

Theology Simply Explained — WSC63

“The Fifth Commandment as Hinge between the Two Tables of the Law”

Pastor walks his children through Westminster Shorter Catechism question 63—especially explaining how the placing of the fifth commandment bridges love of God and love of neighbor, connecting the two tables of the law, so that we act more directly upon God Himself, when we interact with neighbors whom He has put in authority over us.

WSC63: 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 giveth thee.*

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Our shorter catechism question this week is, which is the fifth commandment. The answer is the fifth. Commandment is honor, thy father, and thy mother. That thy days, may be long upon the land, which the lord Thy god. Giveth the Now, this is the fifth commandment. In god's wisdom.

It bridges, the first table. And the second table. The first table, especially the first four commandments stealing, Directly with worship. First, commandment whom tuition, second, commandment by what means worship? Third commandment in what manner to worship, fourth commandment at what time. To worship. And this is the main part of Loving the lord.

Our god with all our heart soul, mind and strength. A right. Uh valuing of god, a right response to god is first and foremost. To worship him. We are also to. Obey him. Now, the second table, the law will deal largely with love your neighbor as yourself. Loving those who are made in god's image, is A necessary.

Uh, corollary a Something that follows. Upon loving the lord with all our heart soul, mind and strength. That if he has a creature, that is his favorite And if he has a creature that he has given the highest dignity, To be made in his image. Then that creature is worthy of love.

And so, Or five through 10 are going to be A lot. Explaining different particulars of. Loving our neighbor as ourselves. As the lord jesus says, in these two great commandments. Hang all the law and the prophets. Indeed, these are the First greatest commandment and the second that is like it.

Now, we say that the fifth commandment is a transition between the two. Because our nearest neighbor for the first part of our life, is our father and our mother. But these are also the neighbor who stand in the place of god to us. God sets them over us with his own authority.

And he tells us to honor them. And he tells us to obey our parents in the lord. Because this is right. As the apostle rightly. Um, Identifies that obedience to a legitimate authority and of course parent is A legitimate authority. Is part. Of honoring. Our parents. Now, we're going to have Next week, the week after.

Um, The. Question. Questions of what is required. In the fifth commandment. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment, the reason annexed to do The fifth commandment. So we'll we'll take those things at those times. All right, but just here, we notice how the lord has given the fifth commandment as a hinge.

Because authorities are not just loved for the sake of Uh, being made in god's image. Uh, but must be loved in a way that recognize that god has made them his stand in, as it were not that we would Uh, trust in them and worship them. That would violate the first table of the law, wouldn't it?

But that we obey them and submit to them. With an obedience and submission. That really is obeying and submitting the lord. And so, it's proper to have a great respect for authority. And to have that respect aim, first and foremost at the lord himself, who is the ultimate authority?

So, you have things like, Wives submitting to their husband's as to the lord. Because all submission is, first of all, That a training of the heart. To submit to the lord, a participation. In the lesser submitting. The participates in the greater submitting submitting to the lord. And, Children obey your parents.

In the lord. And so it's not just it's not enough to obey mom and dad. It's not even enough to obey right away all the way in cheerfully Because that is honoring obedience. There's a Obedience that is honoring. And then there is an obedience that is merely superficial.

We see that even in the obedience of worshiping god. Right. When men, add The traditions of men to how to worship god. Jesus says of that, these people draw near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And we're once again in that. Uh, season. Of the year.

During which the churches are full of people who say my heart is so close to god. This time of year. And why are they saying their hearts are so close to god? Because they are following a tradition of men. Is jesus saying their hearts are so close to god?

No. Jesus says, in those things in which they draw near that are given from the bible to do. They draw close to god. But when they teach as doctrines, the commandments of men, when they add the traditions, men jesus says Their hearts are far from me. And so, there is this.

Obeying. Uh, and honoring that is defined by the lord. And it is necessary. Not just to obey But to obey, right away all the way into cheerfully. Well, that is true with the lord, that is true with our parents. If we are going to honor them but there's one more step.

Children obey your parents. In the lord. Means that you honor not just your parents when you obey them. But that you honor the lord jesus when you obey them. And this will be a great help to you. When you have a command or instruction or a duty that you do not feel like doing And, Uh, even if You don't.

Outwardly, do the hunched, shoulders and pouty face and slightly more stompy steps as you go off to do it, which, of course, Is dishonoring. But maybe you're a little bit of advanced to beyond that and you don't do all those things outwardly. You just do them inwardly While you put on your mask cheerful face, Well.

In order that that cheerfulness might go even to your heart. You can remember the fifth commandment is a hinge. Between the first table of the law. And the second table of the law. It touches both. And you can receive the instruction from the lord jesus. Who made you out of love?

From who in his love, made you. And who in his love redeemed, you Who in his love is sanctifying you so that you may be made perfectly holy and perfectly happy forever. And so it's not just obeying right away, all the way in cheerfully to mom and dad. It's obeying with a heart that is honoring christ.

Honoring god. As the one. Who is giving you the command by way of your parents. So that's why this one's the fifth commandment. I'm sure there are Uh, more

reasons. I can. And see in my mind's eye various Uh, wise men's writing on this explaining, how this? Is a foundational commandment for Um, The proper maintenance of the home and the church and the society, all three of which Uh, having peace and order.

Uh, in them. Enables us to attend well, upon the means of grace. In in, The holy assembly on the lord's day and day by day in the christian household. With the out, the outward piece and tranquility even of the nation facilitating, both of those things and so forth. So they're all lots of reasons.

Why? This one is the fifth commandment and the first one from the second table. But there's, especially that one. That authorities. Are not just made in the image of god. Uh, but stand in his place to us. In some respect, as there is no authority. Except that which comes from god.

And they are god's ministers. How to quote jesus before pilot and to quote, The apostle by the spirit. And romans 13. Similar things in the first beat or two. And so forth. So, The question is, which is the fifth commandment, and the answer is the fifth, commandment is honor, thy father, and thy mother.

That thy days may be long. Upon the land which the lord thy god, giveth thee.