

Theology Simply Explained — WSC61 “What the Law and Nature of the Sabbath Forbid”

Pastor walks his children through Westminster Shorter Catechism question 61—especially explaining from Scripture what God forbids by the way He words the fourth commandment.

WSC61: What is forbidden in the fourth commandment? *The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.*

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

The catechism question for the week is, Number 61 what is forbidden in the fourth commandment? And the answer is the fourth commandment forbiddeth, the omission. Or careless performance. Of the duties required and The profaning the day by idleness or Doing that, which is in itself, sinful Or.

By unnecessary. Thoughts words or works? About our worldly employment or recreations. So obviously, if the fourth commandment is one that is not. In a phrase, thou shalt not but is phrased as a positive command. Remember, and consecrate, Remember this habit day to keep it holy The first way that you can, Violate the first commandment.

The first thing that it forbids. Is failing to do. That, which is commanded. Now, in particular, The command being to consecrate as holy means. Failing to do only that. Which is commanded. So you could really just answer the question, the fourth commandment forbidth, The omission. Of the duties required.

Because when something is consecrated as holy, it is consecrated only for that purpose. Can't be used for any other purpose. When it's something is consecrated as holy, it must be done. With the whole heart as well. So, the omission is forbidden. The careless performance. Is part of itself, an omission and the profanities.

That are described our mission. So the fourth commandment is what we would call a regulative commandment that as or a prescriptive commandment It means not only does it give us. Things that we can't do but it tells us what we must do and nothing but that just like we say the regulative principle of worship or the prescriptive principle of worship that you may only do in worship.

The things that God Has prescribed. But in this case, with respect to the Lord's Day. So the fourth commandment for bidth, the omission, and then, of course, the careless performance of the duties. If God has consecrated the day as holy then, does it keep the day to do acts of worship in a heartless?

Mindless thoughtless, careless matter. That's not consecration. That is. The sin of Nadab and Abihu drawing near to God. And yet not reverencing him. Or as Jesus calls, it drawing near. With the lips. But the heart being far from him. Very important to remember that. In that particular context Jesus was talking about including the traditions of men, alongside the commandments of God.

So that can be done with the public. With the actions of public worship. Second, commandment Type stuff. The way native and by, who did in Leviticus chapter 10 but it also applies to the Lord's Day. That if we do on the Lord's day, Which God has set apart as holy unto him for drawing near to him and worship.

If we had things that are traditions of men, To the Lord's day. Then we draw near with the lips, but our hearts are far from him. And of course there's a much more crass way. Much more. Vulgar obvious way of drawing near with merely lip service and that is To not think about him at all.

To not incline are hearts towards him. Our our affections, our emotions towards him at all. Joyless. Lord's day, keeping. As careless performance of the duties required. Not to come. With a submissive will. Desiring to respond to whatever it is that we discover about our Lord, with praise to whatever it is.

That he teaches us with faith to whatever it is that he commands us with obedience, this careless performance of the duties required. No. We must keep the day joyously and we must keep the day. Thoughtfully believingly thoughtfully and we must keep the day zealously. And diligently. So, all of those In the emotions and the intellect and the will.

Are required. So the fourth commandment forbidth, the omission or careless performance of the duties required. And, The profaning the day by. So you take a day that is supposed to be completely clean or completely, holy or completely set apart and then you do something that is not clean or something that is less than or other than what it is set apart for and you profane it, you make it filthy, perhaps you have heard the word profanity used of filthy speech, recognizing the purpose of speech is something in which we image, God, something that we use to praise God.

Something that we use to edify others. And rather than letting our speech always be with grace season with salt in order to edify We use our speech. In a way that brings down or that is useless or even that it's foul. And that is, Profanity. Well, just as you can profane speech, you could profane the Lord's day simply by knowing nothing.

If today is set apart as holy for a particular purpose. And for us, it's it's a day of laying around and doing nothing. We're disregarding that which God has called holy We're treating it as if it is either for us or even just useless altogether, And taking that day off.

As it were. That's profaning the day. The other another way pertaining. The day is doing that, which is in itself. Sinful, Of course, we should never sin, but then you take time that is set apart as holy In a way that other time is not and you sin in that time, That is to perform.

And here when he says worldly employment. So recreation is not saying sinful employments or recreations? He's saying non-worship Thoughts. Or recreations. So some there will be necessary thoughts. About. Earthly things, those things that are necessary in order to worship Eating and drinking and being dressed. And And so forth.

Those things that are necessary in order to enable others to worship deeds of mercy, alleviating their needs, Um, coming to their aid in order that they may be the better enabled to worship the Lord. On his day. As well And then there are necessary. Thoughts, words and works in the responding to God's Word.

Because hearing God's Word is a big part. Of the worship of God and praying to God is a big part of the worship of God. And so his word, because it has application to all sorts of things in our lives. We have the necessary duty of hearing his word in a submissive way, in a way that applies that word.

So those are necessary thoughts words and works worrying about What you have to do. Your work you have to do. That's not a necessary. Thought word to work. Desiring or wishing that you could be doing some recreational activity instead of Some earthly recreational activity instead of. The worship of God That's not A necessary.

Thought word or work but there are necessary thoughts words of works. That come in the context either of making appropriate application of God's word to your life. Having his word search. Us be living and active expose, the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Correct. Something that we have been doing wrongly or instruct us to do something that we have been failing to do.

That is right to do. And then of course, Making all our requests known and to God and being anxious about nothing. But in all things by parent supplication, with Thanksgiving, making our requests known to him. Casting all our cares, upon him in prayer because he cares for us, Those are not unnecessary thoughts words or works.

Those are a right way. Of. Of worshiping God in the way that he has commanded. So, We must never. To, you know, think that oh well. I would really, like to think about this thing or talk about this thing. So, I'm gonna do it in a way, that sounds worshipful, so that it'll be keeping the Lord's day.

No, that wasn't a necessary way. That was a way that you Tried to make it necessary so that you can serve. Your desire. But, But rather always Thinking and speaking in a way that is necessary to the day. Necessary to our keeping, it the way the Lord has commanded us.

To do. This is a commandment that is much more easily kept. By thinking of the other question that previous question. What is required? In the fourth commandment. If we. If we spend our thoughts, or turn our thoughts and client our thoughts towards not doing what is forbidden? We're probably already on the way to breaking.

The fourth commandment because of the way. That it is positively commanded and because of the nature of consecration or holiness, or sanctifying or devotion All of those words, describing, what we are to be doing with the day?