

Catechism

A Catechism?

(Adapted from a teaching by Pastor John Piper)

I. What is a catechism?

In 1 Corinthians 14:19 Paul says, "In the church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to *instruct* others, than ten thousand words in a tongue." In Galatians 6:6 he says, "Let *him who is taught* the word share all good things with *him who teaches*." Acts 18:25 says that Apollos "has been *instructed* in the way of the Lord."

In each of these verses the Greek word for "instruct" or "teach" is *katecheo*. From this word we get our English word "catechize". **It simply means to teach Biblical truth in an orderly way.** Generally this is done with questions and answers accompanied by Biblical support and explanation.

II. The history of these catechisms

These catechisms come from the Baptist tradition. Although CRCC is non-denominational, these catechisms can serve as a solid foundation for our families. We may add a few elements to it as catechism becomes more ingrained in the culture of our church.

III. Is there a Biblical pattern of doctrine?

Several texts teach that there is. For example, in Romans 6:17 Paul gives thanks that "you have become obedient from the heart to the *pattern of teaching to* which you were committed." 2 Timothy 1:13 says, "Follow the *pattern of sound words* which you heard from me." Acts 2:42 says, "They devoted themselves to *the apostles' teaching*." 2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, "Stand firm and hold to *the traditions* which you were taught by us." And Acts 20:27 says, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the *whole counsel of God*."

So it appears that there was a body of authoritative instruction and even a way of teaching it in the early church.

IV. Why is it important?

1) We are required to "continue in the faith, stable and steadfast" (Col. 1:23).

- 2) We are urged to "attain to the unity of the... knowledge of the Son of God...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:13-14).
- 3) There are many deceivers (1 John 2:26).
- 4) There are difficult doctrines "which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).
- 5) Leaders must be raised up who can "give instruction in sound doctrine and also confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9).
- 6) We are commanded to teach and disciple our children (Deuteronomy 6, Ephesians 6).

V. How shall we begin?

We are asking every family within CRCC (and especially fathers) to make the practice of catechism a part of your family routine. Carve out a time (perhaps in the morning or during or after dinner) for family worship and catechism. The good news for Dads and Moms is that this only requires you stay one day ahead! :)

Let's get excited about building a "stable and firm" generation who knows and serves Christ!

Other thoughts

Sometimes there are other ways to express a true answer to these questions. Feel free to use Scripture to formulate other true answers where possible and helpful. The aim of a catechism is not to be exhaustive but to give a solid foundation from which to "keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17).