

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

Scripture References: Matt. 22:37-40. Matt. 10:27. James 2:10. Rom. 13:10.

Questions:

1. How are the duties of the commandments divided in this answer?
The duties are divided in the following way: Our duties toward God and our duties toward our neighbor.
2. What is the meaning of the word "sum" in this question?
The meaning of the word "sum" is the comprehensive duty of the law which is love; for love is the fulfilling of the law.
3. What is the meaning of loving God with all our heart?
To love God with all our heart means to love him without hypocrisy, to be sincere and honest in our love.
4. What is the meaning of loving God with all our soul?
To love God with all our soul means to exercise all the faculties we have in fulfilling the duties of our Christian life as we delight in Him and in following His will.
5. What is the meaning of loving God with all our strength?
To love God with all our strength means to love nothing or no one more than God.
6. Who is our neighbor that we are to love as ourselves?
Every man is our neighbor therefore we are to have a general affection toward all.
7. What is it to love our neighbor as ourselves?
To love our neighbor as ourselves is to love him with the same truth and constancy of love as we do ourselves, Eph. 5:29.
8. If a standard could be given from Scripture as to this love for others, what could be given?
A good standard from the word of God would be Matt. 7:12—that we do to others what we would have them do to us, or John 5:12, where Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."

DELIGHT THYSELF IN THE LORD

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Ps. 37:4). When a person is saved by grace one of the results is that he will love the Lord, will have a desire to delight himself in the Lord. There will be a desire on the part of the Christian to love the Lord with the whole heart. This is not always possible because of sin but the desire, the aim is there.

A prayer of Lancelot Andrewes reads, "Thyself, O my God, Thyself for thine own sake, above all things else I love. Thyself I desire. Thyself as my last end I long for. Thyself for thine own sake, not aught else whatsoever, always and in all things I seek, with all my heart and marrow, with groaning and weeping, with unbroken toil and grief." Someone has well said that the trouble with the church of today is that we do not have enough children of God with the melting, zealous prayer of men like Andrewes.

So many times people will say, "I am sure I love God for after all I did ask His Son to come into my heart and I do go to church, etc." How can we be sure we are delighting ourselves in the Lord? How can we be sure we love Him? Some of the characteristics of a real love to God are as follows: (1) We can not find contentment outside of Him for He is the health of our countenance. (2) We hate that which would separate us from God, namely sin. The Psalmist said, "I hate every false way." This is something over which we do not always have the victory for many times the false way wins out but when it does and we realize it we plead for forgiveness from Him. (3) We want to tell others about Him. To say we love God, delight in Him, and keep quiet about Him would be inconsistency of the worst order. (4) We are willing to suffer, if needs be, die for Him. Paul said, "I am ready to be offered up." We are always willing to go through whatever He would have us go through if only His name might be glorified.

There are indeed many other characteristics but the ones listed above should be sufficient for us to use as a standard regarding our love for Him. It would be good for us to pause right now and pray: "Search me O God and know my heart." The flame of love should always be burning brightly in our hearts. If it is not it may be that neglect of duty, or too much love of the world, or lack of prayer and Bible study might be putting out that flame. That flame needs to be ever fanned not hindered. If it is not there we shall never receive the desires of our hearts from Him.

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