

Heidelberg Catechism Spring 2020 Week 11

The Renewal of the Holy Spirit/Ten Commandments

“The Christian life is not to be characterized by the repeated cycle of sin-confess-sin-confess. Rather it should be sin-confess-repent-grow.” ~Randy Smith

Lesson Objective: We will learn that the new life which manifests itself in doing good works has its beginning in conversion, which consists in the mortification of the old and the quickening of the new man. The rule by which we are to be governed is the law of God, as contained in the ten commandments.

Lesson

The Renewal of the Holy Spirit

86. Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?

Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing,¹ and that He be glorified through us;² then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof;³ and by our godly walk win also others to Christ.⁴

[1] Rom. 6:13; 12:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9–10; 1 Cor. 6:20. [2] Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12. [3] Matt. 7:17–18; Gal. 5:6, 22–23. [4] Rom. 14:19; 1 Pet. 3:1–2; *2 Pet. 1:10.

87. Can they, then, not be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, unrepentant life?

By no means, for, as Scripture says, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.¹

[1] 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Eph. 5:5–6; 1 Jn. 3:14–15.

The Life of Repentance

88. In how many things does true repentance or conversion consist?

In two things: the dying of the old man,¹ and the making alive of the new.

[1] Rom. 6:4–6; Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:5–10; 1 Cor. 5:7.

89. What is the dying of the old man?

Heartfelt sorrow for sin, causing us to hate and turn from it always more and more.¹

[1] Rom. 8:13; Joel 2:13.

90. What is the making alive of the new man?

Heartfelt joy in God through Christ,¹ causing us to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works.²

[1] Rom. 5:1; 14:17; Isa. 57:15. [2] Rom. 8:10–11; Gal. 2:20; *Rom. 7:22.

91. What are good works?

Those only which proceed from true faith,¹ and are done according to the law of God,² unto His glory,³ and not such as rest on our own opinion⁴ or the commandments of men.⁵

[1] Rom. 14:23. [2] 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10. [3] 1 Cor. 10:31. [4] Deut. 12:32; Ezek. 20:18, 20; Isa. 29:13. [5] Matt. 15:9; *Num. 15:39.

The Law of God

92. What is the law of God?

“And God spoke all these words, saying:”

First Commandment

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.”

Second Commandment

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Third Commandment

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Fourth Commandment

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger

who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Fifth Commandment

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

Sixth Commandment

“You shall not murder.”

Seventh Commandment

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Eighth Commandment

“You shall not steal.”

Ninth Commandment

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Tenth Commandment

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”¹

[1] Ex. 20; Deut. 5; *Matt. 5:17–19; *Rom. 10:5; *Rom. 3:31; *Ps. 119:9.

93. How are these commandments divided?

Into two tables:¹ the first of which teaches, in four commandments, what duties we owe to God; the second, in six, what duties we owe to our neighbor.²

[1] Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13. [2] Matt. 22:37–40.

94. What does God require in the first commandment?

That, on peril of my soul’s salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry,¹ sorcery, enchantments,² invocation of saints or of other creatures;³ and that I rightly acknowledge the only true God,⁴ trust in Him alone,⁵ with all humility ⁶ and patience⁷ expect all good from Him only,⁸ and love,⁹ fear,¹⁰ and

honor¹¹ Him with my whole heart; so as rather to renounce all creatures than to do the least thing against His will.¹²

[1] 1 Cor. 10:7, 14. [2] Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:10–12. [3] Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8–9. [4] Jn. 17:3. [5] Jer. 17:5. [6] 1 Pet. 5:5–6. [7] Heb. 10:36; Col. 1:10b–11; Rom. 5:3–4; 1 Cor. 10:10. [8] Ps. 104:27–30; Isa. 45:6b–7; Jas. 1:17. [9] Deut. 6:5. [10] Deut. 6:2; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10; Matt. 10:28. [11] Deut. 10:20. [12] Matt. 5:29–30; 10:37; Acts 5:29.

95. What is idolatry?

Idolatry is to conceive or have something else in which to place our trust instead of, or besides, the one true God who has revealed Himself in His Word.¹

[1] Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19; Eph. 2:12; Jn. 2:23; 2 Jn. 1:9; Jn. 5:23; *Ps. 81:8–9; *Matt. 6:24; Ps. 62:5–7
*Ps. 73:25–26.

96. What does God require in the second commandment?

That we in no way make any image of God,¹ nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded us in His Word.²

[1] Deut. 4:15–19; Isa. 40:18, 25. Rom. 1:22–24; Acts 17:29. [2] 1 Sam. 15:23; Deut. 12:30–32; Matt. 15:9; *Deut. 4:23–24; *Jn. 4:24.

