# Lesson 9

## Time

### 00–05

**Greeting, Opening Prayer**

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### 05–10

**State the Topic and Goals for the Lesson**

1. To serve God, not out of a drive to earn one’s salvation, but rather out of gratitude and in freedom through a transformed life.
2. To discover in the Scriptures God’s guidance for growth in holiness and faith as a way of life.
3. To deepen personal dependence upon Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for godly thoughts and actions.
4. To embrace practical and specific ways to obey God.
5. To experiment with practical and specific ways to worship and pray.

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### 10–20

**Warm-up Discussion (choose one or two questions)**

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “holy”?
2. What would you say to someone who asserts, “The Church has no right to tell me how I ought to live my life”?
3. In what areas do you see conflicts between biblical standards of conduct and the standards of conduct evident in our culture?
4. When you find a conflict between scriptural standards of conduct and your own desires, how do you handle it?

**Historical Note**

What we believe shapes our behavior.

The first ecumenical creeds (Nicene and Apostles’) do not address moral conduct. However, concern for godly conduct was part of the early catechumen process, as quality of life was carefully inspected before inquirers were permitted to join the Church. The code of conduct became more stringent in the first reforms of the Church and the rise of monasticism. These codes eventually resulted in a works-based approach to holiness. The Reformers addressed these problems in their confessional documents, affirming faith as the source of holy conduct, not the other way around.
Prior to the Reformation
Sanctification  (The pursuit of holiness)  
Justification  (May or may not someday achieve God’s acceptance in eternity)

After the Reformation

Justification  (God’s acceptance by grace/faith in this world)  
Sanctification  (The pursuit of holiness)

:20:25
Ask the group, “What questions are you going to want to have answered before we are finished tonight?”
List on whiteboard. These might be words to be defined, meaning to be explained, or application to be made. Make note where these questions will be answered in your sub-topic coverage below . . . or punt!

:25–:30
READ ESSENTIAL TENET III-E

:30–1:20
PRESENTATION OF EACH SUB-TOPIC
Think in terms of OBSERVE, INTERPRET, REFLECT, APPLY.

GROWTH IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP
Romans 8:9-11
Matthew 6:7-13
Exodus 20:1-2
Exodus 20:3-11
Heidelberg, 4.086
Westminster, 6.114, 6.116, 6.117
Heidelberg, 4.093, 4.094, 4.096, 4.099, 4.103
C67, 9.50
Foster, Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home
Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor

GROWTH IN GODLY THOUGHT AND ACTION
Matthew 5:11-48
Colossians 3:5–4:1
Exodus 20:12-17
Heidelberg, 4.104–4.113
Murray, Principles of Conduct
Calvin, Institutes, II, VII, 11
The Seven Deadly Sins

GROWTH IN FOLLOWING JESUS CHRIST
Hebrews 12:1-3
I Peter 1:13–2:3
I John 1:5-10
Hebrews 8:8-13
Colossians 3:1-4
Heidelberg, 4.114–115
Large Catechism, 7.265
C67, 9.22–9.24
Lewis, Mere Christianity
Wright, After You Believe

GROWTH IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP

I. Growth in Prayer and Worship
Prior to the Reformation, moral effort and good works were considered necessary to be worthy of God’s acceptance.
The Reformation was unleashed when Martin Luther proclaimed that God awarded
salvation by faith, not because of good works. A holy life was the fruit of God’s saving grace, not the source of it.

**Scriptures:**

| Romans 8:9-11 | 1. Romans 8:9-11, The Holy Spirit enables holy life |
| Matthew 6:7-13 | 2. Matthew 6:7-13, Jesus provides his comprehensive model prayer for regular public and private use |
| Exodus 20:1-2 | 3. Exodus 20:1-2, Ten Commandments are given after redemption, not in order to achieve it |
| Exodus 20:3-11 | 4. Exodus 20:3-11, The Ten Commandments make worship our first priority |

**Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms:**

| Heidelberg, 4.086 | HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, PART III; Thankfulness |
| Q86. Since we are redeemed from our sin and its wretched consequences by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why must we do good works? |
| A. Because just as Christ has redeemed us with his blood he also renews us through his Holy Spirit according to his own image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves grateful to God for his goodness and that he may be glorified through us; and further, so that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits and by our reverent behavior may win our neighbors to Christ. |

| 3. Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men; and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue. |
| 5. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscientious hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as, also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths, and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasion; which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner. |
| 6. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself, so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected or forsaken…. |

| Heidelberg, 4.093, 4.094 | HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, PART III; Thankfulness |
| Q93. How are these commandments divided? |
| A. Into two tables, the first of which teaches us in four commandments how we ought to live in relation to God; the other, in six commandments, what we
owe to our neighbor.

Q94. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?
A. That I must avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, enchantments, invocation of saints or other creatures because of the risk of losing my salvation. Indeed, I ought properly to acknowledge the only true God, trust in him alone, in humility and patience expect all good from him only, and love, fear and honor him with my whole heart. In short, I should rather turn my back on all creatures than do the least thing against his will.

Heidelberg, 4.096

Q96. What does God require in the second commandment?
A. That we should not represent him or worship him in any other manner than he has commanded in his word.

Heidelberg, 4.099

Q99. What is required in the third commandment?
A. That we must not profane or abuse the name of God by cursing, by perjury, or by unnecessary oaths. Nor are we to participate in such horrible sins by keeping quiet and thus giving silent consent. In a word, we must not use the holy name of God except with fear and reverence so that he may be rightly confessed and addressed by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.

Heidelberg, 4.103

Q103. What does God require in the fourth commandment?
A. First, that the ministry of the gospel and Christian education be maintained, and that I diligently attend church, especially on the Lord’s day, to hear the Word of God, to participate in the holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian service to those in need. Second, that I cease from my evil works all the days of my life, allow the Lord to work in me through his Spirit, and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.

C67, 9.50

CONFESSION OF 1967, PART II; Section B, 2. Praise and Prayer

The church responds to the message of reconciliation in praise and prayer. In that response, it commits itself afresh to its mission, experiences a deepening of faith and obedience, and bears open testimony to the gospel. Adoration of God is acknowledgement of the Creator by the creation. Confession of sin is admission of all men’s guilt before God and of their need for his forgiveness. Thanksgiving is rejoicing in God’s goodness to all men and in giving for the needs of others. Petitions and intercessions are addressed to God for the continuation of his goodness, the healing of men’s ills, and their deliverance from every form of oppression. The arts, especially music and architecture, contribute to the praise and prayer of a Christian congregation when they help men to look beyond themselves to God and to the world which is the object of his love.

Other Perspectives:

Foster, Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home

Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love. (Richard Foster, Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home, Harper San Francisco, 1992, p. 3)

We do not have to be bright, or pure or filled with faith, or anything. That is what grace means, and not only are we saved by grace, we live by it as well. And we pray by it. (Richard Foster, Prayer, p. 8)

Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor

Prayer has to be a response to what God has said. The worshipping congregation— hearing the Word read and preached, and celebrating it in the sacraments—is the place where I learn how to pray and where I practice prayer. It is a center from
which I pray. From it I go to my closet or to the mountains and continue to pray. (Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, Word Publishing, 1989, p. 16)

**Essential Tenet**

*Progress in holiness is an expected response of gratitude to the grace of God, which is initiated, sustained, and fulfilled by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.* The first response of gratitude is prayer, and the daily discipline of prayer – both individually and together – should mark the Christian life. The life of prayer includes praise to God for His nature and works, sincere confession of our sin, and intercession for the needs of those we know and for the needs of the world. As we practice the discipline of regular self-examination and confession, we are especially guided by the Ten Commandments. We therefore hold one another accountable to:

1. worship God alone, living all of life to His glory, renouncing all idolatry and all inordinate loves that might lead us to trust in any other help;
2. worship God in humility, being reticent in either describing or picturing God, recognizing that right worship is best supported not by our own innovative practices but through the living preaching of the Word and the faithful administration of the Sacraments;
3. eliminate from both speech and thought any blasphemy, irreverence, or impurity;
4. observe the Sabbath as a day of worship and rest, being faithful in gathering with the people of God . . . .

**Teaching Points**

1. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us.
2. Godliness springs from gratitude for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.
3. Prayer is private and social, spontaneous and disciplined, and takes a variety of forms and expressions.
4. We are to worship God exclusively, humbly, reverently, and regularly.

**GROWTH IN GODLY THOUGHT, ACTION**

II. Growth in Godly Thought and Action

The religion of the Bible is concerned with morality and character, but it is not primarily a moral code nor a rule-based religion.

**Scriptures:**

Matthew 5:11-48

1. Matthew 5:11-48, Jesus’ declaration of laws of the Kingdom of Heaven are addressed to the inward responses of the heart

Colossians 3:5–4:1

2. Colossians 3:5–4:1, Paul provides instructions on how Christians are to behave towards one another

Exodus 20:12-17

3. Exodus 20:12-17, The second table of the Law addresses godly social conduct
Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms:

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, PART III; Thankfulness

Q104. What does God require in the fifth commandment?
A. That I show honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and to all who are set in authority over me; that I submit myself with respectful obedience to all their careful instruction and discipline; and that I also bear patiently their failures, since it is God’s will to govern us by their hand.

Q105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?
A. That I am not to abuse, hate, injure, or kill my neighbor, either with, or by word or gesture, much less by deed, whether by myself or through another, but to lay aside all desire for revenge; and that I do not harm myself or willfully expose myself to danger. This is why the authorities are armed with the means to prevent murder.

