

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

Shorter
CATECHISM

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

Lecture #30

The Duty Required of Man
Catechism Questions 38 thru 42



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

© 2023 by John Knox Institute of Higher Education

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means for profit, except in brief quotations for the purposes of review, comment, or scholarship, without written permission from the publisher, John Knox Institute, P.O. Box 19398, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-19398, USA.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

Visit our website: www.johnknoxinstitute.org

Rev. Jonathan Mattull is minister of the gospel at Sovereign Grace Presbyterian Church, in St. Louis, Missouri, a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), Presbytery of the United States of America.

stlpresbyterian.org

The Shorter CATECHISM

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

1. The Chief End of Man—*Question 1*
2. God's Word and Its Teaching—*Questions 2 & 3*
3. What God Is—*Question 4*
4. One Triune God—*Questions 5 & 6*
5. The Decrees of God—*Questions 7 & 8*
6. God's Work of Creation—*Question 9*
7. God's Creation of Man—*Question 10*
8. God's Works of Providence—*Question 11*
9. God's Special Providence Towards Man—*Question 12*
10. The Fall of Man—*Questions 13 & 15*
11. What Sin Is—*Question 14*
12. The Fall's Effect on All Mankind—*Questions 16 & 17*
13. The Sinfulness & Misery of Man's Fallen State—*Questions 18 & 19*
14. The Covenant of Grace—*Question 20*
15. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of God's Elect—*Question 21*
16. The Incarnation—*Question 22*
17. Christ's Office of Prophet—*Questions 23 & 24*
18. Christ's Office of Priest—*Question 25*
19. Christ's Office of King—*Question 26*
20. The Humiliation of Christ—*Question 27*

The Shorter CATECHISM

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

21. Christ's Exaltation—*Question 28*
22. Redemption Applied—*Questions 29 & 30*
23. Effectual Calling—*Questions 31 & 32*
24. Justification—*Question 33*
25. Adoption—*Question 34*
26. Sanctification—*Question 35*
27. Blessings of Salvation in this Life—*Question 36*
28. Blessings of Salvation at Death—*Question 37*
29. Blessings of Salvation at the Resurrection—*Question 38*
- 30. The Duty Required of Man—*Questions 39 through 42***
31. The Ten Commandments—*Question 43*
32. The Ten Commandments: Love of God—*Questions 45 thru 48*
33. The Ten Commandments: Love for God's Worship—*Questions 49 thru 52*
34. The Ten Commandments: Love for God's Name—*Questions 53 thru 56*
35. The Ten Commandments: A Day for Holy Love—*Questions 57 thru 59*
36. The Ten Commandments: Love for God's Day—*Questions 60–62*
37. The Ten Commandments: Love within Our Relationships—*Questions 63–66*
38. The Ten Commandments: Love for Life—*Questions 67–69*
39. The Ten Commandments: Love for Purity—*Questions 70–72*
40. The Ten Commandments: Love for the Lord's Allotment—*QQ 73–75*

The Shorter CATECHISM

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

41. The Ten Commandments - Love for the Truth—*Questions 76 thru 78*
42. The Ten Commandments - Love from Within—*Questions 79 thru 81*
43. Understanding Our Sin—*Questions 82 thru 84*
44. Escaping God’s Wrath and Curse: Saving Faith—*Questions 85 and 86*
45. Escaping God’s Wrath and Curse: Repentance unto Life—*Question 87*
46. Escaping God’s Wrath and Curse: Means of Grace—*Question 88*
47. Means of Grace: The Word of God—*Questions 89 and 90*
48. Means of Grace: The Sacraments—*Questions 91 thru 93*
49. Means of Grace: Christian Baptism—*Questions 94 and 95*
50. Means of Grace: The Lord’s Supper—*Question 96*
51. Means of Grace: Receiving the Lord’s Supper—*Question 97*
52. Means of Grace: Prayer—*Questions 98 and 99*
53. The Lord’s Prayer: The Preface—*Question 100*
54. The Lord’s Prayer: The First Petition—*Question 101*
55. The Lord’s Prayer: The Second Petition—*Question 102*
56. The Lord’s Prayer: The Third Petition—*Question 103*
57. The Lord’s Prayer: The Fourth Petition—*Question 104*
58. The Lord’s Prayer: The Fifth Petition—*Question 105*
59. The Lord’s Prayer: The Sixth Petition—*Question 106*
60. The Lord’s Prayer: The Conclusion—*Question 107*

