

Shorter Catechism: Questions 45 & 47

Sins Forbidden in the First Commandment: Part 5

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God... -Hebrews 3:12

Word of God (Deuteronomy 5 - KJV)

⁶ I *am* the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

⁷ Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

⁸ Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or* any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth: ⁹ Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto 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, ¹⁰ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

¹¹ Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

¹² Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. ¹³ Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁴ 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, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. ¹⁵ And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

¹⁶ Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

¹⁷ Thou shalt not kill.

¹⁸ Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

¹⁹ Neither shalt thou steal.

²⁰ Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

²¹ Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour's.

Shorter Catechism

Question 45 - Which is the first commandment?

A: The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (Exod. 20:3)

Question 47 - What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A: The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, (Ps. 14:1) or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, (Rom. 1:21) and our God; (Ps. 81:10–11) and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone. (Rom. 1:25–26)

Larger Catechism

Question 105 - What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

A: 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 any thing 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.

I. Apostasy and Estrangement from God

- **Ezekiel 14** - ⁴“Therefore speak to them, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, ⁵that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.” ’
- **Hebrews 3** - ¹²Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³but exhort one another daily, while it is called “*Today*,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
- Three Ways in which professing Christians can turn against God:
 - **Heresy** – warring against a true set of doctrines that God has given us.
 - **Estrangement** – Turning of our back to God for a time.
 - **Apostasy** – Leaving the Faith.

Estrangement from God

- Example: Peter’s Denial of Jesus.
 - **NKJV - Matthew 25** - ⁶⁹Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” ⁷⁰But he denied it before *them* all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”⁷¹ And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”⁷² But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!” ⁷³And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you.” ⁷⁴**Then he began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!”** Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.
 - **ESV** - ⁷⁴Then he began to **invoke a curse on himself** and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed.”

Apostasy

- **Thomas Watson** - See the fearfulness of the sin of apostasy! It is renouncing our baptism... The case of such as fall away after baptism is dreadful. 'If any man draw back.' Heb 10:38. The Greek word to draw back, alludes to a soldier that steals away from his colours; so, if any man steal away from Christ, and run over to the devil's side, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him;' that is, I will be severely avenged on him; I will make my arrows drunk with his blood. If all the plagues in the Bible can make that man miserable, he shall be so.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:3 (NASB)** - *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the ^bapostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction*

II. Worshiping the Creature & Compacts with the Devil

- **Revelation 19** - ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
- **Webster's 1828** - COMPACT, n. An agreement; a contract between parties; a word that may be applied, in a general sense, to any covenant or contract between individuals; but it is more generally applied to agreements between nations and states, as treaties and confederacies. So the constitution of the United States is a political contract between the States; a national compact. Or the word is applied to the agreement of the individuals of a community.

III. Making Men the Lords of our Faith and Conscience

- **J.G Vos** - "Undoubtedly there are multitudes of careless Protestants who can give no better reason or higher authority for their faith and practice than the customs or teachings of their church, or the statements of their minister. To accept and obey the customs, teachings, and rules of a church, or the statements of a minister, without satisfying ourselves that they are in accordance with the Word of God, is wrong, for it amounts to making churches and ministers the lords of our faith and conscience. It is every Christian's duty to search the Scriptures for himself, to learn whether the statements of his church and minister are true or not."

IV. Grieving the Spirit of God

- The Holy Spirit is God. Breaking God's Commandments is the way in which we can grieve the Holy Spirit. Paul illustrates some of the ways we can do this in Ephesians 4.
- **Ephesians 4** - ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
- **Matthew Poole** - The Spirit is said to be grieved when any thing is done by us, which, were he capable of such passions, might be matter of grief to him; or when we so offend him as to make him withdraw his comfortable presence from us: see Isa. 63:10. *Whereby ye are sealed*; set apart or marked for, and secured unto the day of redemption; see chap. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22: so, Ezek. 9:4, they are marked that are to be delivered; and Rev. 7:3, the servants of God are sealed that were to escape the following plagues. *Unto the day of redemption*; i. e. full and final salvation at the resurrection: see Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23.

V. Dissatisfaction with God's Providence

- Discontent, dissatisfaction, impatience, charging Him foolishly for the evils He inflicts upon us, praising others for our wellbeing, and ascribing providence to chance or fortune are ways in which we can break the first commandment.
- **Job 2 (KJV)** - ¹⁰ But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.
- **Job 2 (NKJV)** - ¹⁰ But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
- **1 Samuel 6** - ⁹ And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, *then* He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that *it is* not His hand *that* struck us—it happened **to us by chance.**"
- **Deuteronomy 8** - ¹¹ "Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest—*when* you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them*; ¹³ and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, *in which were* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—¹⁷ then you say in your heart, '**My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.**'

V. Christ Keeps the First Commandment for us

Matthew 26 - ³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "**O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.**"

⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ **Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.** The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

⁴² Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "**O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.**" ⁴³ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and **prayed the third time, saying the same words.** ⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and resting? **Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.** ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."