

Westminster Larger Catechism #81

Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved? Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

Eph. 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

Is. 50:10 Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.

Psa. 31:22 I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help.

1 John 3:9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face.

WLC 80 Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation? Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

Discussion Questions

- I. What does the catechism mean by saying that assurance is not of the essence of faith?
- II. Do all Christians receive the grace of assurance as soon as they believe in Christ as their Savior?
- III. Can every Christian attain full assurance of his salvation?
- IV. After assurance of salvation is once attained, can it be lost?
- V. Can a true Christian's consciousness of God's presence and favor ever be wholly lost?
- VI. How should we seek to maintain a strong and clear assurance of our salvation?
- VII. Should we feel discouraged if we do not possess full assurance soon after we believe in Christ?

Westminster Larger Catechism #91

What is the duty which God requires of man?

The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

Rom. 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

James 1:22-25 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

James 4:17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we owe a duty to God?
2. What classes of people deny that human beings owe a duty to God?
3. Why is it wrong to say that our highest loyalty should be devotion to the welfare of humanity?
4. Is it not true that serving our fellow men is a noble way of serving God?
5. Do we have a right to choose whether we will obey God's revealed will or not?
6. Why does God not consult our wishes before imposing His will upon us?

Westminster Larger Catechism #92

What did God at first reveal unto man as the rule of his obedience?

The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocence, and to all mankind in him, besides a special command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was the moral law.

Gen. 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Rom. 2:14-15 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

Rom. 10:5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

Discussion Questions

1. What do we call the condition of the human race before the fall into sin?
2. What special command did God give to mankind in the estate of innocence?
3. How was this special command of God given to mankind?
4. Apart from this special command, what rule of obedience did God give to mankind?
5. How was the moral law given to mankind in the estate of innocence?
6. Do the people have the moral law of God written on their hearts by God's natural revelation today?
7. Why did God not reveal the Ten Commandments to Adam and Eve?
8. What is the popular "modern" view of the moral law? *The law is not a revelation of the will of God, or an expression of the nature of God. If there is a God, he too is subject to the moral law, which exists above and beyond him. The moral law is a discovery of man.*
9. What errors are involved in this "modern" view of the moral law?

Westminster Larger Catechism #93

What is the moral law?

The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he owes to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.

Luke 10:26-27 *He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."*

Acts 24:16 *So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.*

Gal. 3:10 *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*

Discussion Questions

1. How does the catechism define the moral law?
2. Who is subject to the moral law of God?
3. Does the moral law of God bind the heathen who know nothing of the Bible?
4. Does God's moral law bind atheists who do not believe in God?
5. Does the moral law of God bind Christians?
6. Does God's moral law ever change, or is it always the same?
7. Does God's moral law change now, in our own time?
8. What attitude do many modern people take toward the idea that God's moral law is fixed and will remain unalterable till the end of the world? *It is absurd to suppose that detailed commandments given to men 2000 years ago can be adequate for the needs of humanity in this modern age of scientific progress.*
9. How should we answer this objection to the unchangeable character of God's moral law?
10. What kind of obedience does God's moral law require of mankind?
11. Does the moral law of God require us to be good?
12. Is not such a standard far too high for the human race?
13. What kind of duties does God's moral law obligate us to perform?
14. What is the difference between "duties of holiness" and "duties of righteousness"?
15. What is the difference between duties owed to God and duties owed to man?
16. What does God promise upon the fulfilling of His moral law?
17. Can eternal life be obtained in any other way than by the fulfilling of God's moral law?
18. What penalty came upon mankind because of the breach of God's moral law?
19. What is the meaning of "death" as the penalty for breaking the moral law of God?

Westminster Larger Catechism #94

Is there any use of the moral law to man since the fall? Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law; yet there is great use thereof, as well common to all men, as peculiar either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.

Rom. 8:3 *For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,*
1 Tim. 1:8 *Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*

Discussion Questions

1. What error concerning the moral law does this question of the catechism guard against?
2. If the moral law is of no use as a way of attaining righteousness and life then of what use is it?

Westminster Larger Catechism #95

Of what use is the moral law to all men? The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives; to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery, and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.

