

# Instruction In The Westminster Standards

## The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

---

### STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

**Scripture References:** Exod. 20:13. Eph. 5:29. Matt. 10:23. Ps. 82:3, 4. Job. 29:13.

#### Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "kill" in this question?

The meaning of the word "kill" is to commit murder. The correct rendering of the Hebrew here is "Thou shalt do no murder". This would mean the unjust taking of life.

2. What does the sixth commandment require in reference to our own lives?

It requires that we use all lawful endeavors to preserve it.

3. What are these lawful endeavors?

The Larger Catechism teaches: that this commandment requires "the just defense thereof against violence; — a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labour, and recreation." (Q. 135)

4. What does the sixth commandment require in reference to others?

The Larger Catechism teaches: "By resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any." (Q. 135)

5. What does the commandment mean by "lawful endeavors" toward ourselves and others?

By "lawful endeavors" it means a "sober" use of them as the Larger Catechism states it. We need such things as food, drink, recreation, labor—these are all an important part of human life. We need to be equally careful in our action towards others. In all areas we need to be certain our actions are consistent with the Word of God. Love, as presented in The Word, should be our basis of action.

6. Does this commandment speak only of the body?

No, this commandment is also speaking of the soul. There should be, on our part, a careful avoiding of sin and an equally careful and diligent use of the means of grace.

## THE SOBER LIFE

This devotional on the sixth commandment is one that I, as a busy minister of the Gospel, should take to heart even as I write it. And I pray that I, and you, might do so, all to the glory of God. Intemperance on the part of the saved is one of the most flagrant of sins. It seems that the more dedicated the believer is, there is a danger of breaking the sixth commandment by committing an evangelical form of suicide.

Let me be very explicit here in what I mean by "an evangelical form of suicide". There is the terrible temptation, used time and time again by Satan, for the believer in Christ to burn out his life for the Lord in a way that is not consistent with the whole counsel of God. There is actually here a form of self murder.

The born again believer is a person who must realize at all times that he is to be a good steward of what God has given him, realizing that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is a strange thing but the very believer who would not think of indulging in the gross forms of intemperance will turn right around and indulge in a so-called lesser form. He will not drink intoxicating beverages, but he will try to burn the candle at both ends. He will not attend parties that last far into the night, but he will overeat or try to live without exercising his body, keeping it in shape that he might have the stamina to do what God wants him to do when God wants him to do it. In these areas he is very inconsistent.

The Lord has brought to my mind the past few days that possibly the error here is that the dedicated believer might be looking upon the work of the Lord as an idol, that here we have a form of idolatry. Be assured that I am not advocating slothfulness or laziness in the work of our Lord. I am simply wondering if sometimes we forget the teaching of Titus 2:12, forgetting that the word "soberly" means "a constant reign on passions". Need it be said that "passions" include our burning desire to serve Him? May God help us to be certain we walk in the Spirit and be sober, sensible in regarding how we spend our time. Looking back, do we take one day out of seven?

---

**Published By: The SHIELD and SWORD, INC.**

Dedicated to instruction in the Westminster Standards for use as a bulletin insert or other methods of distribution in Presbyterian churches

For information write to: The Shield and Sword, Inc., Box 17580, Memphis, Tennessee 38117. A non-profit religious organization.

Vol. 5

No. 1

January, 1966

Price

Rev. Leonard T. Van Horn  
Editor

To Churches — \$2.00 per 100  
Individuals — \$1.35 per year



**Back Copies**

To Churches — \$2.25 per 100  
Individuals — 15c each