

# DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

MICA (P) 231/07/2011

OCT  
Lord's Days 40 - 44

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 40

#### Question 105. What doth God require in the sixth commandment?

*Answer.* That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour, by myself or by another[a]; but that I lay aside all desire of revenge[b]; also, that I hurt not myself, nor willfully expose myself to any danger[c]. Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword, to prevent murder[d].

#### Question 106. But this commandment seems only to speak of murder?

*Answer.* In forbidding murder, God teaches us, that He abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger[e], and desire of revenge, [f]; and that He accounts all these as murder[g].

#### Question 107. But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?

*Answer.* No: for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves[h]; to show [i] patience, peace, [j] meekness, mercy, and all kindness, towards him[k], and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies [l]; and that we do good, even to our enemies[m].

[a]: [Mat. 5:21,22](#); [Prov. 12:18](#); [Mat. 26:52](#)

[b]: [Eph. 4:26](#); [Rom. 12:19](#); [Mat. 5:39,40](#)

[c]: [Mat. 4:5,6,7](#); [Col. 2:23](#)

[d]: [Gen. 9:6](#); [Mat. 26:52](#); [Rom. 13:4](#)

[e]: [James 1:20](#); [Gal. 5:20](#)

[f]: [Rom. 1:29](#); [1John 2:9](#)

[g]: [1John 3:15](#)

[h]: [Mat. 22:39](#); [Mat. 7:12](#)

[i]: [Rom. 12:10](#)

[j]: [Eph. 4:2](#); [Gal. 6:1,2](#); [Mat. 5:5](#); [Rom. 12:18](#)

[k]: [Ex. 23:5](#)

[l]: [Mat. 5:45](#)

[m]: [Rom. 12:20](#)

### October 1 – LD 40, Day 1: Murderers by Nature by Pastor Steven Key

Romans 13:10: *"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

As we progress to our treatment of the sixth commandment, *"Thou shalt not kill,"* we must be reminded that mere outward observance of the Old Testament letter of the law will not be accepted by God. *"Love is the fulfilling of the law,"* and love is essentially an activity of the heart. Mere external conformity which proceeds not from love will be counted as worthless dead works and will receive God's just damnation. God requires a holy, spiritual love. That love must be first and essentially, love for God. Proceeding from that love must be love expressed toward the neighbour. That means that love for the neighbour is out of the question where there is no love of God in Christ Jesus in the heart.

In that light we are reminded that according to our natures, we are murderers. That becomes even clearer to us when Jesus spells it out with specific application in Matt 5. The finger of God is pointed at you and me. In that passage, and especially Matt 5:21-22, Jesus does not even speak about the actual act of physically murdering someone. Very seldom does a citizen of the kingdom of heaven actually take a life by the shedding of blood. But then, we must not think that because we are the citizens of God's kingdom, and do not shed man's blood in murder, we escape the sin of violating the sixth commandment. That is how the Pharisees interpreted this law. They said, *"..whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment."* But Jesus says, *"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, [idiot, blockhead], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."* Very broad is the scope of the sixth commandment. We must see, once again, not only our murderous natures; but we must see our salvation in Jesus Christ and the positive way towards which this precept directs us.

**October 2 – LD 40, Day 2: The Righteous Taking of Life  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Genesis 9:6: *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man."*

Romans 13:3a,4: *"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.... For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."*

Not every killing of a man is murder. Sometimes there is confusion on that matter, especially when it comes to the magistrate's taking of human life. The magistrate is given the sword power by God. The sword is the symbol of the power to put to death. The magistrate must exercise that power in the punishment of the evil-doer. *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."* That is the command of God. But that calling does not belong to just anyone, to exercise in revenge. *"Vengeance is mine,"* (Rom 12:19) saith the Lord. That calling to execute judgment and to wield the sword in punishment belongs exclusively to the civil magistrate. That is not murder, but his calling according to Rom 13. To refuse that calling is to raise a fist in rebellion against the most high God. That does not mean that the magistrate never commits murder when he takes a life. The magistrate also killed Jesus. Pontius Pilate was responsible for the sword power which he exercised. Throughout history there have been hundreds and thousands of cases where the governmental powers persecuted and killed the righteous. The shedding of blood by the magistrate is only to be used to protect the righteous and for the punishment of evil-doers. The taking of the life of a man or woman who has been justly condemned for murder is not wrong in the sphere of the magistrate. It is demanded of them by God.

Nor is the shedding of blood in a righteous war to be accounted murder. Because it is within the calling of the government to protect the good, war may justly be declared in retribution of an attack and to recover what has been unjustly taken away. Refer to I Sam 15:2-3; 30:18-20; John 18:36.

**October 3 – LD 40, Day 3: Murder**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Exodus 20:13: *"Thou shalt not kill."*

Murder is the willful taking of another man's life by one who has no authority to do so.

That deed is, first of all, the actual killing of a person with or without the use of weapons. It is the destruction of a human earthly life, in direct opposition to the revealed will of God. Today, abortion is one of the most open violations of this commandment. But besides abortion, murder has become such a common occurrence in Western culture that there have to be extraordinary circumstances in order for it even to catch our attention. Television glamorizes murder and those who are closely involved with it. The sin of killing by murder is the crassest expression of rebellion against this sixth commandment of God. But it is not the only violation.

The acid test of whether our appreciation for this commandment is merely intellectual, or whether we desire to give God all the glory in the keeping of His commandments, comes when the declaration of God is applied in such a way that it hurts us. When the sixth commandment says to us, *"Thou shalt not kill,"* that ought to wound us very deeply, because in its prohibition and negative form, the sixth commandment points its finger at our own corrupt hearts.

The commandment says, "Thou shalt not murder." That is, thou shalt do all within thy power to care for that life which is God's gift, His prerogative to give and to terminate. The Heidelberg Catechism reminds us that this includes, "that I hurt not myself, nor willfully expose myself to any danger." Your life is not your own. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You have no right to destroy it! You have no right to abuse your body by any means, whether by gluttony, the use of illicit drugs, excessive alcohol intake or the addictive use of tobacco and smoking, which has been demonstrated beyond any doubt as doing harm to the body.

We need to be honest with the law of God. If we continue to give no regard to the law in its personal application, then the word of James 1:22 comes home to our conscience, "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

**October 4 – LD 40, Day 4: Murder with the Tongue**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 5:21-22: *"Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."*

When it comes to a specific point of application, we very conveniently rationalize away the arrow of God as it strikes us in the words *"Thou shalt not kill."* But we have to face that law honestly as it impinges upon the specific point of our own carnal inclinations! Then we must also realize that the sixth commandment not only forbids the act of murder, but likewise all causes and occasions leading to it.

Here the commandment uncovers every festering sore in our sinful natures. It uncovers such things as dishonoring or hating our neighbour in thoughts, words, and gestures, as well as in deeds. God counts us as having violated this commandment even when we think evil toward the neighbour. The same is true with evil speech. We kill when we speak evil words that hurt the neighbour like daggers. That sin might be most often seen in children. Children speak very freely. Adults usually are more refined in their sinning — more devilish. We usually don't talk to the neighbour's face. We talk behind their backs. But children talk very openly. That is beautiful when they are praising God in their openness. But sometimes they very openly hurt with their speech a classmate or brother or sister. That is what Jesus was talking about in Matt 5, when He said, You want to talk about murder? I tell you, when you call your brother, your classmate, "Raca," — blockhead, idiot, or names like that — you are guilty! That is killing!

