

The Heidelberg Catechism for Families

Lord's Day 10

1. Parents, please gather your family together at least once this week to go over this material as a follow-up on this past Lord's Day's catechism class.

2. Read the following by dividing up these verses among the family members and having each member take a turn reading:

Old Testament: Job 1:6–21

New Testament: Matthew 6:25–33

3. Everyone recite Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 27–28:

27. Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. The almighty, everywhere-present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.

28. What does it profit us to know that God created, and by His providence upholds, all things?

That we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love, since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.

4. Have the father read the following to the family:

Summary

God cares for *you*. Isn't that amazing? There are six billion people in the world right now, and out of all of them, he watches over you. This is why we can sing as we do from our childhood, "He's got the whole world in his hands." The Scripture lessons we just read and Lord's Day 10 of our

Catechism teach us that God the Father cares for us just as he cared for Job when he suffered and even more than the birds of the air or the lilies or grass of the field. The big word we use for this is "*providence*." Providence is God provide-ance of all we need in this life. Let us take a few moments to think about what we learn about theology and how we live in piety because of these texts.

Theological Lessons

First, we learn the following theological lessons:

1. We learn that God can provide for us because he is **almighty**. As Job said, it was only because of the blessing of *God* that he had anything: "The *LORD* gave, and the *LORD* has taken away" (Job 1:21).

2. We learn that God can provide for us because he is **everywhere**. While he was blessing Job and his family he was blessing everyone he chose to bless everywhere on the face of the earth. As Jesus teaches us, every bird everywhere, every flower everywhere, and every blade of grass everywhere is cared for by God, who is everywhere in power.

3. We learn that God provides and that God withholds. "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away." He gave Job all that he had so that Job was called "the greatest of all the people of the east" (Job 1:3), but he also took everything away from Job. It is so important to learn this now while we are experiencing the blessing of God so that we are prepared when he takes from us. The Catechism describes this so movingly, saying that "herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty" are all given by God and not chance.

Practical Lessons

Second, our Scripture and Catechism readings teach us the following practical lessons:

1. Be patient in adversity. When God takes things from us or we do not

feel like he is really blessing us, the example of Job is one that we can look to often. What is so wonderful about his example is that after he experienced the trials of the Lord, he worshipped God! *“Blessed be the name of the LORD!”* Can you say that you would bless God patiently under struggles, trials, and sufferings?

2. Be thankful in prosperity. If you are not thankful when times are good, you will never be thankful when times are bad. Write out as a family or individual the daily blessings of God, talk about them openly, and thank him for them when you pray.

3. Be confident for the future. You need to trust that if God provides for the lowliest of birds, blossoms, and blades of grass, he will provide for all your needs. “Do not be anxious,” Jesus says, instead, be confident in faith. And in faith seek the God’s kingdom and Christ’s righteousness. When you do this, everything else pales in comparison.

5. *Everyone recite Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 27–28, again:*

6. *Have the father pray:*

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you provide all that we need. We thank you that you are able to do so, being almighty, and that you are so near to us when we call upon you, being everywhere present. Teach us to be patient, teach us to be thankful, and teach us to be confident in you, that whether we receive from you herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, or riches and poverty, we know that all these things come not by chance, but by your fatherly hand of goodness towards us in Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever, one God in three Persons. Amen.