

Not Stealing But Giving Generously



Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.. —Romans 13:7

Question 141 of the *Larger Catechism* asks, "What are the duties required in the Eighth Commandment?" The first part of the answer states, "The duties required in the Eighth Commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man, rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills and affections concerning worldly goods."

In The Sermon on the Mount Jesus clearly taught that our duty in keeping the Commandments includes not simply avoiding the evil behavior forbidden, but we must also do the good that is by implication therein enjoined. And of course, all of our avoiding and doing must be sincere, which is to say, from the heart. With regard to stealing then, it is not enough to simply avoid taking what does not belong to us, but we must seek to honestly and faithfully fulfill any and all responsibility we have to manage and care for our own and others' goods. Thus, the *Catechism* begins by commanding truth, faithfulness, and justice in human contracts and commerce. In order to truly not steal from others, I must communicate my true abilities and intentions in an employment arrangement. Resumes should not lie or exaggerate about our education or experience. And if I am scheduled to work eight hours, I must be faithful to do so, showing up on time and leaving on time. Likewise, if I am selling an item, I cannot lie, exaggerate, or "forget" pertinent information about it. And when I am bargaining for that item, I should not exaggerate its flaws in order to get a better price. Truth, faithfulness, and justice should mark all of our dealings with others. Such conduct honors and glorifies God.

So also, does rendering to everyone their due. Here, the *Catechism* is referencing the Scripture quoted at the head of this article. Though it is good and right for me to take advantage of every legal tax break, I must be faithful to pay all that I legally owe. I have a friend who used to work on Andros Island in the Bahamas. Whenever he purchased anything from another nation, there was a customs charge. After satisfying it, the item would be stamped "Duty Paid." The laws of the land had placed a "duty" on the item. Biblically speaking that is not an improper word, for it is our duty to pay whatever the lawful governing power has determined is to be paid for commerce. We owe them that duty, because God is the ultimate authority ordaining and establishing all human authority. So also, if and when we find any goods that belong to another (whether our neighbor or Uncle Sam), we are to restore them to them when we can.

Notice how the Catechism also enjoins generosity as a Christian duty. We are to give and lend freely, according to our abilities and according to the needs of others. Here the Catechism seems to be referencing Rom. 13:8: "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." Love is a requirement God places upon us to all human beings, whether they are our spouses, neighbors, or enemies. We owe them love. If I truly love someone I will give freely to them; when I am able to do so without neglecting prior responsibilities, and when giving will truly help the person. Biblically, a need is not a want, nor can it be a means or occasion of sin. Thus, we are to balance James' command to help those in need of food or clothing (Jam. 2:15), with Paul's admonition that a man who will not work should not be given food (2 Th. 3:10). Generosity cannot encourage sin, for if it does then it is not an act of love but of hate. If I truly love someone I will be generous for their true good, not in order to make myself feel good. Moreover, generosity flows from a heart that is not overly concerned with material possessions. Accordingly, we must be careful to heed the final part of today's instruction commanding moderation in our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods. Life is more than possessions. Life is to be about glorifying God by keeping His commandments from the heart. May God grant that we would see such a life as truly the best and most enjoyable way to live.



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77 Phillips Lane, McKees Rocks, PA 15136 · (412) 788-6100 · ProvidencePGH.org



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SOVEREIGN ELECTION

Sunday Morning · January 28, 2024

THE LORD'S DAY Sunday Morning, January 28, 2024

PROVIDENCE PCA

The Celebration of Worship



Prelude & Welcome

Reflection & Preparation

Psalm 136:1-4

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Call to Worship

Psalm 145

Leader The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You.

They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Leader The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

Invocation

Hymn

 $\it Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim \cdot Trinity 165$

Scripture Reading

Galatians 4:19-5:6

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you. Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Song

Jesus, Master, I Am Thine · Insert

Worship in Giving

Offertory

With All Your Heart · Mary McDonald

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Hymn

Sovereign Ruler of the Skies · Insert

Pastoral Prayer

Children ages 5-8 may be dismissed for Kids' Bible College

Sermon

Isaac Chosen, Ishmael Rejected · Dr. Ray E. Heiple, Jr.

Genesis 21:1-21 NKJV

- And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.
- For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.
- And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him-- whom Sarah bore to him-- Isaac.
- Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.
- Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
- And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me."
- She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."
- So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.
- And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.
- Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."
- And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.
- But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.
- Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."
- So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.
- And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.

- Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.
- And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.
- Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."
- Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink.
- So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.
- He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Officer Ordination & Installation

Ruling Elders: David Douglas, Dennis Stewart, James Stuart

Deacons: Trey Jackson, Mike Lautar, Daniel Martin, Timothy Martin

Questions for Ordination & Installation

- Do you believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, and only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination yow?
- Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
- Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
- ⁵ Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
- Oo you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity, and edification of the Church?
- Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?

Prayer of Ordination & Installation

Exhortation to Deacons Mike Lautar and Daniel Martin

Exhortation to the Congregation of Providence Presbyterian Church

Prayer

Hymn

How Vast the Benefits Divine · Trinity 470

Benediction & Postlude

Following the service, the elders will be available to pray with you at the front of the sanctuary.