inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ.

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Cor 5:21; Rom 1:17; 3:9, 22–28; 7:23; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8–9; John 3:36

60. Why do you say that by faith alone you are right with God?

It is not because of any value my faith has that God is pleased with me. Only Christ’s satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness make me right with God.

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, so that no one may boast.”

1 Cor 1:30

LORD’S DAY 24

61. Why can’t the good we do make us right with God, or at least help make us right with Him?

Because the righteousness which can pass God’s scrutiny must be entirely perfect. Even the very best we do in this life is imperfect and stained with sin.

Isaiah 64:6 “All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.”

Gal 3:10; Deut 27:26; James 2:10

62. How can you say that the good we do doesn't earn anything when God promises to reward it in this life and the next?

This reward is not earned; it is a gift of grace.

Luke 17:10 "When you do all the things which are commanded of you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"

63. But doesn't this teaching make people indifferent and wicked?

No. It is impossible not to produce fruits of gratitude.

Matthew 7:17 "Every good tree bears good fruit."

John 15:5

64. You confess that by faith alone you share in Christ and all His blessings: where does faith come from?

The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel.

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

1 Thess 1:5; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29

The Ordinances

LORD'S DAY 25

65. What ordinances has Christ given to the church?

Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:23 "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was being betrayed took bread."

Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 11:23–26

66. What is baptism?

Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water.

Acts 8:36 “And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’”

John 3:23; Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:13

67. What does baptism symbolize?

My union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection.

Romans 6:4 “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

68. Who should be baptized?

Only those who, having been born of God’s Spirit, repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Acts 2:41 “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”

Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 12:13

LORD’S DAY 26

69. What is the Lord’s Supper?

The Lord’s Supper is the declaration of Christ’s death by believers through the giving and receiving of bread and the fruit of the vine.

1 Corinthians 11:26 “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes.”

70. How does the Lord's Supper remind and assure you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and all His gifts?

His body was offered and broken for me and His blood poured out for me on the cross.

Luke 22:19 "This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

Matt 26:26–28; Luke 22:19–20

71. Are the bread and fruit of the vine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

No. These are called the body and blood of Christ only in a figurative sense.

John 6:35 "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

Matt 26:26; Heb 10:12; John 15:5; Gen 41:26

72. Why then does Christ call the bread His body and the cup His blood?

To assure us that we are united to Him and share in the benefits which His broken body and shed blood obtained for us.

1 Corinthians 10:16 "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?"

LORD'S DAY 27

73. Who are to come to the Lord's table?

Those who are displeased with themselves because of their sins, but who nevertheless trust that their sins are pardoned by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire to strengthen their faith and to lead a better life.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

74. Are those who show by what they say and do that they are unbelieving and ungodly to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?

No.

1 Corinthians 5:11 “But now I am writing to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is a sexually immoral person, or greedy, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.”

1 Cor 10:21; 1 Cor 11:27; 2 Thess 3:14

The Keys of the Kingdom

LORD'S DAY 28

75. What are the keys of the kingdom?

The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline toward repentance.

Matthew 16:19 “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

Gal 1:9; John 20:23; Matt 18:15–18

76. How does preaching the gospel open and close the kingdom of heaven?

The kingdom of heaven is opened to each and every believer as often as he accepts the gospel promise in true faith. The kingdom of heaven is closed, however, to unbelievers and hypocrites as long as they do not repent.

John 3:36 “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

John 3:18; 2 Thess 1:7–9; John 20:21–23; Matt 16:19

77. How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by Christian discipline?

If anyone, though called a Christian, refuses to abandon his errors and wickedness, such a one the elders exclude from Christian fellowship. Such a person, when he promises and demonstrates genuine reform, is received again as a member of Christ and His church.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 “And if anyone does not obey our word in this letter, take special note of that person to not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.”

Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 5:11–13; Gal 1:9; 2 Cor 2:6–8

LORD’S DAY 29

78. What is your responsibility in Christian discipline?

If my brother sins, I am to correct him directly and privately.

Matthew 18:15 “Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault, between you and him alone; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”

Luke 17:3

79. Why must correction first be issued in private?

To protect the offender's reputation from suffering unnecessarily.

Leviticus 19:16 "You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people."

1 Tim 3:11; 1 Tim 5:13

80. What if he doesn't listen to you?

Then I am to take one or two more with me.

Matthew 18:16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed."

Deut 19:15

81. What if he still doesn't listen?

Then it becomes the responsibility of the elders to publicly rebuke him, and—if he still does not repent—to exclude him from Christian fellowship.

Matthew 18:17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as the Gentile and the tax collector."

1 Tim 5:20; 1 Cor 5:3–5; 1 Cor 6:5

82. What if he does repent?

Then he is to be graciously forgiven for all his sins and received back as a beloved brother.

Luke 17:4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

Eph 4:32; Matt 18:13; Luke 15:22; 2 Cor 2:7

Our New Life in Christ

LORD'S DAY 30

83. We have been delivered from our misery by God's grace alone through Christ and not because we have earned it: Why then must we still do good?

To be sure, Christ has redeemed us by His blood. But we do good because Christ by His Spirit is also renewing us to be like Himself, so that in all our living we may show that we are thankful to God for all He has done for us, and so that He may be praised through us.

Romans 12:1 "Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

1 Cor 6:19–20; Rom 6:13; 1 Pet 2:5; Matt 5:16

84. Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent ways?

No.

1 Corinthians 6:9 "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?"

Eph 5:5–6; 1 John 3:14–15; Gal 5:19–21

85. What is involved in genuine repentance and conversion?

Two things: the dying-away of the old self, and the coming-to-life of the new.

Romans 6:6 “ Our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

Rom 6:4–6; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:5

86. What is the dying-away of the old self?

It is to be genuinely sorry for sin, to hate it more and more, and to run away from it.

Romans 8:13 “For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the practices of the body, you will live.”

Psa 51:3, 8, 17; Isa 55:7; Luke 15:18; 2 Cor 7:11

87. What is the coming-to-life of the new self?

It is a wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to.

Romans 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Rom 5:1–2; Isa 57:15; 1 Pet 4:2; Gal 2:20

The Law of God

LORD'S DAY 32

88. What do we do that is good?

Only that which arises out of true faith, conforms to God's law, and is done for His glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31 "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Rom 14:23; 1 Sam 15:22

89. What does the Lord say in His law?

- 1) You shall have no other gods before Me.
- 2) You shall not make for yourself an idol.
- 3) You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain.
- 4) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 5) Honor your father and your mother.
- 6) You shall not murder.
- 7) You shall not commit adultery.
- 8) You shall not steal.
- 9) You shall not bear false witness.
- 10) You shall not covet.

Ex 20:1–17; Deut 5:6–21

90. How are these commandments divided?

Into two tables. The first four teach us how to love God, and the rest teach us how to love our neighbor.

Matthew 22:40 “On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”

91. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?

That I avoid all idolatry. That I sincerely acknowledge the only true God, trust Him alone, look to Him for every good thing humbly and patiently, love Him, fear Him, and honor Him with all my heart.

1 John 5:21 “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

1 Cor 10:7, 14; 1 John 5:21; John 17:3; Jer 17:5, 7; Deut 6:5; Matt 10:28; Matt 4:10; James 1:17

92. What is idolatry?

Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God.

Jeremiah 2:13 “For My people have done two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

2 Chron 16:12; Phil 3:18–19; Gal 4:8; Acts 17:29; Col 3:5

93. What is God's will for us in the second commandment?

That we in no way make any image of God nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His word.

Acts 17:29 "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to suppose that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the craft and thought of man."

Deut 4:15; Isa 40:18; Rom 1:23; Lev 10:1–3; 1 Sam 15:23

94. May we then not make any image at all?

God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way.

Deuteronomy 27:15 "Cursed is the man who makes a graven image."

Deut 4:15–16

95. But may not images be permitted in the churches as teaching aids for the unlearned?

No, we shouldn't try to be wiser than God. He wants His people instructed by the living preaching of His Word, not by idols that cannot even talk.

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching."

2 Pet 1:19; Hab 2:18–19

LORD'S DAY 35

96. What is God's will for us in the third commandment?

That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God by cursing, perjury, or unnecessary oaths, nor share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. In a word, it requires that we use the holy name of God only with reverence and awe.

Matthew 6:9 "Hallowed be Your name."

Lev 24:11; Lev 19:12; Matt 5:37; Lev 5:4

97. Is blasphemy of God's name by swearing and cursing really such a serious sin that God is angry with those who do not do all they can to help prevent it and to forbid it?

Yes, indeed. No sin is greater. That is why He commanded the death penalty for it.

Leviticus 24:16 "The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death."

