

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 # 139 & 72.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #139. *What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required,¹ are, adultery, fornication,² rape, incest,³ sodomy, and all unnatural lusts;⁴ all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections;⁵ all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto;⁶ wanton looks,⁷ impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel;⁸ prohibiting of lawful,⁹ and dispensing with unlawful marriages;¹⁰ allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them;¹¹ entangling vows of single life,¹² undue delay of marriage,¹³ having more wives or husbands than one at the same time,¹⁴ unjust divorce,¹⁵ or desertion;¹⁶ idleness, gluttony, drunkenness,¹⁷ unchaste company;¹⁸ lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays;¹⁹ and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.²⁰

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #72. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.²¹

Question 1—*Why is neglect of the duties commanded so grievous in the case of this commandment?*

¹ Prov. 5:7.

² Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19.

³ 2 Sam. 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:1.

⁴ Rom. 1:24, 26, 27; Lev. 20:15, 16.

⁵ Matt. 5:28; 15:19; Col. 3:5.

⁶ Eph. 5:3, 4; Prov. 7:5, 21, 22.

⁷ Isa. 3:16; 2 Pet. 2:14.

⁸ Prov. 7:10, 13.

⁹ 1 Tim. 4:3.

¹⁰ Lev. 18:1-21; Mark 6:18; Mal. 2:11, 12.

¹¹ 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Deut. 23:17, 18; Lev. 19:29; Jer. 5:7; Prov. 7:24-27.

¹² Matt. 19:10, 11.

¹³ 1 Cor. 7:7-9; Gen. 38:26.

¹⁴ Mal. 2:14, 15; Matt. 19:5.

¹⁵ Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:32.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 7:12, 13.

¹⁷ Ezek. 16:49; Prov. 23:30-33.

¹⁸ Gen. 39:19; Prov. 5:8.

¹⁹ Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14-16; Isa. 23:15-17; 3:16; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1 Pet. 4:3.

²⁰ 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40.

²¹ Matt. 15:19; 5:28, Eph. 5:3, 4.

Answer—The voice of Wisdom crieth out to those who will hear and perform the duties of this commandment, Prov. 5:7. There are only two things the Scriptures command us to flee: 1.) Idolatry, 1 Cor. 10:14; and, 2.) Uncleanness, 1 Cor. 6:18. The former is a sin that attaches to the soul, *cf.* Mic. 5:13, 14 *with* Mic. 6:7; while the latter attaches to the body, 1 Cor. 6:18. This seventh command occupies an analogous place in the second table to that of the second command in the first table, Mal. 2:11; and they are often linked, Eph. 5:5; 1 Cor. 6:9. This commandment requires our greater attention because, like idolatry, uncleanness is a bewitching sin which requires active resistance, Prov. 5:7.

Question 2—What sins of the flesh are forbidden by this commandment?

Answer—This commandment forbids all classes of sins which men, in distempered passions and carnal curiosities, seek to engage, such as: 1.) Adultery, which is the unbinding of the lust of the flesh in one or more married persons, 2 Pet. 2:14. Marriage, since the Fall, when used as ordained, serves as a prophylactic to sheath the uncleanness, Heb. 13:4. Adultery is either single, when one of the parties is married, Luke 16:18; or double, when both parties are married, Lev. 20:10. Because by marriage a man and woman are joined together as one flesh, adultery is against the body of the lawful partner, Mark 10:11. 2.) Fornication, which is a work of the flesh, Gal. 5:19. This is any kind of uncleanness or impurity contracted, whether married, Matt. 19:9; or unmarried, 1 Cor. 6:16, 18. 3.) Rape, which is a mixing uncleanness with a high-handed disregard of the sixth command as well, 2 Sam. 13:14. 4.) Incest, which adds to a violation of this command a radical and unnatural attack upon the sanctity of the family, 1 Cor. 5:1. 5.) Sodomy, or buggery with mankind, which adds perversion of nature to the uncleanness of the flesh, Rom. 1:24, 26, 27. 6.) Bestiality, or buggery with the lower animals, which is an unnatural lust, Lev. 20:15, 16. These last three containing offenses against natural morality, especially, are in the category of sins it is a shame even to mention, Eph. 5:12.

Question 3—What sins do men commit against this commandment with their minds?

Answer—The prohibitions of this command do not end with those sins of the flesh but extend to those mental motions and dispositions which are some many preludes to the out-breakings of uncleanness in the flesh, Gen. 34:2. Amongst these must stand condemned: 1.) All unclean imaginations, whereby we cherish and give life to lustful passions, Matt. 5:28. 2.) All unclean thoughts, whereby we conjure forth and meditate upon the breach of this command, Matt. 15:19. 3.) All unclean purposes, whereby we set in motion an active planning to violate this command, Col. 3:5. 4.) All unclean affections, whereby we set our passions upon the disregard of this command, Rom. 1:26.

Question 4—What sins do men commit against this commandment in their behaviors?

Answer—We sin against this command whenever we engage in: 1.) Corrupt or filthy communications, whereby we enflame the lusts and passions of the flesh in ourselves and others, Eph. 5:3, 4. 2.) Listening to such corrupt or filthy communications, wherein we cherish all inward uncleanness and weaken the resolve of the spirit to resist the temptations of the flesh, Prov. 7:5, 21, 22. 3.) Wanton, or immodest, looks, designed to engage the passions of another in lust, Isa. 3:16. 4.) Impudent or light behavior, which demonstrates a careless disregard of the persons of others in provoking them to lust, Gen. 39:12; Prov. 7:13. 5.) Use of immodest apparel, which is the expression of an impudent person's designing sin, Prov. 7:10. Such is to take the very bandages provided as a medicine for our fallen nature, Gen. 3:21; and turn them into an occasion for licentiousness, Ezek. 16:15, 16.

Question 5—*How do communities or societies of men violate this command?*

Answer—This commandment is violated amongst societies of men, whether civil or ecclesiastical, whenever men: 1.) Prohibit lawful marriage, 1 Tim. 4:3; wherein this commandment has peculiar interest for those not gifted with continence, 1 Cor. 7:9. 2.) Dispensing with, or providing for, unlawful marriages, whether against nature, Lev. 18:1-21; Mark 6:18; or grace, Mal. 2:11, 12. 3.) The allowing, tolerating, or keeping of stews, or districts of whorehouses, according to our place and station, 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Deut. 23:17, 18; Lev. 19:29.

Question 6—*How do individuals more particularly violate this command with respect to themselves and others?*

Answer—Individuals more particularly violate this command whenever they: 1.) Resort to stews, Jer. 5:7; Prov. 7:24-27. 2.) Take entangling vows of singleness, especially contrary to the natural dispositions, Matt. 19:10, 11. 3.) Undue delay of marriage, once all premarital concerns have been duly settled, 1 Cor. 7:7-9; Gen. 38:26. 4.) Having more than one spouse at a time, whereby the several ends of legitimate marriage are brought to confusion, Mal. 2:14, 15; Matt. 19:5. 5.) Obtain unjust divorces, which unlawfully tear down the shield erected by lawful marriages and expose the partners to fleshly temptations, Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:32. 6.) Pursue desertions, which are contrary to that comfort of cohabitation to be found in lawful marriage, 1 Cor. 7:12, 13. 7.) Give themselves to idleness and gluttony, wherein rather than improving the time the flesh is nourished to an excess and disposed to unclean passions, Ezek. 16:49. 8.) Engage in drunkenness, which tends to the direct subversion of all self-control and the opening to all unclean lusts and actions, Prov. 23:30-33. 9.) Keep to themselves unchaste company or place themselves into friendly connections where chastity is no rule, Gen. 39:19; Prov. 5:8. 10.) Engage themselves in lascivious songs, which reveal salacious, libidinous or otherwise lecherous and lewd desires, Eph. 5:4. These kinds of songs are not merely beside but contrary to the very Spirit of moderation and modesty, Eph. 5:18-20. 11.) Make use of lascivious books, whereby passions are inflamed and whoredoms increased, Ezek. 23:14-16. 12.) Entertain themselves with lascivious and promiscuous dancings, by which the flesh is excited and the passions enticed to every kind of lust, Isa. 23:15-17; 3:16. It has been a sad fact of the history of promiscuous dance unleashes lustful temptations which terminate in murders, Mark 6:22. In this motion, we see the progression of sin in the life of men, Jas. 1:14, 15. 13.) Present to themselves stage plays, or theatrical exhibitions, whereby men's lives are represented in light and amorous connections, riotings and revellings (κώμοις), Rom. 13:13; 1 Pet. 4:3; or jestings (εὐτραπέλια), Eph. 5:4; which subvert that spiritual exercise of mortification of the flesh, Rom. 6:12.

Question 7—*What other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness in ourselves or others is especially noted?*

Answer—The other provocations noted are the use and application of artificial coloring to the eyes, face, and elsewhere, which is a notorious note and fashioning of harlotry that is contrary to fundamental modesty, 2 Kings 9:30. The fashioning of the face and body with artificial colors and bedecking with ornamental jewelry is a sign of disregard for chastity which Scripture characterizes as a tearing of those parts of the body to which they are applied, Jer. 4:30. So far from being symbols of a gracious disposition, they are messengers of uncleanness sent forth to entice to impurity, Ezek. 23:40.