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Christian Living

HC and ME

The Heidelberg Catechism for

BOB ROZEMA

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**The Heidelberg Catechism for
Christian Living**



Grand Rapids, Michigan

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**1 Q. What is your only comfort
in life and in death?**

A. That I am not my own,¹
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death—²
to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.³

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.⁵
He also watches over me in such a way⁶
that not a hair can fall from my head
without the will of my Father in heaven:⁷
in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸

Because I belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
assures me of eternal life⁹
and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor. 6:19-20

² Rom. 14:7-9

³ 1 Cor. 3:23; Titus 2:14

⁴ 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:2

⁵ John 8:34-36; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:1-11

⁶ John 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5

⁷ Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18

⁸ Rom. 8:28

⁹ Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14

¹⁰ Rom. 8:1-17

SESSION 1 (Q&A 1)

THE BOTTOM LINE

<Warm-up>

Stresses. Everybody's got 'em. School is going OK until you get huge assignments in every subject just before your term paper is due; you're getting along with mom and dad until that big clash over what time you have to be home on Saturday night. And so on. With a partner, act out a stressful situation—at home, school, work, anywhere—that makes you want to go “Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!” You can be funny or serious or both. Keep it short (a minute or less).



Huguenots wore this cross as a sign of their faith.

Murder in Church

It's no accident that the Catechism begins with comfort. When the authors of the Catechism sat down to write in 1562, they had just received reports that dozens of Huguenots—French followers of John Calvin—had been slaughtered while worshipping in church. Their attackers—a group of French Catholics—killed sixty Huguenots and wounded two hundred more. In the years that followed, some ten thousand Huguenots died for their faith. Torture was common: men were usually burned at the stake; women were buried alive.

<Main Event>

1. When people are hurting, where are some of the places they look for comfort and help?

2. Underline what the Catechism says is our *only* comfort. What do you think it means when it says that this is our *only* comfort?

3. Look up the Scripture passages under the first three footnotes to Q&A 1. Find a phrase in each passage that says we belong to Jesus.


4. Privately remember a time when you especially needed God's comfort and strength (or imagine such a time in the future). Then circle one thing in answer 1 that would give you comfort and hope and strength in such a situation.

<Follow-up>

True comfort is not a strong hand we can cling to when life's storms or death's floods sweep over our heads. It is a powerful hand that holds onto us with a grip that nothing can break. Comfort is Christ's holding on to us when we lack the strength to hold on to him. We know his power is greater than ours—greater than the devil's or death's—and that he will never let us go. We belong to him. *That's* our true comfort.

How do you react to this picture of comfort?

- I can see it clearly and know in my heart that it's true.
- I sometimes feel I'm holding on to Jesus, not vice-versa.
- I haven't felt much of "life's storms" so I really don't know what to make of this.
- I want to believe this but sometimes find it difficult.
- I'm living with the joy and security of knowing I belong to Jesus.
- Right now, I don't see how any of this relates to my life.
- Other: _____



**2 Q. What must you know
to live and die in the joy of this comfort?**

A. Three things:

first, how great my sin and misery are;¹

second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery;²

third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.³

¹ Rom. 3:9-10; 1 John 1:10

² John 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43

³ Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:9-10

SESSION 2 (Q&A 2)

HOW TO BE HAPPY

<Warm-up>

How do you think the “average person” would rank these common ingredients of being happy?

- being smart
- having lots of money
- having a good job
- being attractive
- having good health
- having a loving family
- being famous (as in sports or entertainment)
- believing in God and belonging to a church
- having lots of friends
- being content
- other: _____
- other: _____

<Main Event>

Misery (Sin)

Read Romans 3:9-12 and the first line of answer 2.

1. If you were an artist who wanted to illustrate human misery, what might you sketch? Make a simple drawing or just describe your sketch in words. Or, if you prefer, pantomime how people feel when they suddenly realize they've messed up big-time.

2. “To know real joy in God, [we need to] know inside and out, up and down, through and through, how full of sin we are. We’re just fooling ourselves if we think we’re without sin. And that’s not easy for anyone to confess. Nobody wants to look bad” (*Every Bit of Who I Am*, p. 17). What do you think the Catechism means about *knowing* how great our sin and misery are, and why is that necessary?
3. What does this part of answer 2 tell us we need to experience on a day-to-day basis?
4. What Q&A’s are included in the Misery (Sin) section of the Catechism?

Deliverance (Salvation)

Read Romans 5:6-9 and the second line of answer 2.

1. If you were an artist who wanted to illustrate deliverance from sin, what might you sketch? Make a simple drawing or just describe your sketch in words. Or, if you prefer, pantomime how people feel when they realize they’ve been forgiven for doing something pretty awful.
2. What do you think the Catechism means about *knowing* how we are set free from our sin and misery? What exactly do we need to know?



3. What does this part of answer 2 tell us we need to experience on a day-to-day basis?

4. What Q&A's are included in the Deliverance (Salvation) section of the Catechism? What creed is explained in this section?

Gratitude (Service)

Read Romans 12:1 and the third line of answer 2.

1. If you were an artist who wanted to illustrate a life of gratitude and service, what might you sketch? Make a simple drawing or describe your sketch in words. Or, if you prefer, pantomime what a life of gratitude and service might look like.

2. What do you think the Catechism means about *knowing* how we are to thank God for our deliverance? What does the Catechism mean by *know*? According to the Catechism, what would our motivation be for taking time to help out a neighbor or friend?

3. What does this part of answer 2 tell us we need to experience on a day-to-day basis?

4. What Q&A's are included in the Gratitude (Service) part of the Catechism? What prayer is found there? What guide to Christian living?

<Follow-up>

You are invited to complete the statements to form a prayer asking God to let you live the joy of knowing you belong to him.

(Sin) Loving God, I admit that I

(Salvation) Loving God, I celebrate the way you

(Service) Loving God, in response to what you have done for me, I want to

Amen.