

"Examine Ourselves"

June 19, 2004

Today's Bible Verse-

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?

[2 CORINTHIANS 13:5] [NAS]

~ The Test ~

If you're not in school you've probably not taken a test lately. But, if you were taking a spiritual God test; some of the questions may be:

- How is your relationship to Jesus?
- Are you living in the blessings of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?
- Are you obeying His commandments and keeping His precepts?
- Are you setting the example of a Christian Life?
- Are you living Jesus Christ as well as proclaiming Jesus Christ?
- Do you have any hidden sins that you have not confessed?
- Do you proclaim one thing yet do something different?
- Are you what you claim to be?
- Are you using the Bible and the Bible only as your instruction manual?
- Do people see Jesus in you?

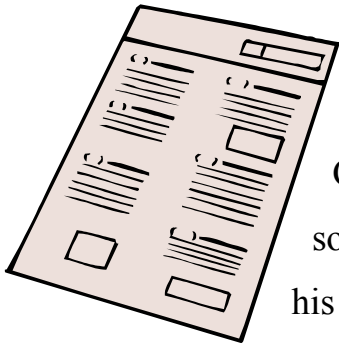


1. Only each of us individually can answer the questions above.
2. It's "one on one" as the saying goes. God has no grandchildren!
3. If God opened the book right now, how would you stand?
4. What would be your test grade? A – B – C – Would you pass?
5. God knows, yes God knows it all; we can't cover up our sins before God.
6. That is the question today, what is our standing with God?
7. That is what I would like to speak on today, **"Let us examine ourselves!"**



I would like to go over numerous Bible verses today concerning examining ourselves; then the price to pay to follow Christ and proceed into how we should be living and what the Bible says about how we Christians should live.

~ **Examine Ourselves before God** ~



First, let's see if the Bible says anything about examining ourselves in a spiritual manner. If you have your Bible, open it to II Corinthians 13:5; Here Paul is writing to the Corinthians, it seems that some in the church were false teachers and they were challenging him on his integrity and his authority as an apostle. He tells them; *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? [2CO 13:5] [NAS]

The Corinthians were called to examine themselves, to see if they were real Christians based upon God's Word. This was a spiritual check-up for them. Were they growing in the presence of the Lord and true Christians or were they just deceivers? It reminds me of what Jesus said in Matthew 7:20, "**Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**" [MAT 7:20] [KJV] We don't have to listen to what anyone says; we will know them by their fruits when using the Bible as the standard. In other words we are to check things out with the Bible; when we say or do something, does it line-up with Scripture?

When Paul was writing to the Galatians he tells them; *But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. 5 For each one will bear his own load.* Galatians 6:4-5 [NAS] Paul is telling us that it's one on one; it's you or me and God. It's an individual relationship with God, not a group. You will be answering to God and God only. So this is the only thing that matters. What your relationship to God is! You will not get to heaven on someone's coattails.

For you see only God knows our hearts, I John says; *in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.* [1JO 3:20] [NAS] You see God is greater than us and He and only Him, knows our heart. This is the reason that only God can judge us, He knows the heart. We do not know the heart of others, so we cannot judge.

~ Is there a price to pay? ~



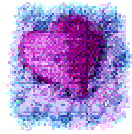
There is a price to pay to follow Jesus in order to pass the test, there is a sacrifice regardless of what you may have heard or been taught. What does the inspired word of Luke say, Luke 14:26 and 27, and Jesus is speaking here; 26 *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.* 27 *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.* [NAS] What is Luke saying here? You have to put Jesus Christ first; in everything in your life; your spiritual walk, your job, your finances, your relationships, yes in everything you are to put Jesus first. First even before family, it doesn't mean that you are to have ill will or malice against your family; it's just that Jesus is first. If you think about these words by Jesus (above), it's very strong words. But Jesus was testing His disciples, letting them know what the cost would be to follow him. (John 6:66)

We are to have the blind faith of Matthew and the other original apostles had, they dropped everything and blindly followed Jesus during His walk on earth. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.* [MATTHEW 9:9] [KJV]

