

# DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

MICA (P) 231/07/2011



**AUG**  
Lord's Days 32 - 35

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 32

**Question 86.** Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?

*Answer.* Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit, after His own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude [\[a\]](#) to God for His blessings, and that He may be [\[b\]](#) praised by us; also, that every one may be [\[c\]](#) assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be [\[d\]](#) gained to Christ.

**Question 87.** Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?

*Answer.* By no means; for the holy scripture declares [\[e\]](#) that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

[a]: [1Cor. 6:19,20](#); [Rom. 6:13](#); [Rom. 12:1,2](#); [1Pet. 2:5,9,10](#)

[b]: [Mat. 5:16](#); [1Pet. 2:12](#)

[c]: [2Pet. 1:10](#); [Gal. 5:6,24](#)

[d]: [1Pet. 3:1,2](#); [Mat. 5:16](#); [Rom. 14:19](#)

[e]: [1Cor. 6:9,10](#); [Eph. 5:5,6](#); [1John 3:14,15](#); [Gal. 5:21](#)

**August 6 – LD 32, Day 1: A Knowledgeable Faith and Gratitude**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

*John 17:3* And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The Christian faith is a knowledgeable faith. Christ expressed this truth in John 17:3 when He declared that the purpose of His bestowal of eternal life to us is exactly for true knowledge!

Little wonder then, that Lord's Day 1, Q/A 2 reminds us that true comfort is enjoyed in the way of a triple knowledge - knowing our misery, knowing how we are delivered from all our sins and miseries, and knowing how to show gratitude to God for His salvation of us.

Lord's Day 32 is the first Lord's Day of the third part of that Triple Knowledge.

We have learned that the knowledge of our misery is the knowledge of our sin, captured by the term, "total depravity".

Knowing that we are totally depraved, we then know that all our salvation comes from God to us through faith in Christ. Against the idea that the Christian faith is "simple" and has little content, our Reformed fathers rightly maintain that "true faith is ... a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word..." and included an exposition of the historic Apostles' Creed as a summary of the content of faith.

True gratitude is also a knowledgeable gratitude. God Himself reveals to us how we are to show thanks to Him. Gratitude is expressed by a life of good works arising out of a life of daily conversion (LD32-33). It is further expressed by a loving obedience to God's law (LD34-44) and engaging in covenant speech with God through prayer (LD45-52).

By spelling out these truths, our Catechism helps us to relate to God rightly and properly by steering us clear from sin.

*For Meditation:* Many do not value precise knowledge in Christianity today. Yet, in other spheres of life, we have little use for one who wants to be a surgeon, engineer or lawyer if he has no desire to have good and precise knowledge in his field of study. Give thanks to God for guiding our Reformed fathers to this precise summary of God's Word and pray that we may daily desire to grow in this knowledge of God.

**August 7 – LD 32, Day 2: The Place of Good Works in the Christian Life**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Ephesians 2:8-10** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

There is not a single religion on the face of this earth that I know of, that does not set forth the importance of its followers doing good works.

But when we consider the question, “*Where do good works belong in salvation?*”, we get different answers. Virtually all religions teach that good works need to be performed in order to earn or merit salvation. And although the Roman Catholics say they “believe” in the work of the Cross of Christ and “grace”, they also say that nobody is going to Heaven except that they build on top of the work and grace of Christ by their own good works: attending Mass, etc. This deadly error of one’s good works being *partly* the ground, cause or means of obtaining our salvation has now come upon the scene of conservative Presbyterian and Reformed churches in a new way in our day: through the Federal Vision movement. Its basic error is that it teaches that God’s covenant is *conditional*, i.e. in some way dependent on the believer. Accordingly, the believer’s justification and salvation is dependent on his own good works.

But how *radically different* the sound of grace in Scripture is! Twice, and within a short space of 2 verses, we are reminded that salvation is “not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” and “not of works, lest any man should boast”. God knows our sinful nature will want to keep extolling itself in that we had a part to play in obtaining our salvation, and so, added these two negative statements after setting forth the wonderful truth that we are saved only by His wonderful grace!

*For Meditation:* Where, then does God’s Word and the Reformed faith place good works in the Christian life? Not in the second part of our Triple Knowledge, but in the third part: gratitude to God following salvation (cf. Eph 2:10, LD32). For of ourselves and prior to salvation, we are “wholly incapable of any good” and “inclined to all wickedness” (cf. LD3, Rom 3:10-12, Eph 2:1-3). Is that your confession, and do you diligently live it out?

**August 8 – LD 32, Day 3: What Good Works Are (1)**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Romans 14:23** *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

**Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*

Because Lord's Day 32 sets forth the place of good works and the necessity of good works, it is certainly not out of order to spell out what good works are. Although the biblical definition of good works is not set forth in Lord's Day 32, it is set forth in Lord's Day 33, Q/A 91.

Today and over the next few days, we will treat this very important idea of what good works are.

Suppose a terrorist gunman broke into a house with a mother and her children at home. This gunman threatens to, and is now about to gun down the children of the home with his AK-47. The mother pleads with the gunman not to. But the gunman is adamant. He is going to go ahead and finish off her children. Now she flings herself in front of her children to shield them from the shots he fires, protecting them, and dies as a result.

Is that act of the woman truly a good work?

The answer is "It depends." It depends on what? It depends on whether the mother was truly a believer, and whether she did that act in true faith. The reason is because faith in Jesus Christ is one of the very necessary ingredients for a deed done by us to be considered as a good work by God. Rom 14:23 declares plainly that *whatsoever* that is not of faith is sin. Heb 11:6 is just as comprehensive: without faith it is *impossible* to please God.

Accordingly, we find our Reformed fathers beginning their answer to the question,

"Q91 But what are good works?

A. Only those which proceed from a true faith..."

*For Meditation:* The answer given by the Word of God and our Catechism to this question and subject of good works is a very unpopular answer. Do you believe it, and do you work the works of service to God by a true faith from your heart?

**August 9 – LD 32, Day 4: What Good Works Are (2)**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**1 Samuel 15:22** *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

Suppose a man was admitted to hospital. His daughter, a young Christian lady, finds out from the doctor that her father has only several days to live and will therefore remain in hospital, and subsequently be transferred to hospice care where he will die. In order to give her father peace of mind during his last days of life, she tells the doctor and nurses not to disclose to him his medical condition. She herself tells him that all is well, and that he is being kept at hospital until he regains his health.

Is she doing a good work?

Continuing to understand what good works are, our Reformed fathers inform us that firstly, they “proceed from a true faith”, and secondly, they “*are performed according to the law of God*” (LD33, Q/A 91).

As proof of this second aspect of what good works are, our Reformed fathers point us to the rash sacrifice of King Saul, who disobeyed God and did not wait as God had told him to wait for priest Samuel to perform the sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22). Saul's sacrifice, done against God's clear instruction, far from being a good work, was displeasing to the LORD.

