

# Shorter Catechism: Questions 53 & 54

The Third Commandment: Duties Commanded

"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" –Matthew 15:8

## Word of God (Deuteronomy 5 - KJV)

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

<sup>7</sup> Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

<sup>8</sup> 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: <sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. <sup>13</sup> Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Thou shalt not kill.

<sup>18</sup> Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

<sup>19</sup> Neither shalt thou steal.

<sup>20</sup> Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

## Catechism

**Shorter Catechism Q.53** - Which is the third commandment?

A: The third commandment is, 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. (Exod. 20:7)<sup>1</sup>

**Shorter Catechism Q.54** - What is required in the third commandment?

A: The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, (Matt. 6:9, Deut.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Westminster shorter catechism: with Scripture proofs.* (1996). (3rd edition.). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

28:58) titles, (Ps. 68:4) attributes, (Rev. 15:3–4) ordinances, (Mal. 1:11,14) Word, (Ps. 138:1–2) and works. (Job 36:24)

**Larger Catechism Q. 112** - What is required in the third commandment?

The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes, (Matt. 6:9, Deut. 28:58, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 68:4, Rev. 15:3–4) ordinances, (Mal. 1:14, Eccl. 5:1) the word, (Ps. 138:2) sacraments, (1 Cor. 11:24–25,28–29) prayer, (1 Tim. 2:8) oaths, (Jer. 4:2) vows, (Eccl. 5:2) lots, (Acts 1:24,26) his works, (Job 36:24) and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holy and reverently used in thought, (Mal. 3:16) meditation, (Ps. 8:1,3–4,9) word, (Col. 3:17, Ps. 105:2,5) and writing; (Ps. 102:18) by an holy profession, (1 Pet. 3:15, Micah 4:5) and answerable conversation, (Phil. 1:27) to the glory of God, (1 Cor. 10:31) and the good of ourselves, (Jer. 32:39) and others. (1 Pet. 2:12)<sup>2</sup>

## Overview

1. First Commandment – Governs Identity of the God we worship – Who is our God?
2. Second Commandment – Governs the Way we worship God.
3. Third Commandment – Governs our Attitude in the worship of God.
4. Fourth Commandment – Governs when we are called into the corporate worship of God.

## I. What is Vanity?

- **Webster's 1828. Vanity** - Emptiness; want of substance to satisfy desire; uncertainty; inanity.

## II. The name of God

*God's name reveals Who He Is – and is connected to His Character*

- **Exodus 34** - <sup>5</sup> Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, **merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth**, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

## III. Reverent Use of God's Name

*Positive Form of the Third Commandment: Use God's name in a Holy and Reverent Way*

- A connection between the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer ("Hallowed be Your name") and the Third Commandment is found in **Larger Catechism Q. 190** – "we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, (Ps. 67:2–3) his titles, (Ps. 83:18) attributes, (Ps. 86:10–13,15) ordinances, word, (2 Thess. 3:1, Ps. 147:19–20, Ps. 138:1–3, 2 Cor. 2:14–15) works, and **whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by**"
- The Word of God models a Reverent use of God's name, especially in prayer:

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<sup>2</sup> *The Westminster larger catechism: with scripture proofs.* (1996). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

- **1 Chronicles 29** - <sup>10</sup> Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> "Now therefore, our God, We thank You and praise Your glorious name
- **1 Timothy 1** - <sup>17</sup> Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### IV. God's Name connected with God's Works

- **General Revelation:** God makes Himself known through the Works of Creation and Providence.
  - Creation: Declares the glory of God (Psalm 19)
  - Providence: Declares the works of God.
- **Special Revelation:** God makes Himself known through the Word.
  - The *Word* is one of the names of God, specifically of the Second Person of the Trinity (John 1:1)

#### IV. Connecting the Ordinances of God to His Name

- **The Word of God**
  - **Psalm 138** - <sup>2</sup> I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name.
  - **Thomas Ridgley** - His word is that in which the glory contained in his names, titles, and attributes, is set forth in the most glorious manner. Thus the psalmist says, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name;' or, thou hast given a brighter discovery of thyself in thy word, than thou hast done in any thing else by which thou hast made thyself known to thy creatures.
  - **Thomas Watson** - That speak jestingly. Such are they who sport and play with Scripture. This is playing with fire. Some cannot be merry unless they make bold with God; they make the Scripture a harp to drive away the spirit of sadness. Eusebius relates of one who made a jest of Scripture, and God struck him with frenzy. To play with Scripture shows a very profane heart. Some will rather lose their souls than lose their jests. These are guilty of taking God's name in vain. Tremble at it. Such as mock at Scripture, God will mock at their calamity. Prov 1:26.
  - **Scoffers** - **2 Peter 3** -<sup>2</sup> that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, <sup>3</sup> knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, "**Where is the promise of His coming?** For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."
- **Praying to God**
- **Observing the Sacraments**
- **Vows**

## V. Attitude of Worship

*Holy and Reverent Thoughts, Meditations, Words and Writings of God's name*

- **Matthew 15** - <sup>8</sup> *These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*

## VI. A Holy Profession

- **Negative Form: Romans 2** - <sup>21</sup> You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? <sup>24</sup> For "***the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,***" as it is written.
- **Positive Form: 1 Peter 2** - <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, <sup>12</sup> having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, **by *your good works which they observe,*** glorify God in the day of visitation.