

Outline - Lesson 3 |



OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What are two things you can do to ride out the rough waters in a relationship?

What are two beneficial things you can do for yourself when a relationship ends?

Describe three things you could do to make a good relationship better.

Give me two reasons why marriage is worth the effort.

LESSON OVERVIEW

In our last lesson, we completed our discussion of the Sixth Commandment as we talked about getting through rough waters, picking up the pieces, how to make a good relationship better, and some basic information about marriage. Today, we move ahead to the Seventh and Eighth Commandments as we discuss how we have turned God's blessings into curses, how to unwrap the gifts God has given, how to be caretakers of His gifts, and how to protect our reputation and the reputation of others.

LESSON

The Seventh Commandment turns our focus to our possessions. Not only does God give us marriage as a blessing, He also gives us all our "stuff" with the intention of it being a blessing.

Yet, as we look around, we see possessions becoming more of a curse than a blessing. That may sound like a strange statement, yet it is an accurate statement. What God intended as a blessing, we have frequently turned into a curse.

Turn to page 173 in your Handouts as we learn how we have turned God's blessings into curses.

Turning Blessings

Write the word “yes” on the line in front of the true statements regarding possessions.

- _____ 1. Possessions become curses because people are never satisfied with what they have.
- _____ 2. Our gift of possessions is no longer a gift because we are selfish and think only of ourselves.
- _____ 3. Possessions become curses instead of blessings because we value them more than we value our God.
- _____ 4. What I have becomes a curse when it causes me to become greedy.
- _____ 5. Possessions become curses because our world has convinced us that we must have more to be somebody.
- _____ 6. Never being content with what we have is a major reason why our possessions turn into curses.
- _____ 7. Possessions become curses because we believe we need what someone else has to be happy.
- _____ 8. God’s gift of possessions turns into a curse because we believe we deserve more than we have.
- _____ 9. We turn blessings into curses when we chase after more “stuff”
- _____ 10. Possessions become curses when we fail to do our part to help others protect their possessions.
- _____ 11. Possessions turn into curses when we carry a chip on our shoulder because someone else has more than we have.
- _____ 12. What we have becomes a curse when it leads us to trust in ourselves instead of relying on God to provide all we need.
- _____ 13. If our possessions simply create a desire for more possessions, our possessions will quickly become curses.
- _____ 14. When we fail to treat our possessions as gifts, it would be better if we had fewer possessions.
- _____ 15. Blessings become curses because people believe they can’t have less and still be happy.

Typically, when we think of the Seventh Commandment, we think nothing of gifts, only about the issue of not stealing. Yet, this principle encourages us to treat our

possessions as gifts from God, as blessings given graciously and freely by our loving God to His undeserving people.

How, then, do we treat our possessions as gifts? How do we unwrap our blessings instead of breaking the heart of our God?

Turn to the next page in your Handouts.

Unwrapping Gifts

We all know how to unwrap a birthday or Christmas gift. Which statements below indicate a way you can unwrap the gift of possessions? Draw a triangle next to each true statement.

1. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by being content with what I have.
2. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by thanking God as He provides each gift.
3. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by refusing to believe my possessions are something I earned.
4. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by appreciating all the gifts God provides.
5. I learn to treat my possessions as gifts by making the most of each day convinced God will provide what I need for the day.
6. I treat my possessions as gifts by not allowing what my friend has to change how I view my gifts.
7. I treat my possessions as gifts by viewing each gift as God's greatest gift and giving Him the praise He deserves for each gift.
8. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by beginning my day thanking God in advance for all He is going to provide.
9. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by keeping a positive outlook even when others seem to have more than I do.
10. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by asking God to keep me from being selfish as each new day arrives.
11. I treat my possessions as gifts by choosing to share what I have knowing God will supply all I need.
12. I treat my possessions as gifts by using my possessions to honor God instead of honoring myself.
13. I treat my possessions as gifts by secretly wishing I had more, but on the outside appearing as if I am content.

14. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by celebrating each gift as God provides it.
15. I unwrap my possessions as gifts by viewing all of life as a gift to be used to give God praise and honor.

Possessions are gifts meant to be unwrapped, gifts given by our gracious God to undeserving people. Every day, God waits for us to recognize our possessions as gifts and to celebrate His gifts by giving Him our thanks and praise.

In order to view our possessions as gifts, we also need to be good stewards, good caretakers of all God's gifts. Those gifts include our intangible gifts, those gifts that have great value yet cannot be purchased.

Since we are to be caretakers of God's creation according to the Seventh Commandment, turn to page 175 in your Handouts.

(Break the class into 3 groups. Each group will be responsible for one of these 3 topics: creation, money & possessions, gifts and talents.)

(Assign one topic to each group and have them write the name of their topic on the line next to "area" in their Handouts.)

Here is what you need to do in your group. Your task is to come up with ten different ways you can function as a good steward, a good caretaker of your particular area.

Occupation - Caretaker

Area: _____

Ten ways I can be a Caretaker:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

9. _____
10. _____

Now that your group has your list completed, let's discuss what you came up with.

(As you look at each area and their responses, ask, "How can doing that enable you to be a caretaker of God's gifts?")

Let's move into the Eighth Commandment where God speaks to us about reputations.

Like our possessions, our reputation is a gift from God. We don't create it or earn it. God offers it as a gift He intends us to protect. But how do we protect the gift of our reputation?

Turn to page 176 in your Handouts.

Protecting our Gift

Write the word "yes" on the line in front of each statement that offers a way you can protect your reputation.

- _____ 1. Be careful about what I do among friends so there is no reason for them to think less of me
- _____ 2. Watch my behavior in public so others don't misinterpret my actions in a negative way
- _____ 3. Don't give others a reason to create a rumor about me
- _____ 4. Demonstrate care, respect, and integrity wherever I may be
- _____ 5. Don't belittle or run down someone else lest people think less of me
- _____ 6. Choose a positive outlook on life even when things are tough
- _____ 7. Offer my friends kindness in the hope that they will offer the same in return
- _____ 8. Place high value on my life every day and treat it as a gift from God
- _____ 9. Choose my friends wisely so they are not prone to speak negatively about me
- _____ 10. Choose to offer acts of kindness to others just because my heart tells me to do so

- _____ 11. Refuse to spread a rumor I may hear about someone else
- _____ 12. View my reputation as a very precious gift that needs to be protected at all times
- _____ 13. Choose to think unkind thoughts about others, but make sure I don't speak about what I am thinking
- _____ 14. Do not allow someone else to treat me as a doormat to be walked on whenever they choose
- _____ 15. Be prepared to explain my actions in an appropriate way so that others understand my reasons and motivation

Although this basic principle speaks primarily about protecting the reputations of others, we need to protect our reputation because, as we do, we are more prepared and motivated to protect the reputations of others.

Aware that we have a responsibility to protect the reputation of others, we need to consider how we can best protect someone else's reputation and fulfill this basic principle.

Turn to page 177 in your Handouts.

Reputation Shields

To protect someone else's reputation is to create a protective shield around their reputation by our words and actions. Draw a star in front of the number of each statement that provides a way to create a protective shield around others.

1. Stand beside them as a friend; defend them when others speak unkind words
2. Refuse to believe negative things I may hear about someone else
3. When I hear something that could diminish someone's reputation, I choose to go to them before I think something negative
4. I make every effort not to tell lies or speak negatively about someone else even when I don't agree with their actions
5. Choose to tell my friend only what I think he/she needs to hear instead of the whole conversation about them
6. Make every effort not to tell their secrets to anyone else
7. Treat them with high value and respect so that others have less reason to diminish their reputation
8. Speak highly of others whenever I have the opportunity

9. When something could be misinterpreted, I choose to explain it in the most positive way
10. When my friend says or does something wrong, I tell others what they did was not wrong
11. Choose to watch my temper and explain things in a kind way even when they don't deserve my kindness
12. Ignore the things they do that might cause someone to question their reputation
13. Look the other way and pretend I don't notice when they do something that could harm their reputation
14. Choose to be kind, caring, and respectful toward others and always give them the benefit of the doubt
15. Make an effort to praise my friend's good actions and qualities whenever I have opportunity

As it is important to protect our reputation, it is equally important to protect the reputation of others. If we are unwilling to protect someone else's reputation, we should not expect them to make the effort to protect our reputation.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

Describe two ways you have turned God's blessings into curses.

Name three ways you can treat your possessions as gifts from God.

What can you do to be a caretaker of your talents?

Describe two ways to protect your reputation.

What are three ways you can protect someone else's reputation?

