

Mid-Week Devotions

ABOUT THE APOSTLES CREED:

The Apostle's Creed is the most widely used confession in the Western Church. All confessions which follow use as their basic structure a desire to explain the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Martin Luther and John Calvin rely heavily on its framework for the work they produced during the Reformation.

The Old Testament bears witness to creed and confessions as a central part of the Hebrew faith. A classic example is found in Deuteronomy 26:5-9, where the Hebrews are taught a formula to remember their history.

Fragments of creeds are found throughout the New Testament. The apostle Paul is constantly exhorting the people of the early church to "remember what they have been taught". Instead of being an inventory of Christian Doctrine, Paul seems instead to be a careful receiver and transmitter of an already authoritative body of teaching in the church.

At first, the church hid its doctrines and teachings from outsiders as a method of protection. During the second and third centuries there was a gradual development toward a more fixed creedal statement throughout the church. Early Church Fathers like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus quoted creedal statements in their defense of Christianity. Tertullian, the first theologian to write in Latin, talked about

a “rule of faith” and a “canon of truth”. These are probably the seeds of the Apostles Creed.

Hippolytus has both the honor of the best name in Early Christianity, and also serves as the first written witness to a fixed creed known throughout the Church universal.

The title “Apostle’s Creed” first occurred in a letter sent to the Pope in 390 CE. Ambrose was convinced it was composed by the twelve apostles, who met to write it together. This was widely believed to be true up until 1438 when that authorship was definitely disproved. Though it may not have been written by the apostles, no serious person questions its origins and that it reflects genuine apostolic teaching based on scripture.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Why is the origin and story of this creed important to our understanding of its meaning?
- Do you think this creed is a thorough overview of the basic Biblical teachings? Is there anything you would add or subtract from it?
- What is one thing about the early church you wish you knew more about?

The Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



A	W	S	G	H	T	Y	U	I	J	F	O	V	R	K	N	P	L	Q	M	X	B	E	Z	D	C
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

1. 11-14-8-9-6 _____
2. 18-12-13-23 _____
3. 10-12-7 _____
4. 17-23-1-26-23 _____
5. 17-1-6-9-23-16-26-23 _____
6. 15-9-16-25-16-23-3-3 _____
7. 4-12-12-25-16-23-3-3 _____
8. 11-1-9-6-5-11-8-18-16-23-3-3 _____
9. 4-23-16-6-18-23-16-23-3-3 _____
10. 26-12-16-6-14-12-18 _____

KINDNESS	JOY	FRUIT	GOODNESS	PATIENCE
FAITHFULNESS	PEACE	LOVE	GENTLENESS	CONTROL