

Examine Yourself

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” 2Cor. 13:5

INTRODUCTION

Paul, who was criticized by the Corinthians who disputed his doctrines, and had to prove his apostleship before them, challenged them to now examine themselves. He told them to examine whether they be in the faith. And this same address is to challenge us. Brother, Sister, question your heart; pass it through a stern examination to see by the teaching of the Holy Spirit what it does know and does not know, what it does believe and what it does not believe, whether it has been growing in grace or stagnating, whether it is really alive or dead to Christ.

When I begin to examine myself, I read specific passages of the Bible that help give me a foundation on which to build my self-examination process. Malachi 3; Psalm 15; Psalm 24:3-5; Psalm 101; Isaiah 58, and others. I then take these passages to evaluate myself and then build them into my prayers. (See list on the last page).

HOW TO EXAMINE YOURSELVES

The word *examine* in the Greek is 3985 *pirad'zo* and means to **test** (objectively), **endeavor**, **scrutinize**, **prove**, **try**.

When you examine something that you want to purchase for example, you are going to take a very close look at it, observing it from every angle; you will inspect and scrutinize it carefully, no doubt. If able, you would even test

it for its strength, to see if it proves to do what it is claiming it can do. And this is what we are to do with our *own selves*, as the Bible says. We need to “closely criticize the temper, the disposition, the thoughts, words, inclinations, purposes, and deeds.” (1SM 89)

We are often quick to criticize others, while not criticizing ourselves, because we rarely spend the time looking at ourselves under the microscope. However, if we were more critical of ourselves, we would be less critical of others. Why is that? We would see our defects standing out so clearly in contrast to the character of Christ, that we would tremble in spirit to even speak of someone else's faults.

One of the best ways to examine yourself is through prayer. In **Psalms 139:23, 24**, David asked God to “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Once we closely scrutinize ourselves from every angle to discover what we are really made of, then we like David should ask the Lord to search us; which from the Hebrew 2731 *chaqar* means to **penetrate**; hence to **examine intimately**. After we examine ourselves we are now to allow, yea “invite” the Lord to penetrate deeply into our hearts to really “know” it, unlike we “think” we know it, so He can reveal

to us where we need a change in our experience (See Phil. 3:13-15). This is such a deep concept to me. God is not doing a superficial work of searching or investigation, but a very close, intimate, thorough work. This text also contrasts the belief of some who say that everyone who accepts Christ will be saved. If that were true, there would be no need of this close searching by God, or examination of self. However, that is another topic we are not trying to cover in this study.

So, after we invite Him to intimately examine us, then we are to allow Him to try us. This word try comes from the Hebrew 974 *bachan* and means to **test** (especially metals); to **investigate**. What are we to allow Him to know and test? Our hearts, thoughts, and ways, according to **Ps. 139:23, 24**.

OUR HEART, THOUGHTS, AND WAYS

Our hearts in the Bible often means the mind and in some cases the feelings. In this text the word for heart in the Hebrew 3824 *lebab* says, the heart (as the most interior organ), used also like 3820, **bethink themselves, mind, understanding**. The Bible says in **Psalms 26:2** "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." The use of the word heart here in the Hebrew 3820 *leb* says, the heart; also used very widely for **the feelings, the will** and even **the intellect**. In this text the idea is the same as in Psa. 139:23, however, this text gives us a little bit more insight into what God is specifically examining.

The word thoughts (Ps. 139:23) in the Hebrew 8312 *sar`aph* says **cogitation**. The dictionary definition is, 1. concerted thought or reflection; meditation; contemplation. 2. The faculty of

thinking. 3. A thought; design or plan. So the Lord is intimately examining what we are thinking, what we commonly reflect upon, what we use our mind to meditate on, or what we contemplate. These all reveal who we really are, (as thoughts and feelings make up the moral character), what our motives are, and what are minds most especially love to dwell upon; Him, self, or the world.. **Proverbs 23:7** says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..." Part of God's examination process is to **show us** what is going on in our mind.

Therefore, when you begin to examine yourself, take a close look at what your mind is most focused on, what it gravitates to in the evening when you lay down to sleep, and in the morning when you first awake. And take note of what comes out of your mouth, because the Bible also says in **Matthew 12:34**, "...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Are you waking with praise on your heart to your Savior for His goodness for keeping you through the night? Are you speaking to Him about what you can do for Him on this day? Are you speaking to Him about becoming a partaker of His Divine nature, that you may vindicate His name this day? Or do you find yourself meditating upon your spouse, or your children, or maybe even your job or co-workers? Perhaps you awake finding yourself as burdened as you were when you went to bed the night before. Or you are contemplating how you are going to make more money today than you did yesterday. We should become very familiar with what our minds are dwelling upon during the day as well. A lot of what our minds dwell upon, has to do with the environment that surrounds us, what we set before us, what we are viewing on television, the internet, or our

iPods or smart phones. What we think and what we speak is a revelation of our spiritual condition, and an index to our relationship with God. Are you constantly complaining about something? Do you bad-mouth other “Christians” who you see at church? Do you view others as lost and yourself saved? Do you think your spiritual experience is highly exalted above theirs, yet you lack a willingness to encourage, teach or help them while you pity them? If this describes you then, you need to examine yourself.