Lev 5:1

LORD'S DAY 36

98. But may we swear an oath in God's name if we do it reverently?

Yes, when the government demands it, or when necessity requires it, for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

Deuteronomy 6:13 "By His name you shall swear."

Ex 22:11; Neh 13:25; Heb 6:16; Gen 21:24; Rom 1:9

99. May we swear by saints or other creatures?

No. No creature is worthy of such honor.

Matthew 5:34–35 “But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet.”

LORD’S DAY 37

100. What is God’s will for you in the fourth commandment?

Although the Sabbath law is no longer strictly binding upon us as it once was upon the Jews, the spirit of this law still directs us to find our spiritual rest in the finished work of Christ, to regularly attend the public worship of God, and to give all who labor a day to refresh themselves.

Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

Heb 4:9–11; Rev 1:10; Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 11:33; 1 Tim 2:1; 1 Cor 16:2; Ex 23:12

101. Why has the day of worship changed from Saturday to Sunday under the New Covenant?

To celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the passing away of the Old Covenant.

Acts 20:7 “And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread...”

Matt 28:1; 1 Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10

102. What do you mean by “the passing away of the Old Covenant”?

That the imperfect and earthly priesthood of the Jews has been replaced with the perfect and heavenly priesthood of Christ.

Hebrews 8:13 “When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.”

Heb 10:11–18; Psa 110:4

103. Must we refrain from all work on Sunday under the New Covenant?

We are free to work on the Lord’s Day under the New Covenant, provided we have a godly motivation and are still able to regularly assemble with God’s people.

Romans 14:5 “One person judges one day above another, another judges every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.”

Col 2:16–17; Gal 4:10–11; Mark 3:4; Matt 12:5; Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 14:12; Heb 3:13

104. Does the new and perfect priesthood of Christ bring with it any other changes of law?

Yes, the true worship of God no longer requires sacrifices for sin, nor a temple, nor priests, nor abstaining from various foods, nor circumcision.

Hebrews 7:12 “For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.”

Heb 10:18; 1 Pet 2:5; Mark 7:19; Rom 14:14; Heb 9:10; Acts 15:6–11

LORD'S DAY 39

105. What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?

That I honor, love, and be loyal to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; that I obey and submit to them, as is proper, when they correct and discipline me.

Ephesians 6:1 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Eph 5:22; Heb 13:17; Eph 6:5; Rom 13:1

LORD'S DAY 40

106. What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?

That I am not to belittle, insult, hate, or kill my neighbor—not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds—I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.

Matthew 5:22 "Whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

Prov 12:18; Matt 26:52; Matt 4:5–7

107. Does this commandment refer only to killing?

God hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness. In God's sight all such are murder.

Leviticus 19:17 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart."

Matt 5:22; 1 John 3:15; Gal 5:20–21; Rom 1:29

108. Is it enough then that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?

God tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to protect him from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.

Romans 12:20 “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”

Matt 22:39; Matt 7:12

LORD’S DAY 41

109. What is God’s will for us in the seventh commandment?

God condemns all unchastity. We should therefore thoroughly detest it.

Hebrews 13:4 “Marriage is to be held in honor among all.”

Lev 18:27; 1 Thess 4:3–4

110. Does God, in this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

We are all temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants us to be kept clean and holy. That is why He forbids everything which incites unchastity.

Matthew 5:28 “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Eph 5:3; 1 Cor 6:18; Prov 7:25

LORD'S DAY 42

111. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

He forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law. But in God's sight theft also includes cheating and swindling our neighbor. In addition He forbids all greed and pointless squandering of His gifts.

Luke 3:14 "Do not take money from anyone by force, or extort anyone, and be content with your wages."

1 Cor 6:10; 1 Thess 4:6; Prov 11:1; 2 Thess 3:7–10; Matt 25:24–28

112. What does God require of you in this commandment?

That I do whatever I can for my neighbor's good, that I treat him as I would like others to treat me.

Ephesians 4:28 "He who steals must steal no longer, but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need."

Matt 7:12

LORD'S DAY 43

113. What is God's will for us in the ninth commandment?

God's will is that I never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander. I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind; I should love the truth. And I should do what I can to guard and advance my neighbor's good name.

Proverbs 19:5 "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape."

Psa 15:3; Prov 12:22; 1 Tim 3:11; Eph 4:25; 1 Cor 13:6

114. What is God's will for us in the tenth commandment?

That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any one of God's commandments should ever arise in my heart. Rather, with all my heart I should always hate sin.

