

Turn the Commandments into Questions by M.P. Foerster

Have you ever thought of the questions each commandment asks? I'll list some possible questions; feel free to add your own.

- 1. And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Ex. 20:3**
 - Do you love Me, really love Me? How are you living this focused love?
 - Do you think of Me as your only God? Do you want Me to step aside occasionally when something or someone more important comes along?
- 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Ex. 20:4-6**
 - Are there any images that are engraved in your thinking that are not like Me?
 - Are you more concerned with getting a human form or likeness that pleases people rather than a spiritual identity that pleases Me, who has already shaped you beautifully?
 - Do you really want to be like Me? If so, are you thinking and acting like Me?

It is so important that we think BIG -- think as big as God thinks and act as wonderfully as God acts. How does God act? With grace, power, poise, laughter -- God has a good sense of humor! After all, He delights in each one of us. Let's also make our prayers BIG -- big with power, big with joy, big with clarity. The tiniest detail is then magnified to be easily seen and valued. We aren't small, withered, fearful thinkers. We are magnanimous in thought and action, in word and deed. We are inclusive, not exclusive, in our loving of everyone. Let's simply be like God, who loves equally each of His/Her precious children.

- 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Ex. 20:7**
 - Do you think I'm the greatest?
 - Do you stand in awe of Me and all that I AM and do?
 - Do you have a sense of reverence for My purity, perfection, grandeur, allness?
 - Do you trivialize My name or My Son's name by using them casually, angrily, or profanely?
 - When you pray and open up your whole being to Me, do you really expect an immediate answer from Me? Or are you just praying because you're supposed to but don't really have the faith that your prayers are answerable?

Where is our conviction? Our conviction determines our commitment. How committed are we to God? Are we committed enough to work for Him day in and day out without

grumbling, self-pity, or self-righteousness, but with humility, honesty, and grace?

4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Ex. 20:9-11

- Do you have time in your week, in your days, for Me?
- How important am I in your daily activities?
- Am I the center of your affections, or am I just a cheap date?
- How do you keep the Sabbath holy?
- Is Sunday a weekly reminder of Easter?

5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Ex. 20: 12

- How are you caring for your aged parents? Do you treat them with respect?
- Are you convinced that I am your Father-Mother?
- Are your actions based on the Golden Rule?

6. Thou shalt not kill. Ex. 20:13

- Do you look with love at one another? Or do you give a murderous glance?
- Do you love My children so that you would never kill another's opportunity for success, for love, for joy, for friendship?
- Do you kill the thought or motive that would lead to abuse or violence?
- Do you kill others' ideas, aspirations, or plans that I have given them?

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Ex. 20:14

- Are you faithful to Me? If so, then you will be faithful to one another.
- Are you willing to deepen your love for Me until you feel satisfied without lusting after other gods...appetites for sensual delicacies that turn sour in the stomach?
- Are you willing to obey Me rather than the self-destructive, undisciplined desires of the flesh?

8. Thou shalt not steal. Ex. 20:15

- Do you accept that I have given you all that you ever need -- abundant supply, infinite ideas, satisfying relationships that glorify Me?
- Are you willing to do your own work and to study and live what you are learning?
- Do you indulge in self-satisfied pride and take credit for My ideas?

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Ex. 20:16

- Do you tell Me the truth?
- Are you honest with yourself about everything, or do you play games of hide and seek with the truth?
- Do you understand that I am absolute Truth and that to know Me, you must be truthful?

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. Ex. 20:17

- Do you cherish in your heart of hearts all that I have given you as sufficient for a happy and fulfilling life?
- Are you grateful for the good that I have given others?
- Do you see others' abundance as a promise for everyone?
- Are you greedy?
- Are you loving your neighbor as yourself as My commandment requires?

It has been said that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence until you get there and discover it is artificial turf. This commandment deals with thoughts, with the hearts of men. It prohibits grasping thoughts that lead to grasping deeds.

Enjoy developing your own questions that each commandment asks. And then answer these questions thoughtfully, humbly, honestly.

— M.P. Foerster