

Spiritual Self-Examinations

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Introduction: The Necessity of Examinations.

- A. As much as we may dislike exams, examinations are important and necessary (e.g., school tests, bar exams, medical licensing exams, driver's test, etc.).
 - 1. There is an exam which is of the *utmost* importance: Are you in the faith? Is Jesus Christ in you? (**2 Cor. 13:5-9**).
- B. The *spiritual* examination of our lives.
 - 1. God calls us to *introspection* – the act of looking within ourselves to examine whether Jesus Christ is in us.
 - 2. Are you truly in the faith of Jesus Christ? It goes beyond baptism!
 - 3. We are commanded to evaluate our *relationship* to Jesus Christ.
- C. Examinations help prevent real dangers from occurring (e.g., safety inspections for cars, dentist visits, physical exams to prevent diseases, etc.).
 - 1. We are called to take a “spiritual exam” – an exam of such great significance that our salvation depends on it! (**2 Cor 13:5-6; 1 Cor 9:27**)

I. Wrong Measurements of Testing.

- A. The teachings of men.
 - 1. It can be tempting to listen to “feel good” doctrines of men; yet such preaching will not put us to the test (**2 Tim 4:3-4**).
 - 2. To be tested, we need preaching that will reprove, rebuke, and exhort us from the Word of God (**2 Tim. 4:1-2**).
- B. The commendations of men.
 - 1. If the estimation that people have of you is very positive, it may or may not be an accurate judgment of your true spiritual condition (**Luke 16:15**).
 - 2. We should not crave the flattery of men, but instead see the value of a good rebuke! (**Prov. 28:23**).
- C. Comparing ourselves to others.
 - 1. The standard is not the “highest” Christian (**2 Cor. 10:12**), but Jesus Christ Himself (**1 Pet. 2:21**).
 - 2. Remember, the test is whether “*Jesus Christ is in you*”! (**2 Cor. 13:5**).
- D. Outward appearances only
 - 1. Some deceive themselves into thinking that outward appearances make us spiritual people (**Mat. 23:27-28**).
 - 2. Outward religious acts is not all that we should examine (**Mat. 7:21**).

II. Right Measurements of Testing (**2 Cor. 13:5**).

- A. “The Faith” (i.e., God’s word, the Scriptures, the gospel).
 - 1. God’s word is that *perfect* measurement for a *spiritual* testing! (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
 - 2. Whether or not we are strong spiritually depends on our “standing firm in the faith” (**1 Cor. 15:1-2; 16:13; 2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23**).
- B. “Jesus Christ” (**1 Pet. 2:21**)
 - 1. What will put us to the test every time is to compare our lives with the life of Jesus the Son of God (**1 John 2:6**).

2. Are you committed to imitating Jesus in the life that you live? Is “Jesus Christ in you”? (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1-2; Phil. 2:5; Luke 9:23).

III. The Requirements for a Spiritual Examination.

- A. Study God’s word to “expose your heart”
 1. God’s word has the power to expose our hearts! (Heb. 4:12).
 2. Do you want to know what is *truly* in your heart? Read God’s word!
 3. Scripture exposes error and falsehood as well as our flaws and weaknesses; it reproveth and corrects us (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 4. God wants purity of heart and not just our obedience (Mat. 5:8).
- B. Apply God’s word to yourself with *absolute* honesty
 1. The Word reveals to us what our life is all about (Jas 1:21-24).
 2. We must “look intently” at the law of liberty with absolute honesty and then humble ourselves as to what the Word reveals about us (Jas 1:25-27).
 3. Once the exam is taken, will you ignore the results and make excuses, or will you do something about it?
- C. Seek solitude for introspection and prayer.
 1. A spiritual exam often requires a quiet and solitary place to think and pray; like Jesus who sought such a place and opportunity (Mark 1:35).
 2. In solemn silence, we examine ourselves without distractions of the world and meditate upon our souls in view of God and Eternity (Ps. 4:4).
 3. In solitude, we examine ourselves with God’s word and ask for help in this examination from God in prayer (Ps. 139:23-24).
 4. God, who knows us better than anyone, searches our hearts and lives (Ps. 139:1-4; Jer. 17:10).
- D. Examine yourself instead of examining others.
 1. The command is: “Test *yourselves* to see if you are in the faith; examine *yourselves*!” (2 Cor. 13:5a). This is a call for *self*-examinations.
 2. Too often, people get so busy examining *other people* that they have no time to look at their own lives (e.g., other churches, brethren, neighbors).
 3. Instead of pointing our finger at others, we must first look to our own lives and judge not others hypocritically (Mat. 7:1-5).
 4. *Constantly* examining our own lives will help keep us humble and prevent us from arrogantly ripping apart others for their faults (Gal 6:1-5).
 5. An honest self-examination each day will help keep us from temptation and from “kicking others when they are down” (or caught in a trespass).

Conclusion: Spiritual Self-Examinations are not only important, but Are also absolutely necessary and required for Our Salvation. Do not “Fail the Test”!

- A. Only those who are in Christ will pass the test on Judgment Day (1 Cor. 1:30).
- B. Have you been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? (Ac. 2:38)
- C. If so, is “Jesus Christ in you” still to this day? (2 Cor. 13:5).
- D. If you fail the test, repent and confess your sins to God (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9)
- E. While there is still time, God by His grace, will allow you to retake your exam!