And if those charges do not dig deeply enough, our Catechism points to the truth that God abhors not only murder, but the **causes** thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He counts all these as murder! Oh, how great is our need for Christ!

**October 5 – LD 40, Day 5: The Causes of Murder**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

I John 3:15: *"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."*

When the Lord God says, *"Thou shalt not kill,"* He looks not merely at the outward act. He looks at the heart and finds our envy, that terrible and corrupt attitude of our heart that hates to see the neighbour better off than us. In writing to Timothy, Paul mentions envy in the same breath as strife (murder), and railings ( words that kill) (1 Tim 6:4). Envy, says Solomon (Prov 14:30), is the rottenness of the bones. It is a cancerous growth that not only grows into murder, but is murder in its very root.

An unholy hatred is the root of all murderous acts. That hatred is first of all hatred toward God for placing such a neighbour in my path. That is the terrible attitude of the corrupt, sinful heart. Such hatred also characterizes us, always, except by the grace of God.

We must also see the unholy anger that dwells in our hearts. When we are angry for our own cause, angry apart from the conscious love of God, then there is murder in our hearts. When we pay no attention to the injunction of Paul in Eph 4:26, to *"let not the sun go down upon your wrath,"* then we are sure to awaken in the morning with the scum of murder covering our heart.

Finally, there is the murderous seed which is the desire for revenge. God will take vengeance upon the wicked. A terrible thought that is, that should humble us deeply. But when we desire to pay back the wrong which has been done to us or which we imagine has been done to us, we show that there is murder in our hearts.

The believer has only to look at his own life, and he knows that those seeds of murder, envy, hatred, anger, and desire for revenge are still very much alive in his sinful flesh. Therefore, the Christian cries out, O "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). But he also prays for grace to fight against those temptations to kill; and he prays for grace to love even as God in Christ has loved him. Is that your life?

**October 6 – LD 40, Day 6: Loving the Brethren**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

I John 3:14: *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."*

Here is the positive calling of the sixth commandment. Scripture calls us to love our neighbour. But first we need to see our calling to love our brothers and sisters in Christ. That love is not a mere sentiment. Love is a bond of perfectness between persons (Col 3:14). Love is the bond that unites persons, so that with all their being they seek to do good to one another, in all patience, peacefulness, meekness, mercy, and kindness. That love does not exist in darkness, for love is of God. John writes, *"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"* (I John 3:16).

Will you see the positive commandment in the words *"Thou shalt not kill"*? This is it: We must so love the brethren that we are willing to lay down our lives for them. We must seek one another's spiritual and material welfare at the expense of our own. Because such is the love by which we have been redeemed. *"for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"* (I John 4:20b).

Love your neighbour as yourself. Your neighbour is the person whom God places on the pathway of your life. To love him is our calling for Christ's sake. Jesus said, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets...one jot or one tittle shall in now wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"* (Matt 5:17-18). Christ loved us. He loved not everybody; but He loved His elect perfectly, while we were yet enemies. On the cross He laid down his life for us who were murderers at heart. Every drop of blood that trickled from His hands and feet was out of His love for us. That is why we must hear the prohibition of the sixth commandment, *"Thou shalt not kill."* That is why we must also hear the positive demand, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Look at the cross. Hear the gospel. Do you see your calling?

**October 7 – LD 40, Day 7: Loving our Enemies**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 5:43-48: *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

Here it is clear that the love of the neighbour, which God requires, is a holy, spiritual love. It is also clear that the law is indeed of Divine origin. For who had ever thought of loving enemies?! In opposition to the Pharisees' interpretation of the demand to "love the neighbour as yourself," Jesus explains the term *neighbour* and shows that it is so broad as to include our enemies! We are even to love those who hate us, speak evil against us and persecute us! With whomever God in His providence places in your path, we have but one calling: Love him. That is the law of God's kingdom, the perfect law of love. That is a profound calling. To love even that neighbour who is our enemy is a love that can only be one-sided. Yet that is our calling, to walk in the love of Christ, also in relation to the neighbour who is our enemy. For did not God love us while we were yet enemies with Him?

But then let us also understand, to show love towards such a neighbour is to speak to him of the glorious God of righteousness and truth. We must speak the truth in love, showing patience, meekness, mercy, and all kindness; but in firmness declaring and demonstrating from the Scriptures that salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. We do so, recognizing the glorious possibility that even among our enemies, there may be an elect brother or sister.



## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 41

**Question 108.** What doth the seventh commandment teach us?

*Answer.* That all uncleanness is accursed [\[a\]](#) of God: and that therefore we must with all our hearts [\[b\]](#) detest the same, and live [\[c\]](#) chastely and temperately, whether in [\[d\]](#) holy wedlock, or in single life.

**Question 109.** Doth God forbid in this commandment, only adultery, and such like gross sins?

*Answer.* Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, he commands us to preserve them pure and holy: therefore he forbids all unchaste actions, [\[e\]](#) gestures, words, thoughts, [\[f\]](#) desires, and whatever [\[g\]](#) can entice men thereto.

[a]: [Lev. 18:27](#)

[b]: [Deut. 29:20-23](#)

[c]: [1Thes. 4:3,4](#)

[d]: [Heb. 13:4](#); [1Cor. 7:4-9](#)

[e]: [Eph. 5:3](#); [1Cor. 6:18](#)

[f]: [Mat. 5:28](#)

[g]: [Eph. 5:18](#); [1Cor. 15:33](#)

**October 8 – LD 41, Day 1: Marriage – A Creation Ordinance**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Genesis 2:18: *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."*

We now consider the most profound and blessed institution given by God to His people — the institution of holy marriage. The purity of this holy bond must be maintained by us, no matter whether we are married or single; young or old. As we stand before marriage, after all, we stand before the fountain of life as far as human relationships are concerned. To maintain the purity of this fountain, therefore, is critically important and has far-reaching implications. All the more is that true when we understand the significant symbolism of that God-ordained bond. For as Eph 5:32 expresses it, Marriage is a great mystery, revealing the amazing and glorious relationship between Christ and the Church. The seventh commandment maintains the sanctity of that holy bond.

Marriage is not a sacrament instituted by Christ; but a creation ordinance. Along with the Sabbath day, marriage belongs to the treasures established by God for His people at the time of creation. Already then, as Christ emphasizes in Matt 19, marriage was instituted and established as a precious gift of God, an unbreakable bond which would also serve to reflect the relationship in which man stood to God Himself. At the very beginning of time, God created male and female. He created man first, and then in that great act of mercy, He gave man a wife, creating her out of the man. God did so, *"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Matt 19:5,6). That is Jesus explaining and maintaining that creation ordinance of God.

With all the attacks upon marriage in our day, we must be clear that this institution is not open to reinterpretation. Marriage is not a relationship that man established. Marriage is not a relationship that man can redefine. It is a divinely-ordained institution established by God Himself at creation, a one-man-with-one-woman relationship to serve God's glorious purpose.

**October 9 – LD 41, Day 2: One Flesh**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 19:4b-6: *"Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain (two) shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

In baking bread, separate ingredients are mixed together and become one. Those mixed ingredients are then baked. Once baked, you can never separate those ingredients again. The same is true of marriage. Two persons, a man and a woman, become one flesh. One, by its very definition, is indivisible. Marriage is indissoluble. Though separation of two might take place through sin, and though in the case of adultery, there might even be a *putting away*, or what we call *divorce*, even then, there is no dissolution of the marriage bond. Which is why, as Jesus explains, there may be no remarriage among those who are put away or divorced. Marriage is for life. No more than the ingredients of a baked loaf of bread can be separated and restored to be mixed into another loaf, can a married man or woman who have become one flesh be so restored to their original single state as to enter another union. Not only is it impossible, but the results of such an attempt can only be a gross perversion of the marriage bond established by God.

This one-flesh relationship is of tremendous significance. For that reason God has also given us the seventh commandment, *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."* We approach this commandment as those redeemed by Christ. The power of sin, which also affected our marriages, has been broken by Christ, freeing us from the misery into which we had cast ourselves. So marriage, horribly corrupted by the fall into sin, was brought once again under the discipline of God's loving ordinance. He has done so for our sakes. For that reason, we find in marriage a very special relationship, in which we may glorify God with thankfulness for what He has given us in Christ. Even in single life, we see a unique calling to maintain the sanctity of holy marriage, for the significant place God has given it.

**October 10 – LD 41, Day 3: Honourable Marriage**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Hebrews 13:4: *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

Scripture tells us that marriage is honourable in all, a good gift of God. Even in the realm of those who are unbelieving, we may find husbands and wives who are entirely committed to each other, who show that the marriage bond is an honourable institution and who are faithful one to another. In fact, there are those among the children of the world who, to the shame of some church members, show a higher regard for loving and caring for their wives, or for submitting to their husbands, than do some believers. But the question for Christians is different and deeper than the matter of appearance and outward behaviour — even though that is part of it. For us the question is this: is **Christ** is present in our marriages, and do our marriages conform to His Word as expressions of thankfulness to Him? That, really, is what lies at the root of the seventh commandment.

Only when husband and wife are faithful as members of Christ, only when Christ exercises dominion over this relationship, is that marriage found in His eyes a bond that reflects the beauty of His grace. And only when we as members of His Church uphold and defend that holy institution, is there obedience to the seventh commandment.

We sometimes think that we honour God when we refrain from certain wicked activities. But love is the fulfillment of the law. We are not finished with the seventh commandment when we guard ourselves against the physical pursuit of the neighbour's wife, and preserve ourselves from adultery and fornication. We are obedient only when love so dwells in our hearts and lives that it crowds out all sinful thoughts, words and deeds. Love for God and for the neighbour comes to expression by holding marriage in holy esteem, and consecrating our marriages and our bodies to the Lord as His temple. So it comes to this: Is Christ present in my marriage? Is Christ present in my perspective of marriage? Is Christ present in my view of single life? Is Christ present in my perspective of my neighbour's wife or daughter? Or, from the viewpoint of the woman, is Christ present in my perspective of my neighbour's husband or son?

**October 11 – LD 41, Day 4: Marriage, A Foundational Institution  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Amos 3:3: *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"*

Christ's presence in our marriages is tremendously important. Marriage is foundational to all of society, including the church. It is the fundamental institution of society. It is the presence or absence of Christ in our marriages that determines in large measure the spiritual welfare of ourselves and our children, of our church and school, as well as our nation and culture. If marriage is sealed in Him, and lived with Him and His Word at the center, a man and woman assist each other on the way to heaven, glorify their Redeemer, and enjoy marriage as the most blessed relationship God has established. But at the same time, every marriage that is not sealed in Christ, every marriage that is not lived upon the foundation of Him Who alone is life, and Whose Word alone brings blessing and joy, is a marriage that can do nothing but defile that holy institution which God established at creation. Two must be one, one also in the faith.

The question of Amos 3:3 is rhetorical, with an obvious answer, "Of course not!" Notice that the question is not one of permission, "May they?" It is a question of ability — "Can they?" It is impossible for two to walk together, except they are one in the faith.

The Catechism speaks of *holy wedlock*, or purity in single life which upholds the sanctity of that holy institution of marriage. Marriage is indeed holy, set apart by God as a special institution for His people. It is a picture of the bond that exists between Christ and His Church (Eph 5:32). The inspired apostle is given to see marriage as a shadow of the heavenly. The bond between a God-fearing husband and his God-fearing wife shows a reflection of the holy and unbreakable bond between Christ and His Church. This is our perspective exactly because our Lord Jesus Christ left His Father in heaven to cleave to His Bride, indeed, to **purchase** her with His own precious blood, and thus to become one flesh with her. He did so as a tremendous, even indescribable and unfathomable, act of His love. As He continues His work in us by His Holy Spirit, sanctifying us to His glory, our Christian marriage becomes a reflection of the beauty of that eternal love.

**October 12 – LD 41, Day 5: Marriage with Love**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 5:25: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."*

In marriage, the husband represents Christ Himself as the head, not only leading and guiding, but also loving his wife, even as Christ the Church. The husband seeks his wife's spiritual growth and blessing, nourishing and cherishing her, even as Christ sanctifies His Bride, *"That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Eph 5:27). The wife, on the other hand, lives in submission to her husband, serving him, assisting him, reverencing him, living unto him. These things belong to the positive requirement of the seventh commandment. These things mark a sanctified marriage.

In that fellowship of love, the husband and wife also enjoy the physical intimacy of marriage, the sexual union expressive of the intimate love that is theirs as part of that mystery, reflecting the love bond between Christ and the Church. It is an act of intimacy that God has given strictly to that holy union between husband and wife, and from which He is also pleased, in the years of our youth, to gather a holy seed, covenant children, showing Himself faithful to His promise to establish His covenant with believers and their seed. What a wonder of God's grace is the sanctified bond of holy marriage! Love is the fulfillment of the law!

So highly does God hold the standard with respect to marriage that we are told in 1 Cor 6:9-10, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, not abusers of themselves with mankind...shall inherit the kingdom of God."* We read the same in Eph 5. The only deliverance from this sin is through the death of Jesus Christ, and through repentance and faith in His name. The apostle immediately goes on in 1 Cor 6:11 to speak those blessed words, *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

**October 13 – LD 41, Day 6: Maintaining Chastity  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Matthew 5:27,28: *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*

Because we are bombarded by various attacks upon the holy institution of marriage, and because the temptations are fierce, God gave us the seventh commandment, calling us to the pathway of righteousness and thankfulness to Him. The Heidelberg Catechism says, “since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Spirit, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy; therefore He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto.”

The sin of adultery reaches deeply into our sinful flesh, even into our thoughts and desires. That is why all unchaste actions, as well as whatever can entice men to such sinful thoughts and desires, are forbidden us. That is also why Scripture exhorts us to modesty in the way we dress as well as in our speech. For the purity of holy marriage and the sanctity of the Christian life, we may not entice others to sinful thoughts.

Let our youth understand that for this same reason, the modern dance is not fitting for the Christian. Modern dance is usually set to music that by its beat and lyrics, is also conducive to lustful thoughts and movements of the body — as a study of music history will reveal. While some will point to the fact that dancing is spoken of in Scripture without condemnation, we ought to remember that such dancing, or literally “leaping for joy,” without the mingling of men with women, is something entirely different from the artificial movements set to today’s music, as the dance now takes place between men and women and often in close contact with each other. Even where some may be unaffected by such activity and contact, most will find unchaste thoughts and desires being incited by these unchaste actions and gestures.

Let us also guard against all vulgar talk about sex. To take that which God has sanctified as a precious gift belonging to holy marriage, and make it filthy, is to profane the sanctity of marriage. Let us hear the command of Scripture, *“Flee fornication”* (1 Cor 6:18).

**October 14 – LD 41, Day 7: Marriage Restored by Christ  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 5:31-32: *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*

Because our marriages are all affected by sin, we must repeatedly be called before the mirror of God’s Word, to repentance and a sanctified walk. It is imperative that we walk godly as husbands and as wives. It is imperative as young people that we see marriage in the light of Scripture, and preserve ourselves with a view to that holy state. It is imperative as a church that we uphold the holiness of marriage in our opposition to divorce and remarriage. We must walk in the light of God’s Word, even if we have to do so alone!

But as we leave this subject, we must also notice God’s wonderful preservation of this sanctified bond. The sanctity of marriage has been restored by Christ. Having redeemed us as His precious Bride, Christ has given us the motivation to honor marriage. That motivation does not come from the terrible consequences of violating the seventh commandment. Rather, because of our intimate fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, we would not offend Him, but would live as before His face, to glorify and praise Him whether in marriage or single life. So with Joseph, we flee temptation, saying, *“how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”* (Gen 39:9b) God hates all impurity. Because He is my Redeemer and my Friend, I hate all impurity too. Is that your confession?

We say this because our bodies as well as our souls have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. We are not our own, but belong unto our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. You do, don’t you? Therefore we serve not ourselves, but we walk according to our Lord’s will. By that blessed gift of holy marriage, we see God gathering His Church and giving us a reflection of that unbreakable, holy bond — His own covenant love embracing us as His bride. *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* May we preserve the purity of that mystery as reflected in our own marriages, and those of our brothers and sisters in Christ.



## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 42

**Question 110.** What doth God forbid in the eighth commandment?

*Answer.* God forbids not only those [\[a\]](#) thefts, and [\[b\]](#) robberies, which are punishable by the magistrate; but He comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we design to [\[c\]](#) appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbour: whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right, as by unjust [\[d\]](#) weights, ells, [\[e\]](#) measures, fraudulent merchandise, false coins, [\[f\]](#) usury, or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all [\[g\]](#) covetousness, all abuse and waste of his gifts.

**Question 111.** But what doth God require in this commandment?

*Answer.* That I promote the advantage of my neighbour in every instance I can or may; and deal with him as I [\[h\]](#) desire to be dealt with by others: further also that I faithfully labor, so that I [\[i\]](#) may be able to relieve the needy.

[a]: [1Cor. 6:10](#)

[b]: [1Cor. 5:10](#)

[c]: [Luke 3:14](#); [1Thes. 4:6](#)

[d]: [Prov. 11:1](#)

[e]: [Ezek. 45:9,10,11](#); [Deut. 25:13](#)

[f]: [Psa. 15:5](#); [Luke 6:35](#)

[g]: [1Cor. 6:10](#)

[h]: [Mat. 7:12](#)

[i]: [Prov. 5:16](#); [Eph. 4:28](#)

**October 15 – LD 42, Day 1: Biblical Stewardship (1)**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Luke 12:23: *“The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.”*

The eighth commandment is short and to the point: *“Thou shalt not steal.”* But as with all the commandments, so also here the law is very broad in its application. The eighth commandment speaks of our required love towards the neighbour, specifically with respect to our neighbours’ earthly possessions. But it also speaks of our own personal use of the possessions which God has given us. It sets before us the positive instruction of this commandment as set forth in Luke 12:13-31, to seek the kingdom of God, knowing that *“life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.”*

We also approach the eighth commandment as those who have been redeemed in Christ. We read the Ten Commandments as they follow the introduction to the law: *“I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”* (Ex 20: 2, Deut 5:6). That reality of our salvation is the context in which we approach the law, including the eighth commandment. Hearing the eighth commandment from Him Who redeemed us from the slavery of sin, we do not attempt to push aside this statute, but desire to walk according to the will of God in thankfulness of heart. We see that the redemptive work of Christ embraces all things, and necessarily affects our perspective towards earthly possessions. So we seek God’s will also concerning earthly possessions.

The eighth commandment is undergirded by a fundamental principle — the biblical principle of stewardship. The eighth commandment requires us to recognize that we are only stewards or managers of **God’s** possessions. The Bible’s teaching concerning stewardship emphasizes two things. The first point of emphasis is that God owns all things. That is confirmed in the first two verses of Ps 24. He Who created all things is the absolute owner of all things. There is nothing we can claim as our own. Therefore, when it comes to earthly possessions, we must recognize that everything in our possession is an extension of God’s kingly possessions. He is pleased to use certain means to place those goods in our possession. But we are caretakers of what is His.

**October 16 – LD 42, Day 2: Biblical Stewardship (2)**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalms 50: 12,14a: *"If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof...Offer unto God thanksgiving."*

The truth that God owns all things is not understood in our day. The disregard of that truth is a fundamental error of all economic systems and philosophies. All forms of economic theory, whether communism, socialism or capitalism, teach that things belong to man. Although there are other fundamental errors that can be exposed in the economic theories of communism and socialism, excluding God from the equation is a critical fault in current capitalistic theory. This fault is easily explained too. The world, after all, has taken God out of His own creation. They have done so, by denying God as the Creator. But we confess the truth of Scripture, that He is the Creator of all things, the one, only true God. *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"* (Heb 11:3). Because He created, and there is none beside Him, it stands to reason that He is the owner of all things.

But this sovereign ownership, which is God's alone, is an ownership that has also been revealed in a most beautiful way. He gave His Son for the deliverance of this His creation. By the deceit of Satan, the whole creation was brought under the power of sin. But God sent His Son to deliver not only His elect church, but also the creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom 8:19ff). So that when we are told in I Cor 3:21, that *"all things are yours,"* we do not fail to overlook the connection — *"all are yours; And ye are **Christ's**; and Christ is God's"* (1 Cor 3:23). That means that far from leaving the earth and all material things under the power of sin, Christ has come to pull them away from the grasp of Satan, the prince of this world, and to return them to His heavenly Father — a work that will be seen as complete when He finally accomplishes His purpose and establishes the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness dwells and there is no more stealing and usurping of His sovereign ownership.

**October 17 – LD 42, Day 3: Biblical Stewardship (3)**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

1 Timothy 6:10: *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*

The biblical principle of stewardship recognizes God as the owner of all things. But there is a second aspect of this principle of stewardship, namely, that you and I are required to live our whole life in the recognition that all is God’s.

This happens only by our life in Christ and by the work of His Holy Spirit in our hearts. We confessed this when we said in Lord’s Day 1 that “I with body and soul...am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.” That means that the Lord our Savior cares for us also with respect to our physical needs. So Jesus said in Luke 12: 27-31: *“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

Redemption in Christ, and more particularly the conscious participation in that salvation through faith, frees us from the slavery of the love of money and the bondage of materialism, so that we no longer have the drive to gain the world at the expense of our souls. The work of the Spirit of Christ in us is a work that instills in us a desire to seek the things above, and not the things of this earth. He shows us that the earth is the Lord’s and we are His servants.

But that life of Christ in us always has to fight against the sinful inclinations of our sinful nature, which seeks the things that are below. That also explains the reason for the eighth commandment. In recognition that God sovereignly gives to every man his place and portion, we take that which God has given us and dedicate it to His glory; and we refrain from wrongfully taking to ourselves that which belongs to our neighbour.

**October 18 – LD 42, Day 4: The Thankful Christian's Exercise of Stewardship**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 4:28: *"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."*

The eighth commandment, *"Thou shalt not steal,"* implicitly requires us to labour. It is by working that God normally puts in our possession those goods by which we must serve Him as stewards. In addition, we faithfully labour in order to have something to give to those in need. Also implied, and stated explicitly throughout Scripture, is our calling to seek first the kingdom of God, even in the application of our stewardship. The fruit of loving the neighbour in our use of the earthly things God gives us is that we relieve those who are truly in need, and support wholeheartedly the causes of the kingdom of heaven.

It is indeed the work of Christ in us that fills our hearts with a desire to give to the causes of His kingdom. The thankful Christian will not steal from the cause of Christ and use God's good gifts for his own benefit and pleasure, but will first give with willingness of heart, knowing by experience that God loves a cheerful giver (II Cor 9:7b). The apostle, writing in II Cor 8:2, testified that the churches in Macedonia were faithful in such exercise of stewardship. They are set before us as an example of what ought to characterize us. Though living in deep poverty, they gave liberally for the cause of Christ's church and for those in need. They did so, said the apostle, for this reason: *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"* (II Cor 8:9).

The thankful Christian, seeing his deliverance from the bondage of sin and death through the precious gift of Christ, honours the Lord with his substance and with the firstfruits of all his increase (Prov 3:9). Do we live that way? Do we live with an understanding of the foundational principle of the eighth commandment, that God Himself owns all things, and that He is the giver of every good and perfect gift?

**October 19 – LD 42, Day 5: Stealing Forbidden**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

1 Thessalonians 4:6: *“That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.”*

The eighth commandment, and the Catechism’s exposition of this commandment, sets before us the grievous violation of this foundational principle in wrongfully acquiring, possessing and spending earthly goods. Stealing is not only done by those acts punishable by the magistrate. There is also stealing that is done so quietly and without notice, that we might still appear in the eyes of others, and perhaps even in our own eyes, as very honest people.

God sees all those sins by which people try to take what belongs to the other, whether by force, or under the appearance of right. He sees those who squander His good gifts, unfaithful stewards. God sees the stealing by healthy-bodied men who do not work faithfully, but who take their daily sustenance from others. Paul had to address that as well, in Eph 4:28.

God sees all the unfaithful stewardship in the business world and in the sphere of labour. He sees those executives who draw increasingly exorbitant salaries and bonuses, as if they own the world, while they bleed their workers, cut jobs and insist on harder work and longer hours. God sees the rich getting richer at the expense of the poor. He has a special word for those rich. It’s found in James 5. *“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.... Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.”*

But it isn’t just the bosses who frequently are found guilty by God of stealing. God also sees those employees who steal from their employers, not putting in an honest day’s work for the wages they are paid, who stretch their lunch break and coffee breaks, who hold their employers hostage at the hands of their labor unions. God sees.

**October 20 – LD 42, Day 6: Stealing and Covetousness  
by Pastor Steven Key**

1 Timothy 6:6-9: *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."*

Covetousness, the desire to have for ourselves what God has given to someone else, is the heart sin of stealing.

Covetousness often comes to expression by frivolous spending without regard to our present obligations. The prosperous and pleasure-mad culture in which we live tempts us to steal. That is exactly what we do when we spend what is not ours to spend.

There is legitimate debt. By that I refer to debt by which we hold equity or goods which have a greater value than the debt, which debt also is not impinging upon our proper seeking of the kingdom as the priority in our lives. A man must normally take on debt in order to purchase a house. But he doesn't assume that debt, unless he can care for the causes of the kingdom of God first, without hindrance, as well as the needs of his own household in food and clothing and other necessities of life. But there is another form of debt which is altogether illegitimate, and which Scripture exposes as stealing. That is spending on credit that which is not ours to spend. To spend beyond what God has given us is taking that which is not ours to spend and pretending that we already have it.

In modern culture when so much emphasis is placed on material things, we must guard ourselves against covetousness and remember our biblical calling as stewards! The banks want us to spend and to run up exorbitant finance charges. Clothing stores, electronics stores and all the other stores, want us to spend, and spend freely. Advertising entices us. The possessions of our neighbours instill in us a desire for those same possessions or better. But let us understand the covetousness of our own hearts, and pray for the Spirit of grace, that we might fight against this sin of stealing.

**October 21 – LD 42, Day 7: The Heart Lesson of the Eighth Commandment  
by Pastor Steven Key**

II Corinthians 8:9: *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”*

The eighth commandment teaches a powerful and blessed lesson to us who are in Christ Jesus.

In the first place, this eighth commandment, as all the other commandments, exposes our own sinfulness. It exposes not only our sinful deeds in the failure to exercise faithful stewardship, but more particularly, it exposes the sins of our hearts. How plagued we are with covetousness as it pertains to earthly possessions! How little thought we give to the sovereign mercies of God in what He has given us! How pitifully weak is our exercise of stewardship! How great is our need for Christ! Don't you see? For this stealing that has characterized our lives in many different forms is a sin that calls for the execution of God's righteous justice. But Christ has delivered us from the bondage of this sin too. He did so by bearing the punishment for our guilt, even to the death of the cross. He did so by becoming poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

Now, by the work of His Holy Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ has instilled in our hearts a love for Him and for the neighbour, a love which also will express its gratitude by seeking God's will concerning earthly possessions. By the wonder of God's grace, we are made servants of God rather than slaves to the world. We have been transformed from being slaves to material things and seekers of earthly possessions which do not last, to servants of God and stewards in His everlasting house.

In that light, we see that God's law is sweet. It leads us to the positive calling of godliness with contentment, which is great gain. Contentment is the grace of the Holy Spirit in our hearts whereby we are happy in the way in which God leads us. That is ours because we are rich — rich toward God. You are, aren't you? When you see that, then you also confess with the apostle in II Cor 9:8, *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”*



## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 43

**Question 112.** What is required in the ninth commandment?

*Answer.* That I bear false witness against no man[a], nor falsify any man's words[b]; that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer[c]; that I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly, or unheard[d]; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit[e], as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God[f]; likewise, that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it[g]; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbour[h].

[a]: [Prov. 19:5,9](#); [Prov. 21:28](#)

[b]: [Psa. 15:3](#)

[c]: [Rom. 1:29,30](#)

[d]: [Mat. 7:1ff](#); [Luke 6:37](#)

[e]: [Lev. 19:11](#)

[f]: [Prov. 12:22](#); [Prov. 13:5](#)

[g]: [1Cor. 13:6](#); [Eph. 4:25](#)

[h]: [1Pet. 4:8](#)

**October 22 – LD 43, Day 1: The Power of the Tongue  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Proverbs 10:19: *“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.”*

It is immediately evident from Prov 10 that the tongue is a powerful instrument. It is a power for good; it is also a power for evil. It builds up; it also destroys. It gives expression to wisdom; it also gives expression to utter foolishness and brings destruction. The tongue is a well of life when used by the righteous man to give expression to God’s truth; but it is a tool of violence when used to oppose the truth. A man shows that he is a fool, says the inspired writer, when he uses his tongue to propagate slander and to speak lies, and the mouth of the wicked speaks frowardness. But *“the lips of the righteous know what is acceptable”* before God (Prov 10:32). So the conclusion may be found in Prov 10:19, *“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.”* How careful we must be with the use of our tongues, our mouths. That is the essence of the ninth commandment.

A most destructive sin is the evil use of the tongue. So James wrote in Jam 3:5-6, *“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”* In the words of our Catechism, the tongue can call down “the heavy wrath of God.” Our consideration of this ninth commandment is a matter of urgency. And our attitude towards this Word of God exposes us for what we are. James put it this way in Jam 1:26: *“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”*

So once again, as those redeemed by Christ, as those who love His Word of truth and therefore those who humble ourselves before Him, we express our desire. “Teach thou us, Father. We desire to walk in the way of thy commandments. For we love Thee, and would express to Thee our gratitude.”

**October 23 – LD 43, Day 2: The Revealer of the Truth**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 25:5: *“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”*

The tongue is a precious gift from God to show forth His praise and to hold forth His truth. The underlying principle of the ninth commandment is once again found in God Himself. God is the God of *truth*. In harmony with the perfection of His own Being, God alone determines the truth and works according to that truth. *“For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth”* (Psa 33:4).

In addition, as David makes clear in II Sam 2:6, God is the God Who reveals truth. That is why David prays in Psa 25:4,5: *“Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”* God’s Word is truth. It is truth throughout the ages. It is the *“scripture of truth”* (Dan 10:21), perfectly reliable and trustworthy. It is breathed by the *Spirit of truth* (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13), the Holy Spirit. When God sent His Son into the world, His divinely anointed Son Who is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Son said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6).

It is Christ Who reveals to us the infinite perfections of God — His truth, His holiness, His righteousness, His mercy, His love, His grace. By His death on the cross, Christ is the way unto the Father. To the God of truth, He leads us, bringing us into the fellowship of His covenant life. There is no fellowship with God, apart from the truth. That is why the psalmist sings in Psa 43:3, *“O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.”* So we read in Psa 145:18, *“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.”* To the truth of God, therefore, we must be entirely devoted. God created us to show forth His praise — in truth. So we are to live and so we are to speak.

**October 24 – LD 43, Day 3: Loving the Neighbour in Truth**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Ephesians 4:25: *“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”*

The power of the tongue is a precious gift when used not only to praise God in truth, but also to speak the truth in love to the neighbour and to express love for the neighbour. The Catechism expresses our positive calling this way, “that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbour.”

That means that when my neighbour is a fellow believer, my speech seeks to encourage him spiritually, to strengthen his faith. Woe to that man who is a stumbling block to the brother. I don’t speak, of course, of those offenses that come when a brother refuses to hear the instruction of the Scriptures. As Prov 10:17b says, *“he that refuseth reproof erreth.”* When you bring the Word of God to a wayward brother and he is offended because he refuses to hear the Word with application to himself, that is not your fault — assuming you have spoken the truth in love and with a proper spiritual attitude. Then, his taking offense is not a rejection of you, but of the Word. But woe to that man who becomes a stumbling block to the brother by reason of evil-speaking, or of living a lie. The speech of love is a speech that edifies, that builds up in the faith, that encourages in the truth of God’s Holy Word.

On the other hand, when my neighbour is an unbeliever, the power of the tongue is used to his advantage when I confess the truth of God’s Word and show my life in harmony with that Word of truth. Certainly I am not promoting the honour of my neighbour, when I hide the truth from him and ignore the coming consequence of his walk in unbelief. As much as I am able, I am to speak the truth and confess the name of Him Who is truth. That is the purpose for which God gave me a tongue and the power of speech — to glorify Him in truth, and to promote that truth also in relation to my neighbour.

**October 25 – LD 43, Day 4: The Tongue Devastated by Sin**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

James 3:5b-6: *“Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”*

The form of the ninth commandment — *“thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour”* — indicates that the tongue has come under the power of our sinful flesh. The ninth commandment, says our Catechism, requires “that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God.”

Every form of falsehood is sown by the devil, whose very name means *liar*. Satan kindled that fire of the lie when he came as a serpent to Eve and called God a liar! When Eve responded that if they would eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would die as God had said, the devil said, *“Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”* (Gen 3:4-5).

That tells us even more about the lie. The lie is rooted in wicked pride which seeks to elevate the creature above the Creator, and which would give the creature the right to determine the truth. It is a common thought in our day that truth is what we make it to be. That philosophy goes hand in hand with the rejection of the Scriptures as the absolute standard of truth and the infallible Word of divine authority.

From that first lie of Satan proceeds every form of the lie today and every form of evil speaking. The power of the tongue has been made a power subject to Satan. As we near the end of time, Satan is once again given opportunity to develop his power. He will do so by success of the lie. The book of Revelation reveals that there is given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he is able to deceive the nations, as well as the false church. The tongue, when in the service of Satan, is set on fire of hell. The ninth commandment condemns all forms of lying and deceit as being “the proper works of the devil.”

**October 26 – LD 43, Day 5: Many Lies**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 119: 118: *“Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.”*

The lie takes many different forms. False doctrine is the expression of the lie. There is the lie that the Bible has flaws, is not trustworthy in everything it says. That is the very lie of Satan in the garden. There is the common denial of God's absolute sovereignty, His divine directing and governing of all things. There is the denial of creation as set forth in the Book of Genesis, the work of God's hands. There is the teaching, contrary to the Bible, that God loves everybody and wants everybody to be saved, if only they will accept Him. There are many teachings which deny the application of God's precepts to our lives today. There are many teachings that defile holy marriage, that deny marriage as an unbreakable bond between one man and one woman. The acceptability of divorce, the permissibility of remarriage as the best thing for the happiness of the divorced person, is common and widely accepted in our day, though contrary to the Word of God. It is by the deceit of Satan that there is a muddying or a watering down of biblical concepts. And the fruit is as the Spirit has spoken expressly concerning these last days, that some *“depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”* (I Tim 4:1). Even as there is evidence of the wrath of God upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness and turn it into a lie, we see God's truth held fast. So we are told in Romans 1:18 and following.

The lie and the power of the tongue under the embrace of Satan have terrible consequences also in our relationships to others. To bear false witness can take the form of lying about someone, or misrepresenting him or her. But it can also come to expression many other ways. To leave out certain facts in order to leave an evil impression is to follow the lie of Satan. To imply evil intentions on the part of someone, of whom false motives and evil intentions were absent, is to abandon truth. God knows how guilty we have made ourselves by these grievous sins which raise suspicions and evil thoughts about fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. God calls all to repentance.

**October 27 – LD 43, Day 6: Our Great Need for Purified Speech  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Proverbs 17:4: *“A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.”*

As those who come under the accusation of God in Psa 12:4, we often live echoing the thought, *“our lips are our own: who is lord over us?”* Instead of defending and promoting the honour and good character of our neighbour, in accordance with the calling to love our neighbours as ourselves, we hurt our neighbours with our speech and sin against God.

In Psa 15, the question is brought before God: *“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?”* And the answer follows: *“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.”* Sometimes there are those in the church who are so caught up in sins of the tongue, that they cannot possibly receive a blessing in the sanctuary of God. God will not give them His covenant fellowship and the comfort of His loving presence. And it becomes a vicious circle. As chastisement of their own sins, they receive no blessing from God; so they speak all the more evil of the church, all the while refusing to examine their own wicked attitudes and tongues. So it will continue, until God in mercy awakens them to their utter wickedness, they repent of their repeated backbiting and evil-speaking, and turn again unto the Lord.

