

Each week of 2019 we will take a brief look at one or more questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. To read previous weeks' briefs go to oakhillpca.com/wsc

Q. 39. *What is the duty which God requires of man?*

A. The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

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

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

Q. 41. *Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.

Q. 42. *What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?*

A. The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

The Catechism makes a transition at this point. Up until this point (Q. 38), the Catechism has focused on who God is and what God does. The glorious culmination of God's work is the redemption he accomplishes through his son, Jesus Christ, and applies to sinners through the Holy Spirit.

Now the Catechism turns our attention to the duty of man. In Q. 11 & 12, the Catechism spoke about "God's works of providence." A. 11 tells us, "God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions." And A. 12 reveals that God enters into a covenant with man in order to preserve and govern humans. His revealed will, the moral law, is part of this covenant to preserve and govern. Moral law is one of the ways God exercises providence over creation.

Questions 39-42, very succinctly, points us to where we can learn God's moral law, namely, the Ten Commandments. Nearly every catechism that was produced during the Reformation includes a section on the Ten Commandments. These ten rules provide an excellent summary of "what does the Lord require of you" (Mic. 6:8). Our Catechism will use nearly 40 questions unpacking the meaning and significance of the Ten Commandments for us.

Q. 42 gives Jesus' summary of the law from Matthew 22:37-40. The first four commandments (no other gods, no false worship, honoring God's name, keeping Sabbath) all speak to our relationship with God. If we want to love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind, we can look to these commands for direction.

The last six commands (honor parents, no adultery, murder, stealing, lying, coveting) all teach us how to love our neighbor as ourselves. Over the next 40 questions, we'll get to dive deeply into the meaning of these commands.