



Second Presbyterian Church
Ladies Bible Study
Doctrine of God

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Lesson 1: "Man's Chief End"

Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC) Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: *Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*

1 Cor. 10:31 – "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God."

Scripture Reading:

Rev. 4:11 & Ps. 73:25-26

Why did God create us? / Why are we here on this earth? _____

Genesis chapters 1-3. What was life like in the Garden prior to our rebellion against God?

What changed once sin entered into the world? _____

In what ways did we become sinful and miserable after the fall? There are four main ways in which we became sinful and miserable after the fall:

1. Division with _____ (Gen. 3).
2. Division with _____ (Gen. 3)
3. Division with _____ (Gen. 3; Rom. 8)
4. Division with _____ (Gen. 2:25, 3:7)

What does the Bible teach about our fallen natures? In other words, what does the Bible say about mankind after the Fall? (see Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Rom. 3:10-12; 3:23) _____

What is meant by the word "chief" in the catechism? _____

What is meant by the word "end" in the catechism? _____

What is meant by the word "enjoy" in the catechism? _____

What is the chief end of God? For whom does He exist? _____

Is anything higher or greater than God? _____

If God exists for anyone other than Himself it would be _____. On the other hand, if we exist for anyone other than God it is _____.

How does this fact make the doctrine of the incarnation and salvation all the more amazing?

Where is the chief end of man located? _____

What would be wrong with saying, "Man's chief end is to seek happiness"? _____

- Man was created to be _____ but because of sin we have become _____.

Why does the catechism place glorifying God before our enjoying God?

Why are glorifying God and enjoying God joined together as one singular chief end of man?

- God is most glorified in us when we are most _____ in him – Piper

When we seek to glorify God do our efforts add anything to His glory? _____

What if someone doesn't want to glorify God—is God still glorified? (Rom. 9:21-23) _____

What does it mean to glorify God? _____

How can *you* glorify God? _____

Abraham Kuyper said, "...there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: 'Mine!'" What do you think Kuyper means here? _____

Which life is lived more to the glory of God: a person who is a missionary, or someone who works in a factory? Explain. _____

Preparation for Lessons 2 & 3
On "The Word of God" and "Revelation"

- Refer to the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 1 & the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions 2 & 3 for help.

(You can access the Westminster Standards at <https://www.opc.org/confessions.html>)

True or False Questions:

1. ____ The New Testament is more valuable than the Old Testament.
2. ____ God still speaks to people today apart from the Bible.
3. ____ The only evidence we have that God exists is what is recorded for us in the Bible.
4. ____ Inerrancy means the words of the Bible in the original manuscripts are without error.
5. ____ The Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and life for Christians today.
6. ____ The writers of Scripture (i.e. Moses, David, Paul, etc.) expressed their own style in their writings, but were kept from error by the Holy Spirit.
7. ____ To say that the Bible is inspired means it inspires everyone who reads it with an open mind.
8. ____ Every part of the Bible is inspired.
9. ____ God reveals Himself in nature.
10. ____ Creation is enough to show us what we must do to be saved.
11. ____ It is up to the Church to decide which books belong in the Bible and which ones don't.
12. ____ If God had not revealed Himself to us we would never have known Him on our own.

Short Answer Questions:

1. Is there any difference between God's revelation in nature and His revelation in Scripture? Explain. _____

2. What sorts of things do you learn about God from creation? _____

3. List any other ways you can think of how God has revealed Himself to mankind (cf. Exod. 3:2; Deut. 5:4; John 14:26; Exod. 14:21-22): _____

Lesson 2: "The Word of God"

WSC Question 2: What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

Answer: *The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.*

2 Tim. 3:16 – "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

Scripture Reading:

Rev. 22:18-19; Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20

Is wisdom the same thing as knowledge? Explain _____

Are educated and intelligent people more likely to know God's truth than the uneducated and simple? Why or why not? _____

Is God's Word clear? _____

Why do some people reject/not believe God's Word if it is clear?

How should this make you respond if you believe God's Word?

What should you do for those who do not believe God's Word?

Can man, left to himself, come to a knowledge of the truth of God's Word? Why not? _____

Will we ever know all things? _____

Is God just like us only bigger? _____

How has God made Himself known? What are the two sources of truth? _____

What is meant by the word "rule" in the catechism above? _____

Is God's Word true because you feel like it is true or is it true because it comes to us from outside as true? _____

What does it mean to say that "the Word of God is *contained* in the Old and New Testaments"?

Where should you go to hear the voice of God?

What does it mean to say that the Bible is infallible? _____

Sufficient? _____

Clear? _____

Authoritative? _____

Necessary? _____

If the Bible is infallible, clear and sufficient then why do you think we have the Catechisms, Bible commentaries, church creeds, etc.? _____

Lesson 3: "Revelation"

WSC Question 3: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

Answer: *The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.*

Scripture Reading:

John 20:30-31 & Micah 6:8

What is meant by the word "principally" in the catechism? _____

Are there things the Bible doesn't teach us / are there things we can't learn from the Bible? Give some examples. _____

Can you think of a subject the Bible says nothing about explicitly? _____

Does this mean the Bible is incomplete? _____

What does it mean to say that the Bible teaches implicitly on all things?

- It is in this sense that we can say the Bible has something to say about _____ but not everything to say about everything.

Can some who doesn't submit to the Bible understand the "why" of anything?

- The unbeliever can count but he can't _____ for counting.

What is the purpose of the Bible, according to WSC 3? What are the two main lessons the Bible teaches us? _____

If man tries to understand the world without reference to God, what will be the result? _____

Does a Christian who is a scientist or historian have more understanding of the world than a non-Christian scientist or historian? Explain. _____

Does being a Christian encourage or discourage the study of science?

- <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/myeVPqlrqYI>

How do general and special revelation differ? _____

These two differing modes of revelation have been called the book of _____ and the book of _____.¹

Remember there are two things here: What we are to believe about God and what God requires of us. Why is the priority in the catechism given to what we are to believe concerning God? In other words, why is it prior to our duty? _____

¹ “We know God by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: God’s eternal power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. All these things are enough to convict humans and to leave them without excuse. Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for God’s glory and for our salvation.” (Belgic Confession, Article 2).

Preparation for Lessons 4 & 5
On "The Nature of God" and "The Trinity"

- Refer to the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter two & the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions 4 – 6 for help.

True or False Questions:

1. ____ God is made up of material substance (i.e. stuff you can see & touch).
2. ____ It is a violation of God's law to try to make God visible by a picture.
3. ____ We can see God indirectly.
4. ____ God is quantitatively different from humanity (i.e. much greater than we are).
5. ____ God is qualitatively different from humanity (i.e. in a separate category than humanity).²
6. ____ Given enough time we could know as much as God knows.
7. ____ The doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the Bible.
8. ____ Christ is equal in power and authority with God the Father.
9. ____ The Holy Spirit is a divine force in our lives, not a person.
 - a. John 14:15–17, 26; 15:26; **16:5–15**; Eph. 4:30; Is. 63:10.

² "Beloved, our theology about God matters. What you think about God shapes how you functionally relate to him. But here is the problem that all of us face. We all tend to think that God is just like us, only bigger.

We think that God is like us in that he has some strength, but he's unlike us in that he's stronger than us. We think that he's like us in that he has some wisdom, but he's unlike us in that he's wiser than us. We think that he's like us in that he has some knowledge, but he's unlike us in that he has more knowledge than we have. But what the Scriptures teach is actually that God isn't just *quantitatively* different than us, God is *qualitatively* different than us. The theologians call this God's being *sui generis*, which simply means that he is in a category all of his own.

God is not like us. When we do our theology from the perspective that God must be like me, we end up with all sorts of problems. Why? Because we assume that how I act must be how God acts.

So, for example, if I blow up and lose my temper with my children, then that must be how God acts towards me. I blow up and lose my temper towards my children, therefore God must blow up and lose his temper with me. If I can't forgive myself for some wicked thing that I've done, then God can't forgive me either. Why? Because God is just like me. If other people hate me and think lowly of me, then God must hate me and think lowly of me. Why? Because God is just like one of us. What's the problem with this way of thinking? Well, here's the problem.

It doesn't let God be God. God tells us who he is and it is our job to listen. We don't get to tell God who he is. In our passage tonight, God says four things about how he relates to his people. And all four of these things are rather shocking. All four of the things that God says about how he relates to his elect children are shocking. They're hard to believe.

But I want to ask you this question tonight before we even get into the text. Will you let God be God tonight? Will you simply let him tell you who he is and how he relates to his people? Will you receive it?" (from a sermon I preached on Zeph. 3:17. For the whole sermon: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermons/3226173251438>).

Short Answer Questions:

1. List some of the attributes or characteristics of God (e.g. His self-existence, His eternity, etc.) _____

2. Of those attributes you listed, which are unique to God and which are found in man as an image-bearer of God? _____

Lesson 4: "The Nature of God"

WSC Question 4: What is God?

Answer: *God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.*

Scripture Reading:

John 4:24; Malachi 3:6; Exodus 3:11-14; 34:4-7

What is theology?

It is the nature of _____ which is foundational for all of life.

What is the meaning of the word "spirit"? _____

Define these terms: "infinite, eternal, and unchangeable." _____

What does the second commandment teach us? (Exod. 20:4) _____

Is there any way we can "see" God? _____

Can God do all things? _____

Are there qualities that God shares with man? What do we call these? _____

What are some attributes of God that He does share with humanity? _____

Are there qualities that God does not share with man? What do we call these? _____

What are some attributes of God that belong to Him alone? _____

If God is a Spirit why does the Bible talk about Him like He has bodily parts (Josh. 4:24; 1 Kings 15:5)? _____

Read Genesis 6:6. Does God ever change His mind? _____

Lesson 5: "The Nature of God / The Trinity"

WSC Question 5: Are there more gods than one?