What price have others paid to follow and be loyal to Jesus, I first think of Job in the Old Testament. It seems he paid the ultimate price without dying. He lost his family, friends, possessions, only thing he had left was God. He was faithful to God in all of his hardship. But in the end, Job repented and was blessed in latter years with the Lord's increase of twofold and he lived 140 years. God was good to him for his faithfulness. [Job 42:1-17]

If we are faithful and stand firm in the Lord we will receive our reward of eternal life as Jesus tells us in the book of Matthew, *"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* [MAT 25:21] [KJV] Are each of us going to pass the test, are we going to be good and faithful servants of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Are we going to hear Jesus say, I have prepared a place for you, "come?" [John 14:2-3]





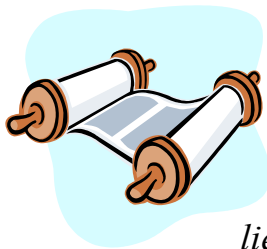
Paul tells us in Galatians not to lose heart, he says; *Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.* [GAL 6:9] [NAS] We are not to quit or lose heart, for in due time we will reap the rewards of heaven; earth is only the temporary testing grounds for us, to see if we pass His test. If we don't pass His test, the author of Hebrew gives us a little insight and writes; *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* [HEB 10:31] [NAS] Well, we all know what the author is referring to here; it's the opposite of Heaven, you don't want to go there.

~How are we to Live ~

How should we live, if we are to honor and worship God? Paul had the right attitude; he knew that our life here on earth was only temporary. Philippians 3:7 tells us Paul's thinking on the subject; *But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.* [PHI 3:7] [NAS] Paul's only mission on earth after his conversion was to praise, glorify and worship Christ and helping spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others. He was to be a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. Anything that he did other than for Christ was just something he had to do just to get by here on earth.

Paul also continues in Galatians 5:24 *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.* There is a constant battle for the flesh, here Paul says if we belong to Christ we have crucified the flesh and we now live by the Spirit and walk in the Spirit; we are not envious, boastful or have malice toward others. As the saying goes, "Are we walking the talk?"

Sounds like the Apostle Paul had a lot to say concerning the flesh, spirit and how to live, so now lets look at Philippians 3:12-16; *Not that I have already obtained it or have*



already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

14 *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

15 *Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;* 16 *however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.* Look at what Paul is saying to us here in these verses; he's not perfect yet, but each day he strives to better himself, keeping Christ Jesus as his goal, never looking back and each day trying never to fall back, keeping yesterday as a standard and striving for improvement for Christ Jesus today. In short, he is continually growing daily in Christ Jesus.

Now we will deal with the problem of what keeps us from having perfection here on earth. Paul says in Ephesians 6: 12 *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but*



against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.* Our conflict is not against each other, but

against Satan. Satan never gives up, he's always there waiting for us to mess-up or get out-of-line with our relationship with God. If we are to stay in that glorious relationship with God, we are to stay in the Word of God; daily, continuously, never giving Satan that foothold that he needs to lead us astray.

Let us now read from Philippians 2:2-8, Paul continues;

2 *make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*

3 *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;*

4 *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

5 *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,*

6 *who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,*

7 *but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

8 *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* [NAS]

Let's break down this group of verses and see what Paul is saying that we can relate to today. Verse 2: Our joy will be complete if we have the same mind of Christ, as well as maintaining the same love as Christ, united with Him in spirit. Paul's only purpose is Christ Jesus: nothing of this present world. Paul goes on to say that we are to have the same attitude as Christ, which he explained in verse 2. Verse 7 tells us that Christ came as a human man, a bond-servant, here to serve and help others. Then in verse 8 Paul said that Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient even to death, and as we know He died on the cross for our sins. Christ is the one and only role-model for us, as this group of verses show. He is setting the example for us as followers of Christ.