The devastation wrought by an evil tongue is a devastation that runs far and wide. This sin explodes its shrapnel into very wide territory. While the Catechism lists rather extensively the various forms in which the tongue shows itself as set on fire of hell, the fact is that the ways of evil are so many, that the Catechism finally must sum it up by the expression, *“all sorts of lies and deceit,”* so as not to overlook any. It is a simple fact, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* 1 John 1:8). But on the other hand — and how important this is — *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9)

**October 28 – LD 43, Day 7: The Wonderful Restoration of the Tongue's Good Use  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Proverbs 16:23: *"The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips."*

The heavy wrath of God, which must rest upon the abusive and lying tongue, was taken up by Jesus and carried to the cross for all who believe. Having spoken His precious Word of truth to us as His almighty power unto salvation, our Lord now fills us with a love for Him and for one another. To us who had the name of our father the devil, and who did not hesitate to give others bad names by our gossip and evil speaking, the Lord has given the name of *children of God* — the very opposite of who we are by nature!

This renewal of life is just as much a part of belonging to Christ as is the forgiveness of sins and justification. It is not possible to claim the work of Christ if our tongues keep on lying, gossiping, slandering and rashly condemning. It is true — and, oh, the sorrow it causes us — that we do not have perfection here, for we have a continual struggle with the old man of sin in us. We do stumble. But if our tongue is untamed and unbridled, quick to speak evil, how shall we sing with sincerity of heart the words of Psa 19:14, *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer"*?

Jesus Christ speaks and works in us to tame the untamable and to break down the works of the devil. What we are unable to do in our own strength is given to us by the power of Christ, when we continually seek His grace and Holy Spirit. In Him is mercy and truth. And as we read in Prov 16:6: *"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."* So we shall love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it. Seeking to glorify God in all things, we shall defend and promote, as much as possible, the honour and good character of our neighbour. This is the way of promoting the well-being of the Church of Christ as well. This is the way of God's blessing. May we repent of our evil-speaking, and seek earnestly to live in thankfulness to our Redeemer.



## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Lord's Day 44

**Question 113.** What doth the tenth commandment require of us?

*Answer.* That even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commandments never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness[\[a\]](#).

**Question 114.** But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments?

*Answer.* No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this [\[b\]](#) obedience; yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live not only according to some, but all the commandments of God[\[c\]](#).

**Question 115.** Why will God then have the ten commandments so strictly preached, since no man in this life can keep them?

*Answer.* First, that all our lifetime we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature[\[d\]](#), and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin, and righteousness in Christ[\[e\]](#); likewise, that we constantly endeavor, and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us in a life to come. [\[f\]](#)

[a]: [Rom. 7:7ff](#)

[b]: [Rom. 7:14](#)

[c]: Rom 7:22; [Rom. 7:15ff](#); [James 3:2](#)

[d]: [1John 1:9](#); [Rom. 3:20](#); [Rom. 5:13](#); [Rom. 7:7](#)

[e]: [Rom. 7:24](#)

[f]: [1Cor. 9:24](#); [Phil. 3:12,13,14](#)

**October 29 – LD 44, Day 1: The Place of the Law  
by Pastor Steven Key**

Romans 7:14: *"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."*

What a difference between the non-Christian and believer, when facing the law of God, the well-known Ten Commandments. For the unbeliever, the law is only the unchangeable demand of the righteous and holy God as Creator and Sovereign. For you who believe, that same law has become, in and through Jesus Christ, the loving precept, the guide for a thankful life. It comes from the same righteous and holy God as Father and Redeemer. For the unbeliever, that law can only be a matter of crushing responsibility, because he has no relationship to the Christ Who alone fulfills that law. For the natural man, that law points to everlasting condemnation, because he must obey that law perfectly, yet he does not obey it because he cannot, and will not. *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"* (Rom 8:7,8).

But that same law points the Christian to life eternal. It does so because Christ has fulfilled that law for us. We do not have to keep that law in order to be redeemed. By His blood, Christ blotted out all our transgressions; in His life He fulfilled all obedience for us. Therefore, we are no longer under the law, but under grace. We are justified by faith, without the works of the law.

Yet, on the other hand, we who believe keep the law by the power of God's mighty grace and the work of His Spirit in our lives. Though only small in beginning and not yet in perfectness, we strive to walk in obedience to the whole law out of thankfulness for all that God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Because Christ lives in us by His indwelling Spirit, because we are thankful Christians, we are compelled to walk in obedience to that law and shall not enter into glory without it. That is the way it must be, if we are to have any comfort in life and death. For the law does not merely gloss over certain aspects of our outward conduct, but reaches into the very depths of our being. That is emphasized in the tenth commandment.

**October 30 – LD 44, Day 2: The Demand for Perfection**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Exodus 20:17: *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”*

By this commandment the law reaches into our inmost lives, to touch the very thoughts and intents of the heart. As we have seen, each of the Ten Commandments addresses a much broader area than is initially indicated in the words expressed.

That is why the Heidelberg Catechism, in expounding the law, does not pay attention to the narrow meaning of each commandment, but opens it up in its broadest application. It also applies that law very personally. “What doth the tenth commandment require of **us**?”

By this approach the Catechism accomplishes three things. First, it examines the tenth commandment itself, calling attention to the spiritual character of the law. Secondly, it compares us with that law and teaches us to understand the reality of our imperfection. Finally, the Catechism speaks of the importance of the law for our spiritual nurture, as it is preached to us and applied to us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The tenth commandment, as the culmination of the law, demands perfection before the holy God. It requires of us “that even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God’s commandments never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness.” Obedience to God is fundamentally a matter of the heart, and not merely a matter of outward conformity to His precepts. It is exactly for that reason that Paul wrote in Rom 7:7, *“I had not known sin...except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”* Until Paul came to a spiritual understanding of the tenth commandment, and saw that the law of God reaches into the deepest recesses of the heart, will and nature, he thought as a Pharisee, namely, that his own outward observance of the precepts of the law marked him as obedient. However, when he saw himself as God sees him, he saw his sin in all those small inclinations or thoughts that arose in his mind and heart, then he understood the bondage to sin and the corruption of his own flesh, and the true nature of the law in the light of God’s perfect holiness.

**October 31 – LD 44, Day 3: Called to Perfect Holiness  
by Pastor Steven Key**

1 Peter 1:15-16: *“But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”*

The positive calling of the tenth commandment is set forth in 1 Pet 1:15-16, where the inspired apostle repeats the Word of God as set forth in the Old Testament in the last part of Leviticus 11. The apostle sets forth the call to holiness in contrast to that way of life which characterizes us by nature. In contrast to that lust which is the expression of covetousness, we are to be holy, as God is holy.

As we consider the tenth commandment, we must understand that the law does not merely forbid us from wanting things that we do not have. That, in itself, is not necessarily wrong. We are commanded by Scripture in 1 Cor 12:31, e.g., to *“covet earnestly the best gifts”*. There are proper desires, virtuous desires, as well as the natural, in-created desires for food and drink.

What the tenth commandment forbids is unlawful desiring, that is, wanting anything apart from God, or contrary to His will. That is why Exo 20:17 speaks of those things that God has given to the neighbour, and not to us. That is the perspective as well in 1 Tim 6:8 and following, where we are called to contentment, having food and raiment.

Covetousness is essentially idolatry. Thus the tenth commandment ties us back to the first. We have gone full circle! Whoso violates even the least of these commandments, violates them all (Jam 2:10)! The first commandment, forbidding idolatry, is directed first to our outward life of worship and confession, and only then reaches into the idolatry of the heart. But the tenth commandment touches especially our hearts' desires in relation to the world and the things of this world. Covetousness, therefore, is principally the same as idolatry of the heart. In fact, Scripture sometimes identifies the two together (Eph 5:5, Col 3:5). Positively, our obedience to God must be obedience from the heart. We are to be holy through and through! In accordance with Christ's command in Matt 5:48, we are called by the tenth commandment to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect!

