

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT
FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

QUESTIONS # 145 & 78.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #145. *What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbours, as well as our own,¹ especially in public judicature;² giving false evidence,³ suborning false witnesses,⁴ wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, out-facing and overbearing the truth;⁵ passing unjust sentence,⁶ calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked;⁷ forgery,⁸ concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause,⁹ and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves,¹⁰ or complaint to others;¹¹ speaking the truth unseasonably,¹² or maliciously to a wrong end,¹³ or perverting it to a wrong meaning,¹⁴ or in doubtful or equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice;¹⁵ speaking untruth,¹⁶ lying,¹⁷ slandering,¹⁸ backbiting,¹⁹ detracting,²⁰ talebearing,²¹ whispering,²² scoffing,²³ reviling,²⁴ rash,²⁵ harsh,²⁶ and partial censuring;²⁷ misconstructing intentions, words, and actions,²⁸

¹ 1 Sam. 17:28; 2 Sam. 16:3; 1:9, 10, 15, 16.

² Lev. 19:15; Hab. 1:4.

³ Prov. 19:5; 6:16, 19.

⁴ Acts 6:13.

⁵ Jer. 9:3, 5; Acts 24:2, 5; Ps. 12:3, 4; 52:1-4.

⁶ Prov. 17:15; 1 Kings 21:9-14.

⁷ Isa. 5:23.

⁸ Ps. 119:69; Luke 19:8; 16:5-7.

⁹ Lev. 5:1; Deut. 13:8; Acts 5:3, 8, 9; 2 Tim. 4:16.

¹⁰ 1 Kings 1:6; Lev. 19:17.

¹¹ Isa. 59:4.

¹² Prov. 29:11.

¹³ 1 Sam. 22:9, 10; Ps. 52:1-5 and *title*.

¹⁴ Ps. 56:5; John 2:19 *compared with* Matt. 26:60, 61.

¹⁵ Gen. 3:5; 26:7, 9.

¹⁶ Isa. 59:13.

¹⁷ Lev. 19:11; Col. 3:9.

¹⁸ Ps. 50:20.

¹⁹ Ps. 15:3.

²⁰ Jas. 4:11; Jer. 38:4.

²¹ Lev. 19:16.

²² Rom. 1:29, 30.

²³ Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:29.

²⁴ 1 Cor. 6:10.

²⁵ Matt. 7:1.

²⁶ Acts 28:4.

flattering,²⁹ vain-glorious boasting;³⁰ thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others;³¹ denying the gifts and graces of God;³² aggravating smaller faults;³³ hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession;³⁴ unnecessary discovering of infirmities;³⁵ raising false rumors;³⁶ receiving and countenancing evil reports,³⁷ and stopping our ears against just defense;³⁸ evil suspicion;³⁹ envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any,⁴⁰ endeavoring or desiring to impair it,⁴¹ rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy;⁴² scornful contempt,⁴³ fond admiration;⁴⁴ breach of lawful promises;⁴⁵ neglecting such things as are of good report,⁴⁶ and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.⁴⁷

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #78. *What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.⁴⁸

Question 1—*How ought we to understand the sins forbidden in this command?*

Answer—This commandment forbids anything prejudicial: 1.) Against the truth itself, 1 Sam. 17:28. 2.) Against our neighbor's good name, 2 Sam. 16:3. 3.) Against our own good name, 2 Sam. 1:9, 10, 15, 16.

Question 2—*Wherein do we show ourselves contrary or prejudicial to the truth?*

Answer—We act in a way prejudicial to the truth when in public judicatories, whether civil or ecclesiastical, we hinder the administration of justice, either:

First, As a judge, 1.) By having respect to persons, especially for monetary considerations, Lev. 19:15. 2.) By failing to render justice whereby injustice is made to appear a common thing, Hab. 1:4. 3.) By the passing of unjust sentences, whereby the

²⁷ Gen. 38:24; Rom. 2:1.