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK

In our next lesson, we will arrive at the last two Commandments which revolve around a similar theme, the theme of contentment. We will learn why people are becoming more discontented, re-learn the meaning of contentment, learn how to adjust our lives to find more satisfaction, and gather information about the blessings and curses attached to the Close of the Commandments.

TEST NEXT WEEK

Next week, after we discuss our remaining material on the Ten Commandments, we will have a test over the Ten Commandments. I encourage you to take your


Handouts home this week and review pages 137-177 as you prepare for the test. Pages 178-182, which we will discuss next week, will also be included on the test.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK



Outline - Lesson 32



OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Describe two ways you have turned God's blessings into curses.

Name three ways you can treat your possessions as gifts from God.

What can you do to be a caretaker of your talents?

Describe two ways to protect your reputation.

What are three ways you can protect someone else's reputation?

LESSON OVERVIEW

In our last lesson, we discussed how we have turned God's blessings into curses, how to treat our possessions as a gift, and how to protect our reputation and the reputation of others. Today, we arrive at the last two Commandments which revolve around a similar theme, the theme of contentment. In our lesson, we will learn why people are becoming more discontented, re-learn the meaning of contentment, and gather information about the blessings and curses attached to the Close of the Commandments.

LESSON

As you may have noticed, several of our basic principles have revolved around gifts God has given us, gifts He expects us to value and respect. The last two Commandments also speak of a gift, perhaps one of the greatest gifts apart from our faith-related gifts as these two basic principles speak about contentment.

It may be easy to say, "Be content with what you have," yet we already know that saying words is easy. Carrying out those words is a different matter.

Before we can speak of how to be content, we need to consider some of the reasons why we are becoming more and more discontented every year, why our level of contentment continues to go in the wrong direction.

Turn to page 178 in your Handouts.

Going Down

Circle the number of each statement that indicates a possible reason why people are becoming more discontented.

1. People are becoming more discontented because they believe what they have is never enough.
2. People are less contented because they are living the lie that they must have what everyone else has to be content.
3. People are more discontented because greed has interfered with proper thinking.
4. People are becoming more unhappy because they believe their “stuff” is what brings contentment.
5. People are becoming more discontented because they have their priorities in the wrong order.
6. People are becoming more unhappy because they are too busy chasing after what they don’t actually need.
7. People are becoming increasingly discontented because they want everything their way.
8. People are becoming more discontented because they are viewing less events in their lives as God’s miracles.
9. People are becoming more unhappy because they are convinced life isn’t fair toward them.
10. People are becoming increasingly more discontented because they perceive God to be uninvolved in their lives.
11. People are becoming more unhappy with life because they fail to realize that what they have is already more than enough.
12. People are becoming more discontented because they are trying to play God instead of allowing God to be God.
13. People are becoming more discontented because nothing is ever good enough.
14. People are becoming more discontented because God is less active in our world than in years past.
15. People are becoming more discontented because their idea of life has become very distorted compared to reality.

It doesn't take a genius to realize that discontentment is on the loose, that discontentment is the norm for most people today.

Realizing that to be true, how do we practice contentment? How do we learn to be content in a discontented world?

Perhaps we need to go back to God's classroom and re-learn the meaning of contentment.

Look at page 179 in your Handouts.

Back to School

When we return to God's classroom, we get a better understanding of what it means to be content. Read each statement and indicate whether you agree or disagree by using "A" for agree and "D" for disagree.

- _____ 1. In God's classroom, less is almost always better than having more.
- _____ 2. In God's classroom, what someone else has is unimportant for me to be content.
- _____ 3. In God's classroom, thinking I need more is viewed as wasting time.
- _____ 4. In God's classroom, choosing to have less is a good way to become more content.
- _____ 5. In God's classroom, what you have or don't have has no bearing on contentment.
- _____ 6. When I return to God's instructions, I realize I have been chasing after what I don't need.
- _____ 7. When I return to God's classroom, I realize no one is better than I because they have more.
- _____ 8. When I return to God's classroom, I realize that faith-related blessings are what surely matter most.
- _____ 9. In God's classroom, it is very clear I could be content with far less than I have at any moment.
- _____ 10. In God's classroom, satisfaction in life arrives when I give God control.
- _____ 11. When I step into God's classroom, I am prepared to be less protective of all I thought I needed to be content.
- _____ 12. As I step into God's classroom, I realize all my possessions can easily becoming a hindrance to being satisfied with life.