Accordingly, what the young lady did was not at all a good work! While the world might consider it to be a good work, she lied to her father and her concern of having her father die with “peace of mind” was misplaced. The calling of this lady was to bring her father God's Word of comfort if he was a Christian, or else to bring him the gospel of repentance and faith in Christ and words of warning in that connection if he wasn't.

*For Meditation:* The world's idea of “good works” is radically different from what God Himself considers to be good works. Often, the argument used by the world is “the end justifies the means”. So, a “white lie” leading to a “good” end is acceptable, even good. What is your response to that?

**August 10 – LD 32, Day 5: What Good Works Are (3)**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**1 Corinthians 10:31** *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Suppose, a wealthy man finds out he is soon going to die. Among the many things he does before his death, he donates most of his estate to charitable organizations. He did so because he wanted his name to be remembered.

Did this dying rich man do a good work by giving his estate to the poor?

The Answer is "No". The dying rich man, in all his giving to charity, did not do a good work. The reason for this is because his motive for all that giving was for his name and glory and *not for the Glory of God*.

And that is the third and final aspect of what constitutes a good work in the sight of God: that work, besides it proceeding from a true faith and being done according to His law, must have the glory of God as its motive (LD33, Q/A 91).

And for proof of this, we have 1 Cor 10:31.

We have covered the three-fold biblical, Reformed definition of what constitutes a good work. So, let us ask ourselves: Are we thankful to God for His salvation? If so, we will show it by a life abounding in good works. The just shall live by faith, and so by faith, let us do good. Let us live according to His Word. And let us live for His glory and not ours.

*For Meditation:* Unbelievers often shame us believers with what has been called "glittering bad works". At the same time, the good works that a believer does in his/her calling or station in life may seem trivial and mundane, and even despised by the world (e.g. a Christian man who gives a good witness by his quiet, diligent labor; or a covenant mother being a keeper of the home, caring for and nurturing her young children). Keeping in mind the proper understanding of what good works are, let us be undeterred in being faithful to Christ, calling to mind that we are not our own but belong to Him. Let us perform what He calls us to do in true faith and for divine glory. It is in this way that we enjoy our one and only comfort in Christ.

**August 11 – LD 32, Day 6: Why Must We *Still* Do Good Works (1)?**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Romans 6:1-2** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

When Q/A 86 is worded, "... why must we *still* do good works?", understand that our Reformed fathers are answering an objection, a classic, wicked objection raised by the Roman Catholic Church against those who teach salvation by grace. That objection is this: if salvation is entirely by the grace of God, to the exclusion of good works on the part of the believer, then why is there any need for, why must we *still* do good works?

But that objection is not originally with the Roman Catholics. The apostle Paul encountered that objection from the enemies in his day of the same gospel of grace which he preached and which we share with him. How does the inspired apostle answer that objection? The answer is found in Rom 6:1-2.

Q/A 87 only affirms the answer of Rom 6:1-2, for it declares plainly that one who does not do good works, but on the other hand, abides in evil works, cannot possibly have been saved by God (cf. 1 Cor 6:9, 10).

Why then, positively, must we still do good works?

The main reason is that good works are the purpose of God's salvation (Eph 2:10). Christ "redeemed and delivered us by His blood". That means that Jesus Christ has rescued us out of the bondage and prison of sin. But He does not stop there. The Catechism says that He also "renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image; so that we may testify by the whole of our conduct our gratitude to God for His blessings". This means that Christ continues to cause us to live in Him *after* He rescues us out of prison.

The bottom line is, He freed us from sin not for us to live in sin again, but to abound in good works! By abounding in good works, we show gratitude to God. This is the purpose of God's salvation of us in and through Jesus Christ.

*For Meditation:* Good works are the purpose of God in our salvation. Are good works personally purposed by you this day in your life?

**August 12 – LD 32, Day 7: Why Must We Still Do Good Works (2)?**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Matthew 5:16** *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Why must we *still* do good works? The Catechism reminds us that we, whose only comfort is that we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ and who hold to God's glorious gospel of grace, have many, many reasons to do good works after experiencing God's salvation in our lives.

First, by doing good works, God is praised by us. For our good works are the works of *God* to begin with. Phil 2:12-13, Eph 2:10 and Matt 5:16 remind us of this. God is praised and glorified when we do good works because those works come from the God of those people who perform them.

Second, by doing good works, others are gained to Christ. That also is the thought of Matt 5:16. Our Reformed fathers also cite 1 Pet 3:1-2 on this point, and there, we are reminded that believing wives are called to submit themselves also to their unbelieving husbands, one reason being that *"they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear"*.

Third, by doing good works, we are assured of our own faith. The Catechism says that good works are "the fruits thereof" (of faith). In John 15, where Jesus speaks of Himself as the Vine, and all those joined to Him by faith as the branches, He says in verse 8, *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."* Now, if we don't do good works, then we have no faith. And if we continue not to do any good works, then we are most certainly not going to heaven (1 Cor 6:9-10). Good works do not, in any way, earn our way into heaven. But God's people do not live this kind of unthankful life. There is a life of good works! When we see our good works, we know that God is working in us; we know that we are disciples of Christ.

*For Meditation:* We have many reasons to do good works. Let us abound in them and in that way abound in showing thanks to the God of our salvation.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 33

**Question 88.** Of how many parts doth the true conversion of man consist?

*Answer.* Of two parts; of [\[a\]](#) the mortification of the old, and the quickening of the new man.

**Question 89.** What is the mortification of the old man?

*Answer.* It is a [\[b\]](#) sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them.

**Question 90.** What is the quickening of the new man?

*Answer.* It is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, [\[c\]](#) and with love and [\[d\]](#) delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.

**Question 91.** But what are good works?

*Answer.* Only those which proceed from a true [\[e\]](#) faith, are performed according to the [\[f\]](#) law of God, and to His [\[g\]](#) glory; and not such as are [\[h\]](#) founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men.

[a]: [Rom. 6:4,5,6](#); [Eph. 4:22,23](#); [Col. 3:5](#); [1Cor. 5:7](#)

[b]: [Psa. 51:3,8,17](#); [Luke 15:18](#); [Rom. 8:13](#); [Joel 1:12,13](#)

[c]: [Rom. 5:1,2](#); [Rom. 14:17](#); [Isa. 57:15](#)

[d]: [Rom. 6:10,11](#); [1Pet. 4:2](#); [Gal. 2:20](#)

[e]: [Rom. 14:23](#)

[f]: [1Sam. 15:22](#); [Eph. 2:2,10](#)

[g]: [1Cor. 10:31](#)

[h]: [Deut. 12:32](#); [Ezek. 20:18](#); [Mat. 15:9](#)

**August 13 – LD 33, Day 1: The Idea Of Conversion**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Isaiah 6:10:** *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and **convert**, and be healed.*

**Isaiah 59:20:** *And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.*

To "convert" is to "turn". "Conversion" involves a turning FROM something TO something else. It refers to a "change" of disposition. Basically, we turn from sin (HC, Q/A 89: "... more and more to hate and flee from them") to a life of gratitude unto God (HC, Q/A 90: "...live according to the will of God in all good works").

