



John Calvin's *Institutes in the Christian Religion* (1541)

A PPA Seminar: Fall 2017

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Study 7: Chapter Four: Faith with an Explanation of the Apostles' Creed, Pt. 1

Read pgs. 183-293

"[True and saving faith is] a firm and certain knowledge of God's goodwill to us which, being founded on the free promise given in Jesus Christ, is revealed to our minds and sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."

Prayer: "May the LORD grant that we may be engaged in the mysteries of His Heavenly wisdom with a true increase of piety, for His glory, and for our edification. Amen."

Scripture Reading: Luke 8:4-15; Acts 8:9-24; Hebrews 11:1, 6; James 2:18-19; 2 Peter 1:3-11

Subjective Faith: Faith as Instrument to Receive God's Abundant Goodness in Christ

1. If the Law exposes our sinfulness before God and condemns us, where must our faith and hope be directed? [pg. 183]
2. How is faith more than mere belief? Can someone believe and not have saving faith? Prove your answer from Holy Scripture. How do you know if you have true and saving faith? [pgs. 183-85]
3. What is a "*complete definition*" of faith according to Calvin? How are each Person of the one Triune God the object of our faith? [pgs. 185-88]
4. Can one be certain and assured of one's faith? Does this certainty mean the believer's faith is perfect? Explain in your own words. [pgs.187-193]
5. How specifically does unbelief do battle with our faith? What does God arm believers with in order to grow and mature us in our faith? Honestly, are you aware of this battle? Are you using all the means God has provided for you to battle against this formidable foe? [pgs. 191-92]

6. What are the two sources of Godly fear? How can the true fear of God grant a greater faith, certainty, and trust in God? Distinguish between sinful fear and healthy fear of God. [pgs. 192-95]

7. What is the ultimate foundation of our faith? How are these made available to the believer? Explain how the whole gospel is summed up in Jesus Christ? [pgs. 196-201, 206-208]

8. Why is the Spirit described as the “inner teacher”? Why is illumination by the Spirit of God necessary in the Christian life? Describe how the Spirit of God seal truth in our hearts. Do you daily pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, especially in times of Bible study and preaching? [pgs. 196-201]

9. Calvin says, “*Faith is more a matter of the heart than of the brain, more about inclination than understanding*”. Explain in your own words what he means by this. [pgs. 204-208]

Faith’s Object: Summarized in ‘Apostles’ Creed’

10. Do you know the ‘Apostles’ Creed’? If not, memorize it. We may believe more than what it confesses, but as Christians we should not believe less. How does this creed lay out the “whole story of our faith”? What are the four divisions of the Creed in your own words? Is it a Trinitarian Creed? Is it Christ-centered? Explain. [pgs. 208-229]

Terms/Implications/Applications

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fides Implicita/ Explicita • Accommodation • Deus Revelatus • Deus Absconditus • Autonomous/ Theonomous • Communicatio Idiomatum • Munus Triplex | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usus Tertius • Hypostasis • Ousia • Autotheos/ Aseity • Nestorianism • Eutychianism • Chalcedonian Christianity |
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