

The Ten Commandments

**You shall have no other gods.
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
Honor your father and your mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand
of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever and ever. Amen**

A Simple Approach to Bible Study and Prayer

Martin Luther developed a series of questions that aided him in studying and praying through God's Word. We know about these questions because he incorporated them in a letter to Peter the Barber (Luther's Barber). Luther called this "A Simple Way to Pray."

These are the four questions:

- 1) **Instruction**
What is God teaching me in these verses?
- 2) **Thanksgiving**
What is there in these words of God for which I get to give thanks to the Lord?
- 3) **Confession**
In light of what I have learned in these words of God, how have I fallen short in this area?
- 4) **Prayer**
Following what we have learned by the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Word, we turn what's been discovered into prayer.

Here's the example, using the 3rd Commandment, that Luther provided in his letter to Peter the Barber:

The Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." I learn from this, first of all, that the Sabbath day has not been instituted for the sake of being idle or indulging in worldly pleasures, but in order that we may keep it holy. However, it is not sanctified by our works and actions—our works are not holy—but by the word of God, which alone is wholly pure and sacred and which sanctifies everything that comes in contact with it, be it time, place, person, labor, rest, etc. According to St. Paul, who says that every creature is consecrated by word and prayer, **I Timothy 4** [:5], our works are consecrated through the word. I realize therefore that on the Sabbath I must, above all, hear and contemplate God's word. Thereafter I should give thanks in my own words, praise God for all his benefits, and pray for myself and for the whole world. He who so conducts himself on the Sabbath day keeps it holy. He who fails to do so is worse than the person who works on the Sabbath.

Second, I thank God in this commandment for his great and beautiful goodness and grace which he has given us in the preaching of his word. And he has instructed us to make use of it, especially on the Sabbath day, for the meditation of the human heart can never exhaust such a treasure. His word is the only light in the darkness of this life, a word of life, consolation, and supreme blessedness. Where this precious and saving word is absent, nothing remains but a fearsome and terrifying darkness, error and faction, death and every calamity, and the tyranny of the devil himself, as we can see with our own eyes every day.

Third, I confess and acknowledge great sin and wicked ingratitude on my part because all my life I have made disgraceful use of the Sabbath and have thereby despised his precious and dear word in a wretched way. I have been too lazy, listless, and uninterested to listen to it, let alone to have desired it sincerely or to have been grateful for it. I have let my dear God proclaim his word to me in vain, have dismissed the noble treasure, and have trampled it underfoot. He has tolerated this in his great and divine mercy and has not ceased in his fatherly, divine love and faithfulness to keep on preaching to me and calling me to the salvation of my soul. For this I repent and ask for grace and forgiveness.

Fourth, I pray for myself and for the whole world that the gracious Father may preserve us in his holy word and not withdraw it from us because of our sin, ingratitude, and laziness. May he preserve us from factious [*divisive*] spirits and false teachers, and may he send faithful and honest laborers into his harvest [Matt. 9:38], that is, devout pastors and preachers. May he grant us grace humbly to hear, accept, and honor their words as his own words and to offer our sincere thanks and praise.

Use the Instruction-Confession-Thanksgiving-Prayer to consider the Bible text before you.

Instruction

Confession

Thanksgiving

Prayer