Lev. 11:44-45 *For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. 45 For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*”

Mic. 6:8 *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Gal. 3:21-22 *Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

Discussion Questions

1. What four uses does the moral law of God have for all men?
2. How is the moral law a revelation of truth concerning God?
3. How is the moral law a revelation of man’s moral obligation to God?
4. How is the moral law of God a means of convincing men of their utterly sinful condition by nature?
5. How does the moral law of God help men toward a right estimate of the matchless character of Christ?

Westminster Larger Catechism #96

What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate men? The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof.

1Tim. 1:9-10 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10 the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

Gal. 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word *unregenerate*?
2. What is the ordinary condition of the consciences of unregenerate people?
3. How does the moral law serve to awaken the consciences of unsaved sinners?
4. Does the moral law provide a way of escape from the wrath of God?
5. Do all unsaved sinners have a knowledge of the moral law of God?
6. Do all unsaved sinners have an equal knowledge of the moral law of God?
7. Does the moral law of God awaken the consciences of all sinners, and drive them to Christ for salvation?
8. Why does not the moral law drive all sinners to Christ for salvation?
9. Why does the Holy Spirit not open the hearts of all sinners so that all will come to Christ and be saved?
10. What is the effect of the moral law in the case of sinners who never come to Christ?
11. Is the moral law of any use to enable unregenerate people to live so as to please God?
12. Is the moral law of any use to enable unregenerate people to earn their own salvation?
13. What is the place of the moral law of God in a scriptural program of evangelism?

Westminster Larger Catechism #97

What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate? Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, besides the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them: How much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.

Rom. 8:14 *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Rom. 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

Discussion Questions

1. When a person is “born again,” and becomes a Christian, how does his relation to the moral law change?
2. When did the covenant of works come to an end?
3. What term describes the type of religion which seeks to earn eternal life by personal obedience to the moral law?
4. What sect of the Jews in the time of Christ was dominated by legalism?
5. What is wrong with legalism?
6. Are modern Christians ever affected by legalism?
7. What is the remedy for legalism?
8. Should a Christian be afraid to commit sin?
9. Should a Christian be afraid to commit sin because of the danger of eternal condemnation?
10. Then why should a Christian be afraid to commit sin?
11. How does the moral law enable the Christian to appreciate Christ?
12. How does the moral law provoke the Christian to thankfulness?
13. Instead of thankfulness, what state of mind does a legalistic type of religion tend to produce?
14. How should a Christian express his thankfulness to God?
15. Since the Bible teaches that the Christian is not under the law but under grace (Rom 6:14), how can he be under the moral law as the rule of obedience?
16. Prove from the Bible that the Christian is not freed from the precept of the moral law as the standard of right living.

Westminster Larger Catechism #98

Where is the moral law summarily comprehended? The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by him in two tables of stone; and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The four first commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.

Ex. 34:1-4 The LORD said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. 2 Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. 3 No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.” 4 So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone.

Deut. 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Matt. 22:37-40 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Discussion Questions

1. Where in the Bible are the Ten Commandments recorded?
2. Are the Ten Commandments a complete statement of the moral law of God?
3. How are the Ten Commandments commonly divided?
4. Do not all ten of the commandments deal with our duty to God?
5. Why do the last six commandments concern our duty to God in connection with our fellow men?
6. Are the two tables of the moral law equally important?
7. What wrong views of the Ten Commandments are common today?

Westminster Larger Catechism #99

What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the ten commandments? For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed:

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we need rules for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?
2. How many rules does the catechism present?
3. From what source are their eight rules derived?

Rule #1 *That the law is perfect, and binds everyone to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience forever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.*

4. What is meant by saying that God's moral law is perfect?
5. What degree of conformity to righteousness does God's moral law require?
6. What part of our nature is involved in God's requirement of obedience to His moral law?
7. How long will the moral law of God continue to be binding on human beings?
8. Where does God's moral law differ from all human laws?
9. Does God's law, in demanding absolute moral perfection of human beings, demand what is impossible?
10. Is God unreasonable in demanding what is impossible for human beings to attain or achieve?
11. Did any human being ever fulfill the moral law perfectly?