The word and idea of "conversion" is found in the NT (cf. Luke 1:16-17) and OT.

First, consider **Isaiah 6:10**. Here, God makes it clear that He has more than one purpose to the gospel that He calls prophet Isaiah to preach to OT Israel. It is not just to comfort, save and convert His people, but also to harden the hearts of the reprobate wicked, to blind them. Contrary to those who teach that God sincerely desires the salvation of all ("well-meant gospel offer"), according to this Word of God, it is God's desire and purpose that a certain group of people *not* be saved, but rather be hardened through the good Word brought by His servant, Isaiah.

Second, consider **Isaiah 59:20**. This verse makes clear *exactly unto whom* the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, comes for in Zion. Because not all Israel is Israel (Rom 9:6-8), He redeemed not everyone at the Cross, and comes not to everyone. But He comes "unto them that *turn* from transgression in Jacob", that is, He comes unto them who are converted by Him.

*For Meditation:* Marvel that God chose to convert you, a hell-deserving sinner, from your sins. But don't stop there. Do you daily flee and turn from your sins, and turn unto God by the power of Christ's cross (cf. Rom 7:18ff)? Because our "old man" will be with us till the day we die, we need daily and constantly to "mortify" him, and be quickened unto love, joy and obedience in the Lord to do His Word and will. We need to be converted daily.

**August 14 – LD 33, Day 2: The Character Of True Conversion**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Luke 1:16-17:** *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

We consider the character of True Conversion today. True Conversion is something radical. It takes place right in the core of our being. It is something that is *of the heart*. It is a TURNING that is from deep within our soul.

It is not something skin-deep. It does not *only* say, "I am sorry". And we know, from the tone of those words, when someone is not truly sorry, don't we? Still more, True Conversion is not something that changes and turns around on something *only* because of the consequences or results that will happen if we don't. For example, medical documentaries may tell us about the harmful results of taking drugs. But true conversion working in us does not only make us stay away from drugs because of that. We do so because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

God reveals in His Word the true and deep nature of True Conversion – He works His work of conversion in our hearts. Besides Luke 1:16-17, in **Colossians 3:15**, we read: "And let the peace of God rule in your **hearts**, to the which also ye are **called** in one body; and be ye thankful."

We are called unto salvation, and called into the body of Christ by a wondrous and radical change, as Peter reminds us in **1 Peter 2:9**, that we are "called (out) out of darkness into His marvelous light;" We are graciously given a new, radically different identity in Jesus Christ by this calling: we are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;"

*For Meditation:* True conversion, being a work of God, is radical and deep. But it has to take place constantly in us, so that we "more and more" hate and flee from our sins, and turn to God. We need to daily "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil 2:12b-13.

**August 15 – LD 33, Day 3: The Power Of True Conversion**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Acts 26:18:** *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

Consider these beautiful words which describe not only the radical character, but also the power of True Conversion: "from darkness to light... from the power of Satan unto God." As Paul himself experienced this power of conversion, he was now going to be used by Jesus to work mighty conversion in the hearts and lives of God's elect.

First, True Conversion takes us away from the darkness and power of Satan. What was darkness like in the life of Paul prior to True Conversion? He tells us: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." (Acts 26:9). How Paul hated and persecuted Christians!

What can we say about this power of darkness? It is a power that makes us fulfill the lusts of our flesh and of the mind. It is a power that makes us by nature the children of wrath and disobedience, and in that disobedience – *dead in sin* (Eph 2:1-3).

From that power, Paul was converted unto light and life with God. Light is the complete contrast to darkness - so that if one lives contrary to the name of Jesus in darkness, one does not live in obedience, submission and service to the name of Jesus in light. In Jesus is found light and life with God (John 8:12). Just as earthly light from the sun gives earthly life to plants and animals, so also spiritual light from Jesus Christ gives life to God's people. Light also dispels darkness, and by it gives us sight and direction in life. It is none other than the Word of God that is a light to our feet, guiding us on the path of life.

*For Meditation:* This life that we have been given is a holy life of communion and friendship with God by His Word and Spirit. Because it is driven by the almighty power of God, it is an indestructible life so that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35ff). Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

**August 16 – LD 33, Day 4: True Conversion Distinguished  
by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Philippians 2:12-13:** *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

The reason why True Conversion is radical, powerful and breaks with sin is because it is God's work. It is a wonderful work of God!

Yet we must take care in distinguishing it from other wonderful works of God in our salvation.

True Conversion is not the work of redemption performed by Jesus Christ. That work took place at the Cross some two thousand years ago. Redemption took place once and for all at the Cross - *outside of us*. Redemption was the once-for-all payment of the purchase price for all our sins and for all other benefits of God's salvation.

And neither is True Conversion regeneration, a work which, like True Conversion, takes place *inside* of us.

How do we distinguish the two?

First, True Conversion follows from Regeneration. God first puts the seed of new life inside of us - that's regeneration. Then comes Conversion as a result of that new life in us, translating us from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.

Second, in Regeneration we are passive, but in conversion we are active (Phil 2:12-13). Just as we have nothing to do with our physical birth, (we are passive at the time of our birth), so also we have nothing to do with our spiritual birth (we are passive in our being born again). But in the work of conversion which God works - we are active. We consciously reject the way of sin and darkness, and we consciously turn to light and life with God.

Third and finally, Regeneration is a one-time thing, but conversion is a life-long process. We are born once, but converted many times thereafter.

*For Meditation:* Take time to consider all the wonderful works that God performs in order to save us from our sins. Especially consider that it cost God nothing less than the suffering and death of His beloved, only-begotten Son so that all these works might be applied to us. Give thanks to God for your salvation so rich, full and free!

**August 17 – LD 33, Day 5: An Example Of True Conversion**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**1 Peter 5:1-2:** *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

The doctrine of True Conversion becomes real to us when we consider an example, that of Peter.

As a result of his great confidence in himself, Peter experienced a terrible fall, but he was re-instated by Jesus, showing to us later on in his life, his True Conversion from his proud confidence in his flesh to humility and dependence upon God.

Peter's fall is well known to us. Peter denied his Lord three times as Jesus said he would. But we know that Peter repented from his sin because Jesus re-instated him before His Ascension into Heaven, telling Peter three times to show his love for Him by feeding His flock.

We also know that Peter experienced true conversion in other ways.

First, whereas he denied Jesus at Gethsemane, Peter preached Christ Crucified boldly in Acts 2.

Second, so dearly did he hold to the words of his Lord when he was reinstated that he admonished the elders of the scattered churches in 1 Peter 5:1-2: "...*Feed the flock of God*"!

