

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS WEEK 17

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 17: *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSWER: The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 34B

Scripture: Read Genesis 3:14-19

Key Thought: *The fall has brought mankind under God's curse.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is meant by the word "estate" in the *Catechism* question?
- ☞ What blessings did Adam and Eve have before they sinned?
- ☞ How were their lives affected by their sin?
- ☞ How was the earth affected by their sin?
- ☞ Was their sinful action worth the price they paid for it?

Prayer

Notes: This section of the *Shorter Catechism* continues to explore the implications of the sin of our first parents for all of their descendants. The condition into which Adam's rebellion brought all mankind is summarised by the phrase "an estate of sin and misery." Explain to your children that the word "estate" used here means "condition." The idea is that their whole condition was radically affected by their act of disobedience. Compare the condition of our first parents before and after they sinned. Note the specific details of the curse that God pronounced upon them and discuss the implications of these. Help your children to understand how sin has completely distorted man's relationship with God and with his fellow man. Show them further how sin has adversely affected the world, which now produces hardship and painful toil for man as he labors under the curse. Help them to see that the momentary satisfaction of sin does not begin to compare with the consequences it brings into our lives. Challenge them to identify specific affects of the curse of sin in their own lives. Pray together, confessing sin and seeking God's grace.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 34B

Scripture: Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Key Thought: *Sin has brought a curse upon the mind of man.*

Questions:

- ☞ How does sin affect our ability to understand God's word?
- ☞ How does sin affect our desire to know God?
- ☞ Why do we make errors and mistakes in judgment?
- ☞ In what other ways does sin affect our minds?
- ☞ Is the mind of man able to understand God by itself?
- ☞ How is the mind of man renewed?

Prayer

Notes: During the remainder of this week's lessons, we will examine four specific ways in which the curse of sin can be seen in mankind. The first of these is the corruption of the mind. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:17-18 that the Gentiles "walk in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened." It is ironic that Adam's attempt to have his eyes opened through eating the forbidden fruit resulted in the blindness of man's mind to spiritual truth. Explore with your children the effects of sin upon man's thinking. Because of sin, we are unable to understand God's word, which seems like foolishness to the natural mind. Further, because of our rebellion, we do not even desire to know God and His ways, because this knowledge would convict us of our guilt before Him. Also, our sin produces all sorts of errors as we seek to come to conclusions about the world, because we see things from a man-centered, rather than a God-centered perspective. Show your children that the mind of man is unable to properly understand the things of God apart from the inner working of the Holy Spirit, who renews the mind and opens our understanding to the truth of God's Word. Pray together for the Spirit of Truth to renew your mind and enable you to think God's thoughts after Him in all things.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 34B

Scripture: Read Jeremiah 17:9-10; Matthew 15:1-20

Key Thought: *Sin has brought a curse upon the heart of man.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does Jeremiah say about man's heart?
- ☞ What does the "heart" of man refer to?
- ☞ What kinds of things are in your heart because of sin?
- ☞ How do your actions reveal what is in your heart?
- ☞ How does God undo the effects of sin in a man's heart?

Prayer

Notes: The curse of sin not only affects man's mind, or intellect, but also results in

a heart that is “desperately wicked.” Explain to your children that when the Bible speaks of the heart, it is referring to the spiritual center of a person, rather than the physical organ known as the heart. The point Jesus was making in the passage from Matthew is that man’s actions and words are wicked because they proceed from a corrupt source. It is not the outward sins themselves that are the most serious, but what those outward actions reveal about the inside of a man. Because of sin, our inner man—our heart—is filled with every kind of wicked intention and evil desire. Thomas Watson wrote: “In the heart are legions of lusts, infidelity, hypocrisy, sinful intentions; it boils as the sea with passion and revenge.” Most people do not believe that their hearts are really as bad as all that. This too is the result of sin, which blinds us to the truth of our own wickedness. Challenge your children to look to their own hearts and to seek to identify how their own words and actions reveal the wickedness that is the result of the fall. Show them that through Christ, God is able to replace our evil hearts with new hearts that delight to serve and honor Him. Pray together, confessing sins of the heart and asking God for grace to renew your hearts daily after the image of Christ.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 34B

Scripture: Read Romans 1:28-32; Psalm 110:3

Key Thought: *Sin has brought a curse upon the will of man.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is the will?
- ☞ Did Adam choose to obey God’s will or his own?
- ☞ When we say someone is “willful” what do we mean?
- ☞ What are the results of man’s willful rejection of God according to Romans 1:28-32?
- ☞ Do you see any of these signs of willfulness in your own life?
- ☞ What does Psalm 110:3 promise? How does this happen?

Prayer

Notes: Another part of man that has been corrupted by sin is his will. Make sure that your children understand what is meant by the will—that it refers to the inclination or man to choose what he will or will not do. Show them that Adam’s sin was a rebellious act of his will as he chose to follow his own desires rather than God’s command. Discuss the many effects of the willful rejection of God listed by Paul in the passage from Romans and identify those areas where willfulness appears in your own lives. Show your children the promise of Psalm 110:3, which says that in the day of Christ, God will make the hearts of His people willing to follow Him. Explain that this can only happen as God’s grace renews man’s will and brings him to repentance for his sin. Praise God to-

gether for His power to transform our sinful will, and ask Him for strength through Christ to gladly submit to His Word.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 34B

Scripture: Read Galatians 5:16-26

Key Thought: *Sin has brought a curse upon the affections of man.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does it mean if you have “affection” toward something?
- ☞ What should be the object of our highest affection?
- ☞ How has sin corrupted our affections?
- ☞ Can we trust our feelings to lead us to do what is right?
- ☞ How does God renew our affections?
- ☞ Do believers always “feel” like doing what is right?

Prayer

Notes: Aside from the mind, heart, and will, sin has also corrupted man’s affections. The affections of a man refer to his feelings, which make him inclined toward someone or something. It has been said that the affections are “the lesser wheels, which are strongly carried by the will, the master-wheel.” Because of sin, our feelings (or affections) have been distorted. Though we were created to have the highest affections toward God and His ways, our sin has directed our affection toward ourselves. We delight in those things that please us and that are displeasing to God. Help your children to understand how their own affections are inclined to desire what is harmful to them and dishonoring to God. Show them that feeling cannot be trusted to lead us in the right direction, because our feelings have been distorted by sin. Explain to them that when God renews our mind, heart, and will by His grace, He also renews our affections. Still, because of the strong nature of feelings, and their tendency to lead us to self-interest instead of God’s glory, we must always submit our feelings to God’s Word. By God’s grace, we are enabled to do what is right even when we don’t “feel” like it.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.