

DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2021 – 7 FEBRUARY 2021



**UPPER
HUNTER**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

As we begin our gratitude section of the catechism, the catechism first takes us through the Ten Commandments. Later we will be taught about the Lord's Prayer. The placing of the Ten Commandments here in the gratitude section is important. The law of God is not placed in the guilt section of the catechism to remind us about our need for the Saviour, although that is one function of the law. The Ten Commandments were given after Israel was rescued from slavery in Egypt, not before. God gives us the law so we may know how to live as His people, not to become His people. Kevin DeYoung's explanation is helpful:

We obey the commandments, therefore, not in order to merit God's favor but out of gratitude for His favor. Don't forget that the Ten Commandments were given to Israel *after* God delivered them from Egypt. The law was a response to redemption, not a cause of it. We must never separate law from gospel. In one sense, the law shows us our sin and leads us to the gospel, but in another sense, the law ought to follow the gospel just as the giving of the Decalogue followed salvation from Egypt. Likewise, Ephesians 2 first explains salvation by grace and then instructs us to walk in the good deeds prepared for us (v. 10). Romans first explains justification and election, and then tells us how to live in response to these mercies (Rom. 12:1). We obey the law in gratitude for the gospel.¹

I pray that we may neither obey the law in order to be saved nor we will forget about the law altogether. Instead, may we uphold the law in response to God's grace.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

¹ Kevin DeYoung, *The Gospel We Almost Forgot*, p164.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM²

Lord's Day 34

Q92) What does the LORD say in His law?

A) [Exodus 20:1-17] 1 And God spoke all these words: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. 8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 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 male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 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. 12 "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. 13 "You shall not murder. 14 "You shall not commit adultery. 15 "You shall not steal. 16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. 17 "You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."

Q93) How are these commandments divided?

A) Into two tables. The first has four commandments, teaching us what our relation to God should be. The second has six commandments, teaching us what we owe our neighbour.

Q94) What does the LORD require in the first commandment?

A) That I, not wanting to endanger my very salvation, avoid and shun all idolatry, magic, superstitious rites, and prayer to saints or to other creatures. 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 honour Him with all my heart. In short, that I give up anything rather than go against His will in any way.

Q95) What is idolatry?

A) Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed Himself in His Word.

MATTHEW 4:10, 22:37

Matt 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Matt 22:37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

When Satan tempted Jesus to worship him, it was a temptation to idolatry. Satan was promising to give Jesus the kingdoms of the world and all their treasures. All Jesus had to do was to bow down and worship Satan. Jesus knew only God was to be worshipped. He didn't try to negotiate with Satan or compromise on this First Commandment, thinking He would use all the kingdoms and treasures for God's glory once He received it from Satan by bowing down to it. Jesus loved God with all His heart, with all His soul and with all His mind, and He commands us to do the same even today. Of course, we continuously fail to do so perfectly, but Jesus had died and rose again for our failures, and so we can now freely worship and serve Him even after a thousand failures. So, decide in your heart that you will worship God alone and ask Him to empower you by His Spirit that you will love Him with all your heart, soul, and mind.

² The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.