

# The Large Catechism

## The First Part: The Ten Commandments

### *The First Commandment*

**You are to have no other gods.**

What does “to have a god” mean, or what is God?

Answer: A god means that from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress

Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart.

The intention of this commandment: To require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God and clings to Him alone.

“See to it that you let me alone be your God, and never search for another.”

What are examples of gods?

See Matt 6:24: Wealth

Also, those who boast of great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship,

and honor \_\_\_\_\_ has also a god, but not this true and only God.

For to have a God, you can easily perceive, is not lay hold of Him with our hands or to put Him in a bag [as money] or lock Him in a chest. But to apprehend Him means when the heart lays hold of Him and clings to Him.

Besides, there is a false worship and extreme idolatry, which we have hitherto practiced, and is still prevalent in the world, upon which all the ecclesiastical orders are founded, and which concerns the conscience alone that seeks in its own works help, consolation, salvation, presumes to wrest heaven from God, and reckons how many bequests it has made, how often it has fasted, celebrated Mass, etc.

Does God want us to receive good things?

We are to trust in God alone \_\_\_\_\_, and look to him and expect from him naught but good, as from one who gives us body, life, food, drink, \_\_\_\_\_  
nourishment \_\_\_\_\_, health,  
protection, peace and all the necessities of both temporal and eternal things.

For even though otherwise we experience much good from men, still whatever we receive by His command or arrangement is all received from God. For our parents, and all rulers, and every one besides with respect to his neighbor, have received from God the command that they should do us all manner of good, so that we receive these blessings not from the \_\_\_\_\_, but through them, from  
God.

### ***Explanation of the Appendix to the First Commandment***

See Exodus 34:14, Exodus 20:5-6

“For I the Lord your God, the strong, jealous one, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing mercy to many thousands who love me and keep my commandments.”

Although these words relate to all the commandments (as we shall hereafter learn) yet they are joined to this chief commandment because it is of first importance that men have a right head; for where the head is right, the whole life must be right, and vice versa.

From the beginning he has utterly extirpated all \_\_\_\_\_, and, on account of it, both heathen and Jews; even as at the present day he overthrows all false worship, so that all who remain therein must finally \_\_\_\_\_.

But as terrible as are these threatenings, so much the more powerful is the  
\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, that those cling to God alone should be sure that he will show them mercy, show them pure goodness and blessing, not only for themselves, but also to their children and children’s children, even to a thousand and even many thousands of generations.

Let everyone take this to heart and thus be careful not regard this as if a mere human being were speaking. For it brings you either eternal blessing, \_\_\_\_\_, and salvation, or eternal wrath, misery, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Those who have employed all their care and diligence to accumulate great possessions and wealth, what have they finally attained? You will find that they have wasted their effort and toil. God makes no greater demand on us than a \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ for every good thing.

**If the heart is right with God and we keep this commandment, all the rest will follow on their own.**

### *The Second Commandment*

**You are not to take the name of God in vain.**

If you are asked, “What does the second commandment mean?” or, “What does it mean to take the name of God in vain or to misuse it?” you should answer briefly:

“It is \_\_\_\_\_ God’s name when we call upon the Lord God no matter in what way, for purposes of \_\_\_\_\_ or wrong of any kind.”

What this commandment forbids, therefore, is appealing to God’s name falsely or taking his name upon our lips when our heart knows or should know that the facts are otherwise – for example, when taking \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and one party lies about the other. God’s name cannot be abused more flagrantly than when it is used to support \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**The greatest abuse of the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment:**

But the greatest abuse occurs in spiritual matters, which pertain to the \_\_\_\_\_ when false preachers arise and present their lying nonsense to God’s Word.

See Exodus 20:7. For the Lord will not \_\_\_\_\_ anyone who misuses his name.

Unfortunately it is now a common affliction throughout the world that there are just as few who do not use God's name for lies and all kinds of wickedness as there are a few who trust in God with their whole heart.

