

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Family Catechism

February 2014

Love Is...

A Study of the Love of God

New Life Christian Center | www.nlccministry.org

Catechism Introduction

A Catechism? (Adopted from a teaching by Pastor John Piper)

I. What is a catechism?

In 1 Corinthians 14:19 Paul says, "In the church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue." In Galatians 6:6 he says, "Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches." Acts 18:25 says that Apollos "has been instructed in the way of the Lord."

In each of these verses the Greek word for "instruct" or "teach" is katecheo. From this word we get our English word "catechize". It simply means to teach Biblical truth in an orderly way. Generally this is done with questions and answers accompanied by Biblical support and explanation.

II. The history of these catechisms

These catechisms come from the Baptist tradition. Although CRCC is non-denominational, these catechisms can serve as a solid foundation for our families. We may add a few elements to it as catechism becomes more ingrained in the culture of our church.

III. Is there a Biblical pattern of doctrine?

Several texts teach that there is. For example, in Romans 6:17 Paul gives thanks that "you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were committed." 2 Timothy 1:13 says, "Follow the pattern of sound words which you heard from me." Acts 2:42 says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching." 2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, "Stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us." And Acts 20:27 says, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."

So it appears that there was a body of authoritative instruction and even a way of teaching it in the early church.

IV. Why is it important?

- 1) *We are required to "continue in the faith, stable and steadfast" (Col. 1:23).*
- 2) *We are urged to "attain to the unity of the... knowledge of the of the Son of God...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:13-14).*
- 3) *There are many deceivers (1 John 2:26).*
- 4) *There are difficult doctrines "which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).*
- 5) *Leaders must be raised up who can "give instruction in sound doctrine and also confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9).*
- 6) *We are commanded to teach and disciple our children (Deuteronomy 6, Ephesians 6).*

V. How shall we begin?

We are asking every family or small group within NLCC (especially fathers) to hold weekly worship and family/group bible study using catechism lessons provided by the church.

We are also asking that Wednesday be your designated worship and family or group bible study day. If Wednesday doesn't work for your family or group, feel free to choose another day. Our goal is to learn and grow as a family through biblical teaching.

Let's get excited about building a "stable and firm" generation who knows and serves Christ!

Other Information

Sometimes there are other ways to express a true answer to these questions. Feel free to use scripture to formulate other true answers where possible and helpful. The aim of a catechism is not to be exhaustive but to give a solid foundation from which to "keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17). The biblical basis for family and group bible study is Deuteronomy 6:1-8.

How to Study

Each catechism lesson will be studied for the entire month. The lesson will include a number of questions with biblical answers. Each question will have corresponding scriptures for biblical reference. Each question will also have discussion questions, geared to help your family have great discussions about the truth that was learned. We hope that you all will take the time to write down responses and questions for further study.

The Children Catechism is very similar to the family lesson, in that it is based off of the same questions. However, the questions and the answers are written in such a way that children can understand and memorize. Remember to allow your children to ask questions and give input in discussion. You may be surprised what revelation God may reveal to your child.

With every answer, try to commit them to memory. The scripture says Psalms 119:11 "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." Scripture memory is important, because it helps the believer gain knowledge and revelation of the scripture. Also, memorizing the scripture proves to be beneficial when in hard times in life. Bringing back to mind a scripture and a truth from the word of God will help you gain victory from every storm of your life.

Make sure that you start and end each lesson that you have with a word of prayer. Pray to the Father that He would bless you and your family to understand the word of God, and that revelation would flow from heaven. At the end of the lesson, make sure to pray that the seed of the Word of God is not stolen or destroyed from the enemy. The scripture says John 10:10 "The thief (satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy." The enemy seeks to destroy the seed of the word that was planted during your time of devotions. Lastly, in your closing prayer, pray that the seed of the word will fall on good ground. Remember, the enemy comes to destroy and steal the word. Read for yourself Mark 4:1-20 to see the desire of the enemy. Pray that this does not happen to your family.

