

"Examine Yourselves"

"Let's take a pause right now to take an inventory of our spiritual lives and character. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're examining ourselves according to the Scriptures. What will we see?

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible opens up a door to wisdom for us. Proverbs 9 verse 10 says that, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Now if you wish to know the Holy One and desire wisdom, study the Scriptures. The Bible contains a treasury of wisdom and knowledge for the soul hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Now each moment you spend searching the Scriptures will bless you. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

Robert Burns in his humorous poem, "To A Louse," tells the story of spotting a louse crawling on a lady's bonnet in church. Well this fine lady had no idea that the louse (what we call "lice") is moving around on her head. And he remarks, "O would some Power the giftie give us To see ourselves as others see us! It would from many a blunder free us." Well we often make judgments about the faults of others but are unwilling to admit or deal with our own sins and weaknesses. In all the history of the Bible, there are only a handful of times when people say, "I have sinned." We'd rather make excuses or blame someone else for our faults.

Most of us check the mirror before we go out. We want to see how we appear to others, so that we may present ourselves at our best. Have we ever taken time to check our disposition and attitudes before we worship God or we meet with others? Some complain and some slander; some are angry, and others are depressed. Some have tongues that deceive, while others have mouths full of cursing. Some disrespect both God and people. And some simply don't care what God thinks!

Now we offer this message, "Examining Yourselves," free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We will now worship in song, read from James 1:22 to 25, and then we'll consider the importance of examining ourselves.

Our reading today comes from James chapter 1 verses 22 to 25. And James is telling the people how they need to live up to what they believe and what they read. He says,

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

What a wonderful reading from God's word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your love and we're thankful Father for Your word which teaches us. Father help us not only to be good listeners to Your word but also people who put it into practice. May we do Your will always. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Paul in his last written message to the Corinthians said in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that

Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” Examining ourselves is not always an easy task. Many people hate to go to the doctor’s office and be examined, because they don’t want to know the truth or to have to change. God expects us to do the right thing, when we learn what is right. James 4 and verse 17 says, “Therefore, to one who knows to do the right thing and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

King David wanted to know the truth about his spiritual life and relationship with God; so he asked God in Psalm 26:2, “Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.” Again, David asked God in Psalm 139 verses 23 and 4, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.” Do you want to know what God knows about you? Now God already knows all about us; He didn’t need to examine us. David, however, needed and wanted to know what God saw in him, so that he could correct his hurtful ways.

The Lord said in Jeremiah 17:9 to 10 that, “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.” Now it’s common for people to lie to themselves when the truth is painful or unwanted. If God revealed your hurtful ways to you, would you make changes? If you compared your behaviors and attitudes to the way the Lord Jesus lived and acted, would you make changes?

Some know their faults but ignore them; they would rather focus on others. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 15:18 to 19, “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.” God knows our deeds and knows our hearts. He knows we thought of sin before we committed sin.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:21 to 22, “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not murder’ and ‘Whoever murders shall be guilty before the court.’ “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.” Now it’s easy and arrogant to apply the rules of God only to our actions. God knows our hearts too. Calling others names that condemn can actually cause a person to condemn himself.

The Lord continues to speak of the need to control our thoughts in Matthew 5:27 to 28, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” 2 Corinthians 7 and verse 1 urges us, “Since we have these promises, (that is promises from God) beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” We must control our actions and also the desires of our hearts.

The Lord Jesus remarked about the foolishness of the individual who judges others but doesn’t take the time to deal with his own flaws and weaknesses. He said in Matthew 7:3 to 5, “And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” It’s arrogant to think we aren’t accountable for the very things we hold others accountable for. It’s easy to nitpick at others’ faults and ignore our own.

Friends, our words reveal our character. The Lord Jesus said about words that we speak in Matthew 12:33 to 37, “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for

the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

There are many sins that start in the heart and arise in our words. Ephesians 5:3 to 4 says, “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.” The words and tone of voice you use say more about your character than you may realize. Crude critics say more about themselves than they do about the person they criticize and slander.

