

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 # 138 & 71.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #138. *What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?*

A. The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections,¹ words,² and behavior;³ and the preservation of it in ourselves and others;⁴ watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses;⁵ temperance,⁶ keeping of chaste company,⁷ modesty in apparel;⁸ marriage by those that have not the gift of continency,⁹ conjugal love,¹⁰ and cohabitation;¹¹ diligent labor in our callings;¹² shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.¹³

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #71. *What is required in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.¹⁴

Question 1—*This seventh commandment requires duties with respect to what?*

Answer—This command speaks to a series of duties respecting chastity as it pertains to: 1.) The body, for which one procures sanctification with respect to God and honesty with respect to man, 1 Thess. 4:4. This requires men to possess their bodies in chastity with particular reference to the service of God, 1 Sam. 21:5. Possessing the body in honor entails purging of all that offends in order to seek the glory of God, 2 Tim. 2:21. 2.) The mind, which needs to dispose itself toward God in all chaste thoughts, Job 31:1. The failure of which Job acknowledges as a cause of divine displeasure, Job 31:9. 3.) The affections, whereby our desires are set upon the things of God or the things of the world, the flesh and the devil, 1 Cor. 7:34. 4.) The words, whereby we express the hidden work of grace in the heart, Col. 4:6. Indeed, by words a gracious man seeks to open the door of salvation to those his hearers, Prov. 15:4. Wise words are vehicles of grace to others,

¹ 1 Thess. 4:4; Job 31:1; 1 Cor. 7:34.

² Col. 4:6.

³ 1 Pet. 3:2.

⁴ 1 Cor. 7:2, 35, 36.

⁵ Job 31:1.

⁶ Acts 24:24, 25.

⁷ Prov. 2:16-20.

⁸ 1 Tim. 2:9.

⁹ 1 Cor. 7:2, 9.

¹⁰ Prov. 5:19, 20.

¹¹ 1 Pet. 3:7.

¹² Prov. 31:11, 27, 28.

¹³ Prov. 5:8, Gen. 39:8-10.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 7:2, 3, 5, 34, 36; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:2.

Eccl. 10:12. 5.) The behavior, which, when chaste, makes one of the most effective arguments for the power of true religion, 1 Pet. 3:2. Our behavior ought to exhibit that modesty that is becoming our place and station in life, 1 Sam. 18:1.

Question 2—*What should be our study in the pressing of these duties?*

Answer—The end of these duties is the seeking of the preservation of chastity both in ourselves and in others, 1 Cor. 7:2, 35, 36.

First, we must do nothing that may ensnare ourselves or others, Hab. 2:15. Whoever lays a snare is a partner for the sin that comes by it, as it evident in the case of Judah and his daughter-in-law, Gen. 38:14-16. So, too, Bathsheba's washing of herself in a place where she might be seen of others which became the occasion of that sin which followed, 2 Sam. 11:2.

Second, we are to see that we do everything we can to preserve the chastity of others by not exposing them to temptations against which they may not stand, 1 Cor. 7:5. There are many who might have been kept from sins of uncleanness had the door been kept shut by another, Amos 3:5.

Question 3—*What special instructions are necessary to keep this command?*

Answer—It is very needful that a watchfulness be set over the eyes, which did first bring sin into the world, Gen. 3:6. For which reason Job did make a covenant to be careful with his glances, Job 31:1. For it was undoubtedly by the eye-gate that David was first enticed, even by a curious or careless glance, 2 Sam. 11:2. So, too, it was a glance that, though it did not destroy his honesty amongst men, brought Joseph to prison for a time, Gen. 39:7.

Again, there needs to be a watchfulness over the other senses, especially the ears whereby men have been made to yield themselves captives to sin, Prov. 5:3. Indeed, some men have been brought to total destruction by this means, Judg. 16:15-17.

Additionally, men need to take care that they study: 1.) Temperance, which is a sober use of meat, drink, sleep and recreation, Luke 21:34. Surfeiting, *κραϊπάλη*, is that unrestrained behavior which comes with drunkenness, 1 Sam. 25:36; Hab. 2:15. Temperance is a hedge to chastity, which may explain Paul's topic before Drusilla, a woman known to history for leaving her husband for Felix, who was said to be taken with her beauty, Acts 24:24, 25. 2.) Keep chaste and modest company, Prov. 2:16-20. Many have been ruined by the ill company they keep, for ill company wears off insensibly the impressions of virtue on people's spirits, 1 Cor. 15:33. Maintaining peace and converse with the wicked makes people like them, which is the reason for Solomon's warning, Prov. 5:8, 9. 3.) Modesty in apparel is another hedge against uncleanness and sign of chastity, 1 Tim. 2:9. Studying modesty inclines the heart to those inward exercises of religion which alone are profitable, 1 Pet. 3:3-5. 4.) For those who have not the gift of continency, this duty requires the seeking of marriage, 1 Cor. 7:2, 9. Within the bonds of matrimonial affection there is that shield of conjugal love, Prov. 5:19, 20; coupled with the comfort of cohabitation, 1 Pet. 3:7. 5.) Being busied about some honest employment cuts off many temptations open to those who are idle, Prov. 31:11, 27, 28. Had David taken to the field with his army, he might have avoided temptation, 2 Sam. 11:2. Had Dinah been about the business of her father's house she might have preserved her chastity, Gen. 34:1, 2. 6.) Shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto, Prov. 5:8. Thus did Joseph, Gen. 39:8-10.