

witness about our neighbor. We must not speak lies. The 3rd commandment tells us to be careful how we speak God's name. We must not speak lies about God. Even the 5th commandment, when it tells us to honor our parents, includes the words we speak concerning our father and mother. We must not lie about or revile our parents. Jesus teaches us that what comes out of our mouths shows what is in our hearts. The reason we speak falsely, or with anger, or lust, is because those sins are bound up in our hearts. The good news is that when you turn to Jesus for salvation, He begins to change you from the inside out. As your heart is changed, your words begin to change too!

Discussion Questions

- What do your words that you speak say about your heart? Can you think of ways that your speak that are sinful?
- Is it just the content of your words that is important? What about your tone? Does that matter?
- Do you have words you need to apologize for? To your family? To God?

Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Sometimes my wife will ask me (Pastor Joshua) what I'm thinking. The funny thing is when she asks the question, whatever I was thinking about usually runs right out of my head! My typical response at that point is, "nothing." This isn't always the most helpful answer! The reason she asks the question is that she wants to know me better. For that she needs to get down to the core of who I am. This means getting down to my thoughts. Our thoughts are intimate to us. They shape what we say and what we do. Our thoughts are also a primary place in which sin manifests in our lives. God's law recognizes the centrality of our thoughts. The 10th commandment is a command that is entirely about our thoughts. *You shall not covet.* Often we think our battle with sin is one to be waged primarily in our words and deeds. We need to reign in our sin and follow God's law. But our battle with sin actually starts with our hearts. The Apostle Paul was convicted by the thoughts in his head. Romans 7:7-8 *I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness.* Though the Apostle had spent his life following the law in a way that appeared blameless, when he looked in his own heart he was filled with sin! He needed Jesus to save him from his heart.

Discussion Questions

- Have you realized how your thoughts break God's law?
- What are some examples of sinful thoughts?
- How can you be saved from your sinful thoughts?
- If you are a believer, how have your thoughts changed since coming to Jesus?

Baptist Catechism

Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, December 31st, 2023)

Baptist Catechism Question #17

Q: What is sin?

A: *Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.*

Suggested Memory Verse

1 John 3:4 *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.*

Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

What do you think of when you think of sin? Do you think of evil acts by bad guys in the movies, twirling their mustaches as they laugh about their villainy? What about for yourself? Is sin doing what you know feels wrong? Maybe things that you want to do but then feel guilty for? Perhaps you think primarily about sin being bad actions that hurt others around you. It's common for most people in our world to think about sin in terms of feelings. How does this action make me feel? Or in terms of harm, does it hurt anyone else? God's Word gives us an understanding of sin that is more sure and certain. Sin is transgressing, or breaking, God's holy law. Sin, or transgression, is so tightly bound to the idea of God's law that without the law there isn't any such thing as sin. Romans 4:15 *For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.* Why is it so important to see sin as breaking God's law? If we base sin on how we feel or how bad we make others feel, we are making people the measure of what is wrong or right. When we see sin as breaking God's law we have a standard that is unchanging. We also begin to see how bad sin really is. It is against God that our sin is ultimately committed!

Discussion Question

- Can you think of any sins that people in society think are really bad? How do they usually argue that sin is bad?
- Have you ever heard people besides Christians talk about sin being wrong because it breaks God's law?
- Do you need to change the way you talk about your own sin? Do you talk about your sin as breaking God's law?

Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

When the Bible talks about sin it talks about two different types of sin. The one we are most familiar with are *Sins of Commission*. Sins of commission are that type of sin where we directly break God's law in our thoughts, words or deeds. The catechism calls this *transgression*. The 8th commandment says "you shall not steal." When we take what doesn't belong to us we are doing what the law forbids. These are easy to understand because God says "don't do it" and we go ahead and do it anyway. We commit the very sins God prohibits in His law. These sins of commission are often the first that come to mind when God begins to bring conviction to your heart. Maybe you heard the pastor preaching on what God requires in His law and you began to see that you had sinned. Perhaps you memorized the 10 commandments and as you did so you began to become aware that you had broken these commandments. You had misused God's name. You had misused the Lord's Day. You had dishonored your parents in your speech. You had looked on others with lust in your heart. You had acted with anger, stolen, and lied. You coveted what your neighbor has. These are all sins of commission and they hit us close to home, showing us how sinful we are. The only one who never sinned in thought, word, or deed was our Lord Jesus Christ. He was holy and always kept God's law.

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever felt conviction for the sins you committed? What did you do? What does the Bible tell us to do?
- Have you ever tried to justify your sin by saying it wasn't too bad or that everyone else does it? Are those good excuses?
- Why is it important that Jesus never sinned by breaking God's law? How does this lead you to worship Him?

Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

We talked about sins of commission, doing what God forbids. There is another type of sin that is a little more difficult to see. This is the sin of omission, in which we don't do what God commands. The catechism calls this *want of conformity to God's law*. James 2:15-16 *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?* James points out a sin of omission in his readers. They might speak kindly to their neighbor, and they aren't actively trying to kill their neighbor, but they are failing to love their neighbor. They are omitting the command to do good. Though sins of omission are often more subtle, that doesn't mean they are less sinful. Neither are they less common. In fact, for every sin of commission against God's law there is a corresponding sin of omission that we must not overlook. The 2nd commandment tells us not to make and worship idols. It is a sin of commission to make an idol. It is a sin of omission when we fail to worship God as He deserves. When your heart is changed by the Holy Spirit and you begin to love God's law, this ought to cause you to put off both types of sin. You ought to hate your sins of commission, breaking God's commands, as well as your sins of omission. Your desire to actively do God's will must grow!

Discussion Questions

- Try listing some of the 10 commandments (or other commands). See if you can identify both sins of commission and sins of omission with regard to each command.
- Do you think more about your sins of commission or omission? Why do you think that is? Pray that God would help you see all of your sins and put them to death.
- How did Jesus show his perfect obedience as compared to our sins of omission?

Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

The old rhythm says *Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me*. While this saying is wrong on many levels I want to look at it from the standpoint of the one doing the hurting. We have a tendency to think hurtful actions are wrong but what we say isn't as important. Another way of saying this is, we might consider certain actions sinful, but policing our words seems a little extreme. Aren't we just saying what is in our minds. How can speaking the truth be all that wrong? Contrary to this opinion, the Word of God warns very seriously about the words that come out of our mouths. The 9th commandment tells us not to bear false