

QUESTION 7: WHAT DOES THE LAW OF GOD REQUIRE?

ANSWER : PERSONAL, PERFECT AND PERPETUAL OBEDIENCE; THAT WE LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART, SOUL, MIND AND STRENGTH; AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES. WHAT GOD FORBIDS SHOULD NEVER BE DONE AND WHAT GOD COMMANDS SHOULD ALWAYS BE DONE.

50 minute Lesson Outline:

- Catechism Recap (5 mins)
- Introduction to Question (5 mins)
- Teaching Outline (15 mins)
- Discussion and Question Time (20 mins)
- Virtue Vision (5 mins)

Bible Passage: Matthew 22:34-40

Memory Verse: Matthew 22:37-40

Big Idea: God's law is still relevant for the Christian, and it requires obedient and loving lives.

Aim: To help us understand what it is to live wholeheartedly for God in light of His love and grace.

Virtue: Gratitude.

LEADER'S NOTES:

This lesson is the first in a series of nine questions that deal with God's law and the response the God demands from His people. Each question will consider an aspect of the law and will engage with its significance for us today. **This lesson will highlight that God's law is still relevant today and that it is an important part of the Christian life. Here we will carefully consider what it means to respond to God's saving grace by living thankful lives characterized by obedience. The role**

of God's law is often downplayed, but this question will help us understand that it is meant to guide us in how to respond appropriately to His grace in His world.

Things to remember:

- Obeying God's law will never make anybody right with God.
- Think seriously about how this question will practically affect your personal life.
- Wholehearted devotion to God will involve striving to live obedient lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

CATECHISM REVIEW LAST WEEK, Q6

Question 6: How can we Glorify God?

Answer : We glorify God by enjoying Him, loving Him, trusting Him, and obeying his will, commands, and law.

INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 7

ASK: *What would life be like if there were no laws?* Our initial response might be positive or exciting! However, think about some laws were created to keep us safe. For example, what if cars never stopped at red lights? Or if people could harm each other without consequences? Laws are an essential part of life and they are generally established so that society can operate safely and well.

ASK: *What if there was no punishment for breaking laws?* Laws mean nothing without the threat of punishment! People would constantly defy laws if there were no consequences for breaking them.

TEACHING OUTLINE

QUESTION 7: WHAT DOES THE LAW OF GOD REQUIRE?

Ask: Are/Were you good at obeying your parents?

Perfectly obedient?

Why do we disobey?

Consider how our disobedience affects the ones we love the most. The truth is, everyone in the world is a law breaker and not just because they disobey their parents. Even if we kept all the laws of our country, we have all broken God's laws.

God revealed His law to His people and it was recorded in the Bible. Ever heard of the 10 Commandments? In the Old Testament book of Exodus, God clearly handed down His law to His people (the Israelites) at Mount Sinai, described how God expected His people to live. He gave His law after miraculously saving them from Egypt and they had come to know Him as a powerful and merciful saving God.

God brought them out of slavery and then desired to show them how to live as His people and under His rule. After all, they had been enslaved for 400 years and most likely had forgotten how to live as a healthy society. God demanded perfect obedience from His people. God wanted His people to respond to Him with wholehearted devotion because of His saving grace. But the Israelite people were not able to perfectly obey God's law, and there were consequences for breaking it.

READ: Matthew 22:34-40

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

37 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.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

God's law is still the standard by which He expects us to live.

Explain: The only person to ever perfectly keep God's law was Jesus. This means that everyone else is a lawbreaker and lawbreakers deserve punishment. Christians are free from the prospect of punishment, however, because when Jesus died on the cross, He did so in order to take the punishment for all lawbreakers who turn to Him in repentance for forgiveness.

The reason Christians seek to keep God's law is because of His saving grace shown to them in Jesus, ***not because it will win them favor with God!***

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus taught what can be described as a summary of God's law. It is how He expects His followers to live. Jesus commands people to show upward love and sideways love, to love God and to love people. Jesus explains to Pharisees and the listening crowds that the law can be summed up by commanding people to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind and to love their neighbors as themselves.

How do you respond when you've been given a gift or shown some kindness? Presumably, in thanks!

The greatest gift to us is Jesus, the One who saves those who trust in Him from punishment and death. ***What's the right response to God's great gift?*** Surely it's living thankful lives, seeking to glorify God by living as He commands.

REVIEW

Question 7: What does the law of God require?

Answer: Personal, perfect and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Activity: Using the *Paper Heart Diagram*, identify ways that you can love God with all your heart, mind and soul. Write those down on the “Upward Love” side of your heart. Next, identify ways in which you can love the people the God has placed around you and write your thoughts down on the “Sideways Love” side.

Take a few minutes and share your thoughts with your group.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

- 1. Does keeping God’s law please God?** Living obedient lives is glorifying to God and is pleasing to Him, but it does not win us favor with Him.
- 2. I’d like to keep God’s law perfectly. How do I do that?** It is impossible to keep God’s law perfectly and that’s why salvation through Jesus is essential. The Holy Spirit will give you the ability to live in increasingly godly ways that are consistent with God’s law.
- 3. What happens if I keep breaking God’s law?** If you consider yourself a Christian, you should have the confidence that Jesus has taken your punishment. Continual repentance of our lawbreaking and asking God for strength can be helpful in learning to live for Him with wholehearted devotion. If you are not a Christian, there is a very clear punishment for breaking God’s law, but there is hope found in Christ alone!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What do think loving God with all you heart, mind and soul means?

How can you love your friends better? What about your family? Or your neighbors?

What steps do you need to take to move closer to wholehearted devotion to God?

VIRTUE VISION: Gratitude

The reason God's law is still relevant is because it is God's guide for life and it teaches us how to live with gratitude in response to His grace. One way we can show Upward Love is to express gratitude to God! Using the *Q7 Tweet Template*, write a tweet (no more than 140 characters) that declares your gratitude to God for who He is and what He has done.

Share your response with your group.

MEMORIZE Matthew 22:37-40

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38 This is the great and first commandment.

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