***Gifts of the Reformation (3)***

***The Priesthood of the Believer***

After *justification by faith alone,* perhaps the most radical teaching of Martin Luther was *the priesthood of all believers.*

**All of you who believe in Jesus Christ are priests.**

**1. The nature of our priesthood** (1 Peter 2)

(Because we are in Christ we share in His offices.)

A. A *chosen* priesthood

Hebrews 5:4-6 (compare Isaiah 56:3-7; 66:21)

B. A *royal* priesthood

C. A *holy* priesthood

D. A *prophetic* priesthood

**2. The privileges of our priesthood**

A. To *choose* our ministers

Acts 6; 1 Timothy 4:14

*“Therefore every one who knows that he is a Christian should be fully assured that all of us alike are priests, and that we all have the same authority in regard to the word and the sacraments, although no one has the right to administer them without the consent of the members of his church, or by the call of the majority (because, when something is common to all, no single person is empowered to arrogate it to himself, but should await the call of the church). Moreover, the sacrament of ordination, if it has any validity at all, is only the rite through which someone is called to the ministry of the church, since the priesthood is simply the ministry of the word”* (349).

B. To *pray* for one another

Hebrews 10:19-22; The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

*“Not only are we the freest of kings, we are also priests forever, which is far more excellent than being kings, for as priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things. These are the functions of priests, and they cannot be granted to any unbeliever”* (64).

C. To *serve* one another

Hebrews 13:15-16; Romans 12

**3. Consequences of our priesthood**

A. The spiritual value of *ordinary work*

Colossians 3:22-24

Regarding the works of monks and priests: “*However numerous, sacred, and arduous they may be, these works, in God’s sight, are in no way whatever superior to the works of a farmer laboring in the field, or of a woman looking after her home. Rather, all are measured by Him by faith alone”* (311).

B. The foundation for *representative government*

Note: Page numbers are from *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings,* ed. By John Dillenberger (Anchor Books, 1961).

# For Additional Study or Family Discussion

Did the Lord speak to you today about Himself and His ways? Did He show you a duty you need to perform or a promise you need to claim? What was either encouraging or challenging in the sermon?

1. Priests in the Old Testament did not serve only on their own behalf. They offered prayers and sacrifices for the people, and they taught the people God’s law (Malachi 2:4-7). Even though you may not be an office holder in the church, you are a priest serving on behalf of others (Hebrews 13:15-16). How are you exercising your priesthood?

2. Your ordinary work is pleasing to God if you do it heartily for the Lord (Colossians 3:2-24). The work of elders is to lead and feed the flock, so church members should follow their leadership (Hebrews 13:17), but God does not favor them any more than He does you.