



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- For the course of this study, we will be referencing “Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word” by Voddie Baucham.
- Chapter 5: Learning Apologetics through Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- 2 Timothy 2:2 and 3:14 find Paul encouraging Timothy, saying, “the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”, and “continue in the things you learned and became convinced of.”
- The Apostles knew that there is a “**pattern of sound teaching**” and they spent time writing to the churches in order to confront unsound teaching. The church must know what she believes.
- Romans 6:17 - But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart **that pattern of teaching** to which you were given over...



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- Acts 2:42 - And they were continually devoting themselves to **the apostles' teaching** and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15 - So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to **the traditions which you were taught**, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.
- This “pattern of sound doctrine” is useful so that we might “continue in the faith” (Col. 1:23), share in the “unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:13-14), and “exhort and refute [reprove] those who contradict” (Titus 1:9).



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- Colossians 1:23 - if indeed you continue in the faith firmly grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.
- Ephesians 4:13-14 - until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ, so that we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming,
- Titus 1:9 - holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to reprove those who contradict.



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- Catechisms give us the foundation and the glue upon which a Christian (biblical) worldview is built. They provide “real answers to real questions” as we learn and teach what we believe.
- Catechisms generally teach biblical truth in 4 areas: creation and the fall, salvation/redemption, prayer (The Lord’s Prayer), and ethics (The Ten Commandments). (Pg. 103).
- Catechisms were used since the time of the Reformation to impart biblical truth to children and new believers. Disciples of Jesus Christ are taught by rote memorization the things they (should) believe, with the understanding that belief affects behavior. What we believe influences how we live.



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- The Heidelberg Catechism, which was published in 1562, was divided into 52 sections so that one could be memorized and recited each Sunday of the year.
- The Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms, published in 1648, served to instruct younger and older believers in their times of family worship during the week.
- William Collins and Benjamin Keach produced The Baptist Catechism in 1677, revised in 1693, borrowing from the Westminster and adding Baptist distinctives. This catechism was used in Baptist churches in England and America for well over 200 years.



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- Charles Spurgeon blended The Westminster Shorter Catechism and the Baptist Catechism into The Puritan Catechism and introduced that to his church in 1855.
- Tracing the historical use of catechisms we see that they were introduced in order to serve the purpose of making disciples within our own homes. This focus on the family was understood to be necessary for the church as a larger spiritual family to thrive and grow.
- Religious instruction was understood to be the responsibility of parents for their children, and this daily instruction would be bolstered by the work of the pastors and teachers in the church who instructed the entire congregations when they gathered for corporate worship.



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- In the 1860s there was a notable decline of the use of catechisms in churches and families in both England and America. Spurgeon had seen this decline on the horizon and had prepared his catechism in 1855.
- This decline was specific to the role of the Sunday school. Originally, these schools served the purpose of teaching children to read and write and basic Christian ethics were a by-product as the Scriptures were used as the text book for learning. The students were children who worked during the week just as their parents did, or otherwise were not able to receive formal education. The focus was not for children of church members!



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- Sunday schools began to replace family and home worship. Religious instruction was passed from parents and pastors to others in the church whose goal was more oriented toward social or behavioral conformity to Christian norms – teaching moralism.
- The goal was to produce good little boys and girls and thus influence society at large without them ever having to actually come to church or become Christians.



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- In the preface of *Little Lessons for Little People* (1864), Basil Manly wrote, “While you learn these Little Lessons, ask God to make you good children, for Jesus’s sake and then when you grow up, you will be good men and good women, and when you die, you will go to Heaven.”
- That same year, Charles Spurgeon voiced his concern regarding the moralistic emphasis invading Sunday schools: “I think that in some Sunday-school addresses there is not always the gospel so clearly and decidedly proclaimed as it should be. It is not very easy, I know, to preach Christ to little children, but there is nothing else worth preaching. To stand up and say, ‘Be good boys and girls, and you will get to heaven,’ is preaching the old covenant of works, and it is no more right to preach salvation by works to little children than to those who are of mature age.”



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- In the years that followed, the focus shifted again from moralism to evangelism. This was a subtle shift that resulted in evangelism replacing disciple making! The number of converts became the metric for spiritual growth and health in the church.
- In 1922 in *Building a Standard Sunday School*, Arthur Flake wrote: “The supreme business of Christianity is to win the lost to Christ. This is what churches are for... surely then the Sunday school must relate itself to the winning of the lost to Christ as an ultimate objective.”
- There was an almost immediate increase in the number of children’s baptisms that by the 1960s was alarming many who saw childhood converts falling away from the church in their older teens and twenties.



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- The use of catechisms is increasing in recent years, especially among Reformed churches. If there is a “pattern of sound doctrine” that needs to be being taught within the church and within our families, the good news is that we do not need to reinvent the wheel! We have updated versions of all of these catechisms available today.
- These tools (Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms) are useful to aid parents in fulfilling their mandate from Scripture: “Train up a child according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
– Proverbs 22:6



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- “Train up a child according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6
- Why do we need to train our children (other than in obedience to Scripture)?
- Proverbs 22:15 tells us, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.” “Ah ha!” you say, “There it is – immediately when talking about parenting the first thing you bring up is spanking.” Yep, you just knew it didn’t you....being all fundamental and believing the Bible you knew I would start with the rod! You knew it was coming. But slow down just a minute. Let us look at this verse. Before we discuss discipline we need to see the truth that is often missed.