How do you regard what God says in His word is another thing. 1 Thessalonians 5:20 to 22 says, “Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” Many despise the word of God, and others are ashamed of it. You remember the Lord Jesus said in Luke 9:26 that, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” Some who sit in judgment of God’s Holy Word today forget that the very words they despise will one day judge their souls for eternity.

How we worship matters. The church at Corinth was ruining their participation in the Lord’s Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:20 to 21 tells the story: “Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.” And he reminded them that this was a time when we should take seriously the body and the blood of Jesus. The Lord’s Supper is a solemn memorial feast.

And he remarked in verses 27 to 32, “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.” Now it’s better to find out the truth and make changes than to continue in error and sin to the destruction of our souls.

We must understand: God always knows our thinking and our way of life. When confronted by his three friends, Job defended his way of life. And Job said in chapter 31, verses 4 to 8, “Does He not see my ways And number all my steps? If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart followed my eyes, Or if any spot has stuck to my hands, Let me sow and another eat, And let my crops be uprooted.”

Job continues in Job 31:9 to 11. He says, “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor’s doorway, May my wife grind for another, And let others kneel down over her. For that would be a lustful crime; Moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges.” Job recognized that he cannot cover up his sins. And he said in Job 31:33 to 34, “Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, Because I feared the great multitude, And the contempt of families terrified me, And kept silent and did not go out of doors?” Job was not perfect, but he was an honorable man who took God seriously. Do you?

2 Corinthians 6:14 to 18 says: Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." We must be careful that we don't allow the ways of the world to overwhelm our devotion to our Father in heaven.

We need to be busy in the Lord's work. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Paul then wrote in Colossians 4:17: And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." Are you working for the Lord?

Some people think that everyone will be saved, that no matter what they believe or do they'll still be saved. Well, this simply isn't true. People who think this have really deceived themselves. 1 John 1:5 to 7 says, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." I tell you, "if" is a big word! If we aren't walking in the light with the Lord, we have no promise that our sins will be forgiven.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 to 14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is (confined) constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it." Are you surprised at that? You know most people think everybody's going to be saved. And if you say that everyone will be saved, should I listen to you or should I listen to what the Lord Jesus said? Our Savior said in Matthew 7. The Lord said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." We need to please put Jesus Christ first. To put Him in our heart and in our life. And now only believe what His word says but to practice it, to do it, to live it out in our lives. Let me encourage you to take time to examine yourself to see how you're living. Whether you're faith is being lived out or it's just pretended.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we pray that You will bless us in our study and in our lives that we may truly commit ourselves to You and to Your will always. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." God wants us to live good lives. The apostle Paul urges us in Romans 12:1 and 2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Yes the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect.

Now this transformation begins with getting right with the living God. Some people think everything is all right with God but are unaware that they never came to the Lord or have drifted away from the Lord. Now if you've never obeyed the gospel, then trust in the Lord Jesus, repent of your sins, confess Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins. Now that's what Peter told the lost to do in Acts 2 verse 38. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion or burial in water and we do that with Christ whenever we're baptized. We die to sin, at that point, and we live to righteousness. When you're baptized, God washes away your sins and adds you to His church (Acts 2 verse 41 and 22 verse 16). Now the main thing is not to wait. Don't wait, get right with God today!

Now just because there was a time when you went to church when you were young doesn't mean that God accepts you at this point in your life. You can drift away from God in sin and neglect a great salvation (Hebrews 2 verses 1 to 3). Christian friend, if you're living in sin, confess it, repent of your sin, and ask God's forgiveness. And God is merciful to the humble and contrite.

We hope that today's study about Examining Yourself has led you to be honest with yourself and make changes for the good. Now if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. And you can watch SEARCH on YouTube anytime! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and be sure to like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. If you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Now we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say to you because we care, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.