



Finding Comfort

The Heidelberg Catechism: Week 2

Context: Completed in 1562, the Heidelberg Catechism helped clarify beliefs and de-escalate tensions between emerging Protestant groups during the Reformation. Even though it tackles challenging topics like sin and guilt, it does so with the Good News of Jesus Christ front and center, encouraging believers through the ages to remember and respond to God's abundant love and grace. After reading the Q&A below, reflect: When you were a child, what did you believe about sin? Do you still believe this? Why/why not?

Q & A 3

Q. How do you come to know your misery?

A. The law of God tells me.

Q & A 4

Q. What does God's law require of us?

A. Christ teaches us this in summary in Matthew 22:37–40: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Q & A 5

Q. Can you live up to all this perfectly?

A. No. I have a natural tendency to hate God and my neighbor.

READ Matthew 22:34–40

1. How is the lawyer's question in verse 36 a test or a trick?
2. What does the lawyer's question reveal about human nature?
3. How would you describe the love that Jesus refers to in verses 37 and 39? Is it action-oriented or mere emotion? What's the difference and why does it matter?
4. Describe a time when you did something that hurt someone. What did you learn about yourself?
5. Why is it meaningful, and even hopeful, “to know your misery?”

Closing thought: Craig Barnes writes, “True to its pastoral nature, the catechism begins by reminding us that we confess our sins not to wallow in our guilt, but only to discover the comfort of how we are set free from it.” (From *Body and Soul: Reclaiming the Heidelberg Catechism*). **Pray** that we can be a church of love and hope by fully surrendering our sin and shame to God.