

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 39

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 39: *What is the duty which God requires of man?*

ANSWER: The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to His revealed will.

MONDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 119A

Scripture: Read Isaiah 45:1-10; Psalm 116:12-14

Key Thought: *All men are responsible to obey God.*

Questions:

- ☪ Are all men—even unbelievers—required to obey God's will?
- ☪ Why do we owe obedience to God as our Creator?
- ☪ Why do we owe obedience to God as our Provider?
- ☪ Why do we owe obedience to God as our Lawgiver? (Jas. 4:12)
- ☪ Is God's requirement of obedience unfair? What makes it sometimes seem unfair to us?

Prayer

Notes: With Question 39, we have come to a major transition point in the *Shorter Catechism*. Question 3, which asked, "What do the Scriptures principally teach?" had a two-fold answer: "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." The questions we have studied so far have unfolded what man is to believe concerning God. We now begin to examine what duty God requires of man. The summary answer, which will be fleshed out in the weeks ahead, is that God requires obedience to His revealed will. Talk with your children today about the fact that all men are responsible to obey God. This is true, whether they acknowledge Him or not, because man's stubborn rebellion doesn't change the fact that God is their Creator, their Provider, and their Lawgiver. Discuss each of these with your children as they relate to the duty of obedience. Show them that God's requirement of obedience is not the least bit unfair, but that we resist obedience because we are sinful. Pray together that God will help each family member to understand Him more clearly and to delight in obedience to His will.

TUESDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 119A

Scripture: Read Romans 1:18-21; Deuteronomy 29:29

Key Thought: *God requires all men to obey His revealed will.*

Questions:

- ☪ Are there some things in the mind of God that we don't know?
- ☪ Does God expect His creatures to respond to what is hidden?
- ☪ Do those who deny the existence of God have any excuse? Why not? What has God revealed to them? How?
- ☪ What else does God reveal to His people? (Deut. 29:29)
- ☪ When God reveals something, what is your duty?

Prayer

Notes: Today's emphasis is on the fact that God requires obedience to His revealed will. There are many things in the mind of God that are hidden from us, either because we are unable to bear them or simply because God chooses in His wisdom to conceal them from us. We are not required to respond to what we do not see, any more than a father should expect a child to read his mind without giving clear guidance and instruction. The verses in Romans explain that God has revealed Himself to every human being through the obvious evidence of Creation so that those who refuse to recognize and submit to Him have no excuse. The verse in Deuteronomy speaks of the more specific revelation that God gives to His people in the form of His written Word. We are again reminded that it is not for us to try to figure out the hidden things of God, but to receive the words of His Law, obey them, and pass them on to our children. Make sure that your children understand that obedience to God's revealed will is the result of God's gift of faith in the heart. This is why the writers of the *Catechism* discuss obedience after justification. Finally, remind your children that it is their duty to respond in immediate, complete, and cheerful obedience when God's will is revealed to them through His Word.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119A

Scripture: Read Luke 9:57-62; Matthew 4:18-22; Psalm 106:1-3

Key Thought: *Obedience must be immediate and constant.*

Questions:

- ☪ Why did the men in Luke 9 not immediately follow Jesus?
- ☪ What did their hesitation reveal about their view of the world?
- ☪ What did their hesitation reveal about their view of Jesus?
- ☪ What do we learn from Peter, Andrew, James, and John?
- ☪ How is our heart toward God reflected in our obedience to other authorities He has appointed?

Prayer

Notes: The obedience that God requires of His creatures is to be immediate and constant. Hesitation to obey is a sign of a divided heart. The men who were called to follow Jesus in Luke 9 show by their procrastination that their hearts were far more attached to the world than to Christ. They saw obedience to His call as less compelling than the desire for security. By contrast, Peter, Andrew, James, and John responded to the call of Christ with an instant willingness to leave all things behind them for the sake of following Him. Their immediate obedience revealed that their hearts delighted in Him above all else. Show your children how procrastination shows the true condition of the heart. The strength or weakness of our devotion to God may even be seen in our interactions with other authorities He has appointed, since they are merely reflections of His authority. If we are slow to obey our parents, ministers, or governors in what is right, it is because we are slow to obey God and quick to serve ourselves and our own interests. Encourage your children to examine their lives in light of these things, repenting of all hesitation in obedience and seeking God's grace to respond instantly to His commands.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119A

Scripture: Read Psalm 119:1-6; Mark 10:17-22

Key Thought: *Obedience must be complete and extensive.*

Questions:

- ☞ What kind of obedience does the psalmist say is blessed?
- ☞ Is our obedience whole-hearted when we obey only some of God's commands, while ignoring others?
- ☞ What did the rich young ruler mean when he told Jesus he had kept all of the commandments from his youth?
- ☞ Why did Jesus tell him to give away all of his possession?
- ☞ Do you desire in your heart to know and obey all of God's commandment? Where does such a desire come from?

Prayer

Notes: The obedience that God requires of His creatures must also be a complete and extensive obedience. The psalmist sings of the blessedness of those who serve God whole-heartedly—those who look into all the commandments of God. Because of the sin in our hearts, we are prone to try to convince ourselves, others, and even God that we are righteous by choosing out a few of His commandments and obeying them. In the meantime, we leave many other commandments of God undone. Another problem we have is in obeying God's commands outwardly, but not keeping them in our hearts. This was the case with the rich young ruler. He thought he had kept God's commandments because he never killed anyone, or stolen an-

other man's wife, or taken what he had not earned. But Jesus showed him that complete obedience goes much deeper than merely conforming to the letter of the law. God delights in obedience from the heart. Challenge one another with these things and pray for grace to pursue all of God's commands with a whole heart.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119A

Scripture: Read Titus 2:11-15; Psalm 40:8; 2 Corinthians 9:7

Key Thought: *Obedience must be cheerful and sincere.*

Questions:

- ☪ Is God pleased with mere outward obedience?
- ☪ Does the true Christian obey God because he has to, or because he wants to? How does Christ model this for us?
- ☪ Do we earn God's favor through obedience? Who earned God's favor for us?
- ☪ If we obey grudgingly, what does this say about our hearts?

Prayer

Notes: Obedience that is acceptable before God is not only immediate and complete, but also cheerful and sincere. There are many who go through the motions of obedience out of a sense of obligation, but with no love in their hearts toward Christ. Their obedience is like that of a slave who resents his chores and can't wait for the opportunity to escape the watchful eye of his master. Sadly, many who profess to be Christians serve God in this way, but this is not the obedience of a child of God. The follower of Christ serves God, not because he has to, but because he wants to. His heart echoes that of his Savior who said, "I delight to do Your will, O God!" The Christian knows that his obedience does not earn God's favor, but that Christ has accomplished all that was necessary to commend him to God for eternity. His obedience, then, is not a chore by which he seeks to please God, but the joyful response of a heart that has been freed from the bondage of sin to serve the living God! If we see God's commands as burdensome or heavy, we need to examine our hearts to see if we have truly understood the sacrifice of Christ for us. We do not pursue the duty of obedience to God's revealed will in order to please God, but because we are pleased with God. Such a view toward God comes only through the regenerating grace of the Spirit applying the work of Christ. Apart from this saving grace, all men remain in bondage. Praise God for the freedom to serve Christ with cheerful hearts!



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.