Third, our Canons affirm Peter's True Conversion by pointing out Peter's "lamentable fall" in the best of all places: the Fifth Head of Doctrine, "*The Perseverance of the Saints*", Art. 4 - reminding us of God's work of grace in causing Peter to be recovered spiritually, to be truly converted, to persevere unto the end of his salvation.

*For Meditation:* Those who are truly converted can fall into grievous sin. If Peter could, if David - described to be a man after God's own heart - could, then we can. Calvinists, who confess the "P" of 'TULIP', understand that they can fall into grievous sin. Do you? And do you therefore take great care daily to "mortify" our old man (Col 3:5)? And what if we fall into a lamentable state of sin? Don't deny it, don't hide it, don't wait for time to pass by! Repent and live! Be converted and healed!

**August 18 – LD 33, Day 6: What True Conversion Consists Of**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

*Colossians 3:5, 8, 12: Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry... But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth... Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

True Conversion consists of 2 parts: the mortification of the old and the quickening of the new man.

That means that the Christian life is one of a constant struggle between the new man and the old man. It implies therefore, that the Christian will never be perfect in holiness and obedience before God in this life. Those who teach that we can achieve perfection in this life are wrong. They forget that the Christian life is a constant struggle as a result of the existence of the old nature of sin in him, and thus of our constant need to mortify him.

Q/A 88 of this LD maintains that both natures will be there in the believer. In doing so, it gives an understanding of conversion that is thoroughly biblical (cf. Col 3: 5, 8, 12).

Q/As 89 & 90 point out the two godly affections of True Conversion: the sincere sorrow of heart on account of our sins against God associated with the mortifying of the old man, as well as the sincere joy of heart in God when living in holiness associated with the quickening of the new man.

We conclude today's devotion on the note of the Joy of True Conversion. This, like godly sorrow (2 Cor 7:10), is a thoroughly biblical idea. For Paul, when he speaks of the quickening of the new man in Col 3:12, brings up "love" in v. 14 and "peace" in v. 15. Where there is true love and peace, there is also true joy!

*For Meditation:* True joy is a vital ingredient to the Christian life. In the midst of trials and afflictions that we experience, let us not forget that we are abundantly blessed by God and experience the great riches and comfort of His Word and gospel. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, Rejoice." (Phil 4:4). For we are "...more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom 8:37).

**August 19 – LD 33, Day 7: What True Conversion Produces**  
**by Rev Dennis Lee**

**Colossians 3:18-22:** *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;*

True conversion will produce a life of good works.

And good works, as you will recall, was explained in last week's meditations. Recall briefly that firstly, they proceed from a True Faith; secondly, they are done according to the law of God; thirdly and finally, they are done with the motive of glorifying God.

The life of True Conversion is such that the true convert abounds in good works not only in some areas of his/her life (areas which he/she might find it easier to do good works in for whatever reason), but in every area of his/her r life.

Col. 3:18ff concludes with a series of good works in the area of married life (for both husband and wife), family life, and also our life at work. Peter tells us in 1 Pet 2:11ff very much the same thing - how we should abound in good works in our relationship with all kinds of people around us. Would you say that you live a zealous life abounding in good works?

People who are truly converted are thankful to God for His wondrous salvation of them, and will always show that thankfulness to Him with a life of good works.

This is true for all of God's people. Yes, even for those of us who have experienced grievous falls in our lives and have been brought back by Him and restored unto a living fellowship with Him. May Peter's fall, and then his recovery by the Lord in the way of True Conversion encourage us to live fervently the life of True Conversion and abound in good works!

*For Meditation:* Let good works abound in all areas of our lives. Let us do good works at home, at work, at school, and with one another in Church - with a heart and mind ready to serve, to forgive, to receive; and ready for active and committed service unto the Lord.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 34

#### **Question 92.** What is the law of God?

*Answer.* God spake all these words, [Exodus 20](#), [Deut. 5](#), saying: I am the LORD thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the LORD thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

#### **Question 93.** How are these commandments divided?

*Answer.* Into two [\[a\]](#) tables; the [\[b\]](#) first of which teaches us how we must behave towards God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor.

#### **Question 94.** What doth God enjoin in the first commandment?

*Answer.* That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, [\[c\]](#) sorcery, [\[d\]](#) soothsaying, superstition, [\[e\]](#) invocation of saints, or any other creatures; and learn [\[f\]](#) rightly to know the only true God; [\[g\]](#) trust in Him alone, with humility [\[h\]](#) and patience [\[i\]](#) submit to Him; [\[j\]](#) expect all good things from Him only; [\[k\]](#) love, [\[l\]](#) fear, and [\[m\]](#) glorify Him with my whole heart; so that I renounce [\[n\]](#) and forsake all creatures, rather than [\[o\]](#) commit even the least thing contrary to His will.

#### **Question 95.** What is idolatry?

*Answer.* Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God who has manifested Himself in His word, to contrive or have any other object in which men place their trust. [\[p\]](#)

[a]: [Ex. 34:28,29](#)

[b]: [Deut. 4:13](#); [Deut. 10:3,4](#)

[c]: [1Cor. 6:9,10](#); [1Cor 10:7,14](#)

[d]: [Lev. 18:21](#); [Deut. 18:10,11,12](#)

[e]: [Mat. 4:10](#); [Rev. 19:10](#)

[j]: [Psa. 104:27](#); [Isa. 45:7](#); [James 1:17](#)

[k]: [Deut. 6:5](#); [Mat. 22:37](#)

[l]: [Deut. 6:5](#); [Mat. 10:28](#)

[m]: [Mat. 4:10](#)

[n]: [Mat. 5:29,30](#); [Acts 5:29](#); [Mat.](#)

[f]: [John 17:3](#)

[g]: [Jer. 17:5,7](#)

[h]: [Heb. 10:36](#); [Col. 1:11](#); [Rom. 5:3,4](#);

[Phil. 2:14](#)

[i]: [1Pet. 5:5,6](#)

[10:37](#)

[o]: [Mat. 5:19](#)

[p]: [2Chron. 16:12](#); [Phil. 3:18,19](#); [Gal.](#)

[4:8](#); [Eph. 2:12](#)

**August 20 – LD 34, Day 1: The Law of God**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: Exodus 19:17 – 20:3

The heading of this section of the Catechism, above Lord's Day 32, is very important; "The Third Part – Of Thankfulness."

The catechism showed us firstly our misery, our total inability to obey the law of God, and our inclination to hate God and our neighbor. Secondly, the catechism taught us our only way of deliverance, through faith in Jesus Christ, the perfect and complete Savior. Now, thirdly, it shows us how to live in thankfulness for that great salvation.

There are especially two parts to our thankful living. Firstly, we respond to being saved by a willing obedience to God's commandments, and secondly, we respond to God's grace by a life of prayer, of constant communion with God.

Are you thankful for your salvation? Then you will not only show that by being a person of prayer, but also by being concerned to obey the Lord. A person who says he is a Christian, but does not pray, and is not concerned about how he lives, is not a true Christian.