Q106. But does this commandment speak only of killing?
A. In forbidding murder God means to teach us that he abhors the root of murder, which is envy, hatred, anger, and desire for revenge, and that he regards all these as hidden murder.

Q107. Is it enough, then, if we do not kill our neighbor in any of these ways?
A. No; for when God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, he requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness toward him, to prevent injury to him as much as we can, also to do good to our enemies.

Q108. What does the seventh commandment teach us?
A. That all unchastity is condemned by God, and that we should therefore detest it from the heart, and live chaste and disciplined lives, whether in holy wedlock or in single life.

Q109. Does God forbid nothing more than adultery and such gross sins in this commandment?
A. Since both our body and soul are a temple of the Holy Spirit, it is his will that we keep both pure and holy. Therefore he forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires and whatever may excite another person to them.

Q110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?
A. He forbids not only the theft and robbery which civil authorities punish, but God also labels as theft all wicked tricks and schemes by which we seek to get for ourselves our neighbor’s goods, whether by force or under the pretext of right, such as false weights and measures, deceptive advertising or merchandising, counterfeit money, exorbitant interest, or any other means forbidden by God. He also forbids all greed and misuse and waste of his gifts.

Q111. But what does God require of you in this commandment?
A. That I work for the good of my neighbor wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me, and do my work well so that I may be able to help the poor in their need.
Q112. What is required in the ninth commandment?
A. That I do not bear false witness against anyone, twist anyone’s words, be a gossip or a slanderer, or condemn anyone lightly without a hearing. Rather I am required to avoid, under penalty of God’s wrath, all lying and deceit as the works of the devil himself. In judicial and all other matters I am to love the truth, and to speak and confess it honestly. Indeed, insofar as I am able, I am to defend and promote my neighbor’s good name.

Q113. What is required in the tenth commandment?
A. That there should never enter our heart even the least inclination or thought contrary to any commandment of God, but that we should always hate sin with our whole heart and find satisfaction and joy in all righteousness.

Other Perspectives:

John Murray, Principles of Conduct

...Biblical ethics has paramount concern with the heart out of which are the issues of life. (John Murray, Principles of Conduct, Eerdmans, 1957, p. 13)

...The biblical ethic takes account, not [just] of individuals...but of individuals in their corporate relationships. (John Murray, Principles of Conduct, p. 13)

Calvin, Institutes, II, VII, 11

The Second Table prescribes how in accordance with the fear of his name we ought to conduct ourselves in human society. In this way our Lord, as the Evangelists relate, summarizes the whole law under two heads; that ‘we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul and with all our power; and ‘that we should love our neighbor as ourselves’ [Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:37, 39]. You see that of the two parts in which the law consists, one he directs to God, the other he applied to men. (Calvin, Institutes, II.VII.11)

The seven deadly sins (pride, greed, gluttony, lust, jealousy, anger, and sloth) compiled during the Middle Ages were considered deadly precisely because they were destructive for healthy experience in Christian community.

The Essential Tenet

5. give honor toward those set in authority over us and practice mutual submission within the community of the church;
6. eradicate a spirit of anger, resentment, callousness, violence, or bitterness, and instead cultivate a spirit of gentleness, kindness, peace, and love; recognize and honor the image of God in every human being from conception to natural death.
7. maintain chastity in thought and deed, being faithful within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman as established by God at the creation or embracing a celibate life as established by Jesus in the new covenant;
8. practice right stewardship of the goods we have been given, showing charity to those in need and offering generous support of the Church and its ministries;
9. pursue truth, even when such pursuit is costly, and defend truth when it is challenged, recognizing that truth is in order to goodness and that its preservation matters;
10. resist the pull of envy, greed, and acquisition, and instead cultivate a spirit of contentment with the gifts God has given us.
Teaching Points

1. The Ten Commandments hold us accountable and guide us in the right way to think and act towards our neighbors.

2. Conduct that is obedient to God’s commands will manifest in the following virtues:
   - Honoring of authority in every area of life and practice mutual submission within the Church
   - Forgiveness and lifelong kindness and care for every person of whatever age
   - Chaste behavior in both married and single life
   - Stewardship of possessions
   - Truthfulness and contentment

III. Growth in Following Jesus Christ

By faith and in gratitude, through the Holy Spirit, in the face of challenges, we follow Jesus on the path of holiness as we anticipate the new heaven and earth.

