

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. 57. *Which is the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

Q. 58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

Q. 59. *Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

The commandment, of the Ten, that has received the most debate likely is the fourth commandment. Christians have debated whether we should even look to the Ten Commandments for moral direction. Most, however, agree that they give us a picture of God's unchangeable moral will for his people. The debate about the Fourth Commandment is about how this commandment is fulfilled. Do we keep one day out of seven holy, or is this fulfilled "spiritually" in our relationship with Christ?

With the Catechism, we say, "Yes."

In the text of the fourth commandment from Exodus 20:8-11, God appeals to the pattern of Genesis 1. God created all things in the span of six days and rested on the seventh day. *Therefore*, he calls us to follow the same pattern. This appeal to the creation order transcends all dividers. The command is not only for Moses and Israel in the Old Testament. It is for all of creation, for all time (until "the end of the world").

This pattern teaches us humility and dependence on the Lord. We cannot sustain ourselves by our own efforts. The Sabbath break forces us to stop and say, "I am insufficient."

With the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week, God's people have shifted their observance of the Sabbath to that day (cf. Acts 20:7). This signifies that our rest is found in the sufficient work of Christ (cf. Heb. 4:9-11). So, our observance of Sabbath is an act of faith, trusting not in our effort, but in the completed work of Christ. We'll take more time next week to unpack the Catechism's teaching on how to "keep the Sabbath holy."