The introduction to the law in Exodus 20:1-2 tells us how we should understand the law. Some see the law as the way to being accepted by God – if man will just try really hard to be obedient and to be as good as he can be, God will spare him. Others say the law is irrelevant, that because of grace, the law has no significance in the Christian life.

But, when God gave the law to Israel, he introduced it this way, "I am Jehovah, your God, who has saved you" and because of that, "Thou shalt not ..." God announced the law after He had delivered Israel by a great wonder from the land of Egypt. They were not saved from Egypt by their own obedience, but by the grace of God. God then gave them the law to teach them how to live as His saved people.

The law functions the same way for us. It is not the road-map or way to salvation, but it is the road-map for living as those who are saved. We are not saved because we obey, but we are saved to obey.

The true believer finds in himself a desire to live according to all the commandments of God. This is a part of his salvation; freedom from the dominion of sin, and freedom to serve the Lord.

Do you find that desire in you? The desire out of joy and gratitude to obey? That is an evidence of the reality that God has truly saved you.

**August 21 – LD 34, Day 2: The Completeness of the Law**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: Psalm 119:97-112

We commonly speak of the two parts of the law of God; the first four commandments which contain our duty towards God, and the last six commandments that speak of our duty towards our neighbor. We often refer to this as the “two tables” of the law, for God wrote with His finger on two stones the original copy of the Ten Commandments.

More important than recognizing the division of the law, is seeing its completeness. There are ten commandments. Ten, in the Scripture, is the important number of completeness and fullness. The Ten Commandments are a statement of the entire will of God for man. This does not mean that all the other commands or statements of what God expects of us in Scripture are not important. Rather, all of them fall under the scope of these Ten. Everything God requires of us is summed up in these Ten Commandments.

In the gospels, Jesus gives us an even more succinct, and deeper, summary of the law. In Matt 22:37-39, he gives us two commandments, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Jesus shows us the depth of the law, that obedience requires the whole man, not just what he does, but also his heart, mind and will. Jesus also shows us that the law has to do with relationships; our relationship to God and our relationship to our fellow man. We are created to be creatures of covenant, of fellowship. The law shows us how we are to live, in covenant with God, and in covenant with each other.

God's law is perfect – it shows us the perfection of God, and gives us the complete summary of what God requires of man.

God's law is permanent – Jesus says that He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill and to establish it (Matt 5:17, Rom 3:31).

God's law is powerful – it convicts and converts sinners (Psa 19:7). It is the schoolmaster which leads us to Christ (Gal 3:24).

God's law is precious. The Psalmist exclaims, “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psa 119:97).

Do you love the law of God?

**August 22 – LD 34, Day 3: The Only God**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: Isaiah 40:12-31

The first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” tells us whom we are to serve and worship. This commandment is the foundation for all the other commandments. The law begins with God. He is first, and must be first in our hearts and lives. All obedience begins with recognizing Jehovah as God alone, and knowing, loving, and worshiping Him alone.

In this first commandment, Jehovah, the God of the Bible, tells us that he is God alone, alone in majesty, power, might and dignity as God, and that there is no god besides him. This is the message of the Word of God, and the confession of all true Christians.

After Israel was delivered from the Egyptians, they exclaimed, “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Exo 15:11). In Deut 32:39, Jehovah says, “See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.”

The prophets proclaim Jehovah as God alone. Elijah's great contest on Mt. Carmel, shows that “Jehovah, He is the God! Jehovah, He is the God!” (1 Kings 18:39). Jehovah speaks through Isaiah and proclaims, “I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior.” (Isa 43:10-11).

The New Testament speaks of “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph 4:6) and states that “there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim 2:5) “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Tim 1:17).

This means that all other gods are untrue, but simply the product of human imagination. “We know that an idol is nothing in this world, and that there is none other God but one.” (1 Cor 8:4). Baal, Zeus, Allah, Buddha, etc. are non-existent. They are not real. Yes, their images are real, and the idol worship of them is real, but they are “the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.” (Psalm 115:4-7).

“But our God is in the heavens.” (Psalm 115:3). The living, true, real, almighty, infinite, eternal, immutable, all wise, omnipotent, holy, just, only God. The creator of the ends of the earth.

We do well to meditate on the exclusive claims of God, and to humble ourselves before Him.

**August 23 – LD 34, Day 4: Exclusive Worship**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: Jeremiah 17:1-18

Idolatry is to have some other object of trust or worship instead of, or along with, the One True God who has revealed Himself in the Scripture.

If Jehovah is God alone, why does He bother Himself and us with the problem of idolatry?

There are several reasons. First, because he is God alone, He has the right to demand the exclusive worship of all mankind, and to be jealous for the honor of His own name (Exo 34:14). This is a perfectly reasonable expectation. How wrong of us not to give Him the honor that is His due.

Second, God concerns Himself with idolatry because man's sinful heart loves to invent false gods to take the place of the True God. Man in his sinfulness wants an escape from God, wants a God who is permissive, who will let him be in his sin, but will be there when he's in trouble. In this commandment, God addresses man's fundamental problem, and puts before him his basic calling and purpose. On the one hand, man's problem is selfishness; he wants to serve self, and he wants the world to be ordered to his advantage, while, on the other hand, man's reason for existence is to bring glory to God.

Third, even though these gods are false, they have the power to enslave man's heart. When a man puts his confidence in a creature, Satan is busy, attempting to steal that person's allegiance from God to himself. Ultimately, all those who do not worship the true God of the Scriptures are giving their allegiance and worship to the devil. 1 Cor 10:20 tells us that the things offered to idols are "sacrifice[d] to devils, and not to God".

The first commandment establishes Christianity as an either-or, not a both-and religion. When it comes to religion and worship of God, there is no middle ground. There can be no synthesis of Christianity and the other religions. When Jesus told his disciples, "No man can serve two masters" and "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt 6:24), He was simply reminding them of the first commandment.

Worshipping Jehovah is like a marriage. When you marry a woman, you do it to the exclusion of all other women. You do not say to your wife, "Here is my other lover, I'd like you to meet her so that you can become friends." Your wife will say, "It's me or her, you pick," and no one would fault her for that. "Forsaking all others" we cleave to one another in marriage. The same is true in our relationship to God. He is jealous of our love.

**August 24 – LD 34, Day 5: What is Worship?**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: Proverbs 3:1-10

The catechism gives us a list of verbs as a description of worship. Each of these is worthy of our attention. Do you truly worship God alone? Worship is not limited to what you do in a church service. It involves your whole life. This is what worship is.

First, to worship God is to know Him, to have a right and proper knowledge of Him. This knowledge must come from the Bible. Only from the Scriptures can we know God. God is not who we feel or think He might be. He is not some abstract unknown idea. He is not to be discovered by science or reason. To know God, is to know Him as He has revealed Himself in the Word and by His Son (John 17:3).

