

Delighting in the One True God

Exodus 20:3 | Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 94-95

Studies in the Heidelberg Catechism #45

“**I** *DELIGHT* in the law of God in my inner being” (Rom. 7:22). Before Christ, the law was drudgery. After being made new creatures in Christ, the law is a delight. Our attitude is no longer that I must obey the law, but that I get to. Why? Because being a new creation means I am no longer enslaved in the Egypt of my sins but “have become obedient from the heart” and am freely a “slave[...] of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17, 18). Like the “blessed man” of Psalm 1 my “delight is in the law of the LORD, and on [it I] meditate[...] day and night” (Ps. 1:1, 2). The first law God has given us that we are to delight in is this: **You shall have no other gods before me** (Ex. 20:3).

How are you to be characterized by DELIGHTING IN THE ONE TRUE GOD?

BY BELIEVING GOD EXISTS

The first way to delight in the one true God is the most obvious thing:

BY BELIEVING HE EXISTS. John Lennon once of his idyllic utopia where there was no God: “Imagine there’s no heaven, it’s easy if you try. No hell below us, above us only sky. Imagine all the people, living for today.” In contrast, turn to Hebrews 11. Notice how after he mentions Enoch’s faith he says this:

“without faith it is impossible to please him.” With faith we do please him. Then he explains: “for whoever would draw near to God *must believe that he exists* and that he rewards those who seek him.” To “draw near to God” in the book of Hebrews means to worship. To worship God pleasingly you have to believe he actually is there when you draw near and that he actually hears when you pray. The atheist denies while the agnostic doubts God’s existence. Sadly, a recent pew Research Center study found that only 86% of Christians say it’s essential to being one to believe in God! Let us believe whole heartedly that he exists as he reveals himself in our conscience, in the creation around us, in the canon of holy Scripture, and all guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

BY REALIZING THERE IS ONE TRUE GOD

Second, we are to delight in the one true God BY REALIZING THERE IS ONE TRUE GOD. Children, you probably know by know that not everyone believes what you believe. There are those called “atheists” who don’t believe there even is a God. There are those called “agnostics” we doubt there is a God. Then there are lots of other religions with lots of ideas about God. Our Jewish and Muslim neighbors believe in one God like we do, but they deny that he is Triune—one God, three Persons. Our Mormon neighbors, on the

other hand, believe there are millions upon millions of gods and that all faithful Mormon men become gods with their own planets in eternity.

There is only one true God, though. Our Catechism says **that I** [am to] **rightly know the only true God** (Q&A 94). How do I do this? Let's turn to John 17. This is Jesus' prayer before his death. He says God the Father gave him as his Son in the flesh "authority to give eternal life to all whom you have given him" (v. 2). Then listen to verse 3 where he explains what this "eternal life" is: "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." How do we know there is only one true God? Jesus tells us. And remember from John 1:18, the purpose for which the Son of God came to earth was to make him known to us.

BY ENTRUSTING MY EXISTENCE TO THIS GOD

But just knowing this with our heads isn't good enough. Every day we watch the skydiving planes take off and land and all the people coming down with their parachutes. But if you're up there thousands of feet in the air and you see a parachute sitting next to you, what good does it do you just knowing that if you don't use it? You have to grab hold of it, put it on, jump, and use it. Similarly I delight in the one true God BY ENTRUSTING MY EXISTENCE TO THIS GOD. I don't just acknowledge him with a little nod of the head; I give

myself to him. “I am yours; save me,” the Psalmist said (Ps. 119:94). This means **I...trust him alone**. This means **I...look to God for every good thing humbly and patiently**. This means **I...love, fear, and honor him with all my heart**. In short, that I renounce all created things rather than go against God’s will in any way. Jesus illustrated this absolute allegiance by saying, “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). If we love him, we will entrust ourselves to him more than we do to anything or anyone else.

BY REJECTING IDOLS OF THIS “GOD”

This leads to a fourth way we express this love and delight in the one true God: BY REJECTING IDOLS OF THIS “GOD.” You all know the saying, “You are what you eat.” Is that true spiritually? Let’s turn to Psalm 115 and find out.

The world asks, “Where is their God?” (v. 2) because our God is invisible while theirs have massive stadiums! Their idols are just “silver and gold, the work of human hands” (v. 4). And even though they have mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands, and feet they do not speak, see, hear, smell, feel, or walk (vv. 5–7). Then the Psalmists says one of the more intriguing statements in

Scripture: “Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them” (v. 8). You are what you eat; you are what you worship.

That’s why Scripture takes this so seriously. Paul exhorts us “not [to] be deceived” that “idolaters...will [not] inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9, 10). And John says it succinctly: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21). When our Catechism says **that I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation, avoid and shun all idolatry, sorcery, superstitious rites, and prayer to saints or to other creatures** (Q&A 94), we can sinfully think as long as I don’t play dungeons and dragons, call the psychic friends network to find God’s will, cross myself with water before coming into church, or pray to Mary or St. Jude for his help then I’m good.

But what’s idolatry? It’s “**having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in his Word**” (Q&A 95). Idols can be *in the place of* God or *alongside of* God. Even more, an idol can be *a thing* or *an idea*. What things or ideas exist in our culture that want to be *in the place of* God or *alongside of* God? **Success?** “If you’re not first, you’re last.” If you’re not

climbing the ladder, you're unsuccessful. **Wealth? Virtue? Social groups? Politics? Self?**

I want to ask you again: when you hear **you shall have no other gods before me**, is this is drudgery or a delight to you? I delight in the law of God in my inner being because he's given me this law to keep me from going back into slavery to sinful self and to teach me service to my Lord Jesus Christ.¹

Endnotes

¹ See Pierre Charles Marcel, *In God's School: Foundations for a Christian Life*, trans. Howard Griffith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 144-145.