Thus you now understand what it is to take God's name in vain, that is, either simply for purposes of falsehood, and to allege God's name for something that is not so, or to curse, swear, conjure, and in short, to practice whatever wickedness one may.

In addition, you must know how to use the name of God properly. With the words, "You are not to take the name of God in vain," God at the same time gives us to understand that we are to use his name properly, for it has been revealed and given to us precisely for our use and benefit.

Examples: As when one \_\_\_\_\_ truly, where there is need and it is demanded. So also when there is right \_\_\_\_\_, and when the name is invoked in trouble or praised and thanked in \_\_\_\_\_.

See Psalm 50:15

Why is swearing forbidden in the gospel, yet Christ, St. Paul, and other saints often took oaths?

See the following:

Matt 5:33-37; 26:63-64; Galatians 1:20; 2 Corinthians 1:23.

The proper way to honor God's name is to look to it for all consolation and therefore to call upon it. Thus, we have heard above, first the heart honors God by faith and then the lips by confession.

For this purpose it also helps to form the habit of commending ourselves each day to God – our soul and body, spouse, children, servants, and all that we have – for his protection against every conceivable need.

We have prevented the misuse of the divine name and taught its proper use, not only by how we speak but also by the way we act and live, so that everyone may know that God is well pleased

with the right use of his name and will just as richly reward it as he will terrible punish its misuse.

### *The Third Commandment*

#### **You are to hallow the day of rest**

The word holy day (holiday, German: Feiertag) is rendered from the Hebrew word sabbath which properly signifies to rest, that is, to abstain from labor. Hence we are accustomed to say, cease working, or sanctify the Sabbath.

Now, in the Old Testament, God separated the seventh day, and appointed it for a rest, and commanded that it should be regarded as holy above all others. As regards this external observance, tis commandment was given to the Jews alone, that they should abstain from toilsome work, and rest, so that both mand and beast might recuperate, and not be weakened by unremitting labor.

This commandment, therefore, according to its gross sense, does not concern us Christians; for it is altogether an external matter, like other ordinances of the Old Testament, which were attached to particular customs, persons, times, and places, and now have been make free through Christ.

**But we keep this commandment because on such a day of rest (since we can get no other opportunity) freedom and time be taken to attend \_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_, so that we come together to hear and treat of God's Word and then to praise to God, to sing and pray.**

However, this, I say, is not \_\_\_\_\_ to any time, as with the Jews, that it must be just on this or that day; for in itself no one day is better than another; but this should indeed be done \_\_\_\_\_; however, since the masses cannot give such attendance, there must be at least one day in the week set apart. But since from of old Sunday has been appointed for this purpose, we also should continue the same, in order that everything be done in harmonious order, and no one create disorder by unnecessary innovation.

When asked, "What is meant by the commandment: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?"

Answer: To \_\_\_\_\_ the holy day is the same as to keep it holy. But what is meant by keeping it holy? Nothing else than to be occupied in holy words, works, and life. For the day needs no sanctification for itself: for in itself it has been created holy (from the beginning it was sanctified by its Creator). But God desires it to be holy to you. Therefore it becomes holy or unholy on your account, according as you are occupied on the same with things that are holy or unholy.

For the Word of God is the \_\_\_\_\_ above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints or all holy and consecrated garment upon a heap, still that would help us nothing; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God's Word is the treasure which sanctifies everything, and by which even all the saints themselves were sanctified.

At whatever hour then God's Word is \_\_\_\_\_, preached, heard, read or \_\_\_\_\_ upon, there the person, day, and work are sanctified thereby, not because of the external work, but because of the Word which makes saints of us all.

For let me tell you this, even though you know it perfectly and be already master in all things, still you are daily in the dominion of the devil, who ceases neither day or night to steal unawares upon you, to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against the foregoing and all the commandments. Therefore you must always have God's Word in your heart, upon your lips, and in your ears...Such is the efficacy of the Word, whenever it is seriously \_\_\_\_\_, heard, and used, that it is bound never to be without fruit, but always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness, and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts.