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Section: Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q101. In what way has God commanded the saved to communicate to Him?**

We are to communicate to God in persistent prayer.

* **Introduction**

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

* **Is the Cannon Closed?**

We cannot add to scripture. The canon is closed.

**Dr. Michael J. Kruger**: “The apostles had the very authority of Christ himself. They were his mouthpiece. As such, their teachings, along with the prophets, were the very foundation of the church. Paul describes the church as ‘built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets’ (Eph 2:20). If the church wanted to know the true Christian message, they would always need to look back to the teaching of the apostles.”

**J. N. D. Kelly**: "The criterion which ultimately came to prevail was apostolicity. Unless a book could be shown to come from the pen of an apostle, or at least to have the authority of an apostle behind it, it was peremptorily rejected, however edifying or popular with the faithful it might be."

**1689 Confession of Faith**: “The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience … the Lord was pleased at different times and in various ways to reveal himself and to declare his will to his church. To preserve and propagate the truth better and to establish and comfort the church with greater certainty against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world, the Lord put this revelation completely in writing. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God's former ways of revealing his will to his people have now ceased.”

Scripture alone is sufficient for Christians. We don’t need anything else to find extra information about God.

* **Who Is Our Authority?**

The fundamental issue with humanity is this: We sinfully want more certainty than what we believe God’s word provides, or we want something that feels more personal, so we look for it somewhere else.

**Genesis 3:1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”

We should absolutely look to Scripture as all authoritative because it is the absolute words of God. The Scripture is our source for truth in all things.

* **How Has Our Authority Commanded We Communicate to Him?**

**Romans 12:12** ... be constant in prayer.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** pray without ceasing … for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

**Colossians 4:2** Continue steadfastly in prayer ...

* God speaks to us by the words historically laid down as Scripture—not any other means.
* God has commanded the saved to communicate to Him in prayer.
* This prayer is to be constant/persistent.

**Q102. What is prayer?**

Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God in praise, thanksgiving, confession of sin, and expressing our requests to Him while submitting to His sovereign will.

* **Introduction**

The anatomy of prayer can really be broken into two predominant categories:

1. God-exalting
2. Man-benefiting

* **Pouring out our hearts**

Prayer is not simply dry communication; it is pouring our hearts out to God.

**James 4:3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

There is an intentionality with prayer that qualifies the act to actually be prayer.

* **Praise**

**Psalm 145**

**Job 13:15a** “​Though he [God] slay me, I will hope in him”

* **Thanksgiving**

**Psalm 107:1** Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

**Ephesians 1:2-9** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

* **Expressing Our Requests to Him**

Matthew 7:7-11 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

* **Submitting (Yielding) to His Sovereign Will**

**Matthew 6:10** “Your Kingdom come, your will be done ...”

* **Application**
* **Scripture is sufficient**
* **Pray often**
* **Pray with sincerity**
* **Pray with discipline**
* **Pray with expectation**
* **Pray to the Trinity**
* **Pray with reverence and respect**
* **Pray as a beloved son or daughter**

**Ephesians 2:4-5** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved