

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 # 119 & 61.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #119. *What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required,¹ all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them;² all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful;³ and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.⁴

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #61. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required,⁵ and the profaning the day by idleness,⁶ or doing that which is in itself sinful,⁷ or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.⁸

Question 1—*Why are omissions of duties required forbidden by this command?*

Answer—Sins of omission are exceedingly prejudicial because, though they have a tendency to harden the heart, and stupefy the conscience, yet they are least regarded, Prov. 17:16. This point of neglect of Sabbath keeping, in particular, is a slighting and contempt for the great reward promised, Ezek. 22:26.

This rest, being an holy rest, entails that kind of exercise proper to the spiritual work demanded upon that day, Ex. 20:8. This exercise is public in God's worship, Isa. 66:23; in hearing of sermons, Luke 4:16; in joint prayer, Acts 16:13, 14; in receiving of sacraments, Acts 20:7; and singing of psalms, Ps. 92 *title*. It is also private, in those exercises of family and secret, Lev. 23:3. It should be carried out with a frame suitable to the peculiar work of the day, Prov. 8:34. This omission is most culpable because the Sabbath is an emblem of heaven, Rev. 1:10.

Question 2—*What else is forbidden?*

Answer—This commandment requires the careful keeping of it in its depth and breadth of spirit, which is the sign of a genuine spiritual frame, 1 John 5:3. Duties performed carelessly or in a partial way or that are done by way of formality or in a manner indifferent are not pleasing to the Lord, Rev. 3:15; Matt. 15:8.

¹ Ezek. 22:26.

² Acts 20:7, 9; Ezek. 33:30-32; Amos 8:5; Mal. 1:13.

³ Ezek. 23:38.

⁴ Jer. 17:24, 27; Isa. 58:13.

⁵ Ezek. 22:26; Amos 8:5; Mal. 1:13.

⁶ Acts 20:7, 9.

⁷ Ezek. 23:38.

⁸ Jer. 17:24-26; Isa. 58:13.

This is also a necessary warning because of the weakness of the natural constitution which recoils at the discipline of the flesh and lapses into a voluntary and customary drowsiness or infirmity, Jon. 1:5, 6. Care must be exercised to keep the flesh in control in order to avoid the lapse into an unbecoming carriage by reason of this weakness, Matt. 26:40, 41. The best antidote against wandering thoughts and weariness of the body is due preparation, Ps. 57:7.

Additionally, any negligent keeping of those duties required is forbidden, Mal. 1:13. In this regard, all violations of the first three commands are aggravated upon the Sabbath day, Isa. 1:13. Likewise, the unprofitable observance of this day is condemned, Ezek. 33:30-32.

We should avoid all temptations to grow weary with this appointed day and find ourselves desiring a return of those days wherein we serve the cares of the present life, Amos 8:5.

Question 3—*How is the sabbath also profaned?*

Answer—The Sabbath is also profaned by those who spend this time in idleness, or loitering away the day, Acts 20:7, 9; Matt. 20:3. This is also done when we give ourselves over to idle thoughts or conversation as well as when we endeavor to shorten the day as much as possible especially by curtailing its observance in anticipation of worldly concerns, Ps. 122:1.

Though sin committed on any day is hateful to the Lord, sin committed upon the Sabbath is aggravated, Isa. 56:2-6. Thus, care ought to be taken to avoid doing anything sinful upon the Lord's day, Ezek. 23:38.

Question 4—*What other sins are forbidden by this command?*

Answer—Those thoughts, words and works are needless upon the Sabbath day which tend only to fix the heart upon worldly affairs, Jer. 17:24-27. It should be observed that it is only by not thinking, or speaking, or working about our worldly employments, and by employing ourselves in holy exercises, that we distinguish the Sabbath from every other day, Isa. 58:13, 14.