

## **Heidelberg Catechism 4-5 –Why You Can't Get Comfort**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Man wants comfort and tries various things to get comfort but can't find it. He always fails.

**He fails because he does not know his sin, he does not know how to be saved, and he does not know how to serve God.** So what does he do?

**Man tries hallucinogenic drugs** (or alcohol or food) to give him comfort and escape from his troubles. But these drugs only have temporary effects...cost a lot...and have dangerous side effects.

**Man pursue riches to bring comfort** – thinking he can buy what he needs...but rich people in rich countries are more likely to be depressed and be suicidal.

**Man often attempts to get comfort by achieving high positions and advancing in his career**...but he can lose his job or his mind and doesn't get lasting comforts.

**Man hopes being married will bring him comfort**, but at the very best, it is only temporary comfort. The couple may get a divorce or the spouse dies. His hope of comfort is dashed.

**Man tries everything except what God says he needs to do!** What does God say to do? You will hear about that today.

Our headings are:

**Look at God's Criteria for Comfort**

**Look at Man's Capability for Comfort**

Our goals are: That you **will see God's criteria for receiving comfort, and, seeing that you don't meet God's criteria, that you will see you need someone to meet God's criteria for you.**

**Look at God's Criteria for Comfort**

**4 Q. WHAT DOES GOD'S LAW REQUIRE OF US?**

**A.** Christ teaches us this in summary in Matthew 22– You shall **love the Lord your God** with all your heart , and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.** On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

**1. When God created man, God demanded man loves him and his neighbor with a perfect love.**

Man expressed love for God by obedience - in his thoughts, words, and actions. From the very beginning, Adam and Eve knew they needed to love, so, not surprisingly, when they sinned, God accused them of disobedience.

**Isn't this an amazing contrast today?** People want to say to God and to you: **Love me for who I am** and **accept and support the lifestyle I have chosen to lead.**...and **don't judge**

me? Think of Bill C6 and how evil our Prime Minister and other MP's are: To them, loving means supporting wickedness.

**2. The criteria of love never changes, and the consequences of not loving God never changes.**

**God says: "You break my command and fail to love me and your neighbor, you die – your soul will be eternally separated from me and you will be sent to hell."**

**3. God did not direct Adam to love himself, and neither does Jesus demand you love yourself.**

He demanded you love others. **Knowing you do love yourself most of all, God used it as a standard of how much you must love God.** God was not endorsing or commanding self-love. (Self-love is a serious sin, the Apostle Paul said.)

**Let me illustrate: If someone says:** "Love vegetables as much as you love bacon." This isn't saying that loving bacon is good. It simply acknowledges you love bacon – which may be bad for you.

Self-love is sin. True love is self-sacrifice for the good of others. **Self-love is sacrificing others for your good.** This does not mean you shouldn't take care of yourself. You need to take care of yourself so you can love others! Motive!

**4. This clear command to obey all of God's law continued even after the Fall.**

Deuteronomy 5:32 "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; **you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.**

Deuteronomy 6:5 "You shall love the LORD your God **with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

Leviticus 19: 18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the LORD.

**5. God also emphasized the quality of that love he expected from his children: He wanted perfect love.**

God is perfect. Man was perfect, having been made in the image of God. So he was perfectly equipped to love perfectly.

**So how can you tell if love is perfect?** Love is perfect if it is from your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole mind, and with your whole strength.

**6. This love God requires of you is based on his law.**

Remember the context of Mt 22.

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and great commandment. 39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

To love God is to keep Laws 1-4. To love your neighbor, you have to keep Laws 5-10.

**Love and law are joined at the hip.** So love is not what you read about in romantic novels or in sappy movies. Love is not an emotion. It is a duty—a faithful obedience to Christ's commands. "If you love me, obey my commands."