²⁸ Neh. 6:6-8; Rom. 3:8; Ps. 69:10; 1 Sam. 1:13-15; 2 Sam. 10:3.

²⁹ Ps. 12:2, 3.

³⁰ 2 Tim. 3:2.

³¹ Luke 18:9, 11; Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 4:6; Acts 12:22; Ex. 4:10-14.

³² Job 27:5, 6; 4:6.

³³ Matt. 7:3-5.

³⁴ Prov. 28:13; 30:20; Gen. 3:12, 13, Jer. 2:35; 2 Kings 5:25; Gen. 4:9.

³⁵ Gen. 9:22; Prov. 25:9, 10.

³⁶ Ex. 23:1.

³⁷ Prov. 29:12.

³⁸ Acts 7:56, 57; Job 31:13, 14.

³⁹ 1 Cor. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:4.

⁴⁰ Num. 11:29; Matt. 21:15.

⁴¹ Ezra 4:12, 13.

⁴² Jer. 48:27.

⁴³ Ps. 35:15, 16, 21; Matt. 27:28, 29.

⁴⁴ Jude 16; Acts 12:22.

⁴⁵ Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3.

⁴⁶ 1 Sam. 2:24.

⁴⁷ 2 Sam. 13:12, 13.

⁴⁸ 1 Sam. 17:28; Lev. 19:16; Ps. 15:3.

righteous are condemned and the wicked justified, Prov. 17:15; especially when it is to the prejudice of more than just his name, 1 Kings 21:9-14. 4.) By rewarding the wicked as if they be righteous or the righteous as if they be wicked, Isa. 5:23; this is to decree unrighteous decrees, Isa. 10:1.

Second, As an accuser, 1.) By the giving of false evidence, Prov. 6:16, 19; which we are assured shall not escape punishment by the Judge Who is never misled by lies, Prov. 19:5. 2.) By suborning, or inducing, false witnesses, Acts 6:13. 3.) By wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, Jer. 9:3, 5; especially when we are out-facing, or defying, the truth, Acts 24:2, 5; or our pleading is overbearing the truth, Ps. 12:3, 4; 52:1-4. 4.) By forging, or deliberately creating false evidence, Ps. 119:69; which is aggravated if it leads to personal gain, Luke 19:8; or, if it deprive another of his right, Luke 16:5-7.

Third, As the defendant, 1.) By denying the justness of a charge when called to a free confession, Prov. 28:13; Jer. 2:35; especially when there are attempts to hide the fact, 2 Kings 5:25; Gen. 4:9; excuse the fact, Prov. 30:20; or otherwise extenuate the sin, Gen. 3:12, 13.

Fourth, As the witnesses, 1.) By concealing some truth, by not making a free and full disclosure, Lev. 5:1; Deut. 13:8. 2.) By maintaining an undue silence in a just cause, Acts 5:3, 8, 9; 2 Tim. 4:16. 3.) By telling anything that is not true, Prov. 19:9.

We also hinder the truth, in common conversation, when we: 1.) Hold our peace when iniquity calls for some reproof from our lips, 1 Kings 1:6; which is a kind of hatred of our brother, Lev. 19:17. 2.) Hold our peace when iniquity calls for us to make a complaint to others, Isa. 59:4.

This command is also violated in our speech itself when we: 1.) Speak the truth unseasonably, or at an inappropriate time, Prov. 29:11. 2.) Speak the truth maliciously to a wrong end, 1 Sam. 22:9, 10; Ps. 52:1-5, *title*. 3.) Speak the truth to pervert it to a wrong meaning, Ps. 56:5; especially when we take true words and twist them uncharitably to the harm of another, John 2:19 *compared with* Matt. 26:60, 61. 4.) Speak using doubtful or equivocal expressions whereby the truth is prejudiced often to the loss of justice, Gen. 3:5; 26:7, 9. 5.) Speak using untruth, Isa. 59:13; or, outright lying, Lev. 19:11; Col. 3:9. 6.) Speak either too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; Luke 18:9, 11; Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 4:6; Acts 12:22; Ex. 4:10-14.

