

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## “Examine Yourselves”

*“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?”* (2 Cor. 13:5). Examination is a necessary part of our daily lives and commanded by God’s word.

Many go to their personal physicians for an annual physical examination to determine their state of health.

During the educational process, students are regularly given examinations or tests to determine their knowledge levels.

When we go to the grocery store to buy fruits and vegetables, we look at, feel, smell, squeeze, and may even thump, the items we intend to buy. We do these things to determine the freshness or quality of the items.

Yes, examination is something we do every day of our lives. However, the type of examination to which Paul refers in 2 Corinthians 13:5 is self-examination, using the standard of God's word, not our own standards.

### Why Do We Need Self Examination?

Before we go further, it is important to define at least three key words used by Paul in this passage:

The word, **“examine”** is from the Greek word *peirazo*, which means *“to tempt, try”* (Vine).

The word, **“prove”** is from the Greek word *okimazo*, is a stronger word than the word **“examine.”** Commentator, Albert Barnes wrote, *“this word, prove, refers to assaying or trying metals by the powerful action of heat; and the idea here is that they should make the most thorough trial of their religion, to see whether it would stand the test...”* – **Barnes Notes**, Vol. 11, p-269.

The word, **“reprobate”** is from the Greek word *adokimos*. According to Vine, *“signifying, ‘not standing the test, rejected (a, negative, dokimos, ‘approved’ was primarily applied to metals. In the N.T., it is always used in the passive voice, (a) of things, Hebrews 6:8, ‘rejected’... (b) of persons, Romans 1:28, of a ‘reprobate mind,’ a mind which God cannot approve, and which must be rejected by Him...; (2 Corinthians 13:5, 6, 7),...here the reference is to the great test as to whether Christ is in a person...”* (Vine).

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he admonished them saying, **“Examine yourselves.”** Why? To determine **“Whether ye be in the faith.”** Paul added, **“Prove your own selves.”** Why? **“Except ye be reprobates.”** Hence, this admonition to the Corinthian brethren applies to all brethren today for several reasons:

**First**, self-examination is a divine command issued by Paul who wrote by direction from the Holy Spirit; hence, by inspiration. Therefore, it is as binding in our day and time as it was in the first Century. Paul’s authority to command was not from men, but from God (Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 2:6-10; 2 Cor. 5:20; Gal. 1:11,12; Eph. 3:2-9)! Furthermore, Paul wrote, **“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord”** (1 Cor. 14:37).

**Second**, self-examination is needed to determine if we are abiding in the faith. The faith has reference to the gospel (Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; Acts 16:5; 24:24; 1 Cor. 16:13)! This is the faith that Jude said, **“was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3). The faith is the gospel Paul preached (Rom. 1:15,16; 15:19, 20; 1 Cor. 1:17; 9:14-18; 15:1-4). The faith is the doctrine of Christ that we must abide in (2 Jn. 9; Matt. 7:28, 29; Jn. 7:16, 17;

Acts 13:12; Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 4:16; 6:3; Titus 2:10-12; Heb. 6:1).

Paul's statement, "***Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith***" implies the possibility of being out of the faith, the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ. The Galatians believed "***another gospel***" or a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:6-9)! Hence, they were in a lost state because they were hindered in obeying the truth (Gal. 5:1-7). We must abide in the teaching of Christ so our abode will be with the Father and His Son (Jn.14:23; 2 Jn.9).

***Third***, self-examination is necessary to avoid being a reprobate. A reprobate is defined as one who is a castaway or rejected for failing the test. Do you want to be a reject? Think of the fruit you examine when you go to the grocery store. Do you buy the fruit that fails the test of your standard in fruit examination? The worst of all rejects is one who is rejected by the Lord – whose end is destruction, and who will be found on the left hand in the last great day (Matt. 7:13; 25:41-46).

### **What Should Self-Examination Include?**

**We should examine what we believe, teach and practice religiously!** The doctrine believed, taught and practiced must be from above, not from men. It must be what Christ and His Apostles authorized through the revealed word, the Bible. Jesus denounced those who taught, "***for doctrines the commandments of men***" (Matt. 15:9).

**We should examine our thoughts!** Solomon wrote, "***For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil***" (Eccl. 12:14). Isaiah wrote, "***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts***" (Isa. 55:8, 9). Our thoughts, even our secret thoughts, must conform to Paul's exhortation – "***Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things***" (Phil. 4:8).