The Shorter CATECHISM

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

Lecture #30

The Duty Required of Man

Question 39: *What is the duty which God requireth of man?*

Answer: *The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.*

Question 40: *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

Answer: *The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.*

Question 41: *Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

Answer: *The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.*

Question 42: *What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

Answer: *The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.*

In this lesson, we start the second section of the *Shorter Catechism*. In the first 38 Questions, we considered what things we are to believe concerning God. In these questions, we considered God himself, his works, his plan of salvation. Now from Question #39 onward, we consider what duty God requires of man. In upcoming lessons, we'll look at each of the Ten Commandments, what they are, what they require, what they forbid. We'll look at what God requires of us to escape his wrath and curse, and this will include teaching on the sacraments and the Lord's Prayer. And in short, what we have is a survey before us. It's a survey of the main things that God requires of us. Well, to help set a foundation for this survey, in our lesson today, we'll look at four Questions, #39 through #42.

In our first Question, #39, we have a very general statement: "What is the duty which God requireth of man?—The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will."

The second Question, #40, introduces a helpful concept regarding the nature of his holy will: "What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?—The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law."

The third Question, #41, directs us to the summary of this revealed will in Scripture: "Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?—The moral law is summarily comprehended in the

ten commandments.”

And the fourth Question, #42, directs us to an even simpler summary of all that God requires of us: “What is the sum of the ten commandments?—The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.”

Now, why is it that the *Catechism* introduces God’s law now? We’ve talked about salvation and forgiveness. Why the law and his commandments now? Well, it’s true that the law convicts and convinces sinners of their need for Christ. This is an important use of the law of God. However, it’s also true that the law directs the enlivened and forgiven believer in the way that he should walk. So the *Catechism* is helping us see that those who have been saved, who do believe in Christ, who are united to Christ, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, and are being sanctified, that they are to walk by his grace in obedience to his holy law.

Certainly, it would be possible to spend an entire lesson on each of these Questions. However, we will look at them together, as they combine to give us a helpful starting point to understand what God requires of us for our obedience. So three points to our lesson: first, Our Duty Revealed; second, Our Duty Clarified; third, Our Duty Summarized.

So first, Our Duty Revealed. God is the only infinite, eternal, and unchangeable being. This means he is the Creator of all things. Everything else is his creature. This means that all other things are dependent upon him, and answerable to him. They are under God, and made for God. this, of course, includes mankind—men, and women, and children. Mankind is accountable to God. When you think about a duty, we’re thinking about a responsibility. A duty belongs to someone who is under another’s authority. When a teacher assigns homework, it is the student’s duty to complete it. When a parent gives a command, it is the child’s duty to perform it.

The first Question today directs our attention to our duty before God. “What is the duty which God requireth of man?—The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.” Notice that *God* is the one requiring this duty. Notice also that he is requiring it of *man*, that is, all mankind. In other words, the duty is a duty for all humans—men and women, adults and children, citizens of every nation, and people in all generations. And what is this duty? It’s obedience to his revealed will. “Obedience means that we obey, that is, carry out and fulfill what someone else commands. Here, of course, we’re thinking about man obeying God.

Well, notice that it God’s *revealed will* that man is to obey. If something is revealed, it is made known. It’s the opposite of hidden. Men are not supposed to obey something they make up, rather, they are to obey what God has made known. They are to obey what God has revealed. The answer to Question #40 identifies for us this revealed will: “The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.”

Well, what is this moral law? The term *moral law* refers to those things God requires of man because they are right in and of themselves—they are moral. In other words, God commands them and requires them of man because they are righteous and good. Even as Paul says, “The law of God is good,” in the book of Romans. So the law, the moral law, is good, and so God commands them. Such requirements are founded on both what God is himself, and what mankind is as God has made him.

For instance, it would never be right for man to worship anything other than the true and triune God. This is why God has commanded man, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” The command represents what is good and true, and thus right. There is only one God. Only this one God is worthy to be worshipped. To worship anything else is to give something else the honor that

belongs only to God. Now this is true for all time, and for all people. Thus, it's moral.

Now, there are other commandments that God has given that are for a particular purpose or season of time. For instance, as one example, Leviticus 23, verses 5 and 6, God commanded Israel: "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread." Now this commandment was only for the Israelites as a ceremony remembering his delivery of them, and anticipating the actual Lamb of God, who would die and take away the sin of the world. And so, as Christ died and rose again, the purpose of that command was fulfilled. This is why we no longer kill animals, though the Old Testament has many commandments about sacrificing animals. That's why we don't observe the dietary restrictions of the Old Testament. Certainly, these things were required of God for a time, but they were required because of a specific purpose that God had, not because they were in themselves right and good, and binding for all time.