Lastly, challenge yourself! Everyone likes a good challenge every now and again. Challenge yourself and your family to memorize the scriptures. Create ways in which to remember the answers to the questions. Develop games and family challenges to bring the word of God to life. Having this foundation of the Word of God in our life is essential to the disciple of Jesus Christ (John 8:31-32).

Our prayer is that you will have the tools you need to succeed. If you ever need assistance at any time, check out the resource page on our church website at www.nlccministry.org, or write down questions and ask questions to your caretaker leader or church leader. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't know. Furthermore, if you don't know do not give answers you don't know. Let your family know 'I don't know, but I will study and find out.' As the lessons go along, you will begin to develop more understanding and revelation from the Word. Further enabling you to better teach and disciple your family.

You Ready?!?! Let's Begin our journey in the word of God.

Love is... / February 2014 Catechism

1. Where does love originate?

Love originates from God; for God, Himself, is love.

Scriptural Reference: 1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:16

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Why can't love originate in man?
- 2) How does your personal testimony or experience with God prove love finds its origin in God?

2. How are we to value love as a believer?

Love should be the believer's greatest desire; in so doing we share the attributes of the father.

Scriptural Reference: 1 John 4:7, Romans 5:8

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does selfishness keep us from valuing love?
- 2) What occurrences in our lives cause us to put love on the "back burner?"

3. What is one of the opposing forces of love?

One of the opposing forces of love is lust. Love seeks to give while lust seeks to gain.

Scriptural Reference: John 3:16, Exodus 15:9

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Does lust only pertain to physical human attraction?
- 2) Name other opposing forces of love? What are some consequences of allowing these forces to reign in the believer's Christian experience?

4. Why is it so important for us to love?

It is important for us to love because it demonstrates who our Father is to those who may not know Him.

Scriptural Reference: Matthew 5:43-45, John 13:34-35

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Is loving others an option?
- 2) Does society seem to think love is important? What are the signs that society values or disregards love?

5. Are we to love those who do us wrong, our enemies?

Yes. God instructs us to love all people, even our enemies.

Scriptural Reference: Matthew 5:44

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Why do we feel justified in not loving our enemies?
- 2) How does loving our enemies empower us?

6. What does the bible say about loving yourself?

The love we have for ourselves should be rooted in our relationship with our Father. When we commit our capacity to love to the Father, we will begin to see value in ourselves.

Scriptural Reference: Psalms 63:3, Colossians 3:3-4

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What is the difference between loving yourself and being vain?
- 2) Is it possible to love others if you don't love yourself?

7. What is the consequence if we don't show love?

If we do not show love, we are living in a state of disobedience according to the word of God, rendering us ineffective and useless in the up building of the Kingdom of God.

Scriptural Reference: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, John 13:34

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Explain how love is necessary to win souls.
- 2) Why do you think love is so important and valuable to God?

8. Are there different types of love?

Yes. The Bible describes four types of love: Agape (Unconditional), Eros (Physical or Passionate), Storge (Family or familiar affection), and Philia (Friendship).

Scriptural Reference: 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (Eros), Exodus 20:12 (Storge), Romans 12:10 (Philia), John 14:21 (Agape)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How can you apply these different types of love in your current relationships?
- 2) What is the consequence of applying one of the types of love to a relationship that does not correspond with that type of love?

9. Can the believer ever be separated from God's love? Can we ever forfeit His love towards us?

No. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God, whether faults, failures, shameful actions, or past indiscretions.

Scriptural Reference: Romans 8:37-39

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Describe the natural occurrence of parents punishing their children. How does this practice compare to God's everlasting love towards His children?
- 2) Why does it often feel that God doesn't love us when we sin? Write down personal reasons and then share with group. Take note of similarities and differences.

10. How can I love like God loves?

In order to love like God loves, we must take on the fruits of the Spirit. We must also embrace humility and integrity in our lives. We must also spend time with the Father in order to receive His heart for our other relationships.

Scriptural Reference: Galatians 5:22-24, Romans 5:8

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Is it possible to love like God loves? Discuss your answers.
- 2) Is it possible to with God? Was there love present at the beginning?