**In fact, the law is an important part of your evangelism.** This is a good lesson to remember here!

**7. Now since love is the norm of the law (like water is the norm for a fish), if you want to obey the law, love is your ground for obeying it. To not have love is like being a fish out of water.**

### **Look At Man's Capability for Comfort**

#### **5 Q. CAN YOU LIVE UP TO ALL THIS PERFECTLY?**

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

**1. Because God demands you keep his laws perfectly and exhaustively, no man is able to do it.**

Adam and Eve were able to do this...but not you. You cannot keep the law because of sin.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "**There is none righteous, no, not one;**<sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.<sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; **There is none who does good, no, not one.**" **23** for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,

**2. It is against your nature to love.**

When you hate, you are doing what is natural. You don't have to train a child to be sinful. He naturally does them. That is his nature. A child is not born as a new white piece of paper. And it is not society that brings about his first sins (though society does contribute to his sinfulness). When a baby learns to sin, it is because he is acting out his nature. This is not a nice picture to use for a baby, but unless you acknowledge your sinfulness, you cannot expect to be saved from your sins. You are sworn enemies of God.

Romans 8: 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

**3. Does the Bible really point to a picture of such dire gloom about all men—even for sweet**

## **little babies?**

Absolutely. Man's norm became hate instead of love. Hate moves to violence and murder.

Genesis 6: 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Consider the **hate of the homosexual agenda** who want to force you to accept their wicked lifestyles (like trying to force ministers to marry them or put ministers in jail for trying to teach them to leave that lifestyle) and they will destroy your business if you don't kowtow to their demands. They are even trying to force Christians to accept them in their Bed and Breakfast homes.

**Hatred from feminists** causes them to want to destroy the children in the womb...and want to force Christian doctors to recommend abortion doctors – and to take your God-given money to do it.

**The hatred of the racist** causes him to kill those who are different from the way he is.

**Hatred for God and love for money** cause some to squeeze their employees – underpaying them.

**Hatred of Christians** caused Quebec to force children to learn anti-Christian ethics in school.

**Hatred of the old and sickly is now being pushed even more strongly on doctors and nurses.**

**Hatred of God causes the Premier to stop you from receiving spiritual care** and eat the Lord's Supper. Yes, and I do mean "hatred." Love is obeying God's law...not banning you from obeying God's law. The opposite of love is hate! There is not neutral ground. And all these things start from the heart.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

**Yet there is hope.** God taught man how desperate man was. He even taught man the condition of his heart so man would not live a life of hypocrisy. **God exposes sins so man might repent.**

**4. There are many in the world and even in Christians circles who don't like this doctrine of man's inability.** Those who despise this doctrine want to make God in their own image. They want God to conform to what they believe -with their assessment of things. So they repackage God to be a relativist when it comes to holiness.

**Some want God to say:** "Do the best that you can and I will accept that."

**Others say sin** has not damaged many as badly as man is damaged and man has retained the ability to obey God based on his personal choice. But God demands perfection. And man doesn't have it!

**5. This awareness of your sinfulness does not go away when you become a Christian.**

**In fact, your sense of your sins is enhanced.** You acknowledge your full sinfulness.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

**6. You only become capable of loving like you should because God works in you and made you a Christian.**

Praise God for that.

1John 4:19 **We love because he first loved us.** 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

**Conclusion:**

**God set high demands-the highest demands of holiness. He perfectly equipped man with everything he needed to meet those perfect demands.** But man failed -**miserably failed** and brought down with him all his descendants to this miserable pit. If man had passed the test, the comforts of Eden would have been his, and yours, forever, but he lost Eden's comfort. **Man continues on a trek toward his own destruction-** everything in his life is moving toward death. You see this in sickness, wars, and crimes...and he has no hope! He has no comfort. Everything he tries for comforts, fails. The best man, who is apart from Christ, can hope for is there is no hell and no judgment- after death... But there is heaven and hell.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. The 1<sup>st</sup> man, Adam, miserably failed, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam didn't.** He perfectly obeyed God's law so you are credited with his perfect obedience. He was a perfect sacrifice for you so you received the perfect holiness God demands. Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus..." God's justice demanded the cross: Christ did not escape. He is the means by which you escape. He restored your comfort...**and confirmed you will have it for eternity!**

**2. Now that you have permanent comfort, worship and work for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam.** Psalm 101:1-2: "**I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life**— when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart."

Finally, if you are carrying your sins on your own head, it will crush you. Before it does, why not call out to the Lord Jesus to take away your sins and free you from sins' burden so you can live and love as a child of Christ?