97. May we not make any image at all?

God may not and cannot be imaged in any way; as for creatures, though they may indeed be imaged, yet God forbids the making or keeping of any likeness of them, either to worship them or to serve God by them.¹

[1] Ex. 23:24–25; 34:13–14; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:22; 2 Kgs. 18:4; *Jn. 1:18.

98. But may not pictures be tolerated in churches as books for the people?

No, for we should not be wiser than God, who will not have His people taught by dumb idols,¹ but by the lively preaching of His Word.²

[1] Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18–19. [2] 2 Pet. 1:19; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Rom. 10:17.

99. What is required in the third commandment?

That we must not by cursing,¹ or by false swearing,² nor yet by unnecessary oaths,³ profane or abuse the name of God; nor even by our silence and connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and in summary, that we use the holy name of God in no other way than with fear and

reverence,⁴ so that He may be rightly confessed⁵ and worshiped⁶ by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.⁷

[1] Lev. 24:10–16. [2] Lev. 19:12. [3] Matt. 5:37; Jas. 5:12. [4] Isa. 45:23. [5] Matt. 10:32. [6] 1 Tim. 2:8. [7] Rom. 2:24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Col. 3:16–17; *1 Pet. 3:15.

100. Is the profaning of God's name, by swearing and cursing, so grievous a sin that His wrath is kindled against those also who do not help as much as they can to hinder and forbid it?

Yes, truly,¹ for no sin is greater and more provoking to God than the profaning of His name; wherefore He even commanded it to be punished with death.²

[1] Lev. 5:1 [2] Lev. 24:15–16; *Lev. 19:12; *Prov. 29:24–25.

101. But may we swear reverently by the name of God?

Yes, when the magistrate requires it, or when it may be needful otherwise, to maintain and promote fidelity and truth to the glory of God and our neighbor's good; for such an oath is grounded in God's Word,¹ and therefore was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments.²

[1] Deut. 10:20; Isa. 48:1; Heb. 6:16. [2] Gen. 21:24; 31:53–54; Josh. 9:15, 19; 1 Sam. 24:22; 1 Kgs. 1:29; Rom. 1:9.

102. May we swear by "the saints" or by any other creatures?

No, for a lawful oath is a calling upon God, that He, as the only searcher of hearts, may bear witness to the truth, and punish me if I swear falsely;¹ which honor is due to no creature.²

[1] 2 Cor. 1:23. [2] Matt. 5:34–36; *Jer. 5:7; *Isa. 65:16.

103. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained,¹ and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church² to learn the Word of God,³ to use the holy sacraments,⁴ to call publicly upon the Lord,⁵ and to give Christian alms.⁶ In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath.⁷

[1] Tit. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:14–15; 4:13–14; 5:17; 1 Cor. 9:11, 13–14. [2] 2 Tim. 2:2, 15; Ps. 40:10–11; 68:26; Acts 2:42, 46. [3] 1 Cor. 14:19, 29, 31. [4] 1 Cor. 11:33. [5] 1 Tim. 2:1–2, 8–10; 1 Cor. 14:16. [6] 1 Cor. 16:2. [7] Isa. 66:23; *Gal. 6:6; *Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:9–10.

104. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

That I show all honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother,¹ and to all in authority over me,² submit myself with due obedience to all their good instruction and correction, and also bear patiently with their infirmities, since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.³

[1] Eph. 6:22; Eph. 6:1–6; Col. 3:18, 20–24; Prov. 1:8–9; 4:1; 15:20; 20:20; Ex. 21:17; Gen. 9:24–25.

[2] Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:18; Rom. 13:2–7; Matt. 22:21. [3] Eph. 6:4, 9; Col. 3:19, 21; *Prov. 30:17; *Deut. 27:16; *Deut. 32:24; *Prov. 13:24; *1 Tim. 2:1–2; *1 Tim. 5:17; *Heb. 13:17–18.

105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

That I do not revile, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor either in thought, word, or gesture, much less in deed, whether by myself or by another,¹ but lay aside all desire of revenge;² moreover, that I do not harm myself, nor willfully run into any danger.³ Wherefore also to restrain murder the magistrate is armed with the sword.⁴

[1] Matt. 5:21–22; 26:52; Gen. 9:6. [2] Eph. 4:26; Rom. 1:19; Matt. 5:25; 18:35. [3] Matt. 4:7; Rom. 13:14; Col. 2:23. [4] Ex. 21:14; *Matt. 18:6–7.

106. Does this commandment speak only of killing?

No, but in forbidding murder God teaches us that He abhors its very root, namely, envy,¹ hatred,² anger,³ and desire of revenge; and that in His sight all these are hidden murder.⁴

[1] Rom. 1:28–32. [2] 1 Jn. 2:9–11. [3] Jas. 2:13; Gal. 5:19–21. [4] 1 Jn. 3:15 *Jas. 3:16; *1:19.

