



Westminster Larger Catechism Q123-133

Q. 123. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Ex. 20:12.

Q. 124. Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

A. By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

Prov. 23:22, 25; Eph. 6:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Gen. 4:20-22; Gen. 45:8; 2 Kings 5:13; 2 Kings 2:12; 2 Kings 13:14; Gal. 4:19; Isa. 49:23.

Q. 125. Why are superiors styled father and mother?

A. Superiors are styled father and mother, both to teach them in all duties towards their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

Eph. 6:4; 2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Thess. 2:7-8, 11; Num. 11:11-12; 1 Cor. 4:14-16; 2 Kings 5:13.

Q. 127. What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors?

A. The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defence and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

Mal. 1:6; Lev. 19:3; Prov. 31:28; 1 Pet. 3:6; Lev. 19:32; 1 Kings 2:19; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Heb. 13:7; Phil. 3:17; Eph. 6:1-2, 5-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-14; Rom. 13:1-5; Heb. 13:17; Prov. 4:3-4; Prov. 23:22; Ex. 18:19, 24; Heb. 12:9; 1 Pet. 2:18-20; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Sam. 26:15-16; 2 Sam. 18:3; Esther 6:2; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6; Gen. 45:11; Gen. 47:12; 1 Pet. 2:18; Prov. 23:22; Gen. 9:23; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 31:23.

Q. 128. What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

Matt. 15:4-6; Num. 11:28-29; 1 Sam. 8:7; Isa. 3:5; 2 Sam. 15:1-12; Ex. 21:15; 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Sam. 2:25; Deut. 21:18-21; Prov. 30:11, 17; Prov. 19:26.

Q. 129. What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

A. It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reprovng, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and, by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

Col. 3:19; Titus 2:4; 1 Sam. 12:23; Job 1:5; 1 Kings 8:55-56; Heb. 7:7; Gen. 49:28; Deut. 6:6-7; Eph. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Pet. 2:14; Rom. 13:3; Esther 6:3; Rom. 13:3-4; Prov. 29:15; 1 Pet. 2:14; Job 29:12-17; Isa. 1:10, 17; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Kings 3:28; Titus 2:15.

Q. 130. What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or in any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Ezek. 34:2-4; Phil. 2:21; John 5:44; John 7:18; Isa. 56:10-11; Deut. 17:17; Dan. 3:4-6; Acts 4:17-18; Ex. 5:10-18; Matt. 23:2, 4; Matt. 14:8; Mark 6:24; 2 Sam. 13:28; 1 Sam. 3:13; John 7:46-49; Col. 3:21; Ex. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:18-20; Heb. 12:10; Deut. 25:3; Gen. 38:11, 26; Acts 18:17; Eph. 6:4; Gen. 9:21; 1 Kings 12:13-16; 1 Kings 1:6; 1 Sam. 2:29-31.