Rule #2 *That it is spiritual, and so reaches the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.*

12. What is the derivation or original meaning of the word *spirit* in the Bible?
13. Apart from the original meaning of "wind," what meaning does the word *spirit* have in the Bible?
14. What is the meaning of the adjective *spiritual* in the Bible?
15. What is the meaning of the word *spiritual* in question 99 of the WLC?
16. Are human laws "spiritual"?
17. How did the Pharisees misunderstand the scope of the moral law of God?
18. What error concerning the moral law is just the opposite of that of the Pharisees?
19. What is meant by saying that the moral law concerns the understanding?
20. What is meant by affirming that the moral law concerns the will?
21. What is meant by the statement that the moral law concerns the affections?
22. What are the "other powers of the soul" to which the catechism refers?
23. In addition to our inward or spiritual life, what activities of human life does the moral law concern?

Rule #3 *That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.*

Rule #4 *That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.*

24. May the same duty be required by more than one of the Ten Commandments?
25. May the same sin be forbidden by more than one of the Ten Commandments?

26. What is the reason why the various commandments overlap in this way?
27. Do the Ten Commandments ever contradict each other, so that what is forbidden in one commandment is required of another?
28. What is the teaching of the catechism concerning positive and negative aspects of the Ten Commandments?
29. What do we mean by the negative aspect of the Ten Commandments?
30. What do we mean by the positive aspect of the Ten Commandments?
31. In the form in which the Ten Commandments are stated, which of these aspects is the more prominent?
32. Does this negative emphasis in the form of the commandments mean that God's original moral law is negative rather than positive?
33. Which of the commandments contains threatenings or promises?

Rule #5 That: What God forbids, is at no time to be done;: What he commands, is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.

Rule #6 That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.

34. What great principle of ethics does the catechism lay down concerning what God forbids?
35. What popular notion contradicts this great principle?
36. Is this popular notion a new idea?
37. Why is this motion that "the ends justifies the means" perverse?
38. Why is this perverse notion popular in the present day?
39. What is the importance of the principle that what God commands is always our duty?
40. Why is not every particular duty to be done at all times?
41. According to the catechism, what are included under each sin or duty mentioned in the Ten Commandments?
42. Why is it correct that the causes, means, occasions, appearances, and provocations of or to any sin or duty are included in the meaning of the Ten Commandments?
43. What danger must we guard against in applying these rules of interpretation to the Ten Commandments?

Rule #7 That: What is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.

Rule #8 That in: What is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in: What is forbidden them.

44. What is the general scope of the last two rules for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?
45. Why does the catechism include the phrase "according to our places" in the seventh rule?
46. Is it tight to arrange for someone else to do something that we will not do ourselves because we believe it to be wrong?
47. How are we to endeavor that others practice righteousness and avoid sin?
48. How should we try to be helpful to others in doing their duty?
49. Why should we "take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them"?

Westminster Larger Catechism #100

What special things are we to consider in the ten commandments? We are to consider, in the ten commandments, the preface, the substance of the commandments themselves, and several reasons annexed to some of them, the more to enforce them.

Westminster Larger Catechism #101

What is the preface to the ten commandments? The preface to the ten commandments is contained in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Wherein God manifests his sovereignty, as being JEHOVAH, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God; having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works: and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivers us from our spiritual thralldom; and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments.

Discussion Questions¹

1. Why is the preface to the Ten Commandments important?
2. What is meant by the sovereignty of God?
3. What is the origin of the name *Jehovah*?
4. What is the meaning of the name *Jehovah*?
5. Why does the preface to the Ten Commandments mention God's delivering Israel out of Egypt?
6. Why did God refer to the land of Egypt as "the house of bondage"?
7. What two obligations does God's work of redemption place upon us?

¹ Taken from *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary* by Johannes G. Vos, edited by G.I. Williamson

Westminster Larger Catechism

#102 *What is the sum of the four commandments which contain our duty to God? The sum of the four commandments containing our duty to God is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.*

#103 *Which is the first commandment? The first commandment is, Thou shall have no other gods before me.*

#104 *What are the duties required in the first commandment? The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; and walking humbly with him.*

Luke 10:27 *And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."*

1 Chr. 28:9 *And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.*

Psa. 29:2 *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.*

Discussion Questions¹

1. What does it mean to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind?
2. Why is the first commandment placed first in the Ten Commandments?
3. Why are we obliged to acknowledge God as the true God, and our God?
4. Shall we be dependent upon God forever?
5. How are we to express our dependence upon God?
6. What is a right attitude toward God?
7. What do we mean by right thoughts concerning God?
8. What do we mean by right responses to God's revealed will?
9. What are some of the great truths assumed in this answer of the catechism?
10. How may the duties required in the first commandment be summarized?