Scriptures:

1. Hebrews 12:1-3, Jesus Christ is the perfect standard for all faith and conduct
2. I Peter 1:13–2:3, The blood of Christ frees us from the power of sin and transforms our conduct
3. I John 1:5-10, The light of Jesus Christ and his blood frees us from darkness in order to face our sin
4. Hebrews 8:8-13, The new covenant in Jesus Christ means that the law is written on the heart
5. Colossians 3:1-4, We are empowered to be holy as we set our hearts and minds on the ascended and impending Lord Jesus Christ

Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms:

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, PART III; Thankfulness

Q114. But can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

A. No, for even the holiest of them make only a small beginning in obedience in this life. Nevertheless, they begin with serious purpose to conform not only to some, but to all the commandments of God.

Q115. Why, then, does God have the ten commandments preached so strictly since no one can keep them in this life?

A. First, that all our life long we may become increasingly aware of our sinfulness, and therefore more eagerly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ. Second, that we may constantly and diligently pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that more and more we may be renewed in the image of God, until we attain the goal of full perfection after this life.
LARGER CATECHISM

Q155. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ, of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.


The new life takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no man has any ground on which to stand, except God’s grace.

The new life does not release a man from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, fear. He still has to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as he matures in love and faithfulness in his life with Christ, he lives in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.

The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death.

The teaching of apostles and prophets guides men in living this life, and the Christian community nurtures and equips them for their ministries.

Other Perspectives:

I think all Christians would agree with me if I said that though Christianity seems at first to be all about morality, all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue, yet it leads you on, out of all that, into something beyond. (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Book III, 12)

The aim of the Christian life in the present time—the goal you are meant to be aiming at once you have come to faith, the goal which is within your reach in the present life, anticipating the final life to come—is the fully formed, fully flourishing Christian character. (N. T. Wright, *After You Believe*, Harper One, 2010, p. 32)

The Essential Tenet

In Jesus Christ we see the perfect expression of God’s holy will for human beings offered to God in our place. His holy life must now become our holy life. In Christ, God’s will is now written on our hearts, and we look forward to the day when we will be so confirmed in holiness that we will no longer be able to sin. As the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, Jesus leads us along the path of life toward that goal, bringing us into ever deeper intimacy with the Triune God, in whose presence is fullness of joy.

Teaching Points

1. Jesus Christ’s holy life is the standard for all human life.

2. We must share in Jesus Christ’s holy life if we are to grow in grace.

3. In Jesus Christ the law of God becomes internalized.
4. Even with the law inside us, we still sin.
5. One day, we will be transformed so that we will be free of sin.
6. Jesus Christ leads his people toward the goal of knowing, serving, and enjoying God forever.

1:20–1:50

GROUP DISCUSSION from prepared group questions

*Emphasize how this belief enlivens relationship with God and motivates responsive action. Scratch where they itch, as long as interaction is on-point.*

1. “The first response of gratitude is prayer, and the daily discipline of prayer—both individually and together—should mark the Christian life.” What challenges do you face in a life of daily prayer?

2. “The life of prayer includes praise to God for His nature and works, sincere confession of our sin, and intercession for the needs of those we know and for the needs of the world.” Which of these elements of prayer are you most inclined to include and which are you most apt to leave out?

3. **The first four commandments comprise the first table of the law, (Exodus 20:1-12) in which we are instructed to worship God as a way of life. The first two commandments require that we worship God exclusively and humbly. What’s wrong with being open to other gods or worshiping God according to your own personal innovations?**

4. In what ways is worship—with a dual focus on “preaching the Word and faithful administration of the Sacraments”—faithful to the intention of the second commandment not to make idols that suit our own appetites?

5. How do observing the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship, speaking circumspectly about God, and honoring those in authority equip us to live in ways that are honoring God?

6. **Commandments 5-10 comprise the second table of the Law and focus on godly actions and attitudes (Exodus 20:13-17). How does obedience to these commandments create and cultivate healthy relationships?**

7. **The historic “seven deadly sins” were considered deadly because they were destructive to Christian community. In what specific ways does disobedience to the commandments erode healthy relationships?**

8. Gratitude is at the heart of a healthy relationship with God and with other people. In what specific ways does gratitude lead to obedience to the second table of the Law?

9. In the last commandment we are to “resist the pull of envy, greed and acquisition, and instead cultivate a spirit of contentment with the gifts God has given us.” What is the relationship between gratitude and contentment?

10. Jesus Christ is our Lord. We follow Him and aspire to be like Him as “His holy life must now become our holy life.” By the Spirit, “God’s will is now written on our hearts.” In what ways can you see Jesus’ character reflected in your attitudes, actions, and relationships?

1:50–1:57

**CHECK IN with original questions on board.**

SUMMARIZE “What We Have Learned Tonight”
## Concluding Remarks

Until the twentieth century, morality was central to education. Aristotle, who set the tone for ages to follow wrote, “… the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought.” Today public educators struggle to find the place for moral literacy and value added instruction in the curriculum.

More than ever the Church needs to be the conscience of the nations and the school of character. Jesus wants us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

| 1:57–2:00 | CLOSING PRAYER |