



From Your Pastor

A Study of the Shorter Catechism

“Seeking First God and His Righteousness”

Questions 45-48

WSC 45: Which is the first commandment? A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exod. 20:3). / **WSC 46:** What is required in the first commandment? A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly (1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17; Matt. 4:10; Ps. 29:2). / **WSC 47:** What is forbidden in the first commandment? A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, (1) or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, (2) and our God; (3) and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone. (4) (1) Ps. 14:1 (2) Rom. 1:21 (3) Ps. 81:10,11 (4) Rom. 1:25,26. / **WSC 48:** What are we specially taught by these words [before me] in the first commandment? A. These words [before me] in the first commandment teach us, That God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God. (1) (1) Ezek. 8:5,6; Ps. 46:20,21.

Memory Verses: *“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”* (Romans 8:3-4)

An Explanation: The first commandment is a summary of our call as God’s subjects to acknowledge Him as God, the only true God, and to live before His face in righteousness and holiness. This commandment teaches us to always seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, to love Him with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Matt. 6:33; 22:37-40). We are taught in this commandment to acknowledge God’s Lordship not only in our confession of Him, but also in our lives, in the way that from our hearts, we seek rightly to worship Him, faithfully serve Him, and to willingly give to Him all the glory (Rom. 11:33-36; 12:1-2). As we learned in the first catechism Q&A, this commandment particularly teaches us how we are to “glorify God” (in confession, worship, service, humility), but also how we are to “enjoy Him forever” as our God. We were made to acknowledge, worship, serve, and glorify God, and therefore in this alone can we find true happiness as God’s creatures.

Though in our fallen flesh, we would never, nor could never do this command, and therefore we discover that we fall short of God’s glory and are condemned before God for not doing our duty as His creatures (Rom. 3:19-23). We can rejoice in that what was impossible for us, becomes possible in Christ through His work of redeeming and freeing His beloved people from slavery to sin, so that the righteous requirements of God’s law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after His glorious Spirit! (Romans 3:24-26; 8:1-4, 31-32).

As we continue through the Ten Commandments in the next few questions and answers from the Shorter Catechism, let us keep an illustration in mind. The Law of God can be likened to a mirror as you might find in an enchanted land. The mirror can be seen in, but it can also be seen through. We look *through the mirror* of God's commandments to see the wonderful and perfect character of our God, His perfect holiness and righteousness, and we behold the glorious face of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). We look *into the mirror* and see the reflection of how we are living in light of His character and righteousness. As we look *through the mirror*, so we see a gracious and forgiving God who provides all the grace and power we need to live holy lives. As we look *into the mirror* and see our own reflection, we learn where we specifically need to repent of our sins, and seek in Christ the grace and power to live holy lives. *Through the mirror* to behold the happy and joyful life we were created to live; *in the mirror* to behold the progress we may be making in living before Him but also to be aware of the ongoing need of repentance and forgiveness we need in Christ Jesus!

Suggested questions to ask yourself for meditation and devoted prayer on God's Law (Psalm 1): How do you specifically see God and His character in questions 45-48? How do you specifically see Christ, and your need of Him today? What is your need of change right here, right now? Use the Shorter Catechism exposition of the Law to focus your sights on God, His glorious Christ, and your need of ongoing repentance and faith!

Prayer: Father, let me live my life before you, seeking to please you in all I do and say by your grace (2 Cor. 5:9). Teach me your ways, and let me demonstrate my love for you in joyful obedience, as my Savior before me has shown to me! (John 15:9-11). Let me be a person after your own heart because of your sovereign grace, your sanctifying grace, and your forgiving/accepting grace given to me in Jesus Christ.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Biggs