

Memory Cards

Luther's Small Catechism



Lutheran Catechism
PROMOTING USE OF LUTHER'S CATECHISMS

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The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

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The First Commandment

What is this?

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things..

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The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of your God.

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The Second Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, practise witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

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The Third Commandment

You shall sanctify the day of worship.

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The Third Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

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The Fourth Commandment

You shall honour your father and your mother.

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The Fourth Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents or those in authority over us, but honour them, and serve and obey, love and value them.

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The Fifth Commandment

You shall not kill.

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The Fifth Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not physically hurt or harm our neighbour, but help and support him in every bodily need.

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The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

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The Sixth Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we live chastely and decently in our words and actions, and everyone loves and honours their spouse.

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The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

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The Seventh Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbour's money or possessions, or get them by deception or dishonesty, but help him to improve and protect his property and income.

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The Eighth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

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The Eighth Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not lie about our neighbour, betray him, slander him, or give him a bad reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

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The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's house.

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The Ninth Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not seek to get our neighbour's inheritance or house by deceit, or take it by a pretence of justice, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

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The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, servants, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

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The Tenth Commandment

What is this?

We should fear and love God so that we do not alienate, force or entice away our neighbour's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

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What does God Say about all these commandments?

He says, “I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

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What does God Say about all these commandments?

What is this?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything contrary to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly do what He commands.

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The First Article

Of Creation

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

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The First Article

What is this?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason and all my senses, and still looks after them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and everything I own. He richly and daily supplies me with everything I need to support this body and life. He shields me from all danger, and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does out of pure fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this I owe it to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

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The Second Article

Of Redemption

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

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The Second Article

What is this?

I believe that Jesus Christ—true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary—is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, bought me, and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death; in order that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

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The Third Article

Of Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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The Third Article

What is this?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; just as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church, He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day He will raise me and all the dead and give everlasting life to me and to all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

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The Introduction [to the Lord's Prayer]

Our Father who art in heaven.

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The Introduction [to the Lord's Prayer]

What is this?

Here God tenderly urges us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently and with full conviction, as dear children ask their dear father.

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The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

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The First Petition

What is this?

God's name is certainly holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

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The First Petition

How is this done?

When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches and lives in any other way than what God's Word teaches defiles the name of God among us. Preserve us from this, Heavenly Father!

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The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

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The Second Petition

What is this?

The kingdom of God comes by itself even without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it would come to us also.

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The Second Petition

How is this done?

When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and there in eternity.

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The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

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The Third Petition

What is this?

The good and gracious will of God is certainly done without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

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The Third Petition

How is this done?

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and intention which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until our end. This is His gracious and good will.

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The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

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The Fourth Petition

What is this?

God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all evil people; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to recognise this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

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The Fourth Petition

What is meant by daily bread?

Everything that belongs to the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, property, land, animals, money, goods, a devout spouse, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honour, good friends, faithful neighbours, and other such things.

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The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

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The Fifth Petition

What is this?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor refuse our petitions because of them; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them. Instead, we pray that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much, and we truly deserve nothing but punishment. In the same way, on our part, we will also sincerely forgive and willingly do good to those who sin against us.

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The Sixth Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

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The Sixth Petition

What is this?

God certainly tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and that, though they attack us, we would finally overcome and win the victory.

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The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

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The Seventh Petition

What is this?

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every kind of evil of body and soul, property and honour; and that finally, when our last hour comes, He would give us a blessed end and graciously take us from this valley of tears to Himself into heaven.

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Amen

What is this?

I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and that he hears them; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way, and has promised that He will hear us. “Amen, Amen,” that is, “Yes, yes, it shall be so.”

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The Sacrament of Holy Baptism – First

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not only plain water, but it is the water set in God's command and joined to God's Word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” [Matthew 28:19]

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The Sacrament of Holy Baptism – Second

What is the gift or benefit of Baptism?

It brings about forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” [Mark 16:16]

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The Sacrament of Holy Baptism – Third

How can water do such great things?

Of course it is not the water that does them, but the word of God, which is in and with the water, and the faith that trusts this word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is just water and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a water of life rich in grace, and a washing of new birth by the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus chapter three: “He saved us . . . by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is most certainly true.” [Titus 3:5–8]

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The Sacrament of Holy Baptism – Fourth

What does such baptising with water signify?

It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily remorse and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new person should daily come forth and arise, to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St Paul says in Romans chapter six: “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” [Romans 6:4]

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Confession

What is Confession?

Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, by no means doubting but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

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Confession

Which sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those of which we are unaware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the confessor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

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Confession

Which [sins] are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife or servant? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, angry, rude or quarrelsome? Have you hurt anyone by words or actions; have you have stolen, neglected or wasted anything, or done any harm?

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Confession

Please give me a brief form of Confession

Say to the confessor:

Dear sir, I ask you to hear my confession and to pronounce forgiveness in accordance with God's will.

I, a poor sinner, confess before God that I am guilty of all sins. In particular, I confess before you that I am a servant, a maid, etc. Alas, I serve my master unfaithfully; for in this and in that I have not done what they commanded me; I have provoked them, and caused them to curse, have been negligent and have allowed damage to be done. I have also been shameless in words and deeds, have quarrelled with my equals, have grumbled and sworn at my mistress, etc. For all this I am sorry, and I pray for grace. I want to do better.

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Confession

A master or lady of the house may say this:

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully trained my children, servants and wife to honour God. I have cursed and set a bad example by rude words and deeds. I have done harm to my neighbour and spoken evil of him. I have overcharged, sold shoddy goods, and used false weights and measures.

The penitent should add anything else he has done against God's commandments and his own position in life.

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Confession – [let this be enough]

If anyone does not find himself burdened with these or greater sins, he should not trouble himself, searching for or inventing other sins. That would make confession a torture. Instead, he should mention one or two that he knows. For example: "In particular I confess that I have cursed, or that I have used obscene words, or that I have neglected this or that, etc." Let this be enough.

But if you know of no sins at all (which is surely impossible), then mention none in particular, but receive forgiveness upon your general confession which you make before God to the confessor.

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Confession

Then the confessor shall say:

God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. Amen.

Furthermore:

Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

Answer:

Yes, dear sir.

Then let the confessor say:

"Let it be done for you as you believe." And by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Depart in peace.

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The Office of the Keys

What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

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The Office of the Keys

What do you believe according to these words?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

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The Office of the Keys

Where is this written?

This is what St John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty:

“The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.’”

[John 20:22–23]

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The Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

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The Sacrament of the Altar

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: ‘Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.’

“In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”

[Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25]

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The Sacrament of the Altar

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

Indeed, it is not the eating and drinking that does them, but rather these words: “Given, and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins.” These words are the main thing in the Sacrament; and whoever believes these words has what they say, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

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The Sacrament of the Altar

Who, then, receives this Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a fine outward discipline; but that person truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and ill-prepared; for the words “For you” require nothing but believing hearts.

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Morning Prayer

In the morning, when you get up, bless yourself with the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, say the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.

If you choose, you can also say this little prayer:

I thank You, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go to your work joyfully, singing a hymn, such as the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion suggests.

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Evening Prayer

In the evening, when you go to bed, bless yourself with the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

If you choose, you can also say this little prayer:

I thank You, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray You to forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.

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Asking a Blessing

The family shall go to the table reverently and with folded hands, and say: The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

[Psalm 145:15–16]

Then shall follow the Lord's Prayer and this prayer:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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Returning Thanks

Likewise also after the meal they shall say reverently and with folded hands: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. He gives food to all flesh. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

[Psalm 136:1, 25; Psalm 147:9–11]

Then shall follow the Lord's Prayer and this prayer:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, who live and reign forever. Amen.

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To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers

Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive. 1 Tim. 3:2-4

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 1 Tim. 3:6

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. Tit. 1:9

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What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. 1 Cor. 9:14 ❖ One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. Gal. 6:6-7 ❖ Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The labourer deserves his wages.” 1 Tim. 5:17-18 ❖ We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thess. 5:12-13 ❖ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Heb. 13:17

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Of Civil Government

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer. Rom. 13:1-4

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Of Citizens

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. Matt. 22:21 ❖ It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour. Rom. 13:5-7 ❖ I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Saviour. 1 Tim. 2:1-3 ❖ Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. Tit. 3:1 ❖ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 1 Pet. 2:13-14

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To Husbands

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Pet. 3:7

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Col. 3:19

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To Wives

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

Eph. 5:22

They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

1 Pet. 3:5–6

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To Parents

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Eph. 6:4

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To Children

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and your mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Eph. 6:1–3

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To Workers of All Kinds

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

Eph. 6:5–8

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To Employers and Supervisors

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with Him.

Eph. 6:9

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To Youth

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.

1 Pet. 5:5–6

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To Widows

The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

1 Tim. 5:5-6

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To Everyone

The commandments . . . are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Rom. 13:9

I urge . . . that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.

1 Tim. 2:1

*Let each his lesson learn with care,
And all the household well shall fare.*

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