

Shorter Catechism: Questions 49 & 50

The Second Commandment. Part 1: Duties Required

Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it – Deuteronomy 12:32

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 49 – Which is the second commandment?

A: The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto 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 water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thy self 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. (Exod. 20:4–6)

Question 50 - What is required in the second commandment?

A: The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such

religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word. (Deut. 32:46, Matt. 28:20, Acts 2:42)

I. What is Worship? Quick Survey

- **Kenneth Stewart** – Coming into the special presence of God, by calling upon His name. To bring our offerings and to receive God’s blessings.
 - Offerings – Prayer and Praise.
 - Receive – Word and Sacrament.
- **James Fisher** - What is meant by *religious worship*?

A. That homage and respect we owe to a gracious God, as a God of infinite perfection; by which we profess subjection to, and confidence in him, as our God in Christ, for the supply of all our wants; and ascribe the praise and glory that is due to him, as our chief good, and only happiness.
- **Thomas Ridgley** - Religious worship is that whereby we address ourselves to God, as a God of infinite perfection; profess an entire subjection and devotedness to him as our God; put our trust in him for a supply of all our wants; and ascribe to him that praise and glory which is his due, as our chief good, most bountiful benefactor, and only portion and happiness.
- **Dennis Prutow**¹ - Three words used in Greek that get translated as “worship” in our English Bibles.
 - *sebō* – Denotes the act of *fearing* God. In the Bible, worshipers are called *God-Fearers*.
 - **Acts 17:4 (NASB)** - “And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing [*sebomenōn*] Greeks and a number of the leading women”.
 - *proskynēo* – Prostrating, kissing the feet, hem of his garment, the ground before the object of worship, etc.
 - **John 4:21** - God is spirit, and those who worship [*proskunoūntas*] Him must worship [*prokuneîn*] in spirit and truth.
 - *latreia* – Form of service, wherein we carry out religious *duties*.
 - **Hebrews 9:1** - “Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship [*latreias*, service] and the earthly sanctuary.”
 - Used for our Christian Duty - **Romans 12:1** - “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship [*latreian*]”

II. Worship according to the Word

- Foundational principle in WSC 50: Worship must be in accordance to the way that “God hath appointed in His Word”. Also called the Regulative or Prescriptive Principle of Worship.

¹ Material taken from Public Worship 101

- **John Calvin** – “Assuredly, when the word of God is despised, all reverence for Him is gone. His majesty cannot be duly honoured among us, nor his worship maintained in its integrity, unless we hang as it were upon his lips. ²”
- **WCF 21.1** - The light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. (Rom. 1:20, Acts 17:24, Ps. 119:68, Jer. 10:7, Ps. 31:23, Ps. 18:3, Rom. 10:12, Ps. 62:8, Josh. 24:14, Mark 12:33) But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own **revealed will**, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not **prescribed** in the **Holy Scripture**. (Deut. 12:32, Matt. 15:9, Acts 17:25, Matt. 4:9–10, Deut. 15:1–20, Exod. 20:4–6, Col. 2:23)

III. Our Duty: Receive, Observe and Keep

- **Receiving** – Approve of them with the mind, and embrace them with the will.
- **Observing** – We cannot know the ordinances of God and not observe them.
- **Keeping** – Keep them pure as far as it is in our power and station to do so. Do not add or remove from the ordinances God has appointed.
 - **Deuteronomy 12** - ³² Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it

IV. Duties Enumerated –

- **Larger Catechism Question 108** – What are the duties required in the second commandment?
A: The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his word; (Deut. 32:46–47, Matt. 28:20, Acts 2:42, 1 Tim. 6:13–14) particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; (Phil. 4:6, Eph. 5:20) the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word; (Deut. 17:18–19, Acts 15:21, 2 Tim. 4:2, James 1:21–22, Acts 10:33) the administration and receiving of the sacraments; (Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 11:23–30) church government and discipline; (Matt. 18:15–17, Matt. 16:19, 1 Cor. 5, 1 Cor. 12:28) the ministry and maintenance thereof; (Eph. 4:11–12, 1 Tim. 5:17–18, 1 Cor. 9:7–15) religious fasting; (Joel 2:12,18, 1 Cor. 7:5) swearing by the name of God; (Deut. 6:13) and vowing unto him; (Isa. 19:21, Ps. 76:11) as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship; (Acts 17:16–17, Ps. 16:4) and, according to each one’s place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry. (Deut. 7:5, Isa. 30:22)
- Receiving, Observing and Keeping Pure and Entire the following:
 - 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

² Calvin, J. (1997). *Institutes of the Christian religion*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

- Religious Fasting
- Swearing by the name of God
- Vowing Unto Him (Oaths and Covenants)

- Disapproving, Detesting, Opposing
 - False Worship, and removing it, and all monuments of idolatry according to one's place and calling.
 - **J.G Vos** – “How are the ‘monuments of idolatry’ to be removed?” The monuments of idolatry are to be removed from any nation or social organism, not by indiscriminate action on the part of the public in general, nor by mob violence such as often took place in the days of the Reformation, but in an orderly manner “according to each one's place and calling.” That is to say, the work of removing “monuments of idolatry” is to be left in the hands of those persons in family, church, and state who have the legitimate authority to carry out such a task. A private citizen who by reason of his Protestant convictions believes that the Roman Catholic Mass is idolatrous does not have the right to walk into a Roman Catholic Church and smash the altar with an ax. The head of a family may remove ‘monuments of idolatry’ from his own house but not from his neighbor's house. In a heathen country, Christian people should hope, pray and work for the removal of all ‘monuments of idolatry,’ but they have no right to undertake the removal by direct action, except where the “monuments of idolatry” exist in their own homes or on their own property. On the other hand, where a family is converted from idolatry to Christianity, it is proper that the “monuments of idolatry” in that household be removed, and other Christians may of course be requested to assist in such an undertaking”