



Fourth-Eighth Commandments

Lesson 3



MEMORY (pg. 67; green catechism)

Fourth Commandment

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long on the earth.
-Exodus 20:12 AAT (alt.)

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger, but give them honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem.

Fifth Commandment

Thou shalt not kill.

Do not murder.
-Exodus 20:13 AAT

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Do not commit adultery.
-Exodus 20:14 AAT

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse.

Seventh Commandment

Thou shalt not steal.

Do not steal.
-Exodus 20:15 AAT

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or good, nor get them by false ware or deal, but help him to improve and protect his property and business.

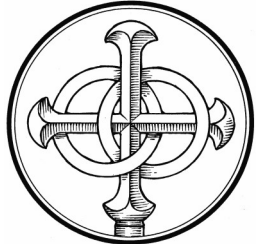
Eighth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Do not lie concerning your neighbor.
-Exodus 20:16 AAT

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.



RESPOND

Psalm	90
Reading	Matthew 5:17-48
Catechism Hymn	287:1, 5-9

All catechism students

- Catechism Family Devotions
 - Attend Divine Service and Sunday School
 - Read memory work aloud 3 times in the morning and in the evening every day this week
 - Review the lesson on this review sheet
- continued on next page*

First year students

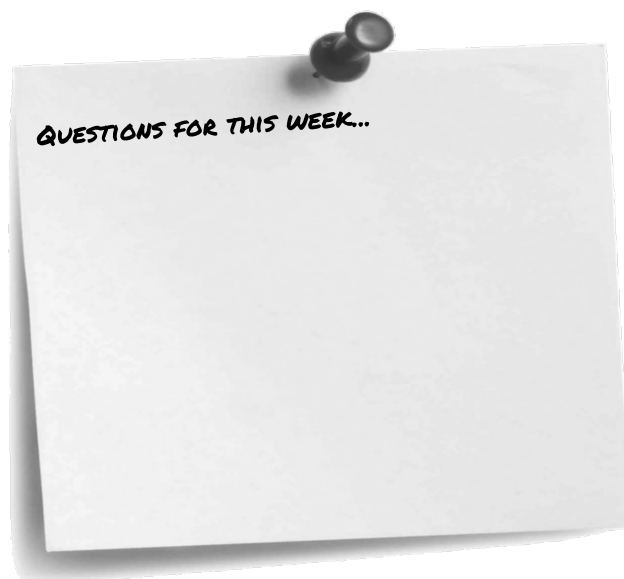
- Complete Lesson 3A Quiz in online classroom

Second year students

- Read Questions 52-69 in *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (pg. 63ff).
- Complete Lesson 3B Quiz in online classroom

Third year students

- Read *Luther's Large Catechism* pg. 37-71.
- Complete Lesson 3C Quiz in online classroom



Review—Fourth Commandment

The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. The last seven deal with our relationship with our neighbor.

Fatherhood and motherhood are distinguished from all other human relationships.

We are not simply commanded to love father and mother, as we are to all people in general, but to honor them.

To honor parents is to submit to a hidden majesty in them, that is, to recognize in them the work of God.



In this way He separates and distinguishes father and mother from all other persons upon earth and places them at His side. For it is a far higher thing to honor someone than to love someone, because honor includes not only love, but also modesty, humility, and submission to a majesty hidden in them.

We must, therefore, impress this truth upon the young that they should think of their parents as standing in God's place. They should remember that however lowly, poor, frail, and strange their parents may be, nevertheless, they are the father and the mother given to them by God. Parents are not to be deprived of their honor because of their conduct or their failings.

This commandment teaches us to (a) esteem parents above all things; (b) speak modestly to them; and (c) support them with our works and possessions, especially when they become old.

Honoring parents is a place for true good works for children.

Good works are not chosen by a Christian, but given by God. Parents are given so that children can do good works.

God has assigned parenthood the highest place on earth; parents stand in the place of God for their children.



But here again the devil rules in the world, so that the children forget their parents. We all forget God, and no one considers how God nourishes, protects, and defends us, and how He bestows so much good on body and soul. This is especially true when an evil time comes. We grow angry and grumble with impatience, and all the good that we have received throughout our life is wiped out of our memory. We act the same way toward our parents, and there is no child that understands and considers what the parents have endured while nourishing and fostering him, unless the Holy Spirit grants him this grace.