Question 3—*Wherein do we show ourselves prejudicial to our neighbor's good name?*

Answer—We show ourselves prejudicial when we are not careful to avoid all that is injurious to our neighbor or his good name:

First, When our words are used uncharitably against the seeking of justice, by: 1.) Slandering, wherein false charges are raised to the damage of his reputation, Ps. 50:20. 2.) Backbiting, which is slandering a person absent, Ps. 15:3. 3.) Talebearing, which is gossiping usually with some malicious intent, Lev. 19:16. 4.) Whispering, which is a secret or surreptitious expression of some belief, or rumor, usually of scandal, Rom. 1:29, 30. 5.) Scoffing, which is speaking to someone in a derisive or mocking manner, Gen. 21:9; which is to be accounted a form of persecution, Gal. 4:29. 6.) Reviling, which is criticizing in an abusive or angrily insulting manner, 1 Cor. 6:10.

Second, When through pride or self-conceit of heart we: 1.) Are rash, which consists in an uncharitable judging and condemning of others in our hearts, Matt. 7:1. 2.) Harsh, or possessed of cruel judgments without warrant, Acts 28:4. 3.) Engage in a partial censuring, whereby we allow in ourselves what we condemn in others, Gen. 38:24; Rom.

2:1. 4.) Misconstruct intentions, Neh. 6:6-8; words, Rom. 3:8; or actions, Ps. 69:10; 1 Sam. 1:13-15; 2 Sam. 10:3. 5.) Have unjust suspicions of him, 1 Tim. 6:4; which are contrary to the charity we must have toward one another, 1 Cor. 13:7. 6.) Envy or grieve at the deserved credit, or esteem, of any, Num. 11:29; Matt. 21:15; especially if it is accompanied with an endeavor or desire to impair it, Ezra 4:12, 13. 7.) Rejoice in the disgrace or infamy of others, Jer. 48:27.

Third, When through carelessness or malice we: 1.) Unnecessarily discover the faults and infirmities of others, Gen. 9:22. 2.) Aggravate their lesser faults, whereby we often seek to extenuate our own faults, Matt. 7:3-5. 3.) Revive the memory of our neighbor's crimes which were worn out of mind, especially being repented of, 2 Sam. 16:7, 8. 4.) Betray secrets committed to us, Prov. 17:9; which is traitorous behavior, 2 Tim. 3:4. 5.) Detract, or otherwise endeavor to impair the credit of our neighbor, Jer. 38:4; for those who do so are accounted judges of the law, Jas. 4:11. 6.) Raise false rumors to the prejudice of our neighbor, Ex. 23:1; or, receive and countenance such evil reports, Prov. 29:12. 7.) Stop our ears against a just defense, Acts 7:56, 57; Job 31:13, 14.

There needs to be care taken that we do not sin in defect by holding others in scornful contempt, Ps. 35:15, 16, 21; Matt. 27:28, 29; which is often a pretext for joining sin to sin by our vain-glorious boasting, 2 Tim. 3:2. There also needs to be care that we do not sin in excess by holding men's persons in fond admiration, Jude 16; Acts 12:22; which is often accompanied with another breach of this command, flattery, Ps. 12:2, 3.

Question 4—*Wherein do we show ourselves prejudicial to our own good name?*

Answer—Besides all the ways we prejudice our good name generally in our carelessness for the truth and our neighbor's good name, we especially do so when by our words we: 1.) Bear witness against ourselves unnecessarily, and without a due call, discovering our own secret faults and infirmities, especially to those who have no sense of piety, Prov. 25:9, 10. 2.) Bear false witness against ourselves, by denying the gifts and graces of God in us, Job 27:5, 6; 4:6. 3.) Bear false witness for ourselves, Prov. 28:13.

Likewise, when by our actions we: 1.) Breach any lawful promises, Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3. 2.) Neglect such things as are of good report, 1 Sam. 2:24. 3.) Practice, or not avoid ourselves, nor hinder what we can in others, those things which procure an ill name, 2 Sam. 13:12, 13.