- _____ 13. In God's classroom, He isn't the least bit interested in my possessions or status.
- _____ 14. In God's classroom, He is interested in my heart, not how wealthy I am or where I live.

As we mentally step into God's classroom, we see a very different picture of life, a picture that reminds us that contentment is possible, that we can find satisfaction when we are willing to make some life adjustments.

Look at the next page in your Handouts as we learn how to make some important life adjustments for the sake of becoming more content.

Adjusting Life

Circle the number of each statement that indicates a possible life adjustment you could make for the sake of becoming more content.

1. Watch less television so I am not as easily deceived by all the advertisements
2. Choose to slow down and enjoy the simple things I have been overlooking
3. Stop believing I need to be like everyone else
4. Choose to set aside some of my "stuff" and realize life will go on without it
5. Choose to be who God created me to be instead of trying to be like everyone else
6. Make an effort to improve my attitude so that I become happier regardless of what I have or don't have
7. Take a stand for myself and my faith rather than following the crowd
8. Listen to my heart; keep my heart right with God and believe He will lead me down the right path
9. Choose to be content in every moment rather than basing contentment on my circumstances
10. As the world chases after more, smile to myself and say, "How great it is to know faith is all it takes to be content!"
11. Choose to follow the crowd on occasion knowing I can always be content another day
12. Enjoy life at the moment; treasure each day as a gift. Spend time thanking God for all He gives me each day

13. Spend less time worrying and more time giving everything to my God
14. Begin each day saying, "What can I do to make a difference for You, Lord?"
Then, choose to make a difference
15. Do all I can to please my God each day convinced His approval is all I need to be content

Contentment may be difficult to find as we look around, yet contentment is still available when we are willing to make life adjustments, when we are willing to look at life in a different way and believe contentment is still what God is waiting to see in us each day.

We can make adjustments in our lives and become more content. Yet, to find true satisfaction, we need to look at our heart. We need to monitor our heart.

Turn to page 181 in your Handouts so we can learn how to monitor our hearts and thereby increase our level of contentment.

Heart Monitoring

Draw a star next to each statement that would enable you to monitor your heart and thereby become more content.

1. Keep a watchful eye on my thoughts. When they start down the wrong path, ask God to redirect them to the right path
2. Spend time in prayer each day asking God to show me how to be more content
3. Train myself to notice ways I can be content with less
4. Worry less about tomorrow and focus more on how I can make a difference today
5. When thoughts of needing more enter my mind, argue against them, and replace them with the truth
6. Tell myself daily, "Contentment has nothing to do with my circumstances. With God's help, I can be content at any moment"
7. Watch for opportunities to help someone else rather than thinking only of myself
8. Concentrate on doing what pleases God instead of what feels good to me
9. Teach my mind to believe that what brings the most satisfaction is doing what most choose not to do

10. Tell myself as often as necessary that I already have more than enough. I need nothing more to be content
11. Trust God to provide all I need and choose to follow His direction
12. Teach my heart to notice and be grateful for the simple things
13. Choose not to compare myself to someone else, but only to God's expectations for me
14. Choose to do one thing different each week to lead me closer to contentment

When we monitor the heart, when we keep our heart on the right track, we will have a better grasp on the meaning of contentment and being satisfied in every situation. Retraining our heart and mind will be a life-long task, yet the task brings great rewards, the best of which is peace and contentment instead of the rat race for more things that only leave us less satisfied.

Before we end our class time, we need to take a few moments to look at the Close of the Commandments.

At first glance, the Close of the Commandments appear to portray God as a vengeful God who is looking for the next opportunity to hurl down His anger and fury on His people.

Yet, that is not the nature of our God nor what God wants to do. Instead, God wants to bless all those who keep His Commandments.

God's threat to punish us and generations to follow points out the importance of keeping these basic principles. For those who think, "These are just guidelines, merely suggestions," God impresses on our hearts that they are principles we must follow if we intend to remain one of His people until our last day arrives.

Aware of God's intentions in the Close of the Commandments, how do we bring honor to our God? How do we receive God's blessings instead of His punishment?

Look at page 182 in your Handouts.

Punishments to Blessings

Write "yes" on the line in front of each statement that would enable us to receive blessings instead of punishments from our God.

