

Heidelberg Catechism 4-5 – Comfort: Why You Can't Get it

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Isn't it true than mankind has tried and continues to try all kinds of things to bring comfort – something he desperately craves?

Man tries hallucinogenic drugs (or alcohol) to give him comfort and escape from his troubles. The trouble is, these drugs only have temporary effects...costs 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 忧郁 and suicidal.

Man hopes that 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. The hope of comfort is dashed.

Man tries everything except what God says he needs to do!

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 how you need someone to meet God's criteria for you so you can have comfort.

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. 问4：神的律法对我们有什么要求？答：基督已在马太福音廿二章37-

40节总结的教训了我们：“你要尽心，尽性，尽意，尽力爱主你的神。这是诫命中的第一，且是最大的。其次也相仿，就是要爱人如己。这两条诫命，是律法和先知一切道理的总纲。”

1. When God created man God demanded that all people (men, women, boys and girls) love him and their neighbors with perfect love. Love was the norm 准则 Man expressed that love for God by obedience. They showed love in their thoughts, their words, and their actions. Adam and Eve knew that love was the norm of their lives. When they sinned, God directly accused them of disobedience. (So they knew God's law.) Isn't this an amazing contrast from 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? But God's criteria never changes. God did not make it a suggestion to love. He demanded it and expected proof of love.

2. The consequences of not loving God and man does not change either. 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 that you love yourself. He demanded that you love others. Knowing that you do love yourself, God used it as a standard of how much you must love God. God was not endorsing self-love 自爱 He was not commanding it. (Self-love is listed a serious last day sin by Apostle Paul.) Let me illustrate. Someone says: “Love vegetables as much as you love pork fat.” This wasn't saying that loving pork fat was good. It simply acknowledges that you love pork fat – 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. (But note well that when some people say self-love they may simply mean that you must take care of yourself – which is a good thing.)

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

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 stated the quality of that love that he expected from his children. God demanded perfect love from those who were perfectly made and perfectly equipped with all things to love. God's holiness caused him to demand perfect love... which is perfect holiness...Man was made in the image of God and man must reflect 反映 God's holiness. This is a communicable attribute 可传递属性...an attribute of God that he can give to you. **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.** This is the only way you can love...at every opportunity and in perfection...as God demands.

6. This love that God requires of you is based on his law. Remember the context of Matthew 22.

Matthew 22:36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 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 keep Laws 5-10. **Love and law are joined at the hip.** Everything that that the OT taught was about loving God and loving one's neighbor, and how one could get credit 获好评 for loving God and loving one's neighbor. So love is not what you see in Soap Operas...or romantic novels... Love is not an emotion. It is a duty-a faithful obedience to Christ's commands. "If you love me you will obey my commands." Christ. Notice then how teaching the **law is an important part of your evangelism传福音**

7. Now since love is the norm of the law (like water is the norm of 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.** Love was the ground for keeping God's law in Canaan, and is the ground for you keeping God's law today.

Look At Man's Capability for Comfort

5 Q. CAN YOU LIVE UP TO ALL THIS PERFECTLY? 问5:你能完全遵守这诫命吗?

A. No. I have a natural tendency to hate God and my neighbor. 答:不能;因为我的本性是倾向于憎恨神和邻舍的。

1. Because God demands that you keep his laws perfectly and exhaustively, no man is able to do it. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were able to do this...but not anymore. Of course, the reason man is not able to keep the law is because of sin.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." **19** Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **1John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2. But why do you not love like you should? It is against you nature to love. When you hate, you are doing what is natural. You don't have to train a child to do sinful things. He naturally does them. That is because it is in 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 促进 to his sinfulness in many ways later). When a baby learns to sin it is because he simply acting out his nature. This is not a nice picture to use for a baby, but unless you acknowledge you sinfulness, you cannot expect to be saved from your sins. You are sworn enemies of God.

Romans 8: 7 Because **the carnal mind 体贴肉体 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 and even include these sweet little babies our sisters will soon have? 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 邪恶 lifestyles (like trying to force ministers to marry them) and will destroy your business if you don't kowtow to their demands (taking you to human rights commissions). They are trying to force Christians to accept them in their Bed and Breakfast homes, and to force bakers to make cakes with perverted messages!

Hatred from feminists 女权主义者 causes them to want to destroy the children in the womb...and want to force Christian doctors to recommend abortion doctors.

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 want to squeeze his employees – underpaying

them.

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

Euthanasia安乐死 is now being pushed on doctors and nurses, especially, by the government and those who don't want to murder themselves. 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 that man might repent.**

4. Some don't like this doctrine of man's inability to remedy his condition. Those who despise this doctrine, do so on the basis that they want to make God in their own image. They want God to conform to what they are and believe. God must agree with their assessment of things. **So these despisers of this doctrine then repackage God to be a relativist when it comes to holiness.** They want God to say:

"Do the best that you can and I will accept that." Some teach this to their congregations and students. God demands perfection. Consider again God's words regarding man's thoughts and man actions:

Leviticus 19:17 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 'You shall not take vengeance..."

5. This awareness of your sinfulness does not go away when you become a Christian. In fact, your sense of your sins is enhanced加强. You acknowledge your full sinfulness. The godly Apostle Paul wrote:

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 have only become capable of loving like you should because Christ works in you. 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? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother..."

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

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. That 1st man, Adam, miserably failed, but the 2nd Adam never failed. He perfectly obeyed God's law so you would be credited得赏 with his perfect obedience. And he was a perfect sacrifice for you so you received that perfect holiness that God demands. Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation定罪 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 that you will have it for eternity!

2. Now that you have that permanent comfort, worship and work for the 2nd Adam. He expects his children to worship and work for him. 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?