

"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

January 2014

These things come...

A Study on Prayer and Fasting

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.

These Things Come...

1. What is prayer?

Prayer is communication with God. It is expressing our devotion and inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him.

Scriptural Reference: Mark 11:24; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Does God hear us when we pray? How do we know?
- 2) Can we hear God when He answers us? How do we know?

2. Who can pray?

Anyone can pray, but only those who walk in faith and obedience can expect to receive answers to their prayers.

Scriptural Reference: 1 John 3:22; Luke 18:1

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Is it necessary to repent before praying? Why?
- 2) Why are faith and obedience required in order to hear answers to prayer?

3. Why should we pray?

God's word commands us to pray. We pray to cultivate fellowship with God, receive nurture and strength, and maintain boldness for a vital witness for Christ.

Scriptural Reference: 2 Thessalonians 5:17; Psalm 86

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What spiritual benefits do we receive in prayer?
- 2) Is worship a part of prayer? Why?

4. To whom do we pray?

We pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our prayers are accepted by the Father because of Jesus' sacrifice.

Scriptural Reference: Matthew 6:9-10; Psalm 95:2

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Must we only speak to the Father when we pray? Or, can we speak to each member of the Trinity?
- 2) How have you personally experienced the Holy Spirit answer a prayer?

5. When should we pray?

God's Word commands us to pray continually. We can pray throughout the day, expressing and demonstrating our devotion to God as we go throughout each daily task.

Scriptural Reference: Ephesians 6:18; Luke 6:12, 9:18

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Are believers who pray early in the morning more spiritual and believers who pray later in the day less spiritual?
- 2) Why should a believer's first course of action be to pray at the sign of trouble?

6. What should we include in our prayers?

Although prayer cannot be reduced to a formula, certain elements should be included in our prayers: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (A.C.T.S. Prayer Model)

Scriptural Reference: Psalm 8:1; 1 John 1:8-9; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What does it mean to bring everything to God in prayer?
- 2) Does God care more about our "big" prayers and "less about our "little" prayers.

7. What is spiritual fasting?

Fasting is one of the most powerful spiritual disciplines of all Christian disciplines. It is the denial of food in order for greater intimacy with God.

Scriptural Reference: Matthew 4:4; Isaiah 58:6

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *How does fasting give believers the opportunity to be more intimate with God?*
- 2) *What are some reasons fasting is one of the more difficult spiritual disciplines to take part in?*

8. What are the benefits of fasting?

Fasting results in deeper relationship and intimacy with the Father, mastery of fleshly desires and behaviors, spiritual restoration and breakthrough, clear direction, and improved physical health.

Scriptural Reference: Acts 13:2-3; Matthew 4:1-4

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *What does it mean to gain mastery over the flesh?*
- 2) *Since fasting and healthy dieting both result in improved physical health, are they the same thing? What is the difference?*

9. Where should the believer direct his focus during a fast?

As we fast our focus should be on the Lord. As we focus on our Father and our relationship with Him, our confidence grows and we are encouraged to continue with the fast and delve deeper in the things of the Spirit.

Scriptural Reference: Psalm 121:1; Colossians 3:1-2

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *How does focusing on Christ and meditating on scripture encourage the believer to complete a fast?*
- 2) *Should a believer feel guilty or incapable if/when the temptation to break a fast early comes?*

10. Is fasting a requirement for the Christian?

Yes, fasting is considered one of the spiritual disciplines for the believer as modeled by Jesus.

Scriptural Reference: Matthew 6:16-18; Isaiah 58:6-9

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Is fasting required to make it into heaven?*
- 2) *Is it possible to live a holy Christian life without fasting?*