

Shorter Catechism: Questions 45 & 47

Sins Forbidden in the First Commandment: Part 3

If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me –Matthew 16:24

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.

Outline of Sins Forbidden

1. Atheism
2. Idolatry
3. False, Unworthy or Wicked thoughts of God
4. **Searching into the Secrets of God. Profaning the things of God.**
5. **Hatred of God and Self-Love.**
6. **Unbelief and Heresy**
7. **Distrusting of God**
8. Pride
9. Tempting God and trusting in means (both lawful and unlawful)
10. Carnality
11. Blind Zeal
12. Lukewarmness
13. Worshiping the Creature
14. Following the Doctrines and Commandments of Men
15. Grieving the Spirit of God
16. Hating the Providence of God

I. Searching into the Secrets of God.

- **Larger Catechism** – “...bold and curious searching into his secrets; (Deut. 29:29) all profaneness, (Tit. 1:16, Heb. 12:16)...”
- **Deuteronomy 29** - ²⁹“The secret *things belong* to the Lord our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.
- **Principles in Deuteronomy 29:29**
 1. God’s ownership of secret things (Secret Will, Hidden Knowledge).
 - Our Duty – Do not pry into these things. Be content without them.

2. His granting to us and our children, revealed things (Revealed Will, in the Word of God).
 - Our Duty – Perform these things. Be content in doing them.
- **Profaneness** – *The irreverent use of sacred things.*
 - **Hebrews 12** - ¹⁶lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

II. Hatred of God and Self Love.

- **Larger Catechism** – “...hatred of God; (Rom. 1:30) self-love, (2 Tim. 3:2) self-seeking, (Phil. 2:21) 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; (1 John 2:15–16, 1 Sam. 2:29, Col. 3:2,5)...”
- **The World’s Perversion of The Greatest Love**
 - Whitney Houston song “Greatest love of all” (1985).
 - **Lyrics** - I found the greatest love of all inside of me
The greatest love of all is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself it is the greatest love of all
- **The Word – The True, Greatest Love**
 - **John 15** - ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.
- **Denying ourselves**
 - **Matthew 16** - ²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
 - **James Fisher** - What is it for a man to deny himself?
 - A. It is to give up with his self-wisdom, his self-will, and his self-righteousness.
 - **Self Wisdom vs. God’s Wisdom**
 - **1 Corinthians 3:18** - ¹⁸Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “*He catches the wise in their own craftiness*”; ²⁰and again, “*The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.*”
 - **Self-Will vs. God’s Revealed Will**
 - **Matthew 6** - ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 - **Self-Righteousness vs. God’s Righteousness**
 - **Philippians 3** - ⁷But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

III. Unbelief and Heresy

- **Larger Catechism** – “...vain credulity, (1 John 4:1) unbelief, (Heb. 3:12) heresy, (Gal. 5:20, Tit. 3:10) misbelief, (Acts 26:9)...”
- **1 John 4** - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
- **Hebrews 3** - ¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called “*Today*,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
- **Titus 3** - ¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.
- **J.G Vos on Heresy** - In the Bible the word *heresy* means carrying on propaganda for false doctrine, for example, by forming a sect of party in the church to teach and propagate false doctrines, contrary to what God has revealed in his Word. In modern usage the term *heresy* has come to mean false doctrines, and especially believing and holding false doctrines which are contrary to the essential truths of Christianity. While heresy in this modern sense is certainly sinful, still in the Bible the word includes the idea of forming a party or faction to carry on propaganda for false doctrines.

IV. Distrusting of God

- **Larger Catechism** – “...distrust, (Ps. 78:22) despair, (Gen. 4:13)...”
- **Psalm 78** - ¹⁷ But they sinned even more against Him by rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness. ¹⁸ And they tested God in their heart by asking for the food of their fancy. ¹⁹ Yes, they spoke against God: They said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? ²⁰ Behold, He struck the rock, so that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed. Can He give bread also? Can He provide meat for His people?” ²¹ Therefore the Lord heard *this* and was furious; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel, ²² Because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation.
- **J.G Vos on Despair vs. Distrust** - These two terms are related to each other. Despair is simply total distrust. Distrust means doubting or disbelieving God’s promises, love, and goodness. Despair means disbelieving God’s promises, love, and goodness to the limit. Cain gave way to despair, because he said that his punishment was greater than he could bear. He had no faith to ask God to forgive his sin of murdering his brother. Judas gave way to despair when, instead of praying to God for forgiveness, he went and hanged himself. Despair is a common motive for suicide; when a person has come to think that there is no more hope of God’s help he may, in his desperate unbelief, seek to “end it all” by taking his own life.