Although the rest of the commandments have promises, this one has a promise plainly and clearly attached to it: long life. Cf. Eph. 6:2-3.

All authority flows and is born from the authority of parents.

We should also obey teachers and other servants who stand in the place of and assist parents. Likewise, workers and employers as extensions of our family.

Such respect and honor serves our neighbor and is truly a good work.

Much of the world's woes are because children don't honor parents. We ourselves have caused such calamities by our own disobedience.

This commandment also extends to fathers in office, or government officials and officers of the law.

In addition, the fourth commandment also demands that we recognize and honor spiritual fathers, who preach the Word of God.



So we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment: fathers in blood and fathers in office. Or, those who have the care of the family and those who have the care of the country. Besides these there are still spiritual fathers. They are not like those in the papacy, who have had themselves called fathers but have performed no function of the fatherly office. For the only

ones called spiritual fathers are those who govern and guide us by God's Word.



Through the vocations of parents and other authorities, God provides for His creation.



This ought to encourage us and give us hearts that would melt in pleasure and love for those to whom we owe honor. We ought to raise our hands and joyfully thank God, who has given us such promises.



This teaching is not only for children and those under authority, but also for parents and those in authority.

Their authority is not so that they could act as tyrants; this is not worthy of honor.

Parents (and other authorities) should work to provide for the bodily necessities of those under their authority and to train them to honor and praise God.

Not only the world, but also Christians fail at this, using authority to gratify themselves instead of for the good of those they govern.



world.

For if we wish to have excellent and able persons both for civil and Church leadership, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, so that they may serve God and the



Review—The Fifth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment takes us away from spiritual and temporal governance to living among our neighbors.

This commandment governs individual conduct and does not apply to offices of governance where vocations stand in the place of God. Therefore it is not forbidden for the government to kill, nor for parents to get angry. Cf Romans 13:1-7.

This commandment is not only about the outward deed of murder, but also about the disposition of the heart toward the neighbor. Cf. Matthew 5:20-26.



Therefore, this commandment forbids everyone to be angry, except those (as we said) who are in the place of God, that is, parents and the government. For it is proper for God and for everyone who is in a divine estate to be angry, to rebuke, and to punish because of those very persons who transgress this and the other commandments.



This commandment is necessary because the world is evil.



In this commandment God—like a kind father—steps in ahead of us, intervenes, and wishes to have the quarrel settled, so that no misfortune comes from it and no one destroys another person. And briefly, He would in this way protect, set free, and keep in peace everyone against the crime and violence of everyone else. He would have this commandment placed as a wall, fortress, and refuge around our neighbor so that we do not hurt or harm him in his body.



The commandment spans from deeds of the hand to the nature of the heart, and forbids:

- (a) Harming our neighbors by hand or deed
- (b) Using our tongue to counsel or instigate harm
- (c) Using any methods that may cause harm to neighbors
- (d) Being ill disposed toward someone in anger or hatred or wishing ill upon someone.

The Fifth Commandment also requires us to provide help, as much as we are able, to our neighbors who are in need.

This commandment is especially directed toward those who are our enemies.

Because this commandment governs not only the hand, but also the heart, it should function as a mirror to remind us that our works deserve nothing but wrath and damnation.

Review—The Sixth Commandment

Every commandment forbids doing a particular harm to our neighbors.

The Fifth Commandment governed our neighbor's body; the Sixth Commandment governs that which is closest to our neighbor.

This commandment is directed not only at the outward deed of adultery, but at all unchastity.



Therefore, this commandment is directed against all kinds of unchastity, whatever it may be called. Not only is the outward act of adultery forbidden, but also every kind of cause, motive, and means of adultery. Then the heart, the lips, and the whole body may be chaste and offer no opportunity, help, or persuasion toward unchastity.



The commandment to guard and protect the estate of marriage shows us God's approval of it.

The purpose of marriage, an estate instituted before all others, is for a man and woman to live together, bear children, and nourish and train them to honor God.

Marriage is necessary on account of the natural desires

and impulses of the flesh; it takes a special gift from God to remain chaste without marriage.

