

Searching His Word
Self-Examination
By Russell Earl

There are times when we all must go to the doctor for a physical examination. The doctor looks us over, checks our reflexes, and various other things. We do this so that we may maintain good health.

In 1 Corinthians 11:28 we read, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” We are warned here to examine ourselves so that we do not partake of the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner. The idea of examining ourselves should be an act we all do on a regular basis. It is about more than taking the Lord’s Supper in a worthy manner. If we do not take the time to examine ourselves and correct the things that are wrong, then we will crumble as Christians.

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, the Bible says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you...”? We are to examine ourselves daily. This is oftentimes more difficult than it sounds. We can be afraid of what things are brought to our minds.

The time we use to examine ourselves, however, can be a very important time. We can realize our errors, and we can slide them under the rug, letting the sin and error condemn us, or we can be humbled in repentance.

We can realize our faults and shortcomings and correct them. When the time comes upon us that we realize we are in sin is a time when a Christian will either “sink or swim.” If we choose to repent of our sins and come back to Christ with a heart of repentance.

This is how the growth of a Christian is accomplished. It is not accomplished by parading around with our noses in the air as if we are without sin. There are those who, when their sin is found out, quickly seek to justify themselves and brush off the wrongdoing. However, the Father does not simply “brush off” the sin, regardless of how small we may think it is.

We are told to “test ourselves” as to whether we are in the faith. When many hear these words, they are stricken with fear. It is a terrifying thought to come to the realization that we may be in the wrong. However, what many fail to realize is that this is the whole purpose of self-examination. We must REPENT of our sins and come back to God.

Sadly, there are those who seem as if they would rather live in torment than admit they have sinned or feel embarrassed of their sin. In 1 Corinthians 12:30, we read that “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” When we do not examine ourselves daily, we become as weak or sick Christians. In verses 31 and 32, we read that if “we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged,” and “we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned WITH the world (emphasis added R.E)”. When we examine ourselves, it is so that we may judge ourselves so when we realize our sins, we may repent of them. No longer will we be “condemned with the world.”

As difficult as it may sound, self-examination is something all Christians should actively be doing. Not so we can feel bad about ourselves or feel afraid to sit down and ask ourselves, “Am I living as a Christian?” We are to examine ourselves, so we may not be condemned as those in the world will be condemned. We judge our own actions, so we may not be judged.

Let us not be like the world, brushing off sin and searing our conscience with a hot iron. Instead, let us examine ourselves daily to whether we are “of the faith.” Self-examinations can save the soul.