Second, to worship God is to trust in Him. Perhaps this is the real test of whether one worships the true God. From day to day, are we trusting in the Lord, or leaning on our own understanding (Prov 3:5-6)? What gives us security as we go through life? Is it ourselves, our friends, our money, our job, our family, our education, our insurance policies, etc? God is almighty, faithful, true and trustworthy. He keeps His promises. He will never fail His people.

Third, to worship God is to submit to him with humility and patience. This means not only that we must obey Him, but especially that we must submit to the providence of God in our lives. Life can be very difficult, and God's people can be put through some very severe trials such as persecution, grief, sickness, poverty, anxiety, etc. These are real experiences. But God sends them. With humility, we recognize we don't deserve better. With patience, we trust that God knows what is best for us.

Fourth, to worship God is to expect all good things from God only. On what do you pin your hopes? In what do you find joy and solace in life? "Rejoice in the Lord, always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil 4:4). Our God is the God of goodness and blessing, the fountain of life. We must look to him, and not to any creature, for true happiness both for this life and the next.

Fifth, to worship God is to love Him. Our love for God should be total - "With all your heart, mind, soul and strength." Every ounce of your strength, and every part of your being, must be used to love God. This love should be willing, sacrificial, dedicated and single. We must be consumed, intoxicated, with God.

Sixth, to worship God is to fear Him. To fear the Lord is to have a constant consciousness of who He is, in all His heavenly majesty, and to know who we are before Him. John Calvin said that this is all we really need to know, God and ourselves. The one who fears the Lord is directed in every action, thought and word by the awareness of God. He lives before the Lord.

Seventh, to worship God is to glorify him. To glorify God is to put Him first, and to see that He gets the recognition in everything we do. We are not here for ourselves, but God made us for Himself. How easily we forget this and live for our own reputation or pleasure. But, "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom 11:36).

And eighth, to worship God is to obey him, "to renounce and forsake all creatures, rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will." The least thing – if we truly worship God, we will be concerned to obey him meticulously.

Pray that God may give you a heart and life of true worship.

**August 25 – LD 34, Day 6: Modern Idolatry**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: Philippians 3:7-21

Idolatry is defined in the catechism as putting your trust in some object other than God.

Historically, and externally, when we think of idolatry, we think of the worship of personal gods and goddesses. Every group of people in history has had gods like this (think of the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Greeks, the Romans, etc.). This form of idolatry also includes such things as sorcery, superstition and prayers to the spirits of the dead.

But in the modern world, a world of science and technology, a material and comfortable world, man seems to have advanced beyond trusting in such unknown, invented, spiritual deities. Man, today, seems to know better than to have all these gods. Man looks at the gods of Greek mythology, and laughs at them.

Regardless, every person has his gods. Man was created a religious being, a creature who has an innate need for a being greater than himself, on whom he can depend. Man will look for security outside of himself.

And so, today, man's idols are mental and material. As such, they are no different than the gods of the ancient religions.

By "mental", I mean that man comes up with his theories and philosophies, attempting to explain this world apart from the True God revealed in the Scriptures, and leading man in the end to ignore the spiritual and focus on the physical world, especially himself and his happiness in this world.

Atheism, very popular today, says there is no personal God or spiritual realm and that the world is simply material and physical. The emphasis in education falls then, on the physical sciences, on what can be discovered by research.

Agnosticism will admit that perhaps there is a God and a spiritual realm, but says that this is irrelevant and that God cannot be found anyway.

Pantheism says that this entire world is god, that he is the spirit that fills the universe, just as you have a spirit in your body. Trees, birds, the sun, men and all things are parts of god. God is not a distinct separate being from this creation.

Humanism says that man is the ultimate end of all things, and that man is free to do as he pleases in this world. The ultimate goal of man's existence is his own freedom and happiness. Humanism is the philosophy behind education and government in the modern day.

Materialism, or worldliness, is another denial of God. The opposite to godliness, it is godlessness, living "without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). People will put money, fame, family, pleasure, all things related to their earthly life first, living only for a sense of fulfillment in some aspect of life here on earth.

So many today have these mental and material gods for their idol. They may not even know the words, "atheism, pantheism, humanism, etc." but these philosophies have influenced the whole human race.

We need to see that the reason for these gods is that man in his heart does not want to serve God, but wants, instead, to live for himself. This is true for each of us too. Very easily, we create idols in our own hearts, objects of worship, goals, things on which we trust, that have nothing to do with God. We pursue these gods, putting them before spiritual interests, and as a result suffer spiritually.

Oh may God give to us hearts of true devotion to him!

**August 26 – LD 34, Day 7: One God and Savior**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read: John 14:1-13

Judaism is a monotheistic religion which claims to worship the God of the Bible. But this is not true, because they deny Jesus Christ, who is the revelation of the Father.

The first commandment tells us not only that there is only one God, but also that there is only one Savior and one way of salvation. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, is the only Savior. The only way of salvation is through faith in him.

Scripture tells us that God is jealous of his worship. Isa 42:8, “I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” Yet at the same time, the Bible says of Jesus, in Heb 1:6, “let all the angels of God worship Him.” If we follow simple logic, our conclusion must be, “Christ is worthy of worship because he is God.”

It is in that light that we must read this first commandment. To worship God is to believe in Him. Jesus says, “ye believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1). Thomas says to Jesus, “My LORD and my God” (John 20:28). It is by believing in Jesus Christ that we worship the true God. We believe in Jesus for salvation from sin. We trust in Him alone, and none else for our forgiveness and righteousness. As we do this, we worship God alone, and we put aside all idolatry.

The catechism makes this connection when it says that in keeping the first commandment we “renounce and forsake all creatures” and that each of us does this “as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul.” Believing on Jesus Christ means fleeing all idolatry, not trusting any other creature, and placing all our confidence in Jehovah God as he has revealed Himself in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Do you do that? Do you believe in Jesus Christ alone for salvation? Are you trusting yourself or something else other than Christ for your acceptance with God? God says, “Worship me alone!” Jesus says, “Believe on me, as the only way to the Father.”

May the Lord give us this true faith!

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 35

**Question 96.** What doth God require in the second commandment?

*Answer.* That we in no wise represent God by images[\[a\]](#), nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in his word. [\[b\]](#)

**Question 97.** Are images then not at all to be made?

*Answer.* God neither can nor may be represented by any means. [\[c\]](#) But as to creatures, though they may be represented, yet God forbids to make or have any resemblance of them either in order to worship them or to serve God by them. [\[d\]](#)

**Question 98.** But may not images be tolerated in the churches, as books to the laity?

*Answer.* No; for we must not pretend to be wiser than God, who will have His people taught, not by dumb images[\[e\]](#), but by the lively preaching of His word. [\[f\]](#)

[a]: [Deut. 4:15](#); [Isa. 40:18](#); [Rom. 1:23ff](#); [Acts 17:29](#)

[b]: [1Sam. 15:23](#); [Deut. 12:30](#)

[c]: [Deut. 4:15,16](#); [Isa. 46:5](#); [Rom. 1:23](#)

[d]: [Ex. 23:24](#); [Ex. 34:13,14](#); [Numb. 33:52](#); [Deut. 7:5](#)

[e]: [2Tim. 3:16](#); [2Pet. 1:19](#)

[f]: [Jer. 10:1ff](#); [Hab. 2:18,19](#)

**August 27 – LD 35, Day 1: The Sin of Image Worship**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read Exodus 32:1-19

In the first commandment, we learned that God alone must be worshiped. We must not imagine that there are other gods besides him, and we may not worship them. All our trust for salvation must be in Jehovah alone.

Now, the second commandment adds to that by telling us how we should worship Jehovah. God not only tells us that He is the only God to be worshiped, but He also tells us how we ought to worship Him.

The sin of the second commandment is image worship. In image worship, people create an image, which they say is a representation of the true God. They then say that by worshipping this image, they are worshipping the true God. In making an image, there is an attempt to bring God down to man's level, to a position where He can be perceived with the senses and understood with the mind; where He is not so majestic and transcendent, but where He is tangible, and where He can be understood in our terms and on our terms.

When Israel, with Aaron, built the golden calf at Mt. Sinai, they were guilty of the sin against the Second Commandment. They attempted to set up an image as an object of worship that would help them to think about and be able to relate to Jehovah. This was the same sin that Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom, committed when he built golden calves at Dan and Bethel and told the people that, rather than going to the temple at Jerusalem to worship Jehovah, they could come and worship these images.

Image worship is "will-worship." It is worship of God which stems from man's own desires. Man dictates to God the terms on which he will worship Him. Man does this because it is the easy way to worship God. The true worship of God is difficult work for man. Not only is God not material, but he is majestic, transcendent, heavenly, holy and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Man is a sinner. How much easier to bring God down to his level, than to have to worship God as He is.

This explains why Israel worshiped God with the golden calf. They had heard God's voice thundering from the mountain, and said to Moses, "You speak with God, and then tell us what He has to say." Then, when Moses was gone, they attempted to bring God down to a tangible, physical, visible, comfortable level.

Today, many churches worship God in much the same way. They want their worship to be palatable to man. They cater to what they think the audience might like. They are "seeker sensitive." In all this, what God says about how He ought to be worshiped is ignored, and man dictates to God the mode of worship.

In our worship of God in the church, we must be very careful to worship Him only as He has commanded in His Word.

**August 28 – LD 35, Day 2: God is Spirit**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read John 4:1-26

In the Old Testament, the worship of God was accompanied by many types and external rituals. This was not because God was different then, but because Israel did not yet have the full revelation of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. All the rituals and external rituals in the Old Testament were not in themselves, objects of worship, but only types and shadows to point the people of God forward to the promised Messiah. Now Jesus has come, and concerning how we are to worship God in the New Testament era, He said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)

That God is a spirit means that He is invisible. God is invisible because He is more glorious than we would ever be able to take in with our human eyes. Just as our human eyes cannot look directly at the sun, so no man can see the glory of God and live (1 Tim 6:16). The most we will ever see of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ, in whom we can see the glory of the one who is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Firstly, because God is a Spirit, He cannot be worshiped with images of any kind, either images of wood and stone, or images of him that are formed in the heart of man. God is not like anything that man can imagine. Every false doctrine, then, is an image of God: it is a creation in the mind of man of a god who is different from the God revealed in the Scriptures. All of us are guilty of this at different times; when we think that God does not see our sin, when we think that God does not know our problems, when we think that God is too weak and distant to help us – then we have created an image of God in our mind that does not represent who God really is.

That God is a Spirit means, secondly, that he must be worshiped in a spiritual manner. This means that we must worship Him from our hearts and not merely by outward rituals or practices. How easy it is to go through the motions of worship – prayer, singing, listening to the Word, giving – without ever consciously lifting our hearts on high in faith to God in His Son Jesus Christ. How easy to worship God "correctly" so that others will see it and accept us. But God demands that our worship of him be spiritual.

Let us pray that God will bring our hearts, minds, spirits and souls to understand who He is, that we may truly worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

**August 29 – LD 35, Day 3: The Regulative Principle of Worship**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read Psalm 27

The modern church is extremely permissive in its worship of God. In the last couple of decades, many inventions have been introduced into the worship services of “Christian” churches that were never dreamed of before. The modern church says that you may worship God as you please, so long as it is an expression of who you are.

In history, some churches have said that if something is not expressly forbidden in Scripture, then it is acceptable in worship. The Reformed churches, however, have insisted from the time of the Reformation that if something is not expressly commanded in Scripture as a part of worship, it is forbidden. This is called the regulative principle of worship, and is stated more clearly in the Heidelberg Catechism than, perhaps, in any other Reformed creed. The Catechism says that the Second Commandment requires “that we in no wise ... worship (God) in any other way than He has commanded in His Word.” This means that God’s Word should regulate and stipulate every aspect of our worship.

This is what Jesus means, in John 4, when He says that the Father receives such as worship Him in “truth.” Truth is that which God has revealed in His Word. The truth must not only be the content of our worship, but it must also be the rule for our worship. The Scriptures not only regulate what we teach in worship, but also what we do and how we do it.

Because of this, the Reformed churches have carefully followed a liturgy, or form for worship, which includes only those elements that God’s Word has expressly commanded. From the Scriptures, the elements of worship are prayers, singing, giving, reading and hearing of the Word. Central to worship is the preaching and hearing of God’s Word.

Preaching is central because of what worship is. Worship is not simply man bringing something to God, but worship is firstly, God coming and speaking to us. The whole worship service is a holy conversation between God and His saved people. During worship, God speaks to us and then we respond with praise to Him. God’s speech is primary, and that’s why preaching must be central. During worship, we respond to God in song, prayer and confession, the things that He has first revealed to us. Worship is God condescending to speak to us, and we responding to Him. Psalm 27:8 puts it this way, “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”

What a wonder, a miracle of grace, worship is. We are sinners, and, God almighty and holy, condescends to speak to us. How glad and ready we should be to worship Him as He commands.

**August 30 – LD 35, Day 4: The Preaching of the Gospel**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read Romans 10:8-31

The way that God tells the church to teach His people is the lively preaching of the gospel. We should not pretend to be wiser than God and come up with other methods. Then we are assuming that God can't get His job done with preaching.

During the time of the Reformation, the argument presented by the Roman Catholics was, "We need the images as books to the laity." The laity are the general church members, and Rome thought it was necessary to have these images as a point of contact or reference to God, especially since most of the people could not read. The reformers responded by saying simply, "Then we must teach them."

Faith for the Christian comes by hearing (Romans 10:13-15). Our goal in worship is not to impress or entertain the senses, but to edify and educate the people of God by teaching them from the Scriptures. Jesus, in the great commission, commands the church to "Go, teach all nations" till the end of time. This is what we must do. The preaching of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes.