Answer: *There is but one only, the living and true God.*

WSC Question 6: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

Answer: *There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.*

Scripture Reading:

1 Cor. 8:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

It is important that we start with God's _____ and we avoid futile

Don't let your study of _____ revelation fall into _____ (Deut. 29:29)

Where God has spoken let us _____ where God hasn't let us be

There are two main ways in church history that people have erred when it comes to the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. _____

a. Is God infinite? _____. Anything less than God is _____ less than God

2. _____

a. Matt. 3:16-17

What is monotheism? _____

Is monotheism biblical? _____

Briefly summarize the doctrine of the Trinity in your own words: _____

What does a "Unitarian" believe? _____

Who would be Unitarian?

What does a "Polytheist" believe? _____

Read the following verses and note one thing that they all teach us: _____

Deut. 6:4

1 Cor. 8:4-6

Is. 44:6

What do these verses teach us? _____

Eph. 1:3

Gal. 1:1

Is. 9:6-7

John 1:1

John 20:28

Titus 2:13

Romans 9:5

Acts 5:3-4 [John 14:16; Acts 28:25 compare with Is. 9:6]

[Spirit is omniscient Job 11:7 compare with 1 Cor. 2:10]

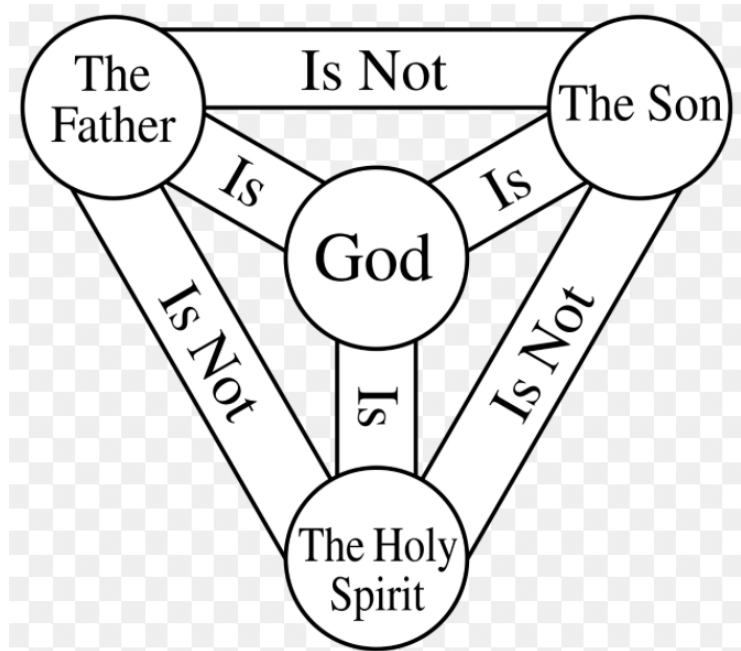
[Spirit is omnipresent Ps. 139:7]

[Spirit is omnipotent Luke 1:35]

[Spirit is eternal Heb. 9:14]

[Spirit is creator Gen 1:2; Ps. 104:30; and re-creator John 3:6; Titus 3:5]

From all that has been said above one must conclude that there is _____ in
_____ persons. This is the doctrine of the Trinity.



Preparation for Lessons 6

On "The Decrees of God"

- Refer to the Westminster Confession of Faith chapters 3 & 4, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions 7-9, for help.

True or False

1. ____ There are numerous things that happen by chance each and every day.
2. ____ Since God has predetermined all things we are not responsible for our choices.
3. ____ God changes His plans depending on our free choices.
4. ____ God does not know what the future holds.
5. ____ God controls not only the end of all things but the means toward that end.

Short Answer Questions:

1. How are God's plans different than our plans? _____

2. Are all events predetermined by God? Explain. _____

3. Does God ever change His mind? Explain. _____

Lesson 6: "The Decrees of God"

WSC Question 7: What are the decrees of God?

Answer: *The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*

Scripture Reading:

Eph. 1:4,11; Is. 46:10; Prov. 16:33

What does the catechism mean by the word "decree"? _____

What does the word foreordain mean? _____

Does God decree my salvation? _____

Is there anything in this world that happens by chance or accident? Explain why or why not. _____

Why does the catechism say "the decrees of God are His eternal purpose" (singular) rather than "purposes" (plural)? _____

Is there a purpose for everything that happens? _____

Is there any possibility that God's decree is unwise? _____

So if God has a plan for all things when did God design this plan? _____

Do God's plans ever change? _____

Can anything stop God from carrying out His decrees? _____

Does God need to seek out advice or counsel from others to determine His plan? _____

If God has a plan for all things then does this mean there is no such thing as man's freedom or "free will"? _____

What does it mean to say that God "has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass"? _____

Five Characteristics of the
Decrees of God

If everything that happens is part of God's plan how should we respond? _____

If God plans everything that happens in life does this mean life is easy? _____

Did God know that sin was going to enter into the world? _____

Is God the author of sin? _____

If God determines everything that happens then does it matter what we do with our lives? _____

Do we always understand why God does what He does? Explain. _____