Now, as you get older, you'll learn more about this, and you'll see three main categories of Biblical law: the Moral Law (which we'll be considering more fully); the Ceremonial Law; and the Judicial Law. The Ceremonial Law refers to those rituals and sacrifices performed under the old covenant, which were anticipating in one way or another the coming of Jesus Christ. The Judicial Law refers to the law given to Israel as a nation, which was meant to govern it as a society. But the Moral Law refers to that law that is binding upon all people, all societies, in all places, for all time.

But where was this moral law first revealed? Well, it was revealed unto all men and written upon their hearts. Notice Paul's words in Romans 2, verses 14 and 15: "For when the Gentiles"—that means the nations beyond Israel—"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law"—that is, the moral law that's written—"do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Notice Paul's point—all men have the work of the moral law in their heart. And so he uses several important words, when he says that the nations, the Gentiles, do by nature, by fact of what they are made to be, they do the which are contained in the law, but they don't have the law of God written themselves. And they show the work of the law written in their hearts, so they have a natural understanding of this moral law. Their conscience bears witness.

So though men can suppresses it, and deny it, and hardens their hearts against the truth, each person knows, by the very fact of being a human, that it is wrong to steal. He knows that the God who made him is worthy to be honored and worshipped. He knows that he ought to honor his authorities. Why is it then that so many people ignore this and do otherwise? Well, remember that once Adam sinned, man fell into an estate of sin and misery. And this means his nature was corrupted. His thoughts and his understanding were twisted. His desires in his heart are now blackened. Instead of clearly understanding and desiring the things that they know to do, they twist and pervert the truth, and now call good evil, and evil good. But thankfully, God has not left man only with his conscience and the work of the law written upon his heart. He's also clarified his moral law in his Holy Scriptures.

So second, Our Duty Clarified. God has kindly given to us a summary of the moral law in clear and concrete commandments. We find this in the Ten Commandments. The answer to Question #41 states that, "The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments." The words "summarily comprehended" means "contained in a summary." It's summarized. It doesn't give an exhaustive and an exacting detailed list of every particular thing, but it gives the main ideas, which the rest of Scripture fills out for us. We'll spend several lessons looking at each of

these commandments in greater focus, but we will not consider them right now. As you look ahead, for future lessons, you'll find the Ten Commandments in two places in their entirety—in Exodus chapter 20, and Deuteronomy chapter 5.

Now, how do we know that the Ten Commandments are the summary of the moral law? How do we know that they were meant to express for us, for all time, and to all men, what God requires of us? Well, there are many reasons, but for now, let me point out two.

First, God himself clearly made a distinction between the Ten Commandments—the moral law—and the ceremonies and sacrifices, and civil laws that he commanded to Israel through Moses under the old covenant. So, whereas the ceremonies and sacrifices, and civil laws are no longer binding upon us, since the old covenant is passed, the Ten Commandments are. Well, how did God make this clear? Well, notice the Ten Commandments were spoken by God immediately, directly, and with a clear and loud voice. That's an important point. Whereas other things were given mediately through Moses, and by Moses written down, or shown in visions, God himself spoke clearly and loudly the Ten Commandments before all.

Second, out of all the commandments, only the Ten Commandments were written directly by God. Moses writes that these were written “with the finger of God.” So it's not Moses writing the Ten Commandments, it's God himself. Another point which shows us God makes this distinction is that only the Ten Commandments were written by God upon two tablets of stone; not on a scroll, or a parchment, or a piece of paper, but on stone, which was an emblem of their enduring legacy, binding upon all. And fourth, the circumstances surrounding the giving of the Ten Commandments made it clear to all the Israelites that these commandments were particularly special. Think of the scene: lightnings, thundering, this voice and trumpet that was blaring. People realized that what's being given now is of particular significance.

Well, you can see this as you read through Exodus, and throughout the rest of the Pentateuch in various places. But notice Deuteronomy 10, verses 3 and 4. These verses provide a helpful summary of most of these points. So see if you can identify these special marks of this special law. Moses said, “And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.” Tables of stone, written by God, spoken by God audibly to all men, surrounded by a fiery mountain, in the public sight of the assembly of God's people. Well, every Israelite would have known, God was marking these ten out as particularly special.

There's a second way of knowing these commandments are special, and that's by considering what it is they command, and how they are used and acknowledged throughout the whole of Scripture. Well, we don't have time to look at this detail right now. We will do it more as we look at each individual commandment in the next number of lessons. But for now, you can look at these commandments, and you'll see that these commandments are commanding things that are for all generations and all people. And as we'll see in those coming lessons, even the New Testament shows us the same thing.

Well, third, as to our final point in the lesson, Our Duty Summarized. It's true, the Ten Commandments are a summary of the duty God requires of us. However, there is a summary that is even more concise. You can think of it as a summary of the summary. Notice the Answer to Question #42: “The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.”

You'll likely recognize these words. They are taken from the Bible, particularly Matthew 22, verses 37 through 40.

But how is it that love summarizes obedience? The world doesn't understand this. Many people think that they don't need to worry about God's commandments, because they have a warm feeling towards God that they call "love." After all, the Bible's commandments, they don't sound pleasant to the world. And they'd rather have feelings that are pleasant. Well, the Bible shows us that true love leads to obedience. Notice how John writes of this in 1 John 2, verses 3 through 5. He writes, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." An evidence of loving God is keeping his commandments. As sin is the transgression of the law, so love leads to the fulfilling of the law.

Of course, this should make sense to us. If we love someone who is in authority over us, we desire to honor and obey them. Children who love their parents, obey their parents. And thus, people who love God obey God. They don't obey God by their own power and ability to be saved by God, as we'll see. Those who obey God do so because of God's grace. Well, notice that Christ himself taught this relationship of love and obedience—John chapter 14, verse 21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." You can then see the connection between the summary and the law. If someone loves God, they will obey his commandments. If you look at the first four commandments, "Thou shalt have no other god," through "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," you'll see commandments that focus more directly on God himself. If someone loves God, they will obey these commandments. The same is true toward our neighbor. If we love God and our neighbor, well then we'll want to keep that second group of commandments, #5 through #10, "Honour thy father and thy mother," through, "Thou shalt not covet," because these express what is to be done toward our neighbor in love.

You can see how love and obedience are related, just by looking at Romans 13, verses 8 through 10. In these three verses, we see a call to love our neighbor. But Paul goes on to show that if we love our neighbor, we are actually obeying God's commandments. That is, when we obey God's commandments, we love our neighbor, and when we love our neighbor, we'll obey God's commandments. Notice he writes, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Think of it this way. If I love my friend, would I steal from him? Would I lie about him? this is why Paul says, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. He does not mean that love replaces the law, as if it's an alternate to the law. Instead, as he shows, he means that when we love our neighbor, love will follow the revealed will of God's holy law.

Well, we must close, and as we do, notice two things. First, God requires of you and me to obey his revealed will. It's not an option. It's not reserved for a special group of people. Whether believer or unbeliever, he requires it of us all. Our obedience is to be sincere and loving. God is not to be obeyed outwardly while our hearts are far from him. We're not to mimic the Pharisees, who on their outside appeared religious, and yet on the inside were full, as Christ says, of dead men's bones. God is to be obeyed joyfully with gladness. We're to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We don't want others to be kind to our face while they hate us in their hearts. So we are to love our neighbors, doing such things to them as we desire them to do to us. That is what is obedience. That's what God requires. Anything short of this is sin. Remember, what is sin? 'Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.' Well here is seen a foundation laid about what God's law requires.

Well second, see how great your need is for Christ. In disobeying, we disobey God's revealed will. And surely then, we need Christ, that by his blood, we would be pardoned, and by his righteousness imputed to us, we would be declared righteous. And yet even as believers who have been forgiven, who are justified, how can we ever hope to obey God and offer to him what his revealed will requires without Christ working in us? We must look to Christ. For only he is able to supply us that measure of grace needed, so that we are able to walk in his ways with love and gladness, not going after a lower standard that we make up, but looking to God's lofty standard, to love him with all of our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. This must be done. And yet it can only be done by and through Christ. Remember, as Christ said, he is the vine, we're the branches. As we abide in him, and he in us, then we bear much fruit. And so, as we think about God's requirement of us to obey him, we must think of his supply to us in Christ. As we consider the commandments that are coming, we need to remember our need for Christ, both for pardon, and for purity. And oh, may it be that he would supply us that grace, that both being pardoned and purified, we would then obey him in love more and more, and all to his glory.