¹ Taken from *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary* by Johannes G. Vos, edited by G.I. Williamson

#105 What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment? The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, atheism, in denying or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of anything due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him; bold and curious searching into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God; using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word *atheism*? What is practical atheism?
2. In what sense does the catechism use the word *idolatry*? Why is it a terrible sin to have more gods than one, or to have any other god with or instead of the true God?
3. Why is forgetfulness of God a great sin?
4. Why is it sinful to have misapprehensions, false opinions, unhealthy and wicked thoughts about God? Does every person have a right to his own opinion about God?
5. What is meant by “bold and curious searching into [God’s] secrets”?
6. What is the real nature of the sin of worldliness?
7. What is misbelief?
8. What is the meaning of “incorrigibleness”?
9. What do we mean by the expression “hardness of heart”? Give a Bible example of a person whose spiritual condition was hardness of heart.
10. What is pride, and why is it condemned in the Bible as a great sin?
11. What is meant by spiritual “lukewarmness”? What is the remedy for spiritual lukewarmness?
12. What is meant by “deadness in the things of God”? What is the remedy for spiritual deadness?
13. What is meant by “making men the lords of our faith and conscience”? Why is it wrong? Are members of the Protestant churches ever guilty of this sin?

#106 What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment? These words before me, or before my face, in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who sees all things, takes special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God: that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation: as also to persuade us to do as in his sight,: Whatever we do in his service.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the expression “before my face” (this is the literal translation of ‘before me’)?
2. What part of our lives is passed in God’s sight? Why is it impossible to flee or escape from God’s presence?
3. Name some Bible characters who attempted to hide or flee from God’s presence. What was the result of their trying to escape from God’s presence?
4. How should we answer the person who says that God is too great to care whether we human beings worship Him or not, or too great to care whether we worship some other god instead of Him?
5. When we read the words “before me” in the commandment, what should our attitude toward this commandment be?
6. How does the catechism describe the sin of having another god in the presence of the true God?
7. How should we perform all our service to God, and all activities of our lives?

Westminster Larger Catechism

#107 Which is the second commandment? The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

#108 What are the duties required in the second commandment? The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the general subject of the second commandment?
2. With respect to the true worship of God, what three duties are imposed on God's people?
3. Why must we be so careful to receive, observe, and preserve the true worship of God?
4. How is this obligation commonly disregarded in the present day?
5. How is the obligation to maintain purity of worship disregarded by many Protestant churches?
6. What is meant by "false worship"?
7. Does not the principle of religious liberty imply that every person has the right to worship as he pleases, according to the dictates of his own conscience?
8. Does not the American ideal of "tolerance" imply that one religion, or manner of worship, is as good as another, and that all are equally pleasing to God?

#109 What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment? The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature: Whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense: Whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God has appointed.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the scriptural principle concerning divine worship?
2. What is the basis of this scriptural principle concerning divine worship?
3. What is the relation between abandonment of belief in the sovereignty of God and the adoption of changes and corruptions in divine worship?
4. How can we most effectively convince people of the validity of this scriptural principle of divine worship?
5. Why is it wrong to make any representation or picture of God?
6. Is it wrong to make paintings or pictures of our Savior Jesus Christ?
7. What attitude should we adopt in view of the present popularity of pictures of Jesus Christ?
8. Are not pictures of Jesus legitimate provided they are not worshipped or used as “aids to worship”?
9. Give some examples of “corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it.”
10. Why can’t antiquity or custom justify changes in the worship of God?
11. Why can’t devotion or good intent justify changes in divine worship?

