



Peace and contentment

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Objective The confirmands know that God wants to bring about a profound and lasting peace in the hearts of His own. They know this peace and want to carry it in their hearts.

Contents The purpose of the divine commandments
Am I happy for the wellbeing of my neighbour?
The Ninth and Tenth Commandments

1 Lead-in

Tell

*David desires
Bathsheba*

One evening King David was walking about on the roof of his palace. From there he saw a very beautiful woman. David enquired about this woman and learned that her name was Bathsheba. She was the wife of Uriah. Nevertheless David wanted to have this woman for himself. He had her brought to him so that he could sleep with her. Eventually things went so far that he ordered Joab, the captain of his troops, to put Uriah in the frontline during the siege of Rabba. He was then to be left alone in battle so that he would be killed. And that is what happened. Afterwards David married Uriah's widow (cf. 2 Samuel 11).

2 Living in accordance with God's commandments

Ask

Which commandments did David violate?

**Listen to answers
and summarise**

David violated both the Sixth and Fifth Commandments. He became an adulterer and a murderer.

Ask

Why did King David violate God's commandments?

**Listen to answers
and elaborate**

Desire leads to sin

David had seen Bathsheba. He liked her and desired her. He then learned that she was someone else's wife. Now he ought to have overcome his desire. But he did not. Rather he allowed himself to get carried away and commit an evil deed. It is quite evident that he violated the Fifth and Sixth Commandments. And previously he had already violated the Tenth Commandment by desiring his neighbour's wife. David was able to conceal his sin from the people. God however, had seen everything. He sent Prophet Nathan to David to make him aware of his sins. God punished David for his conduct (cf. 2 Samuel 12).





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Explain

In addition to the commandments which we have already discussed God gave two further commandments. They guide us in our conduct towards our fellow human beings and their property.

A student reads aloud

You shall not covet your neighbour's house.

A student reads aloud

You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's.

3 The purpose of the divine commandments

Ask

What is the purpose of the commandments which God gave to His people?

Listen to answers and elaborate

God gave the Ten Commandments to His people so that they could live together in harmony and peace without anxiety or fear. His people were to be an example and a blessing for all human beings.

Explain

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments admonish us not to desire anything that belongs to others. In this manner we will preserve our inner peace and the enjoyment we derive from what we possess. We will then not envy our fellow human beings and will be happy.

Peace in our heart

We ought to repeatedly ask ourselves whether earthly desires are taking too much room in our hearts. As God's children we bring our earthly wishes to our heavenly Father in prayer. However, we always add, "Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26: 39). When we can say this wholeheartedly we will please our heavenly Father. Then great peace enters our soul.

No peace without contentment

Contentment and peace in our heart are a good basis for living in peace with our fellow human beings. However, there is more to true peace and genuine harmony than simply not envying or harming our neighbour.

Ask

In addition to keeping the Commandments what else must we do for true peace and harmony to prevail?

Listen to answers and elaborate

We have to overcome all feelings and thoughts which are not good. We must wholeheartedly wish our neighbour well. True and stable peace and harmony will then emerge.

Workbook exercises

The confirmands work on exercises A to D in their workbook. While discussing exercise A the confirmation teacher is to bring out what the two commandments, which Jesus called the greatest, teach us. When these commandments determine our thoughts and actions they will create a profound peace within us. We will thereby fulfil our heavenly Father's will. During the discussion of exercise C it will become clear that the first three commandments concern our relationship with our heavenly Father. The remaining commandments concern our relationship with our fellow human beings.





Exercise D shows that the Ten Commandments consist mostly of restrictions (You shall not...). They are actually prohibitions. However, the commandments which Jesus referred to as being the greatest urge us to love God and our fellow human beings. Because of this love we will do that which is good.

4 Peace in our heart

Explain

It is not always easy to have and keep a profound peace in our heart. We all know that we can quickly lose this peace because it is often severely challenged.

Ask

How can we lose this peace?

Listen to answers and supplement

Many things can deprive us of our peace:

- the sins which we have committed
- great concerns
- injustices which we have suffered
- discontent
- envy
- jealousy
- desires
- uncertainty
- doubt

5 Divine peace

Explain

The Lord Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14: 27). Through Jesus God offers us divine peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4: 7).

Ask

How can we secure and preserve this peace?

Listen to answers and elaborate

- Jesus Christ offers us forgiveness of the sins which we have committed and bestows His peace (the peace of the Resurrected One) on us.
- When we are concerned and afflicted we find refuge at God's altar. There we gain the right perspective to see clearly again. Our anxieties diminish or even disappear.
- Jesus' example teaches us to forgive all who wrong us.
- When we consider that we want to be for ever with the Lord our earthly wishes and desires become trivial.
- Jesus Christ's promise supersedes all uncertainties, anxieties, and doubts: "Surely I am coming quickly" (Revelation 22: 20).





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6 "Blessed are the peacemakers"

Ask

How does this peace affect our life?

Listen to answers and elaborate

When we grasp everything which Jesus Christ offers to us we will have great confidence and strength within.

This includes

- the strength to forgive. God's children repeatedly experience Jesus' grace and experience His profound peace following the forgiveness of sins. They have the inner desire to forgive and not wait until the next divine service.
- the ability to bear burdens. We can bear many things which others find unbearable because we know that God has permitted it.
- the strength to love our neighbour.
- the fortitude to be peacemakers. In our daily life we avoid people who spread discord. It is pleasant to be with those who are peace-loving. Others ought to have a sense of well-being when they are in our presence.
- joyful hope. We know that our Lord Jesus is coming.

The main points

I also want to have the peace of Jesus Christ within me!

Homework The confirmands learn the Ninth and Tenth Commandments by heart.

