

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Examine Yourself”

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith; Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified” (2 Cor. 13:5-NKJV).

This verse, wherein the apostle Paul admonished the saints at Corinth to “*examine*” themselves, occurred near the end of his second epistle to these brethren. Contextually speaking, it should be mentioned that Paul had good reason to urge these brethren to “*examine*” themselves. On the one hand, they had been highly critical of Paul himself, some of them saying this about Paul: “*For his letters...are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible*” (2 Cor. 10:10). On the other hand, the church at Corinth had a history of strife and discord (1 Cor. 1:10-13), carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-3), tolerating “*sexual immorality*” (1 Cor. 5), going “*to law*” against one another (1 Cor. 6:1), needing instruction on the subject of marriage (1 Cor. 7), abuse of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34), the improper exercise of “*spiritual gifts*” (1 Cor. 12, 14), and doubt regarding the “*resurrection of the dead*” (1 Cor. 15:1-28). Moreover, near the end of the second letter to this church the apostle Paul expressed his intent to “*come to*” these brethren, but he said “*I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults...*” (2 Cor. 12:14, 20, 21). Surely, in view of these facts, Paul had good reason to admonish these brethren to “*examine*” themselves! However, though the Corinthian epistle was not written to us directly, it has been preserved for all members of the Lord’s body to “*observe...even unto end of the world*” (Matt. 28:20). Self-examination is as important for God’s people today as it was for His people in the first century.

Reasons why We Should Examine Ourselves:

1. Because it is possible for one to think “*himself to be something when he is nothing,*” and thereby be self-deceived (Gal. 6:3). The Scribes and Pharisees, who majored in hypocrisy, continually looked upon themselves in a much more favorable light than they regarded Jesus Christ Who never committed the first sin!
2. Because it is possible for one “*to think of himself more highly than he ought to think...*” (Rom. 12:3). Perhaps this is one of the most common of sins—condemning in others what one condones in himself!
3. Because we often examine others! It is not wrong to examine others; in fact, the apostle John said “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (1 Jn. 4:1). Every time we hear a person preach we should follow the example of the Bereans who “*received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*” (Acts 17:11). However, in our eagerness to examine the preaching and practices of others, let us make sure that we first check ourselves to make sure that we are conforming to the divine pattern!
4. Because we are commanded to “*examine*” ourselves to determine whether or not we are “*in the faith,*” whether Jesus Christ is “*in us*” lest we be “*disqualified*” (2 Cor. 13:5).
5. Because self-examination enables us to see ourselves as we really are, and to make whatever changes in our lives as may be warranted by the Scriptures. In the final analysis, there can be no lasting self-improvement without periodic self-examination (cf. Jas. 1:22-27).

Test Questions:

Teachers in the classroom have long used “test questions” in order to gauge the progress of their students. Through this process, both the teachers and the students are able to determine if they (the students) are “getting it.” Too many missed or incorrectly answered questions may result in a failing grade. In order to assist the reader in determining if he has a “passing grade” before God, we submit the following questions:

1. **Do you read your Bible on a daily basis?** According to Psalms 1:1, 2, the “*blessed*” or happy person is the one

whose ***“delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law He meditates day and night.”*** Regular Bible study is a “must” if one is to be enabled to ***“rightly”*** divide ***“the word of truth”*** (2 Tim. 2:15), if one is able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2), or to ***“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”*** (2 Pet. 3:18).

2. Do you harbor hatred in your heart? Christians must ***“put off...anger, wrath, malice,”*** etc., and ***“put on love, which is the bond of perfection”*** (Col. 3:8, 14). Unabated hatred, anger, and wrath is a “tell-tale” sign that one is more influenced by Satan rather than by God.

3. Do you have a forgiving spirit? On the cross Jesus prayed, saying, ***“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”*** (Lk. 23:34). Jesus warned, saying, ***“if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”*** (Matt. 6:15). It has often been observed that the person with an unforgiving spirit destroys the bridge over which he also must cross.

4. Do you miss worship with a greater frequency than you miss work? Having a job is a means to an end, namely that of providing for the physical necessities of life. But going to heaven is more important than where you work or how much you earn. Every responsible person, in order to go to heaven, must be ***“faithful”*** to the Lord (Rev. 2:10), and steadfastness in worship to God is a part of what is involved in being faithful to God (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25-31). On the matter of faithfulness in worship, many professed Christians are failing the test!

5. Do you spend more on pleasure than you give to the Lord? Christians are commanded to give as they have been ***“prospered”*** (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), and they must ***“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”*** (Matt. 6:33). One who puts pleasure ahead of the cause of the Lord is hardly putting God ***“first!”***

6. Are you a worker (laborer) in the church, or one who consistently has to be “worked on” in order to manifest even a semblance of faithfulness? We are commanded to be ***“steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...”*** (1 Cor. 15:58). Certainly, one should be eager to help ***“bear one another’s burdens”*** (Gal. 6:2), ***“comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak”*** (1 Thess. 5:14), and ***“convert”*** those who wander ***“from the truth”*** (Jas. 5:19). However, year in and year out there are those who must continually be “pumped up” lest they quit completely. They don’t work to convert others, but others must spend precious time trying to keep them in the ***“straight and narrow.”***

7. Are you striving daily to “live soberly, righteously, and godly” (Titus 2:11)? Yes, it does make a difference how we live! (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8), etc. Every genuine Christian strives to be both ***“the salt of the earth”*** and ***“the light of the world”*** (Matt. 5:13-16). But one ceases to be either ***“salt”*** or ***“light”*** if his language is “off color,” if his habits remind people of the world, if he refuses to pay his just bills, and if his conduct with the opposite sex is less than honorable.

Conclusion:

Many more ***“test”*** questions could be asked, but we have cited enough for each person to “get the message.” Yes, we must ***“examine”*** and ***“test”*** ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5), using God’s word as the perfect standard by which to make the examination. Brother or sister in Christ, based upon the correct answers to the preceding questions, how did you fare on the test? – ***tgmc*** ■

Sentence Sermons

Stress is a good thing. It is the fire that tests our mettle and proves our faith.

Don’t put a question mark where God puts a period.

Suffering from *truth* decay? Brush up on your Bible.

Growing old is inevitable? Growing up is optional.

Hell has no fire escapes and Heaven needs none.

The most important person to be honest with is yourself.

The ways of men lead to a hopeless end, but the way of Christ leads to an endless hope.

— Selected

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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