Today, the argument is given that people have short attention spans, and that they communicate differently, so we need to communicate differently to them. And so we have what's called "contemporary worship," which is largely a display of the artistic talent of different people in order to entertain. We must not capitulate to this urge to modernize. God's method is tried and true. The emptying out of large churches that have no substance, is proof that these new methods are not fruitful. God has commanded the gospel to be preached by preachers, not pictured by artists.

It's important for us, as individuals, to find a church that worships the Lord properly and preaches His Word faithfully. We need this for our own salvation.

**August 31 – LD 35, Day 5: The Jealousy of God**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read Leviticus 10:1-11

One of the reasons that God gives for not worshiping Him with graven images is that He is a jealous God. God's jealousy is displayed in the deaths of Nadab and Abihu who offered strange (or different from what God had commanded) fire before the Lord. God expresses this in Isaiah 42:8, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

When I was a child, I didn't think this was right. We were taught not to be jealous of others, and that jealousy was a form of selfishness. How, then, can God be called a "jealous God?" Wouldn't that make Him sinful and selfish?

But, if you understand properly who God is, it's perfectly legitimate that He be jealous, and in His jealousy, God is not selfish. In fact, God demands exclusive worship and commands how we worship Him, exactly because He is such a gracious and giving God. He has made us and all things, and gives to us so much to enjoy. He has given us His own dear Son as a Savior. Since He has made us, and given us all these things, doesn't He have the right to ask of us our worship? He's a benevolent God, and we owe to him an eternal debt of gratitude.

It would be like a parent giving five dollars to a child, and then telling the child, "You may not spend it all on sweets. Only two dollars may be spent on sweets." Doesn't the parent, as the giver, have this right over the child's spending? So God has the rights over our worship.

Not only is God jealous for His own name, but God is jealous of His people's love. No moral man would share his wife with another. No, he is jealous of her love. God describes His relationship to His people as a marriage relationship. The church is His bride. Because of this; because God has purchased His bride to be His own, He is jealous over her.

God's jealousy also means that He protects His people. In His jealousy over them, He guards them against their enemies and keeps them safe. Because God is jealous of us, we can be sure that He will keep us safe from spiritual dangers and will preserve us to the end.

We ought to be jealous for God. If we are, we will want Him to be worshiped just as He has commanded.

**September 1 – LD 35, Day 6: Private Worship of God**  
**by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read Deuteronomy 6

Even though the Second Commandment is especially about the public worship of God, in and by the church, this does not exclude the private worship of God by individual believers. We know that the second commandment also addresses private worship because image worship begins in the heart and imaginations of man. It is firstly a private sin. For our worship of God to be in Spirit, and in truth, it must also be a private matter.

Yes, the Second Commandment is fulfilled by God's covenant people when they come together for public worship. Too many people today think that this is not necessary, and think that they can worship God on their own or with their family, and they never join with other believers. But Heb 10:25 admonishes us not to forsake the gathering of ourselves together.

All the same, there is a private aspect to our worship of God. This begins with the individual Christian living and walking with God in prayer, in the private reading of God's Word, in personal study of Christian and theological materials, and in a deep and constant consciousness of living before the Lord, and serving Him with thankfulness for His salvation.

This extends to the believer's home and family life too. In the home, believing husbands and wives, believing parents and children, believing brothers and sisters open the Word of God together and spend time in prayer together. Deut 6:7 describes this as a constant, almost habitual part of the life of the Christian home - "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt 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."

It's important that we do not become "church-dependent". Then we leave all study of the Word to the minister and church. Our religious activity, because we are so busy, becomes limited to church activities. In the end, we depend on an institution, rather than on God Himself.

If one has a truly robust personal walk with God, then he will not be "church-dependent," but rather, he will be a true contributor to the worship and life of the church.

**September 2 – LD 35, Day 7: The Promise of the Second Commandment  
by Rev Rodney Kleyn**

Read Psalm 89:20-37

Attached to the Second Commandment are a threat and a promise. Both of them mention the future generations.

To those who will not worship God as He commands, He says that He will “visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” It is striking that God attaches this to the Second Commandment. We might think that the sins of adultery, murder or theft are the ones that will really have consequences in the lives of children. But God says that those who do not worship Him correctly bring the worst consequences on their children. It is the breaking of this commandment especially that has spiritual consequences for children.

This is evident from the Scriptures. Just think of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. It was because of Jeroboam's sin of setting up the golden calves, that Israel went into a downward spiral and became apostate. Never again did they have a good king, and never as a nation did they return again to the proper worship of God. We can see the same thing happening in our day too. In places where the gospel was once faithfully preached, because worship has deteriorated, new generations have risen up that are not interested in worshiping God at all. How sad this is! It should make us take the proper worship of God very seriously.

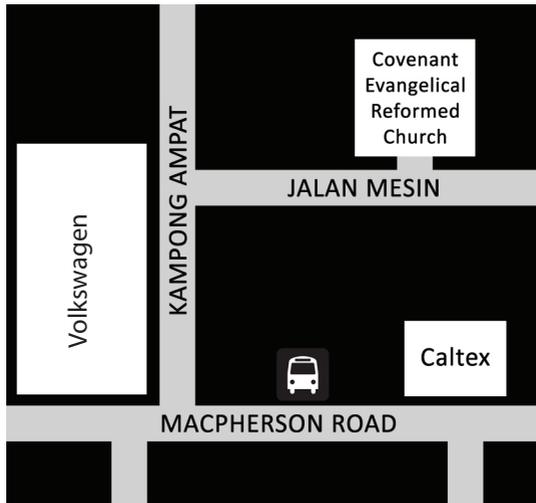
God promises to show covenant mercies to those who keep this commandment in their generations. There is no greater heart-ache than to see children and grandchildren go astray. There is also no greater joy than to see our children with us, walking in the truth, worshiping God with us, hearing and believing the true preaching, and loving to live out of the Word. God will use our faithfulness in worship as a means to preserve our children with us. Today, many churches try to cater to the young in order to keep them in the church. It doesn't work. What works is the faithful preaching of the Word.

We also keep this commandment for the sake of our children and the church of tomorrow. May all who come behind us find us faithful.



## COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

PLACE OF WORSHIP  
11 Jalan Mesin #04-00  
Standard Industrial Building



### Public Transport:

Buses 8, 62, 62A, 90, 151

10 min walk from Tai Seng MRT Station (CC11)

(Take Harper Road exit, walk to Mactagart Road, turn left to Kampong Ampat and left again to Jalan Mesin)

### TIME OF WORSHIP

Every Sunday

9.30 – 11.00 am

2.00 – 3.00 pm

[www.cerc.org.sg](http://www.cerc.org.sg)

Published by Christian Literature Ministry, CERC

cover photograph from rawpixels.ca