

30 Questions for Growth in Holiness

Introduction

Our personal holiness is dependent on three key elements of knowledge. The first is our understanding of the greatness of God. As humans, we tend to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to, and the result is that we think little of God. A. W. Tozer points out how our view of God is a fundamental limit on our personal development when he says, “no people has ever risen above its religion and... no religion has even been greater than its idea of God.”¹ This first area includes knowledge of God Himself (his attributes and character), but also His purpose, and His plan—which includes His plan of salvation and the sending of Christ.

The second area of knowledge is the sinfulness of sin, which is dependent on a high view of God and His holiness. We will not hate sin as God does in this life, but the better we understand His moral purity and value, the more reprehensible sin will appear to us, and the more we will desire to be holy.

The third area of knowledge introduces the purpose of these questions fit. We must personalize our knowledge of sin. We cannot grow in holiness while we are unaware of our own sinful tendencies and the specific ways our flesh is corrupted by sin. By honestly answering these questions we will find specific areas where sin has a stronger hold on us than it should.

How to use these questions

Each question has three boxes beneath it. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates never and 5 indicates a frequently observed phenomenon, enter a realistic evaluation.

These questions can be answered in two stages.

1. Take some time to answer them on your own, filling in the “me” column of the form. As you answer these questions, think with sound judgement (Rom 12:3), be honest but not hyper-critical and fair but not too easy.
2. Sit down with a spouse (if you’re married) and/or close friend (if you’re not) who knows you well enough to answer the questions. Give them permission to be honest with you and ask them to provide a rating based on their observations. When you interact with them, seek to understand their perspective. Do not argue against the other person’s perspective. In the case that you disagree with the other person’s rating, write down their rating and commit to pray about whether the Lord would have you address that area. Depending on the level of interaction this stage may take 1-2 hours.

If both of you are honest there should be a high degree of agreement between your ratings, but since we can be blind to our sin, the other person’s perspective can help us see things we wouldn’t see ourselves.

¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, (Bletchley, UK: Authentic Media, Repr. 2016), 1.

If you're completing these questions with your spouse, I recommend you both print a copy of the questions and do the exercise together. Done with an honest desire to change, this can lead to a fruitful discussion that may enrich your marriage.

Once you've answered the questions select one or two questions that were most dominant and build a plan for change. The plan might include:

- A regular plan for monitoring and addressing manifestations. Journaling related incidents is helpful. The following questions can be helpful journaling prompts.²
 1. What happened (be as specific as possible, what were your controlling motives and desires)?
 2. What did you do (in thought and action)?
 3. What does the Bible say (what relevant biblical passages illuminate the situation, define the problem, expose motives, point to solutions - use a different verse for each entry)?
 4. What would you do differently if you were to do it over?
- Memorize some of the Bible verses you come across in prompt 3 (what does the Bible say?)
- Pray regularly about the issues(s), asking the Lord to convict you and to help you to be aware of your heart so that you can discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim 4:7).
- Some form of accountability where you check in with someone else. It may or may not be your spouse, depending on what is appropriate.

² These questions are more fully explained on my website at <https://darrylburling.com/4-practical-journaling-prompts-to-destroy-sin>.

Name: _____

Manifestations of Pride.

For each question, rate yourself first on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means never and 5 indicates a characteristic. Ask your friend or spouse to also rate you. Give them permission to be honest.

1. Complaining against or passing judgment on God

-a proud person in a difficult situation thinks, "Look what God has done to me after all I have done for Him."

Me	Spouse	Friend

2. A lack of gratitude in general

-a proud person thinks that they deserve what is good and sees no reason to be thankful to God or others.

Me	Spouse	Friend

3. Anger

-a proud person becomes angry because his "rights" or expectation are not being met

Me	Spouse	Friend

4. Seeing oneself as better than others

-a proud person is usually on the top looking down with little tolerance for differences

Me	Spouse	Friend

5. Having an inflated view of one's importance, gifts and abilities

-a proud person needs to hear "What do you have that God didn't give to you?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Me	Spouse	Friend

6. Being focused on the lack of ones gifts and abilities

-a proud person is focused on themselves and wants to be elevated

Me	Spouse	Friend

7. Perfectionism

-a proud person does this to receive recognition or feel good about themselves, making things that are less important more important

Me	Spouse	Friend

8. Talking too much

-a proud person often things that what they have to say is more important than what other's have to say

Me	Spouse	Friend

9. Talking too much about oneself

-a proud person may center around themselves in conversation

Me	Spouse	Friend

10. Seeking independence or control

-a proud person seeks to be their own authority or seek to not see a need for accountability

Me	Spouse	Friend

11. Being consumed with what others think

-a proud person is in a continual pursuit of gaining the approval and esteem of others, being a man-pleaser rather than a God-pleaser

Me	Spouse	Friend

12. Being devastated or angered by criticism

-a proud person cannot bear that they are not perfect or cannot accept who they really are

Me	Spouse	Friend

13. Being unteachable

- a proud person feels that they know it all, is superior and respects no one

Me	Spouse	Friend

14. Being sarcastic, hurtful, or degrading

-a proud person can be very unkind for the sake of raising themselves up

Me	Spouse	Friend

15. A lack of service

-a proud person doesn't want to serve because they don't think of others or desires praise for their action

Me	Spouse	Friend

16. A lack of compassion

-a proud person cannot see past their own desires

Me	Spouse	Friend

17. Being defensive or blame-shifting

-a proud person hates reproof and will go as far as blaming God for their faults

Me	Spouse	Friend

18. A lack of admitting when you're wrong

-a proud person has a great deal of excuses

Me	Spouse	Friend

19. A lack of asking for forgiveness

-a proud person either cannot see their sin or can't humble themselves before God and others to ask for forgiveness

Me	Spouse	Friend

20. A lack of biblical prayer

-a proud person sees no reason to depend upon God or love others in this

Me	Spouse	Friend

21. Resisting authority or being disrespectful

-A proud person refuses to joyfully submit to God and their authorities

Me	Spouse	Friend

22. Voicing preferences or opinion when not asked

-a proud person cannot help but highly esteem their thoughts and do so without consideration for others

Me	Spouse	Friend

23. Minimizing one's own sin and shortcomings

-a proud person usually sees their sin as no big deal and sees others as dreadfully sinful

Me	Spouse	Friend

24. Maximizing others' sin and shortcomings

-a proud person is convinced that other people are the problem

Me	Spouse	Friend

25. Being impatient or irritable with others

-a proud person may be overly concerned with their own schedule or plans being ruined

Me	Spouse	Friend

26. Being jealous of others

-a proud person has a hard time being glad for someone else's sake

Me	Spouse	Friend

27. Using others

-a proud person usually views people in terms of what those people can do for them and their interests

Me	Spouse	Friend

28. Being deceitful by covering up sins, faults, and mistakes

-a proud person wants to be seen as better than they are

Me	Spouse	Friend

29. Using attention-getting tactics

-a proud person cares less about showing who God is than showing who they are

Me	Spouse	Friend

30. Not having close relationships

-a proud person views themselves as being self-sufficient and above the need for godly relationships

Me	Spouse	Friend