

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 35, Part 2, "The Regulative Principle"

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 66:1-4

Lesson Aim	To understand three things: First, what worship is, second, what worship is like according to human conventions according to Isaiah 66 and, third, how worship is pleasing to God when it is done according to the regulative principle.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 35 and Isaiah 66:1-4 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What are some of the erroneous reasons for people worshipping God? People will attend worship services to be entertained, to have some vague religious experience or for self-improvement.</p> <p>What are the correct reasons to worship God? God commands worship and it is for his sake, not ours (we benefit from worship but that is secondary).</p> <p>How do we define corporate, Sunday worship? It is the action of honoring God through his biblically appointed means and this is done because of who God is what he has done for us through Christ. The biblical words for worship mean the act of prostration, of expressing deference.</p> <p>What do we learn about worship that is done according to human convention in Isaiah 66? Israel is judged by God for worship that is not done according to what God has commanded. Israel worshiped God according to means he had ordained but the worship was not humble, the people were not contrite in spirit and did not tremble at God's Word. Aside from wrong motives and attitudes, people can worship wrongly when they use means not ordained by God like Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus chapter 10.</p> <p>The regulative principle will help to guide the church in offering right worship to God. What is it? The regulative principle is only doing in worship what God requires or what God has prescribed in the Scriptures. This principle is built upon the second commandment. The Belgic Confession, article 32 summarizes the regulative principle, "We reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever." Implicit in this statement is that the church only worship according to what God has commanded according to his word. When this happens, God is honored and glorified and his people are nourished and grow in their faith.</p>
Bible Reading	Mark 8-14 (Reading through the Gospels)