

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](http://oakhillpca.com/wsc)

Q. 60. *How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?*

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbids the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q. 62. *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.

In Questions 57-59 we were introduced to the Fourth Commandment and the call to keep the Sabbath holy. We also considered why Sunday is the Christian Sabbath. Questions 60-62 take us further into the meaning of the command. How do you keep a day "holy"?

First, we are called to rest. The Lord wants his people to have a one-in-seven pattern to remind us that we are finite. During the Exodus, God miraculously provided food for the Israelites. He commanded that they gather enough food for each day. But on the sixth day, they were to collect food for two days, so that on the Sabbath they could rest from their work. This rest is important.

Second, we are called to worship the Lord in public and private exercises. Our whole lives are to be worship (Rom. 12:1), but on the Sabbath we have the unique opportunity to gather with God's people for public, corporate worship. This is a time to sing, to pray, and to study God's word.

Third, we are called to do this "all the day." It is the "Lord's day." This is why churches have traditionally had a morning and evening worship service on Sundays. We begin and end our days in worship. Gathering in homes for prayer and study of God's word (Life Groups) is another way to keep the Sabbath holy.

Fourth, we are to avoid "unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations." This phrase has caused much debate. What if I have to work on Sunday? Can I watch a football game on Sunday? The word "unnecessary" is key. Are these activities we ask about "works of necessity and mercy"? We must check our motivations. If we are to keep the Sabbath holy, we must submit to God's desires. We are not the Lord (cf. Isaiah 58:13-14).