#110 What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it? The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments; are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom; accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations; and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

Discussion Questions

1. What is meant by "God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us"?
2. What is meant by God's "fervent zeal for his own worship"?
3. What is God's attitude toward all false worship?
4. Is it unjust for God to visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto third and fourth generations?
5. What is the meaning of the promise of God's "showing mercy unto thousands" of those that love him, and keep his commandments?
6. What should be our attitude to the worship of God, in view of the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

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#111 *Which is the third commandment? The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.*

#112 *The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the Word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and: Whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and Answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.*

Deut. 28:58 If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God.

Rev. 15:3-4 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Discussion Questions

1. What does the third commandment mean by the "name" of God?
2. What does the "name" of God include?
3. What attitude are we to have toward God's name?
4. What do we mean by a holy and reverent attitude toward God's name?
5. How far should this reverent attitude toward God's name control our consciousness and self-expression?
6. How is our daily life to be affected by our attitude toward God's name?
7. What should be our aim or purpose in honoring God's name?
8. Who can really honor and revere God's name?

#113 *What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment? The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable Questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or anywise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by uncomformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.*

Prov. 30:9 lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

Rom. 9:20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"

2 Tim. 4:3-4 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the words *vain* and *vanity* in the Bible?
2. What special kinds of misuse of God's name does the catechism specify as forbidden by the third commandment?
3. In addition to the actual names of God, what forms of His self-revelation are we forbidden to misuse or take in vain?
4. How do people blaspheme God today?
5. What are minced oaths?

6. Why is it wrong to murmur and quarrel at God's decrees and providence?
7. Why is it sinful to misinterpret the Bible?
8. What is meant by "misapplying" and "perverting" God's Word?
9. What are some of the ways in which men oppose God's truth, grace, and ways?
10. What is meant by "making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends"?
11. What makes people ashamed of being known as Christians?
12. How do professing Christians sometimes become a shame to the gospel of Christ?
13. What is meant by "backsliding" from the gospel of Christ?

#114 *What reasons are annexed to the third commandment? The reasons annexed to the third commandment, in these words, The Lord thy God, and, For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain, are, because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.*

Discussion Questions

1. What is meant by affirming that God is the Lord?
2. How is the sovereignty of God often disregarded or denied today?
3. How is the special covenant relationship to God, expressed by the words “thy God,” often denied or obscured today?

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#115 *Which is the fourth commandment? The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

#116 *What is required in the fourth commandment? The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called the Lord's day.*

Matt. 5:17 -18 *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”*

Rev. 1:10 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*

Discussion Questions

1. On whom is the Sabbath commandment binding?
2. What is the principle of the Sabbath?
3. How has the principle of the Sabbath sometimes been wrongly stated?
4. Why was the Old Testament Sabbath the seventh day of the week? Why is the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week? Who changed the day?
5. Will the Sabbath be observed in heaven?
6. Is it important for the church to teach the obligation to observe the Sabbath?

#117 *How is the sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified? The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.*

John 9:14 *Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.*

Is. 58:13-14 *"If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; 14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to have negative and positive observance of the Sabbath?
2. What is meant by a holy resting?
3. How much of the Sabbath is to be devoted to God by abstinence from work and ordinary recreations?
4. What is meant by "works of necessity"? "Works of mercy"?
5. What are the public exercises of God's worship? Private exercises of God's worship?
6. What preparation must we make in order to observe the Sabbath?

#118 *Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors? The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.*

Josh. 24:15 *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

Neh. 13:15, 17 *In those days I saw in Judah people treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of loads, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them on the day when they sold food... 17 Then I confronted the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day?"*

Discussion Questions

1. How are heads of families to see that the Sabbath is observed by the members of their families?
2. Is it possible for heads of families to be too strict in requiring Sabbath observance?
3. What kind of activities should be excluded from family life on the Sabbath? If these are forbidden, won't the day prove to be a burden rather than a joy?
4. In addition to religious worship, what activities are proper on the Sabbath day?
5. What special responsibility rests upon church leaders in the matter of Sabbath observance?

#119 *What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment? The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.*

Mal. 1:13 *But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD.*

Discussion Questions

1. Why is “careless, negligent, and unprofitable” performing of Sabbath duties sinful?
2. Why is it wrong to be weary of the Sabbath, and wish it were past?
3. Why is it wrong to profane the day by idleness?
4. What present-day conditions indicate a prevalent disregard for the Sabbath?