- _____ 1. Make it my goal to obey His Commandments and seek His forgiveness when I fail to obey
- _____ 2. Be afraid of God and do nothing with my gifts for fear of His punishment

- _____ 3. Offer Him my love and my life as one way to honor Him
- _____ 4. Choose to make His Commandments principles and guidelines for how I live my life
- _____ 5. Make the effort to keep His Commandments more often and break His heart less often
- _____ 6. Seek His forgiveness as soon as I realize I have broken His heart
- _____ 7. Push God to the back burner and live life as I choose
- _____ 8. Take each of His Commandments seriously and do my best to obey
- _____ 9. Put my trust in my God; lean on Him; expect Him to guide me down the right path
- _____ 10. Gladly and eagerly strive to do as God expects out of love, not out of fear
- _____ 11. Since God isn't always watching, do what He expects only when He might be watching me
- _____ 12. Recall the big picture regarding each of His Commandments so I do my best to fulfill all aspects of His Commandments
- _____ 13. Ask God to forgive me before I make a mistake and then know I'm already forgiven when I do break His Commandments
- _____ 14. Accept the basics of the Ten Commandments convinced there is no reason to sweat the little things

God's threats of punishment are not child's play. They are real and they can be devastating. Even so, when we do our best to fulfill His Commandments, He promises us blessings even when we rightfully deserve nothing but punishment. As we obey His Commandments, we are not earning favors from God, but responding appropriately to our faith so God has no need to resort to punishment in order to bring us back into a proper relationship with Himself.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

What three reasons can you give for why people are becoming increasingly discontented?

What are two things you can learn about contentment in God's classroom?

Describe two things you can do to become more content with your life.

What is one thing you can do to monitor your heart and find increased satisfaction?

What can you do with regard to the Ten Commandments so you receive God's blessings instead of His punishment?

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK


Next week, our time will be spent reviewing where we have gone over the course of the year and highlighting several pages from our Handouts which we discussed during the year.

TEST TIME


As I indicated last week, today we have a test over the Ten Commandments. As I did previously, I am sending the test home with you to make better use of our class time. Once again, your Handouts need to remain here and you need to bring the test back to our next class.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK



Outline - Lesson 33



OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What three reasons can you give for why people are becoming increasingly discontented?

What are two things you can learn about contentment by returning to God's classroom as we suggested in our last lesson?

Describe two things you can do to become more content with your life.

What is one thing you can do to monitor your heart and find increased satisfaction?

What can you do with regard to the Ten Commandments so you receive God's blessings instead of His punishment?

LESSON OVERVIEW

In our last lesson, we concluded our discussion of the Ten Commandments as we discussed issues related to contentment and how to receive God's blessings instead of His punishment. Today, our lesson will focus on review, on pulling together the essentials of the Christian faith, which we have discussed during the year, for the sake of imprinting those essentials securely in your minds and on your hearts.

LESSON

We began our year talking about what it meant to be a Christian and what it meant to be a Lutheran Christian.

Turn to page 183 in your Handouts as we review some basic information about being a Lutheran and a Christian.

I Am Lutheran

It is one thing to be a Christian. It is another thing to be a Lutheran Christian. Based on what you now know, which statements below are true for you as a Lutheran Christian? Circle the number of each true statement.

1. I believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the one true God.
2. I believe that I am saved, that I am able to be in heaven one day entirely by the grace of God and nothing else.
3. I hold the Word of God as absolutely true from beginning to end, that everything in the Bible is God's Word.
4. I believe that what I do with my life, my good deeds, help me stay in good graces with God.
5. I maintain God loves me because I am a good person.
6. I believe all my good deeds are only a response to my faith not a way to earn my faith.
7. I maintain I am forgiven by God, that every sin I commit is forgivable.
8. I believe Christ's body and blood are really present at the Lord's Supper.
9. I believe the Holy Spirit worked faith in my heart at Baptism because He liked what He saw when He looked at me.
10. I maintain that forgiveness from God is a gift, freely given, never earned by how I live my life.
11. I know with absolute certainty, because of my faith, that if I die tonight, I will be with God in heaven.
12. I believe that the moment I die my soul goes to heaven or hell.
13. I believe that, because I am saved, I can live my life however I want and God will still take me to heaven.
14. I believe the Bible interprets itself, that what the Bible says can be understood by other passages in the Bible instead of by someone else's ideas.
15. I believe the Bible accurately speaks today and does not need to be revised by men to be useful.

After discussing what it meant to be Lutheran Christians, we moved into our discussion of sin, the effects of sin, and God's plan to save us from ourselves.

