

I am persuaded that love and humility are the highest attainments in the school of Christ, and the brightest evidences that He is indeed our Master. –John Newton

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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54. Q. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything 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 shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Ex. 20:4, 5, 6).

55. Q. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word (Deut. 32:46; Mt. 23:20; Acts 2:42).

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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A DAILY PRAYER

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:12-14).

The first six verses of this Psalm address the testimony of creation as to the glory of God. It is not merely that creation exists, and we are observers thereof; it is that “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” This testimony is universally heard. The day utters speech, and the night shows knowledge. Not only is the glory of God declared, but also is His faithfulness set forth as we are made to behold the order that He has set in place and that continues to this day. The sun itself sets forth the picture of the omnipresence of God – “there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

We note in verses 7-11 the value that is placed on the Word of God. This Word we would see brought to fruition in the life of all true believers as these precepts are applied by the Holy Spirit in bringing the very person and character of Christ to live in them. We consider then, *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. (Psalms 19:7-9).* The next two verses express the valuation placed upon these things as being most precious and as serving as a warning and bringing great reward.

Thus, we are brought to consider the infinite depths to which we are taken in consideration of them.

The desire for these things looks to both the source, as being from the Lord, and the benefits in us as redounding to His glory. How then shall we maintain the way before us and how shall we be assured in these things? We would then look to David’s prayer and so endeavor to claim it as our own. These things which are mandated by the Lord are attended by the grace needed to realize them in our life and testimony. The very nature of the prayer indicates our need. As we would look for words with which to approach our God and our Father, we could not do better than the very words of the Scriptures. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. (John 17:8).*

The question here is, in fact, the answer. There is none able to plumb the depths of sin. Men tend to classify sins as greater or lesser. We are reminded of David’s words in Psalm 51, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.” In looking to sins as opposed to sin and sinfulness men err as to the effects of the fall and the depravity that has come as a result. All that men do is tainted by sin and so considered as “filthy rags.” David

senses this and indicates knowledge of his own depravity and the need for cleansing. The matter of “secret faults” is not that of things kept secret from the world or even a matter of rationalization within us. These are rather things that we are not capable of sensing and therefore must be dealt with by the Lord. These things are there, and they are sin whether we know it or not.

From secret sin, David moves on to a realization that many fail to realize. Presumptuous sins are those that are willful; with rebellion against the divine authority and so, presume upon the grace of God. David recognized the potential of sin’s dominion over us in a way similar to that in the unregenerate. The unsaved do not know their danger; David knew of his own weakness and prayed to be kept from it. Left to ourselves, we would easily give place – “neither give place to the devil.” The plea is to the Lord to be kept from them. He would have his countenance to be that emanating from a regenerate heart. And he would be innocent from the “great transgression.” Some here suggest that he may have referred to some sin of great magnitude and consequence. Or perhaps he was thinking of a multitude of sins. It seems rather that if sin were left unchecked it would indicate the absence of grace and final banishment – assurance comes with heartfelt obedience and worship toward the Lord.

David then prays for the most desired way for himself. He begins with speech and communication and the desire that it not be vain or corrupt; rather that which ministers

grace to the hearer. Paul wrote the Ephesians, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29)*. The meditations of the heart are those inward thoughts that circulate through the mind when no one is around. David prayed that these be directed by the Word of God so that prayer, praise, and worship are forthcoming. This is not of the sort which would engender religious pride, but that in which true union and communion with the Lord are sensed and enjoyed. Acceptance with God means having the “image and superscription” of Christ stamped clearly upon it. The need for acceptance with God is felt in all who behold His glory and sense the necessity of His presence. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (Hebrews 12:28)*.

All this is in full dependence and accountability before the Lord sensing that He is our strength (our Rock), and our Redeemer. The whole aim of redemption is that all that concerns us be manifested in the righteousness of God produced in us. This was the aim of our Redeemer in going to the cross. He would have us to be in every way acceptable in His sight. We would over and over again pray that we might be given to adoring Him, to confess both sin and sinfulness as did David, to render true thanksgiving in the realization of all that He is and has done, and so, to seek the grace of God on the behalf of others. O that we might evermore be acceptable in His sight. *bhs*

Edmund P. Clowney wrote, “The Bible does not present an art of prayer; it presents the God of prayer.” We should not decide how to pray based on the experiences and feelings we want. Instead, we should do everything possible to behold our God as he is, and prayer will follow. The more clearly we grasp who God is, the more our prayer is shaped and determined accordingly. –Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy With God*

It's Not a Life of Ease

You can't read the New Testament and fail to understand that the Christian life was never meant to be a life of ease. Each of us will encounter adversity and adversaries, and each of us will have to wage war against our fearsome foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Then, each of us will also have to labor to come to know God and to grow in our likeness to God.

For all these reasons, the Christian life demands a disciplined approach. The apostle Paul often compared Christians to athletes who must train diligently to have any hope of victory. "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things," he said. "They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control" (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).

The only way to win the match or to be victorious in the race is to discipline your whole life toward that podium, toward that gold medal. Similarly, the only way to prevail in the Christian life is to discipline your entire existence toward Christlikeness. Donald Whitney speaks for all of us when he says, "In my own pastoral and personal Christian experience, I can say that I've never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline. Godliness comes through discipline." —Tim Challies, *BLOG June 9, 2024*

Isaac Watts as He Was Dying

He had written of death as sleep and the desirability of it in his book *The World to Come: Why, O my fearful soul, should thou be afraid of dying? Why should thou be frightened at the dark shadows of the grave, when thou art weary with the toils and crosses of the day? Hast thou not often desired the shadow of the evening and longed for the bed of natural sleep, where thy fatigues and thy sorrows may be forgotten for a season? And is not the grave itself a sweet sleeping place for the saints, wherein they lie down and forget their distresses, and feel one of the miseries of human life, and especially since it is softened and sanctified by the Son of God lying down there? Why should thou be afraid to lay thy head in the dust? It is but entering into God's hiding place, into his chambers of rest and repose.*

—Graham Beynon, *Isaac Watts*

Why, then, do we pray? Because prayer is God's ordained method for glorifying Himself by meeting our needs so that we can do His will and His work. "You do not have because you do not ask God" (James 4:2). The same God who ordains the end also ordains the means to the end, and prayer is an important part of that means. When God wants to accomplish something, He raises up a man or a woman, or perhaps a group of believers, to pray about that very matter, and through their prayers He accomplishes His work. —Warren Weirsbe, *Prayer 101*