**November 1 – LD 44, Day 4: Hating All Sin**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Psalm 139:23-24: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

If we are to forbid entrance to even the slightest thought or inclination contrary to God’s commandments, it is a matter of fundamental necessity that we have an attitude of hostility towards sin in our own lives. Our attitude towards sin must not simply be a neutral attitude, and certainly not a sympathetic attitude; but we must absolutely hate all sin. Again, instead of favoring it, or shrugging it off, or even cherishing it and giving it a comfortable place in our hearts and in our lives, we must hate it and seek to sabotage it in every possible way!

This is true of all sins, the Catechism reminds us — the secret and bosom sins, as well as the public and gross sins. While we are often inclined to make distinctions, and to downplay our pet sins, Scripture makes unmistakably clear that the tree that bears no fruit is just as ugly and harmful in God’s vineyard as the tree that bears rotten fruit. God requires that we hate all sin, even the smallest thought or inclination contrary to His will. There are sins that would seem to be to our advantage, as well as those that are obviously bad and to our hurt. But God requires that we hate them all, and flee from them. God demands that we do so with our whole heart.

This must be our attitude, not lethargic nor with hesitation, but earnest! Because all these sins are our mortal enemies, we cannot be relaxed about them even for a moment. No matter where we are or what we are doing, no matter whether we have any support for my position, or whether we are in the workplace where all around us are unbelieving and disobedient colleagues, we dare not relax in our spiritual struggles even for a moment.

We must live with a God-centered focus, delighting in all righteousness. To seek God’s glory in all things is our calling. Let all desires and passions be fervently directed towards that which God delights in. This is the Christian’s thankful response to the tenth commandment.

**November 2 – LD 44, Day 5: Our Humiliating Imperfection**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Romans 7:14: *“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”*

The reality of our imperfection comes to its inescapable light when we stand before the tenth commandment. That we commit sin is bad, but that we are sinners in the depths of our beings is worse. This dark background of our lives, this horrible fountain from which our desires arise, and this sinful nature in which those desires grow like weeds on a bad field, only add to our guilt. In the light of the tenth commandment, we are reminded that we only increase our guilt daily. For when we stand before the commandment, and understand that the requirement is to live perfectly and to be perfect before the Holy God, we find ourselves utter failures.

Don't lose sight of the fact that we are standing before God's law as the redeemed, those who have been delivered out of the bondage of sin. For nothing in ourselves, but entirely of God's grace, we belong to that elite group of “those who are converted to God.” That does not mean merely that we attend church and have certain convictions. After all, many unconverted people attend church and have certain convictions. But converted people are new creatures in Christ (II Cor 5:17). Specifically, as our Catechism explained in Lord's Days 32 and 33, we who are converted have “a sincere sorrow of heart that we have provoked God by our sins, and more and more hate and flee from them.” In addition, we have “a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight” we live according to the will of God in all good works.

“But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments?” And the answer is: “No, but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God.” This answer is sobering, if not humiliating. Even the holiest men...a **small beginning**! As far as the sprouting seed is from the full harvest, so distant are we from that perfect obedience to God's commandments. Paul calls himself the chief of sinners, upon whom was bestowed great mercy (1 Tim 1:15). Peter is the one who cried out, *“Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord”* (Luke 5:8). This is the confession of those who are converted.

**November 3 – LD 44, Day 6: Pressing Toward the Mark**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

Philippians 3:13-14: *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

The reality of our imperfection is not where we stop. In fact, we who are Christ's are very dissatisfied and saddened by this reality of our sinfulness. It is simply impossible to resign ourselves complacently to this imperfection. With the apostle Paul, we *"press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:14). We struggle on in the battle of faith, pressing forward in our expression of gratitude to God, so that with a sincere resolution we begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God. Does this characterize your life?

The life of those who have been converted to God is not a stagnant pool, but a flowing stream. There is no standing still, but progress. So the Holy Spirit of the exalted Christ works. We who are in Christ are partakers of the life of Christ. We are one plant with Him. A living plant germinates and buds forth in all directions and grows, bringing forth the fruits that are fitting to that plant. Such life is the driving force behind that sincere resolution that we begin to live not only according to some, but all the commandments of God. Our life must be characterized by the new obedience, the obedience of love, love for God and the neighbour. Spiritual growth is the characteristic of one who is converted, even though his new obedience remains but a small beginning.

That love for God's law and desire to walk in the way of His commandments in thankfulness to Him, is a love and desire that has been instilled in our hearts and awakened by the Holy Spirit. So even while we lament our sinful nature, we thank God for the wonder of His grace in our salvation. We confess with the inspired apostle in Rom 7:24-25: *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."*

**November 4 – LD 44, Day 7: Preaching God’s Law**  
**by Pastor Steven Key**

I Thessalonians 2:13: *“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*

The Heidelberg Catechism concludes its exposition of the Ten Commandments by reminding us of the importance of preaching that law of God. The authors of the Catechism recognized the need for piercing preaching, preaching which lets no one escape its personal application. They understood that, because they were students of the preaching of the prophets, of Christ Himself and His apostles. So they taught that when the Ten Commandments are preached sharply and faithfully, then God will work by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who are His, conforming them unto His own image.

Such preaching of the law is necessary, in order that “we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature.” This growing knowledge of our sinful nature is a deepening of spiritual life. The strict preaching of the law exposes our sinfulness and shows us how susceptible we are to wandering and living apart from God.

As our own sinfulness becomes a frightening reality for us in an ever-increasing measure, to that same measure we hear the glad tidings of redemption in Christ are heard more clearly. When God exposes our sin by the preaching of His Word, He does so not to cast us off but to bind us more and more to Himself, drawing us by His grace. So the Spirit works. There is a deepening, therefore, not only in the knowledge of sin, but in the knowledge of our redemption. Christ is found indispensable to us. If we do not enter into fellowship with Christ daily, we wither spiritually. By the preaching, God moves us to fervent spiritual life.

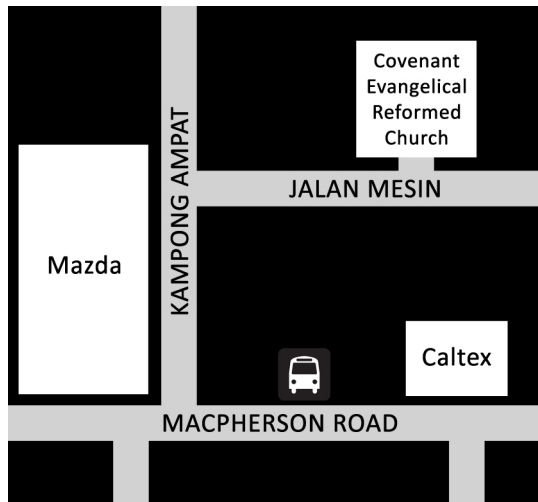
Faithful preaching calls us to a life of true conversion, evidence of the Spirit’s work in us. We long to glorify the God of our salvation! The more the preaching of the law finds entrance into our hearts, the more we yearn for the perfection that awaits us. May God soon fulfill our desire for the perfection of holiness, that His glory may be perfectly revealed in us who are the work of His hand.





## COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

PLACE OF WORSHIP  
11 Jalan Mesin #04-00  
Standard Industrial Building



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Published by Christian Literature Ministry, CERC