Now let's go to Ephesians 4:30-32;

30 *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

31 *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*



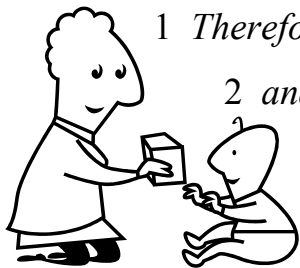
32 *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

You talk about a stress reliever, this it is. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, malice be put away and be kind to one another, forgiving just as God in Christ forgave you. Man is this powerful? But, you cannot do this in the flesh or on your own, it can only be done with Christ Jesus. I have people to come into my office with a lot of malice, anger and bitterness; they just will not let it go. And you can tell just in a few minutes with speaking to these individuals that they are letting this malice control their life. I have this one individual that comes into the office and all she can talk about is her ex-husband, how wrong he did her and what he's doing now. And it has been ten years since they divorced, she just won't let it go. I feel sorry for these people because it has to be affecting their life with all that anger that has built up over the years. She needs Jesus Christ to cleanse her life; maybe she will in time.

As for me I have tried to forgive and forget. I struggle with this forgiveness issue daily, but I try to think, what Christ would do. It helps me to remember that this life is only temporary and it will not matter in the long run. It's a small thing when taking into account the whole picture. I would like to let you know some of my philosophy on this subject. I apologize for using myself as an example. When tax season is over each year I will usually have numerous clients that have not paid me for various reasons. I bill them for my services several times and then after that, their file and bill will be put away. I don't get angry with these people or hold any malice; it's just not worth it when considering the stress and anger that it could cause. It's just a way to clean that problem out of my life. I find that if you let all these small things clutter up your life they develop into big problems and has a damaging effect on your life. Again it's just not worth it. When a friend or family member owes you money or has done something that has affected you. Do you get angry at them and hold a grudge or have malice against them or do you just forget it and not let it interfere with your relationship with them? I'm just asking you to look beyond the present situation: to Jesus.

~Be Imitators of God~

We are to be imitators of Christ and the only way we can be imitators of Christ is to know what Christ did and the only way to know what Christ did is to study His Word and get that one-on-one relationship with Him. Let's continue with Paul in Ephesians 5:1-5;-



1 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;*

2 *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.*

3 *But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;*

4 *and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

5 *For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*



Here Paul sets it out for us in very simple terms, be imitators of Christ and no immoral or impure person will have an inheritance in the kingdom of God. I don't know how he can say it any plainer; it's in God's Word.

In Paul's letter to the Colossian church he addresses the subject of prayer for spiritual wisdom, our relationship with Christ Jesus and giving Him thanks for the inheritance of His wonderful gift of salvation. Let us read Colossians 1:9-12.

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

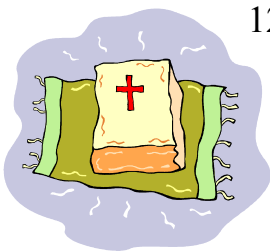
10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

~Christian Conduct~

As Christians, how should we act and react, and how should we live our daily life? Our life should always be in accordance to God's Word and how Christ Jesus lived when here on earth in the body of a man. What does Thessalonians have to say about Christian conduct in our daily lives? I Thessalonians 5:12-28. (Listen Carefully)



12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Live in peace with one another.

14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.



15 *See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.*

16 *Rejoice always;*

17 *pray without ceasing;*

18 *in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

19 *Do not quench the Spirit;*

20 *do not despise prophetic utterances.*

21 *But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;*

22 *abstain from every form of evil.*

23 *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

24 *Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*

25 *Brethren, pray for us.*

26 *Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.*

27 *I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.*

28 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Are we living in accordance to God's Word that is found in the Holy Scripture? Are we doing anything that may not be in accordance to God's Word and our Christian example and testimony? We are to be the light of the world and we are to live in light, not darkness. Are we just a Christian or are we a true disciple of Jesus Christ? I personally struggle daily with trying to live God's Word. We need to consider, am I doing the right thing? "Will others see Jesus in me?" Are you.....?

