

New City Catechism

Question 11: What does God require in the 6th, 7th & 8th Commandments?

Answer: Sixth, that we do not hurt or hate our neighbor.

Seventh, that we live purely and faithfully. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else.

Romans 13:9

Review Commandments 6-8 again. Use your fingers to help.

The following excerpt adapted from 2 Samuel and Psalm 51 helps us understand “what God requires,” or the meaning of these commandments.

Sin Crouches at the Door

“Nathan, go to my servant King David and tell him that I am much displeased with him,” said the voice.

“What shall I say has displeased you, Lord?” asked Nathan.

“He has taken the wife of his loyal servant Uriah for his own, and then arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle in order to cover up his evil deeds. He has broken and despised my holy laws and done a great evil before my eyes. You must tell him that I will punish him severely for this!”

“Yes, Lord, I will go to him,” Nathan said.

Nathan was not able to go back to sleep that night. He thought instead about his wayward king- his beloved David, who had once been a man “after God’s own heart.” What had happened to him?

David had been so dependent on God during the many years he had waited patiently for his kingdom – the years during which the deranged King Saul had repeatedly hunted him down and tried to kill him. But the Lord had protected David from these dangers, and David had trusted God to the point of sparing his enemy’s life on more than one occasion, sure that God would fulfill his promises in his own way.

But recently, David just wasn’t the same man. He had grown weary of battle, opting to stay home idly while his troops fought without him. And his loyalties seemed to have shifted a bit. Nathan wondered, for example, if David held his sons too close to his heart. Once God is displaced as our first love, all manner of evil has room to wriggle in and deceive us. These evils were much more dangerous to David than Saul ever was. Is this what happened to him?

Well, it was not for Nathan to understand why. HE had a message to deliver, and as soon as the sun was up, he went forth to do just that.

“What brings you here so early in the day, Nathan? Asked a curious David as Nathan interrupted the breakfast he shared with his newest wife, Bathsheba, who was nursing their infant son. Bathsheba had once been married to Uriah.

“I must report something to you, Sire,” Nathan said. David nodded his consent, and Nathan continued: “In a certain town there lived two men: one rich and the other poor. The poor man had a single ewe lamb he had bought with all of his savings. HE raised it and cherished it like a child. The rich man, who had great flocks of sheep, was visited one day by a hungry traveler. Rather than butchering one of his own flock to provide the meal, however, the rich man seized the poor man’s ewe and fed it to the traveler.”

“Why that’s an outrage,” David thundered as soon as Nathan had finished his tale. “That greedy, heartless man deserves to die! But first I will make him pay for that lamb four times over. Who is this man?”

“You are the man!” Nathan said solemnly. “The Lord sent me to say to you: ‘I have given you all that your heart could desire, yet you stole what belonged to your loyal servant Uriah, and then murdered him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, I am going to bring calamity upon you and your household.’”

When David heard these words, Nathan saw that his heart was broken. David’s anger continued to burn, but now toward himself. “I have sinned against my Lord,” he acknowledged humbly. Never, in all the years he had loved and followed God, had he ever done such a thing against him. He fell to the floor weeping.

“The Lord has taken away your sin,” Nathan told his repentant king. “You are forgiven; you will not die. But your actions have caused God’s enemies to have contempt for him, therefore, your son by this wrongful union will die.”

For seven days, David fasted at the bedside of his stricken baby son, pleading with God. Each night he lay on the ground and would not move. He prayed: “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.... Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

When the baby died, King David went to the temple and worshipped the righteous God who was faithful to his own commands and brought his people ever back to Him.

- Think through the list of 10 Commandments. Which of these did David violate?
- What do you learn from this story about the relation of one sin to another?
- Can you recall a time when you committed a sin that led to another sin, and another in succession?
- Where did David first go wrong?
- In closing, read Romans 13:9-10.

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Commentary, Video, Prayer, and Song as you see fit.