**We should examine what we hear!** Jesus said, "***Take heed what ye hear...***" (Mk. 4:24). To hear lying, gossip, filthy and foolish talk, dirty jokes, and unkind words are the desire of many. Gutter trash from movies or music can fill our hearts with sin. Some brethren, who are involved in compromise of the truth, desire to hear "sermons" filled with jokes and emotional stories, rather than sermons filled with scripture! How sad, but, how true!

Are you in the class of those Paul warned Timothy about when he said, "***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables***" (2 Tim. 4:3, 4) Think about it!

**We should examine our speech!** Sins of the tongue are numerous: lying, gossip, slander, unkind and hateful words, filthy talk, etc., all of which are condemned in the scriptures (2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Eph. 4:31, 32; Col. 3:8, 9). James taught of the power of the tongue in James Chapter 3. The tongue can be used for blessing or cursing. How do you use yours? Solomon wrote, "***Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles***" (Prov. 21:23). May we heed these divine instructions, "***In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you***" (Titus 2:7, 8). Also read Colossians 4:6.

**We should examine what we see!** Some have "***eyes full of adultery,***" desiring to see filthy movies, pornography, those in immodest attire or such like (2 Pet. 2:14). May they turn their eyes from that which is darkness, to the light, God's word. May we all strive to "***set your (our) affection on things above, not on things on the earth***" (Col. 3:1-2). Let us look for, and see, the fields that are "***white already to harvest***" (Jn. 4:35).

**We should examine how we pray!** We must NOT pray to be seen of men, nor pray using vain repetition (Matt. 6:5-7). Also, we must NOT be doubtful in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8). We must pray for our daily bread (Matt. 6:11). We must pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). We must pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-3). We

must pray for our brethren (Jn. 17:20; 1 Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18). We must pray for the sick and afflicted (Jas. 5:13-16). We must pray for brethren who confess and repent of sin (Acts 8:22-24; Jas. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:16). We must pray for the lost (Rom. 10:1-3). We must pray for spiritual strength and understanding (Matt. 6:13; Col. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:23). And we must pray according to His will (1 Jn. 5:14, 15).

**Finally, we should examine our fellowship!** The apostles of Christ taught much concerning true fellowship, especially John who wrote, *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”* (1 Jn. 1:3ff). Our *“walk,”* must be *“in the light,”* not *“in darkness.”* We must avoid fellowship with anyone or anything that is morally or doctrinally impure. Paul wrote, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”* (Eph. 5:11). Sadly, some of my own brethren are promoting fellowship with sin and error by a misapplication of Romans 14. Please note, Paul said, *“have no fellowship.”* *“No fellowship”* does not mean a little fellowship is permissible! Is this so hard to misunderstand? Will you and do you examine your fellowship?

**Conclusion:** Dear reader, let us include these points in your daily self-examination. *“Examine yourselves”* unless you fail this test. – *tgmc* ■

---

## The Kind of Preaching That We Need

By Greg Gwin

People may have various views about preachers and their work, but the Bible plainly states the kind of preaching that is needed in the world today. We need preaching that is:

**1) Bible based** – The Lord told Jonah to *“preach the preaching that I bid thee”* (Jonah 3:2). Some preaching is pleasant to hear and it entertains people, but it leaves them sadly uninformed about what God really wants.

**2) Doctrinal** – Paul urged Timothy to *“take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1 Tim. 4:16). Doctrine is distasteful to some folks, but it is essential to the saving of the soul.

**3) Direct & Personal** – Preaching that doesn’t deal with the real problems and sins of people is of little value. We should not be unkind, but we have to *“get to the point.”* John the Baptist set a wonderful example, and lost his head for doing so (Mk. 6:18).

**4) Motivated by love** – We won’t succeed in reaching people if they can’t see that we truly care about them. But, when we *“speak the truth in love”* (Eph. 4:15) we will be able to help people deal with the toughest problems.

**5) Full of conviction** – You have to have deep faith in the message you proclaim. As Paul said, *“I believed, and therefore did I speak”* (2 Cor. 4:13).

**6) Bold** – Some men check to *“see which way the wind is blowing”* before they speak. Instead of this, we should speak *“with all boldness”* (Acts 4:29).

**7) Balanced** – We need both positive and negative instruction. If we omit either one, we will not be effective in this important work. Paul told Timothy to *“reprove, rebuke, exhort”* (2 Tim. 4:2), and in doing so he emphasized the need for both positive and negative teaching. The work of preaching is vital in God’s plan for the salvation of lost sinners (1 Cor. 1:21). We need to do it, and do it well. – *Collegevue church of Christ Articles*, October 4, 2020. ■

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

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: [www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com](http://www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com) - Email: [lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com](mailto:lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com) - Phone: 209-365-9250