1- Are you using computer soft-ware that you are not licensed to use?

➤ Are you getting that copy from a friend? (maybe a Christian friend)

2- Do you put in a fair day's work for a fair day's pay?

➤ Don't say, well they don't pay me enough anyway.

3- Do you take little things from work; pencil, paper, other small items?

➤ You may be taking small things without realizing it.

4- Do you pay your bills on time and in the proper amount?

- When you know you owe someone, do you try to get out of paying?

5- Are you going to the gambling casinos and still claiming to be a born-again Christian?

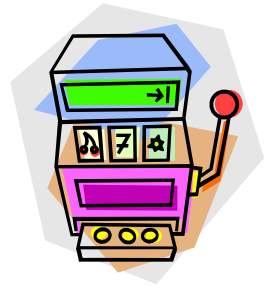
- Are you secretly gambling just because many other are?

6- Do you cheat on your income taxes?

- Do you report all your income?

7- Are you calling in sick from work when you are actually well?

- Are you dishonest with your boss about your health?



Most of these things, if you or I do them will probably not be known to others, but God knows, don't try to cover your sins by thinking that God will not know. God knows the heart. We need to make any sin that we may have right and ask for forgiveness from God, the one and only forgiver; **He can make all things right.** We probably all need a good cleansing!

“Don't waste your life and years, get it right, right now”

I have clients to come in the office that wants to get every little thing correct on their tax forms. Even if it is a \$10.00 check they will put it down on their taxes. These people should be able to sleep very well at night. And then I have others that come in that doesn't want to report any more income then they can get by with, regardless of how much it is. I've seen in life that there are two kinds of people; givers and takers, don't be a taker, be a giver.

I have a friend that a few years ago had stolen a fire-extinguisher from where he had worked before, he got so convicted that he cleaned up the fire-extinguisher, had it refilled and walked in the door of the plant, asked for the supervisor (which happened to be his ex-brother-in-law) and handed the fire-extinguisher to him, advising him that he had stolen it from the company several years ago. Now, this is a great testimony for this Christian Brother.

~Fulfill your ministry~

The Bible has a lot to say about godly living and doing good for the welfare of others. Let's go over some of these verses. Starting with II Timothy 4:1-5, which is charging us to fulfill our ministry, whatever that may be while we are here on this earth.

1 *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:*

2 *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.*



3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,*

4 *and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*

5 *But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

~Godly Living~

Then the book of Titus gives us some insight for godly living in Chapter 3:1-11. What does it say, let's read?

1 *Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,*

2 *to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.*

3 *For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*

4 *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,*

5 *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*

6 *whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

7 *so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

8 *This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.*

These things are good and profitable for men.

9 *But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.*

10 *Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,* (factious- heretic)

11 *knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.*

This last two verses sets it up as it is in this present world, we can be lead astray very easily with what is happening in the world today. There are many heretics out there not preaching Jesus Christ, be careful of them. Know your Bible.

For in Galatians 2:20 is says;

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. [GAL 2:20] [NAS]

Then we turn to Philippians 2:13-16 in closing;

13 *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

14 *Do all things without grumbling or disputing;*

15 *so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,*

16 *holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. Philippians 2:13-16 [NAS]*

These verses let us know who is working in us, about having a good attitude and to be blameless in this crooked and perverse generation, holding fast to Jesus Christ. We, as disciples of Jesus Christ are the light of the world; we are set apart for HIM.

I challenge you today to "EXAMINE YOURSELF" to see if you are living for Jesus Christ and making Him first in your life with the evident of going good deeds in His name. AMEN



I have gotten some information for this article from a number of different sources; internet, Bibles, dictionaries, and study materials from several different authors, etc. I do not take full credit for these writings since there are many. I did not keep up with this information in most cases in order to give proper credit. My comments and rewriting of the sources are in this article. I therefore cannot take full credit for this study. The full credit would have to go to Jesus Christ, the creator of all things.

Dewey E. Fox, Servant of our Lord Jesus Christ