#120 *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it? The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for himself, in these words, Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: from God's challenging a special propriety in that day, The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: from the example of God, who in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it; Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

#121 *Why is the word Remember set in the beginning of the fourth commandment? The word Remember is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment, partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it, and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion; and partly, because we are very ready to forget it, for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restrains our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it comes but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan with his instruments much labor to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.*

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the four reasons annexed to the fourth commandment.
2. Why is it especially necessary that we remember the Sabbath day? Why is it so easy to forget the Sabbath?
3. What two great works of God does the Sabbath day call to our minds? What third great work does the NT Sabbath call to our minds?

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#123 *Which is the fifth commandment? The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.*

#124 *Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment? By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.*

#125 *Why are superiors styled father and mother? Superiors are styled father and mother, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.*

Discussion Questions

1. What truth concerning positions of authority in human society is taught by these questions of the catechism?
2. Why does the catechism add the phrase “according to their several relations”?

#126 *What is the general scope of the fifth commandment? The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.*

Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of relationship are possible between different persons with respect to the degree of their authority?

#127 *What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors.? The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defense and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.*

#128 *What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors? The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.*

Discussion Questions

1. What attitude should we have toward those in authority over us? How is this attitude to be shown?
2. Is it ever our duty to obey commands which are contrary to the law of God?
3. What attitude should we have to the corrections of those in authority over us? What should be our attitude toward the faults and failings of those in authority over us?
4. What is meant by the sin of contempt of those in authority over us?

#129 *What is required of superiors towards their inferiors? It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God has put upon them.*

#130 *What are the sins of superiors? The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.*

Discussion Questions

1. What principle is set forth in these questions of the catechism?
2. Why is the neglect of the duties requires of superiors sinful on their part?
3. What wrong attitude of heart and mind is the source of much wrongdoing on the part of persons in authority?
4. What is meant by provoking inferiors to wrath?

#131 What are the duties of equals? The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other; in giving honor to go one before another; and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own.

#132 What are the sins of equals? The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement of prosperity one of another; and usurping preeminence one over another.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the word equal mean here?
2. What is our general duty toward those who are our equals in human society?
3. What does the catechism mean by "usurping preeminence one over another"?

#133 What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it? The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee, is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the effect upon human society of obedience to the fifth commandment?
2. Do individuals who obey this commandment always live long and attain material prosperity?

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#134 *Which is the sixth commandment? The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.*

#135 *What are the duties required in the sixth commandment? The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.*

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word *kill* in the sixth commandment?
2. What is meant by “lawful endeavors to preserve the life of ourselves and others?”
3. In addition to the actual, literal crime of murder, what does the sixth commandment require us to avoid?
4. Why does the sixth commandment require “patient bearing of the hand of God”?
5. Why are “quietness of mind” and “cheerfulness of spirit” required by the sixth commandment?
6. What is meant by a sober use of meat, drink, etc.?
7. Is it wrong for a Christian to make use of medicine or other scientific treatment to relieve suffering or cure disease?
8. What attitude should a Christian have toward sleep, work, recreation?
9. Why does the sixth commandment require us to maintain a peaceable and kindly spirit toward others?

#136 *What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment? The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and: Whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.*

Gen. 9:6 *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.*

Discussion Questions

1. Why are so many people today opposed to the death penalty for murder?
2. What reason is given for the ordinance of capital punishment in Genesis 9:6? (see above)
3. Does the Bible forbid Christians to engage in war?

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#137 *Which is the seventh commandment? The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

#138 *What are the duties required in the seventh commandment? The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency, conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.*

#139 *What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment? The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.*

Discussion Questions

1. What is the general scope of the seventh commandment?
2. What is the cause of violation of the seventh commandment?
3. What common sins are forbidden by the seventh commandment?
4. What influence in modern life has contributed greatly to violation of the seventh commandment?

5. Where is the proper place of sexuality? How do we preserve this?
6. What attitude should a Christian take toward entertainment media?
7. Why are vows of perpetual celibacy wrong?
8. Is it important that the catechism mentions sodomy and all unnatural lusts?