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- “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.”
- This is true. Without learning and without wisdom and without the experience of age we know that the hearts of our children are full of foolishness.
- What is foolishness? The Bible defines a fool as one says in his heart that there is no God (Psalm 14:1). Foolishness then is the idea that there is no accountability. In other words, the fool is his own god. He does as he wishes with no thought of his responsibility to God. Is this not true of all of us? We are born sinners. David tells us that we are even conceived in sin, that is, we are sinners by nature from conception because of the imputed sin of Adam (Psalm 51:5; Rom 5:12). And we arrive believing the world revolves around us.
- Children then need to be trained so that they might learn that they are not the center of the universe.



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- Depravity - We also see that training is necessary because if we are left on our own we will bring only shame. Proverbs 29:15 tells us: “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”
- If a child is not trained or disciplined then that child will bring shame to his mother, to his parents, to his family, and to all who know him. There is nothing more harmful to a child than to leave him to his own devices. This is true because we are, as was already stated, born sinners by nature. Another way to say it is that we are depraved.
- We are born lost, separated from God by sin and in need of salvation. Here are a few verses that reiterate this truth – we are depraved, and we need saving. We need God to save us!



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- To train up a child “in the way he should go” is to do just that – train up our children so that they know which way to go! It is teaching right and wrong, based upon Biblical truth. So much that the Bible says we find modern psychology and modern parenting gurus teaching us to ignore. Truth is denied as an absolute. The only thing many today think is absolute is that nothing is absolute. We need to teach our children the difference between right and wrong. We need to train them to refute the rationalism of the day so that they might stand for truth and be firm in their convictions.



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- How then do we train up our children in the way they should go? Simply put, we TRAIN them. We can use the word itself to serve as an outline to remind us and teach us how to do what we have been commanded to do. Let us see then what each letter in the word TRAIN stands for as we apply God's Plan for Parenting.
- T - The T stands for Train. Simple enough. We are to train our children. Training means that we treat our children as if they were students, or learners. The Biblical word used to describe this is the word "disciple." Our children are our disciples! The word disciple means literally, "a learner, student, or apprentice."



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- R - The R tells us that it is part of God's plan for parenting that we should Restrain our children from Evil.
- This refers to discipline. Discipline is not the same as punishment. Listen to that carefully, please. Too many parents think that it is their job to punish their children and they miss opportunities to discipline them. Discipline is in fact training. It is teaching, through both positive and negative reinforcement.



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- A - The A tells us that we should Admonish our children in the Lord.
- The word means to encourage. Often, we think of encouragement as attempting to make someone feel good or regain a proper perspective after a let down. But the word actually means to warn, instruct, and counsel. We warn about the danger of sin. We instruct in how to avoid sin. And we counsel so that our children are wise when it comes to knowing the difference between good and evil.



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- I - The I in TRAIN stands Instruct (in righteousness), that is we teach our children how to be right with God.
- Have you considered that your primary mission field on this earth is your own family? Do your children know Jesus Christ? Are they growing in grace and being disciplined by you so that they might follow after, love, and obey our Savior?
- God has assigned parents to be the teachers of their children – Prov. 1:8; Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6 – and God’s program for education is discipleship – Deut. 6:5-7.



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- N - The N represents Nurture.
- This is tender care as we serve as Guardians for our children. Nurture is not hard to understand but it is difficult to implement. Too often we parent with an attitude of superiority, even thinking condescending thoughts toward our children. They are after all needy, and we cannot pursue self gratification and be good parents both at the same time.



Lesson 7 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.
- First there is the responsibility of parents to train their children. And this is so much more than taking them to church and reading them Bible stories. It is, as we have explained, discipling our children in the faith. Have we discipled our children? Really? Or have we relied on Sunday school teachers and others to do what God called us to do?
- Second, the child must be trained in the way he should go. Not in the way he wants to go. Not in the way his parents want him to go. But in the way he should go, that is in the way of holiness before God and love for Him and His Word above all else.
- Third, it says that when he is old he will not depart from this way in which he has been trained. Notice, it does not say he will depart and then come back! It says he will not depart from it. When rightly trained, a submissive, humble heart does not rebel. You see, we have fallen for a lie, even promoted by Christian authors and ministers – this false idea that teenagers will indeed rebel.



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- The Biblical evidence and the testimony of many parents can be offered to show that while rebellion is a serious sin it is not a forgone conclusion for teenagers. If I had the time I could offer argument after argument from the Scripture and testimony after testimony from parents and children to prove that rebellion is not guaranteed. In fact, this verse we are looking at today is the place to start. If we have trained our children properly they will NOT depart, they will NOT rebel, they will NOT stray or lose their faith when tried and tempted.
- Fourth, notice that it says when he is old he will not depart from it. Unfortunately we hear the term and think elderly, senior citizens with gray hair, blue hair, or no hair. We think that when he is old though he has strayed from God all his life he may yet come back. Now, it is true that God may call anyone back at any point in time. But the key to understanding this verse is found in this word “old.” What does it mean?



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- It is best understood to say that when the child is “old” it is that time at which he has grown up or become mature. At times the word is used to denote the age at which a young man begins to grow whiskers on his chin – when he needs to start shaving. So this does not mean old age, but maturity. This is when a child is growing up to be a man or woman. When a child grows up and is mature, if he has been trained faithfully in the ways of God then he has a sure footing and is able to stand fast.
- The best way then to understand this verse is to see that parents are responsible to train up their children in the ways and Word of God so that as they mature, they have a solid doctrinal and practical foundation upon which to stand.



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- Remember then where we started – Catechisms are the Foundation and the Glue for building a Christian worldview.
- Also keep this in mind – within a Christian home, we should view our children as disciples. Some might object, what if our children do not yet give evidence of being born again? That's ok. Remember Judas? Wasn't he a disciple?
- Teach you children what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and pray daily that they will come to know that truth through the experience of being born again by coming to know and trust Him to save them.