Romans 7:7 "For I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"

Matt 5:22, 28

115. But can those converted to God obey these commandments perfectly?

No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience.

Romans 7:21 "I find then the principle that in me evil is present—in me who wants to do good."

Rom 7:14; Rom 7:21–23; James 3:2

116. No one in this life can obey the ten commandments perfectly: why then does God want them preached pointedly?

First, so that we may come to know our sinfulness and look to Christ for forgiveness. Second, so that we may never stop striving to be renewed more and more after God's image.

Psalms 119:97 "Oh how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day."

1 John 1:9; Rom 3:20; Rom 7:7; 1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:12–14; Rom 12:1

Prayer

LORD'S DAY 45

117. Why do Christians need to pray?

Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. And also because God gives His grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly.

Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Psa 50:14–15; Luke 11:9, 13

118. How does God want us to pray so that He will listen to us?

First, we must pray from the heart to no other than the one true God. Second, we must acknowledge our need and misery. Third, even though we do not deserve it, God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord.

Romans 10:13 “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

John 4:22–23; Psa 145:18; Psa 34:18–19; Isa 66:2; Rom 8:15–16

119. What did God command us to pray for?

Everything we need, as embraced in the prayer Christ our Lord Himself taught us.

James 1:17 “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

120. What is the Lord's prayer?

Our Father who is 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.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

Matt 6:9–13

LORD'S DAY 46

121. Why did Christ command us to call God, “our Father”?

God through Christ has become our Father. Our fathers do not refuse us the things of this life; God our Father will even less refuse to give us what we ask in faith.

Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

Matt 6:9; Matt 7:9–11; Luke 11:11; Isa 49:15

122. Why the words, “in heaven”?

These words teach us to expect everything for body and soul from His almighty power.

Acts 17:24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”

Rom 10:12

123. What does the first request mean?

Hallowed be Your name means, help us to really know You, to bless, worship, and praise You for all Your works. And it means, help us to direct all our living—what we think, say, and do—so that Your name will never be blasphemed because of us but always honored and praised.

Psalm 71:8 “My mouth is filled with Your praise and with Your beauty all day long.”

Matt 6:9; John 17:3; Jer 9:23–24; Psa 119:137–138; Luke 1:46; Psa 145:8–9; Psa 115:1

LORD’S DAY 47

124. What does the second request mean?

Your kingdom come means, rule us by Your Word and Spirit in such a way that more and more we submit to You. Keep Your church strong, and add to it. Destroy the devil’s work; destroy every force which revolts against You and every conspiracy against Your Word.

2 Thessalonians 3:1–2 “Finally, brothers, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men, for not all have faith.”

Matt 6:10; Psa 119:5; Acts 19:20; Eph 6:10–11; Psa 68:1

LORD'S DAY 48

125. What does the third request mean?

Your will be done means, grant that we and all men may submit to Your will, joyfully and without complaint, and that we may fulfill our callings with all faithfulness, just as the angels do in heaven.

Ephesians 4:1 “Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called.”

Matt 6:10; Phil 2:14; Titus 2:12; Luke 22:42; 1 Cor 7:24; Psa 103:20

LORD'S DAY 49

126. What does the fourth request mean?

Give us this day our daily bread means, do take care of all our physical needs so that we come to know that You are the only source of everything good, and that neither our work and worry nor Your gifts can do us any good without Your blessing.

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Matt 6:11; Psa 145:15; Matt 6:25–33; Acts 17:25; Deut 8:3; Psa 127:1–2

LORD'S DAY 50

127. What does the fifth request mean?

And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors means, because of Christ's blood, do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are, any of the sins we do or the evil that constantly clings to us. Just as we are fully determined to forgive our neighbors.

Psalm 51:1 "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the abundance of Your compassion blot out my transgressions."

Matt 6:12; 1 John 1:9–2:2; Matt 6:14–15; Luke 17:4

LORD'S DAY 51

128. What does the sixth request mean?

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one means, our sworn enemies—the devil, the world, and our own flesh—never stop attacking us. And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of Your Holy Spirit.

Matthew 26:41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Matt 6:13; Rom 8:26; Psa 103:14; 1 Pet 5:8; Eph 6:12; John 15:19; Rom 7:23; Gal 5:17

129. Why do we say “amen” after our prayers?

To express our confidence in our heavenly Father. Amen means, this is sure to be! God listens to my prayer.

2 Corinthians 1:20 “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes. Therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.”

2 Tim 2:13

