

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Scripture References: Zech. 8:16. I Pet. 3:16. Acts 25:10. III John 12. Prov. 14:5, 25. Eph. 4:25.

Questions:

1. How can we maintain and promote truth between man and man?

We must speak the truth, the absolute truth to one another if we are to promote truth with each other. Further, we must speak truth of one another in all situations.

2. What does this commandment require in regard to our own good name?

This commandment requires, in regard to our own good name, that we must at all times act in such a way that we deserve our good name. Further, we must always defend our good name.

3. How can we deserve a good name before men?

We can deserve it by always acting in accordance with the Word of God. We must live a holy life, showing forth the fruits of the Spirit in our actions, words and thoughts.

4. How can we defend our good name before men?

We can defend our good name by clearing ourselves from all false accusations. This is a responsibility before God as taught in His Word (Acts 24:10-13). We can also defend our good name by giving God the glory for anything we have done which is praiseworthy in the sight of God. (I Cor. 15:10).

5. How can we maintain and promote our neighbor's good name?

We can help our neighbor's good name by: (1) Recognizing his good qualities; (2) By rejoicing with him over his acts of goodness; (3) By refusing to listen to those who would seek to slander him and speak evil of him; (4) By giving honor to him as it is due; (5) By reproving him before others only when there is need to do so and then showing mercy towards him.

A GOOD NAME

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16). There is, in the Word of God, a responsibility presented to the believer to maintain before all a good name. However, there is a false approach abroad in the world of today that has made its way into the realm of the camp of the believers in Christ. This false approach is the worldly emphasis to be accepted of men and forgetting that we only have a "good name" when our actions are consistent with the principles of the Word of God.

Somehow today there is a confusion among believers in this area. They seem to think that it is important to keep their name free from any sort of condemnation even though to do so they keep quiet when they should speak; they compromise when they should not; they negotiate when they should be on the offense. So many times believers in Christ are heard saying, "I'm not going to have any black mark against my name and have it hurt my reputation before men."

What reputation are we to keep as those saved by grace? The only reputation we are to be concerned about is our reputation before God, as to whether or not we are dishonoring the cause of the Christian religion before men. We do not deserve, before God, to have any other kind of good name. We have been saved by grace and we recognize that whatever we are, we have reached that place by the grace of God. But there is one area about which we are to have a good name and that area is our standing before God, all to His glory.

We should have a good name in regard to standing for the truth. Nothing should cause us to be quiet when we should speak out for the truth. We must defend the faith at all times, even if it means standing up when to stand up and speak means our speaking will bring dishonor on our name among the world.

We should have a good name in regard to the position we take, making sure that the thought of compromise never enters into our actions. We cannot compromise the Truth at any time even if it means reaping coals of fire on our heads by the world.

We should have a good name in regard to being sure we are not willing to negotiate in order to keep the black marks of the world against our names. A good plan of living for the believer in the area of having a good name can be found in Philippians 2:12-16. As this is followed, God will bless us, all to His glory, and our name will be good before Him.

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. 7	July, 1966	Price
Rev. Leonard T. Van Horn			To Churches — \$2.00 per 100
Editor			Individuals — \$1.35 per year



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