

- *Have I been stingy and self-indulgent with my money, trying to keep up with what others had?*
- *Have I tried, by claims of various rights, to make the property of others my own, saying they do not really deserve it and I do?*
- *Do I have to keep wishing for and dreaming about things I do not have before I can work with a diligent and glad heart?*
- *Have I lived in grudging discontent with whatever God has given me, restless about what I do not have and neglectful of thankful generosity with what I do have?*

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and [diligently] do their duty.

- *Have I wanted my neighbor's spouse, his workers, or his property to be mine?*
- *Have I tried to win the affections and loyalties of my neighbor's spouse or children or friends away from the neighbor to me?*
- *Have I urged friends and spouses and workers to go back to their calling, holding their marriages, friendships, families, and work together?*
- *Have I fostered discontent with the congregation, its pastor or leaders, and failed to urge members to stay and do their duty in worship, praying, giving and serving?*

What does God say of all these Commandments?

I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should dread His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly do according to His commandments.

God demands our hearts and minds, not merely our outward actions. Therefore, examine the heart as well as the life, connecting the fear and love of God with each commandment. Let the broken heart fear him. God loves, and does not despise, the sacrifices of the broken heart. Rather, he joins the broken heart to his mercy for forgiveness and healing, for peace and purity.

Self-Examination and Reflection

The Ten Commandments preach Repentance; that is, by them God shows us our sin and how much we need a Savior

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

- *My God is that which I love, trust and fear most in my life. I expect my comfort, good and delight from my God.*
- *Do I look to God my heavenly Father, for all love, good and joy? Is everything measured for me by what pleases me?*
- *In all things am I self-centered and selfish?*
- *Do I see my worry and fretting as sin against trusting God?*
- *Do I complain about the troubles, people, work and suffering God lays on me?*
- *Do I love the things God gives me more than I love Him? And do I cling to what God takes away, even though He gives me Himself?*

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

- *Do I curse? Have I cursed?*
- *Do I use God's name cheaply for oaths that are frivolous or false?*
- *Do I stand up and swear by God's Name when it is for the truth of the Gospel or for the benefit of my neighbor in need?*
- *Do I pray with fervor in times of trouble? Am I bored and indifferent in prayer?*
- *Is it so that I cannot speak about God truly because I am bored with God's Word, neglect the study of the Catechism, doctrine and God's Word?*
- *Is my heart and life in the praise of God in worship? Am I mouthing things while my heart is far away?*
- *Is my life, marked with the Name of God in Baptism, characterized by thanksgiving and praise?*

You shall sanctify the holy day / Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

- *Do I strive to make the day of rest holy? Do I care about holy living?*
- *Do I use the Word of God and prayer to make my time, work, study life holy day by day?*
- *Am I lazy and bored with the Word of God? Have I any fear of God over this neglect?*
- *Do I honor the Word of God highly by studying it gladly, learning it by heart, and living it? Do I despise the Word of God by neglect, paying no attention to it when it is read or preached?*
- *Do I love my fellow Christians by being present with them in worship to sustain them? Am I quick to make excuses for neglecting worship because of what someone else has said or done, or to do other things I like more?*
- *Do I spend time complaining about the worship, the pastor or other people? Do I learn the Word gladly so that I may teach others?*

**You shall honor your father and your mother,
that it may be well with you and you may live long upon the earth.**

What does this mean?

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

- *Has the fear and love of God shaped my honor and obedience to parents and others in authority?*
- *Have I trusted God to bless me and make my life good when I submit to the authority of parents and those over me, or have I been angry with them, rebelling, fighting against them because I was afraid I was not getting what I had a right to get?*
- *Have I been insolent, sullen and disrespectful to my parents, teachers, employers or other authorities over me?*
- *Have I been on good behavior when they are present and mocking them when they are absent?*
- *Have I given honor and respect to the pastoral office?*
- *Have I helped those who carry responsibilities in governing? Do I pray for parents, leaders of the nations, schools and church? Do I grumble about work given me to do?*
- *Have I helped make it easier for those who carry responsibilities for governing?*

You shall not kill.

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.

- *Have I treated my neighbor's body and life as gifts of God to him?*
- *Have I injured my neighbor with violent actions, hitting and beating on my neighbor, spoken debasing and insulting words, using foul or dirty words to describe the neighbor, or murdered him with thoughts of anger, contempt, and hatred?*
- *Have I injured my neighbor by ridicule, by neglecting to feed or clothe him, withholding compassion and comfort from him?*
- *Have I avoided giving help to my neighbor, avoiding involvement with him in his difficulty?*
- *Do I abuse my own body with neglect of health, care, excess use of food, drink, tobacco, or drugs?*

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

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

- *Have I used for my own pleasure my ears to hear stories or my eyes to incite cravings for the body of one who is not my spouse, or my mouth to speak such words and stories?*
- *Have I indulged my eyes with longing for my sexual satisfaction from a man or woman who is not my spouse?*
- *Have I dishonored marriage by ridicule, divorce, or neglecting to encourage others to be faithful to their spouses in the fear of God?*
- *Have I had intercourse with a man or woman who is not my spouse?*
- *Have I dishonored my spouse by neglecting to care for the body, mind, feeling, needs of the other, withdrawing faithfulness from the spouse?*
- *Have I failed to trust God to bless us in our marriage, even in times of trouble? Have I neglected to pray for my spouse, to worship together, and to live in the fear and love of God in times of sexual temptations?*
- *Have I practiced thoughts, words, or deeds, or given support of homosexual activity?*

You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

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

- *Have I been lazy at work, doing poor work in school or at the job, or working hard only when the teacher or boss is around?*
- *Have I been stingy in paying my workers?*
- *Have I been greedy, demanding best pay for poor work?*
- *Have I worked for myself rather than for Christ and for the benefit of my neighbor?*
- *Have I cared for the property in the neighborhood, school, or church, so that it was improved?*
- *Have I stolen from the office, school, or the church, or stood silently by while others took what was not theirs? Have I stolen information from another's work?*
- *Have I wasted time and food and money or caused others to waste time, food and money by my neglect?*
- *Have I been stingy when it comes to giving the Lord a generous portion as thank-offering for what he has given me?*
- *Have I stolen from my neighbor by not helping him in time of need?*

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, [think and] speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

- *Have I told the truth in court or in school before authorities or before my parents when I knew the truth? Have I been afraid to bear witness when I knew the truth and it was necessary to speak up against a wrong-doer or to speak for a victim?*
- *Have I gossiped, delighted to tell others about the faults or mistakes of another, excusing myself especially by saying that I spoke only the truth?*
- *Have I gone to others to make peace if I wronged them or they me, or to correct them if I knew of their wrong?*
- *Have I flattered others, or put on a front to make them think of me differently from what is true?*
- *Have I slanted stories to my benefit or deceived others by withholding some evidence of the story?*
- *Have I found ways gladly and willingly to explain, in the best possible way, those words or actions of others that hurt me?*
- *Have I defended my neighbor when things said about my neighbor have made others think badly about him or her?*
- *Have I learned to hear with the weaknesses and faults of others, covering their shame?*
- *Have I been faithful in keeping the secrets of another's heart entrusted to me in confidence?*

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, and obtain it by a show of [justice and] right, etc., but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

- *Have I longed for the honor, wealth, happy life, or what seemed the ease of the lives of others? Has my life been full of craving for these things?*