Look at the next page in your Handouts as we remind ourselves of what sin is and how it affects life and our relationship with God.

Breaking God's Heart

Every sin breaks the heart of God. Choose the statements below that are true about sin and its affects by drawing a sad face on the line in front of each true statement.

- _____ 1. Sin isn't really my fault; I can't help it, so God should give me a break.
- _____ 2. Every sin I commit offends God even if it only involves another person.
- _____ 3. Each time I sin, I interrupt my relationship with God and need Him to repair it for me.
- _____ 4. There are sins I commit every day that break God's heart yet remain unknown to me.
- _____ 5. No matter what my age, even when I was a baby, I sinned more times than I can count on my hands and toes.
- _____ 6. My sins actually leave me in a situation no better than Adam and Eve faced after they committed the first sin.
- _____ 7. God's attitude toward my sin depends on how big the sin is and what kind of a mood God is in at the moment.
- _____ 8. If I committed only one sin today and God had not sent Jesus to pay for my sins, that one sin would condemn me to hell if the world ended at midnight.
- _____ 9. Every sin I commit is like slapping God in the face and saying, "I did it my way!"
- _____ 10. If God had left me in my sin, my sins would create so much guilt and pain that I would wish I could die just to find relief.
- _____ 11. My sins leave me hopelessly lost, forsaken by God, and desperately in need of His forgiveness.
- _____ 12. Because of sin, God chose to intervene, to create a plan to change my life for eternity.
- _____ 13. Since God is a kind and loving God, He overlooks some of my little sins.
- _____ 14. If God shed one tear for each sin I committed today, it would take more than one paper towel to wipe His teardrops off the table.

Once we realized our sin and learned of God's plan to rescue us from ourselves, we discussed who God is and then asked the logical question, "Do you believe in God?" That question led us to consider what we believe about our God.

Turn to page 185 in your Handouts.

I Believe...

Which statements below accurately describe what you believe? In front of each statement you agree with, draw a star on the line.

- _____ 1. I believe God loves me every moment of every day, that nothing I do could cause Him to love me less.
- _____ 2. I believe God created a plan to save me before the world even existed, a plan He will carry out for my benefit.
- _____ 3. I believe Jesus arrived in the manger in order to die in my place on the cross. His death may have been for the whole world, but what matters most to me is that He died for me.
- _____ 4. I believe I deserve nothing from God, that God should have never claimed me as His child, that everything I receive is an incredible gift.
- _____ 5. I believe my life has a unique purpose, that God has incredible things planned for me and through me.
- _____ 6. I believe what I do in my life can make a significant difference for my God, that my part in His plan is important.
- _____ 7. I believe that the forgiveness Jesus made possible for me on the cross is the only way my relationship with God, which I broke by my sin, could be repaired.
- _____ 8. I believe God is still in control of our world even though bad things happen every day.
- _____ 9. I believe my entire life and what I accomplish is a response to my faith, a way to express my appreciation.
- _____ 10. I believe God has forgiven every sin in my past and that He will forgive every sin I commit in the future.
- _____ 11. I believe hell would have been my home for eternity if Jesus had not stepped in and rescued me.
- _____ 12. I believe heaven is my home by faith, that no matter what happens here, I will be in heaven one day.
- _____ 13. I believe I am as important to God as any one else in this classroom, that God loves me as much as He loves every other person.
- _____ 14. I believe every day of my life matters to God, that what I do each day is important to Him.

Having learned who God is and some basic information about our God, we stepped back to the beginnings of our faith, to the topic of Baptism, to that moment when we became members of God's family by grace alone.

Look at page 186 in your Handouts as we pull together our information about Baptism.

Pulling It Together

Circle the number of each true statement below as we pull our thoughts together regarding Baptism.

1. Baptism was instituted by Christ to provide me with a visible means of assurance that I am forgiven by God.
2. Only those who have true faith in Christ can receive the blessings and benefits of Baptism.
3. In summary fashion, Baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers me from eternal death in hell and from the devil, and gives me the assurance of eternal life in heaven.
4. Baptism makes me a member of the church. Beyond that, Baptism has no real significance to me.
5. Through Baptism, I became an adopted member of the family of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
6. Since I am part of the family of the Triune God, my life has great value every day regardless of what others may say or think.
7. Infant Baptism reminds me that there was nothing I did to earn the blessings of Baptism. Everything was God's doing.
8. I believe in baptizing babies because I know babies can believe and they are part of the "all nations" Jesus commanded us to baptize.
9. Baptism offers me added reassurance of forgiveness, yet it doesn't provide more forgiveness than I receive in the pronouncement of forgiveness which occurs in a worship service.
10. Because of my Baptism, I know I will never spend eternity in hell no matter how I live my life.
11. Every day, I must fight the battle within. Some days, I will win; other days I will lose.
12. Fighting the battle between the Old Man and New Man is as simple as playing a video game.

