

# Instruction In The Westminster Standards

## The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations

---

### STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

**Scripture References:** Psalm 19:13. John 19:11.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by the word "heinous" in this question?  
The word means that sins are abominable, grievous to God.
2. What sins are more heinous than others in the sight of God?  
Basically, there are two types of sins more heinous than others in the sight of God. First, would be sins that are committed without any occasion offered. The less the occasion of sin, the greater is the sin itself. Second, would be sins that are committed presumptuously. We remember that under the law there was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins. (Num. 15:30).
3. In modern day living, could you give some examples of sins that are more heinous than others?  
Yes, for example, sins against the Gospel are more heinous than sins against the law (Matt. 11:20-24). Adultery is more heinous than theft (Prov. 6:32-35).
4. Is there any difference in the sight of God in regard to the age of the person sinning?  
Yes, the Bible does make a difference. If persons are older in the Lord, their sins are more highly aggravated than if committed by children or those inexperienced (Job 32:7).
5. Does time enter into the heinous nature of the sin?  
Yes, time does enter in. For example, sins committed on the Sabbath Day are more heinous than the same sin committed on another day of the week, for the Sabbath Day is especially singled out by the Lord.
6. Would ignorance make a difference in regard to the heinous nature of the sin?  
Yes, sins against knowledge are more heinous than sins through ignorance.
7. What is involved in sinning deliberately?  
Involved in deliberate sinning is a defiant attitude toward God, a showing of a real hatred against Him and would be evidence of hardness of heart.

## PROVOKING OTHERS TO SIN

Certainly one of the sins more heinous in the sight of God is when a man sins himself and at the same time provokes others to sin. The eighteenth chapter of Matthew, among many other passages, makes this very plain. The believer should be always very careful lest he is guilty of leading others down a road that is plainly marked, "Sin". Before God he has the awesome responsibility of being a testimony for Jesus Christ at all times and especially in his responsibility to weaker brethren.

There are numerous ways of provoking others to sin. One is to teach errors to people, errors that are such because of the teaching of the Word of God. Today in the era of the Christian Church when a new "ism" has come on the scene, that of Neo-Evangelicalism, there abides this great danger of provoking others to sin. Someone has said that the difference today within the evangelical church is the difference between those who "stand" and those who "withstand" in their daily walk. Those who stand are simply holding their ground, playing on the defense all the time and never scoring against the apostate church of which they are a part. The person who withstands is always on the offense, always carrying the battle to the enemy. He is called "extreme" and is called a "fighting fundamentalist", but he is always preaching the Truth, not having to fight the liberals on their grounds, using their ground rules. Those who simply want to stand are very popular today in evangelical circles but is there not a danger of their leading many to sin, to have a part in the unfruitful works of darkness?

Another way of provoking others to sin is by living a bad example. The believer is constantly watched. Just a few hours ago I was walking down the hall of the hotel where I am now staying and studying and writing. As I went around the corner, I heard one hotel worker say to another, "That man was carrying a Bible!" He was right. I had just gone down to the car to get my "preaching" Bible. The other worker said, "I wonder if anyone has seen him do anything that shows he doesn't believe it?" My prayer went up to the Lord once again, "Oh, Lord! Grant that Thy servant may be a testimony these few days in this place. Help me that I might not lead others to sin but will lead them to Thee."

Many sins are more heinous than others and leading others down the wrong road is certainly one of them. May we ever be a testimony to all we meet, all to His glory.

---

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. 12	December, 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