Marriage ought to be highly honored and encouraged to young people as an honorable estate.



Therefore, it is the duty of parents and the government to see to it that our youth are brought up with discipline and respectability. When they have become mature, parents and government should provide for them to marry in the fear of God and honorably. God would not fail to add His blessing and grace, so that people would have joy and happiness from marriage.

Marital chastity is maintained by man and wife living together in love and harmony.

Review—The Seventh Commandment

After your neighbor's body and spouse, his property is protected next.

The commandment against stealing deals not only with the crass theft of money and goods, but also unfair business practices for personal advantage at the expense of your neighbor.



For, as we have just said, to "steal" means not only emptying our neighbor's money box and pockets. It also means grasping property in the market, in all stores, booths, wine and beer cellars, workshops, and, in short, wherever there is trading or taking and giving of money for merchandise or labor.

You also steal when, by laziness or neglect, you cost your neighbor money.

These unfair business practices are worse than burglars, because it's so hard to defend against them.

Those in authority rob from the entire citizenship when they use their authority for personal gain.

Petty thieves are harshly punished while the greater thieves go on their business, even demanding honor for it.

Such thieves may escape civil punishment, but none escape God's wrath.

Stolen or dishonestly gotten wealth will never be a blessing.

Christians are called to forgive and show pity.



This is enough of an explanation of what stealing is. Let the commandment not be understood too narrowly. But let it apply to everything that has to do with our neighbors. Briefly, in summary (as in the former commandments) this is what is forbidden: (a) To do our neighbor any injury or wrong (in any conceivable manner, by im-

peding, hindering, and withholding his possessions and property), or even to consent or allow such injury. Instead, we should interfere and prevent it. (b) It is commanded that we advance and improve his possessions. When they suffer lack, we should help, share, and lend both to friends and foes

"Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed" (Proverbs 19:17).

This commandment also points faith to God to provide goods and possession by His grace.

Review—The Eighth Commandment

Good reputation is a gift from God in addition to body, spouse, and possessions.

God does not want the reputation, good name, and upright character of our neighbor to be taken away or diminished, just as with his money and possessions.

The plainest meaning applies to the courts, when false witness is brought against an innocent man.

The spiritual meaning is applied to judging false doctrine.



Next, this commandment extends very much further, if we are to apply it to spiritual jurisdiction or administration. Here it is a common occurrence that everyone bears false witness against his neighbor. For wherever there are godly preachers and Christians, they must bear the sentence before the world that calls them heretics, apostates, and indeed, instigators and desperately wicked unbelievers. Besides, God's Word must suffer in the most shameful and hateful manner, being persecuted, blasphemed, contradicted, perverted, and falsely quoted and interpreted. But let this go. For this is the way of the blind world, which condemns and persecutes the truth and God's children, and yet considers it no sin.

This commandment applies to all by forbidding all sins of the tongue. See also, James 3.



To bear false witness is nothing else than a work of the tongue. Now, God prohibits whatever is done with the tongue against a fellow man. This applies to false preachers with their doctrine and blasphemy, false judges and witnesses with their verdict, or outside of court by lying and speaking evil. Here belongs particularly the detestable, shameful vice of speaking behind a person's back and slandering, to which the devil spurs us on, and of which much could be said. For it is a common evil plague that everyone prefers hearing evil more than hearing good about his neighbor. We ourselves are so bad that we cannot allow anyone to say anything bad about us. Everyone would much prefer that all the world should speak of him in glowing terms. Yet we cannot bear that the best is spoken about others.

No one is allowed to publicly judge and reprove his neighbor unless he has a command to judge and reprove, i.e., the offices of magistrate and pastor.

A slanderer is one who is not content in knowing a thing, but also assuming jurisdiction.

If you know of something against someone, bring it to the proper authority.

The commandment refers to secret sins; public sins must also be rebuked publicly.

But we are to explain things in the best possible way.



So also among ourselves should we clothe whatever blemishes and infirmities we find in our neighbor and serve and help him to promote his honor to the best of our ability.

On the other hand, we should prevent whatever may be disgraceful to him. It is especially an excellent and noble virtue for someone always to explain things for his neighbor's advantage and to put the best construction on all he may hear about his neighbor (if it is not notoriously evil).

Notes

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