13. The water in Baptism gets its power as the Pastor pours it on a baby's head.
14. The water in Baptism is "holy water" that has special powers from God.
15. As God connects His Word to the water at the moment of Baptism, He provides all the blessings of Baptism.

After we understood how we were brought to faith and what is ours through Baptism, we expanded our knowledge about our God and what we believe by discussing the Apostles' Creed, our statement of faith.

On page 187 you find one of our exercises where we considered how we can respond to Jesus' work in our lives.

My Response

Draw a star on the line preceding each statement you believe to be true for you.

- _____ 1. Since Jesus is my Lord, I will ask Him each day to guide me and show me how to make a difference for Him.
- _____ 2. Since I believe Jesus came into this world out of love, I will do all I can to show love and care toward others.
- _____ 3. Knowing some of the pain Jesus suffered so I could live with Him, I will endure my challenges and heartaches without complaining.
- _____ 4. Because Jesus rose victorious over death and the devil, I will live each day with a smile in my heart and on my face because I know Jesus is right beside me.
- _____ 5. Since Jesus is Lord of my life, I will do what I can every day to make a good difference for Him.
- _____ 6. Since Jesus paid for my sins on the cross, I will do what I can to serve Him in all areas of my life.
- _____ 7. Since Jesus rescued me from eternal death in hell, I will offer my praises to Him each new day.
- _____ 8. Since the devil can't destroy me, I will go to my Lord in prayer and then do what I can to make a difference for Christ in my day.
- _____ 9. Because of the enormous price Jesus paid for me, I will treat my life with high value and not allow anyone else to make me feel less valuable.
- _____ 10. Since Jesus has made me part of His family, I will honor and respect Him in all I do and say.

- _____ 11. Knowing Jesus rules the world and my life, I will listen to my heart and do what my Lord leads me to do.
- _____ 12. Since Jesus has proven His power over death, I will trust that Jesus can handle anything I bring to Him in prayer.
- _____ 13. Since Jesus rules the world, I will continue to trust Him and rely on His guidance even when things around me are very disturbing and discouraging.
- _____ 14. My response to all Jesus has done is to offer Him my life and to say, "Use me, Lord, as You know best!"

Once we completed our discussion of the Creed, we took the next logical step in our journey as we considered the wonderful privilege of prayer. As we discussed prayer, we talked about the acronym A-C-T-S, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

The next page in your Handouts reminds us of what we do as we pray and how the acronym fits into our prayer life.

As I Pray

Circle the number of each true statement. Then, for each true statement, use the letters A-C-T-S to mark which aspect of prayer the statement speaks about.

- _____ 1. As I pray, I pour out my heart to God admitting I have disappointed Him and broken His heart.
- _____ 2. As I pray, I mention some of my mistakes with little thought and quickly return to what I was doing before I prayed.
- _____ 3. As I pray, I praise God for the day, for the answers I have seen to my previous prayers, and offer my gratefulness for what I know He will do next.
- _____ 4. As I pray, I spend a great deal of time thanking God for being God, for loving me, forgiving me, and being my Friend.
- _____ 5. As I pray, I appreciate the beauty of His creation, thank Him for giving me a new day, and let Him know how much I enjoy living in His presence.
- _____ 6. As I pray, a smile comes to my face as I am reminded of His forgiveness for my past and His promise to walk beside me in the present.

- _____ 7. As I pray, I sense the presence of God as I thank Him for His gifts, make my requests, and praise Him for what I know He is about to do next.
- _____ 8. As I pray, I tell God I am sorry, ask Him to forgive me, and spend the remainder of my prayer praising Him for His goodness toward me.
- _____ 9. As I pray, I ask for God's help, yet do all I can to handle things myself realizing God may not have time for me and my concerns.
- _____ 10. As I pray, I begin with praise, offer my requests, and end with more praise because that's what God deserves from me.
- _____ 11. As I pray, I offer my praise hoping God will be impressed by my actions and give me what I ask.
- _____ 12. As I pray, I do so with absolute confidence that God will respond to every request I make in the best way.