The heart and mind are the two centers from which our ideals of life are made up, and through which our behavior and actions flow. **Proverbs 4:23** says, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” (For more on Proverbs 4:23 see www.templerestored.org/devotionals_dec10_2010.html)

Our way (Ps. 139:24), which God is examining, in the Hebrew 1870 *derek* is a road, a **course of life** or **mode of action**. **Proverbs 4:26** tells us to “Ponder the paths of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.”

This text also says He is searching to see if there be any **wicked** way in me (Ps. 139:24). The word wicked in the Hebrew is 6090 *’otseb*, and means **idol** (as fashioned) also **pain** (bodily or mental); idol, sorrow wicked.

An idol is anything that is adored or set above the Creator. However, pain derived from the body or mind would not ordinarily be looked upon as something wicked. But the Bible brings out various texts to bear this out. **Psalms 42:11** talks about being cast down. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted

within me?” The word cast down, or down in the Hebrew 7817 *shachach* is to **sink** or depress. Despondency is a state of depression of spirit from either internal or external factors. In PK 164 it says. “Despondency is sinful and unreasonable.” It reveals a lack of faith in God, and reliance upon self. As Christians we are to trust God with our life, and leave all things in His hands. The last half of **Psalms 42:11** says, “**Hope thou in God:** for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

CONFESS AND REPENT

If we have consecrated ourselves to God then whatever comes our way we know He has allowed, and therefore we should not let it get us down, angry, or bitter. Anger and bitterness are (wicked) emotions that derive from the heart and cause defilement as **Hebrews 12:15** reveals; “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up **trouble you**, and thereby many be defiled.” Most cases of cancer can be traced to harboring anger or bitterness, or to emotional depression. Unexplained physical pain has also been traced to bitterness or holding on to anger. We need to let these emotions, thoughts and feelings go! If while examining yourself you discover you have been holding on to negative (wicked) emotions, confess and repent, and turn them over to the Lord at once. The body and mind are partners, working in cooperation with the other, one sympathizes with the other. Your physical pain may be the direct result of your mental pain or depression.

As you examine yourself and discover by God’s grace what lies in the depths of your

heart confess. Inspiration says, “Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well...” **Isa. 1:16, 17;** (SC 39)

“When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; **and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin.** His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgement of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved.” (SC 40)

CONCLUSION

As Christians, we must maintain purity of heart and mind by setting standards that help us avoid unnecessary exposure to evil. The avenues leading to the heart and mind must be guarded carefully so as not to allow anything to enter that is in contradiction to the will of God. There may be times when you have to be careful of the influence of the inmates of your own home. This is especially true while you are on the job. Don't sit and listen to negativity flowing from their mouth; get away! But if you can't get away, pray, quote scripture, or sing in your mind. We are living on the brink of

eternity, and we know not how soon our probation is to close as tomorrow has not been promised to us. Let us not put off for tomorrow the work of close self-examination that should be done today and verily at the close of every day. “I was shown God's people waiting for some change to take place—a compelling power to take hold of them. But they will be disappointed, for they are wrong. They must act, they must take hold of the work themselves and earnestly cry to God for a **true knowledge of themselves.**” (1T 261)

It is the enemies purpose to keep us in darkness to our true condition and standing before God, until He has finished His work in the Heavenly Sanctuary. “The great controversy between Christ and Satan, that has been carried forward for nearly six thousand years, is soon to close; and the wicked one **redoubles** his efforts to defeat the work of Christ in man's behalf and to fasten souls in his snares. **To hold the people in darkness and impenitence till the Saviour's mediation is ended,** and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin, is the object which he seeks to accomplish.” (GC 518)

Are you willing to take the same challenge that Paul set before the Corinthians? Examine yourself, prove yourself not a reprobate, not to be rejected by Christ. Examine whether ye be in the faith, because it is a matter which we may be easily deceived upon. Put the question to your own soul, whether Christ be in you or not. Don't look at other Christians, look at yourself, you don't know what God is doing in their life, how He may be working on their heart. Either we are true Christians or we are imposters, and what a fearful thing it is for a man or woman not to know himself, not to know his own mind! May God help us all!

ADDITIONAL FOUNDATION TEXT FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

Job 9:20, 21 – if we knew ourselves we would despise our soul. “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. ²¹Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.”

Jer 17:10 – God searches and gives according to our ways. “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”

Ps. 77:6 – commune with your own heart. “I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.”

Ps 143:5, 8 – meditate on His works. “I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. ⁸Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.”

Ps 19:12 – we to be cleansed from secret faults. “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

Job 10:2 – we to ask God like Job to show us where He contends with us. “I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.”

Job 34:32 – do no more iniquity. “That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.”

Ps. 31:3 – lead me, guide me. “For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name’s sake lead me, and guide me.”

Col. 2:6 – walk ye in Him. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”

PROMISES TO CLAIM

Isa. 53:5 – Christ suffered that we may be healed. “But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

Ps. 103:4 – He redeemeth us from destruction. “Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.”

Eph. 1:7 – In Him we have forgiveness. “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Col. 1:12 – We should give Him thanks. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Jer. 29:11 – God’s thought toward us of peace. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”