107. But is this all that is required: that we do not kill our neighbor?

No, for in condemning envy, hatred, and anger, God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves,¹ to show patience, peace, meekness,² mercy,³ and kindness⁴ toward him, and to prevent his hurt as much as possible;⁵ also, to do good even unto our enemies.⁶

[1] Matt. 7:12; 22:39. [2] Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:1–2; Rom. 12:18. [3] Matt. 5:7; Lk. 6:36. [4] Rom. 12:10. [5] Ex. 23:5. [6] Matt. 5:44–45; Rom. 12:20–21; *Col. 3:12–14; *Matt. 5:9.

108. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

That all unchastity is accursed of God,¹ and that we should therefore loathe it with our whole heart,² and live chastely and modestly,³ whether in holy wedlock or single life.⁴

[1] Lev. 18:27–28. [2] Jude 1:22–23. [3] 1 Thess. 4:3–5. [4] Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:1–4.

109. Does God forbid nothing more in this commandment than adultery and such gross sins?

Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Spirit, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy; therefore, He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words,¹ thoughts, desires,² and whatever may entice thereto.³

[1] Eph. 5:3–4; 1 Cor. 6:18–20. [2] Matt. 5:27–30. [3] Eph. 5:18–19; 1 Cor. 15:33.

110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

God forbids not only such theft¹ and robbery² as are punished by the government, but God views as theft also all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we seek to get our neighbor's goods, whether by force or by deceit,³ such as unjust weights,⁴ lengths, measures,⁵ goods, coins, usury,⁶ or by any means forbidden of God; also all covetousness⁷ and the misuse and waste of His gifts.⁸

[1] 1 Cor. 6:10. [2] 1 Cor. 5:10. [3] Lk. 3:14; 1 Thess. 4:6. [4] Prov. 11:1; 16:11. [5] Ezek. 45:9–10. Deut. 25:13–15. [6] Ps. 15:5; Lk. 6:35. [7] 1 Cor. 6:10. [8] Prov. 5:10; *1 Tim. 6:10; *Jn. 6:12.

111. But what does God require of you in this commandment?

That I further my neighbor's good where I can and may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me,¹ and labor faithfully, so that I may be able to help the poor in their need.²

[1] Matt. 7:12. [2] Eph. 4:28; *Phil. 2:4; *Gen. 3:19; *1 Tim. 6:6–7.

112. What does the ninth commandment require?

That I bear false witness against no one,¹ twist no one's words,² be no backbiter or slanderer,³ join in condemning no one unheard or rashly;⁴ but that on pain of God's heavy wrath, I avoid all lying and deceit⁵ as the very works of the devil;⁶ and that in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs, I love, speak honestly, and confess the truth;⁷ also, insofar as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.⁸

[1] Prov. 19:5, 9. [2] Ps. 15:3. [3] Rom. 1:28–30. [4] Matt. 7:1–2. Lk. 6:37. [5] Jn. 8:44. [6] Prov. 12:22; 13:5. [7] 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25. [8] 1 Pet. 4:8; *Jn. 7:24, 51; *1 Pet. 2:21, 23; *Col. 4:6; *1 Pet. 3:9.

113. What does the tenth commandment require?

That not even the least inclination or thought against any commandment of God ever enter our heart, but that with our whole heart we continually hate all sin and take pleasure in all righteousness.¹

[1] Rom. 7:7–8; *Prov. 4:23; *Jas. 1:14–15; *Matt. 15:11, 19–20.

114. Can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

No, but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of such obedience,¹ yet so that with earnest purpose they begin to live not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God.²

[1] 1 Jn. 1:8–10; Rom. 7:14–15; Eccl. 7:20. [2] Rom. 7:22; Jas. 2:10–11; *Job 9:2–3; *Ps. 19:13.

115. Why then does God so strictly enjoin the Ten Commandments upon us, since in this life no one can keep them?

First, that as long as we live we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature,¹ and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ;² second, that without ceasing we diligently ask God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we be renewed more and more after the image of God, until we attain the goal of perfection after this life.³

[1] 1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 32:5. [2] Rom. 7:24–25. [3] 1 Cor. 9:24–25; Phil. 3:12–14; *Matt. 5:6; *Ps. 51:12.

Homework

115. Why then does God so strictly enjoin the Ten Commandments upon us, since in this life no one can keep them?

First, that as long as we live we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature,¹ and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ;² second, that without ceasing we diligently ask God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we be renewed more and more after the image of God, until we attain the goal of perfection after this life.³

[1] 1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 32:5. [2] Rom. 7:24–25. [3] 1 Cor. 9:24–25; Phil. 3:12–14; *Matt. 5:6; *Ps. 51:12.