Following our discussion of prayer, we turned our focus to the Lord's Supper where Christ offers His very body and blood as the proof that we are forgiven. As we discussed the Lord's Supper, we discussed the need for proper preparation.

Look at page 189 as we review what we need to do before we kneel to receive the Lord's Supper.

Before I Kneel

Write "yes" or "no" on the line as your response to each statement.

- _____ 1. Before I kneel at the Lord's Supper, I simply need to believe Jesus is my Savior.
- _____ 2. Before I kneel, I need to take time to reflect and acknowledge to my God that I am a sinner in desperate need of forgiveness.
- _____ 3. Before I kneel, I must convince myself that I am a good person.
- _____ 4. Before I kneel, I need to believe in my heart that Jesus has forgiven all my sins.
- _____ 5. Before I kneel, I simply need to arrive at church and join in worship.
- _____ 6. Before I kneel, I need to clearly understand what I am receiving at the Lord's Table.
- _____ 7. Before I kneel, I need to ask God to forgive me and intend not to do the same thing again.
- _____ 8. Before I kneel, I need to be truly sorry for my mistakes and sins.

- _____ 9. Before I kneel, I must believe that forgiveness of all my sins is made sure in the Sacrament.
- _____ 10. Before I kneel, I must tell God about each sin I have committed.
- _____ 11. Before I kneel, I need to make it my intention, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to change what needs to change in my life.
- _____ 12. Before I kneel, I must believe I am saved entirely by the grace of God.
- _____ 13. Before I kneel, I need to believe eternal life in heaven is mine by faith alone.
- _____ 14. Before I kneel, I must do certain things in order to get into good graces with my God.
- _____ 15. Before I kneel, I need to put my total trust for all of my life into the hands of God.

After we completed our discussion of the Lord's Supper, we spent the past few weeks focusing on the Ten Commandments, those basic principles for living the Christian life we have learned about throughout the year.

As we bring our classes to a close, I leave you with a challenge. Between now and the time classes resume in the fall, I challenge you to make a good difference for Christ, to make your life count for Him. When you make that your goal, you will always know God is smiling from ear to ear.

I have one more task for you before we close. At the beginning of the year, I gave you what was called a "Pre-Instruction Essay." Now that we have completed our classes, I want to see how you have grown over the course of the year.

Please complete the Essay and return it to me by _____ to complete your work for this year.

(Note: The Post-Instruction Essay in a student ready format is available online as part of the Supplementary Pages located at my website: www.mapleleafprinting.com.)

Post-Instruction Essay

Series I

This is not a test. You cannot pass or fail. Its purpose is to see what you have learned during the year.

The Ten Commandments

1. What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments? Why did God give you the Ten Commandments?
2. How can the Ten Commandments help you live a life that is pleasing to God? How are the Ten Commandments beneficial to your Christian life?
3. Which Commandment do you view as most important? Why?

The Apostles' Creed

4. What does the First Article of the Creed tell you about your God?
5. What does the Second Article of the Creed tell you about your God?
6. What does the Third Article of the Creed tell you about your God?
7. How does what you know about God from the Creed help you live a life that is pleasing to Him? In what ways does what you know about God from the Creed motivate you to serve Him?

The Lord's Prayer

8. What do you see as the benefits of prayer? How can regular time in prayer affect your life?
9. If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, write the words of the prayer you would pray today.
10. What can you gain from prayer that you might not have otherwise?

Baptism

11. What occurs at Baptism that makes it so important in your life?
12. Based on what you know about your Baptism, define faith. Where does it come from? How do you get it? Why is it important?
13. What does your Baptism offer you every day? What are the benefits of Baptism for your life?

The Office of the Keys/Confession

14. What is the purpose of confessing your sins to God?
15. What do you receive when you confess your sins? What do you gain by admitting your mistakes to God?

The Lord's Supper

16. Why do you want to attend the Lord's Supper? What do you gain by attending the Lord's Supper?
17. What do you intend to do each time you prepare to receive the Lord's Supper? What type of preparations will you make before you go to the Lord's Supper?
18. How will receiving the Lord's Supper regularly affect your life?

We close with prayer.