



"A neurosis is a secret that you don't know you're keeping."
—Kenneth Tynan

27-Mar-20

Let Us Examine Ourselves

With the Feast of Unleavened Bread less than two weeks away, many of us are well into our de-leavening. Some may even be finished and feel a sense of relief that the job is done. Some of us go to great lengths to make sure every nook and cranny in our homes are swept clean and turned upside down, and we remove every little hint of leavening. When the job is over, we can exhale and enjoy the fact that we found that lost piece of biscuit, donut, or cookie, perhaps wondering, "How did that get there?" If you have grandkids, chances are you have your answer. After our grandkids have been in the house, we find things in the strangest places—and some things may never be seen again!

We spend quite a bit of time and effort trying to find and eradicate all the leavening from our homes, cars, and offices, and rightly so, as [God](#) commands us to do it. He instructs us to perform certain physical exercises for our learning to understand better how He wants us to worship Him in a worthy manner. As with many of the Bible's rituals, the spiritual lessons are of far greater importance. We do ourselves a disservice when we just go through the motions.

One of these rituals is [Passover](#), which we observe just before the [days of Unleavened Bread](#). In [I Corinthians 11:27-30](#), Paul instructs the Corinthians about how they were to partake of the Passover, explaining that the instructions came directly from Christ Himself. He tells us to eat the bread and drink of the cup in a manner worthy of Him, or we will be guilty of profaning and sinning against the blood and the body of Christ. "For this reason," Paul writes in verse 30, "many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep." J.B. Phillips' *The New Testament in Modern English*, a paraphrase, renders the last word as "spiritually dead." In other words, those who partake unworthily of the [bread and wine](#) put themselves in great spiritual danger.

In verse 28, he continues, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." Only after we have examined ourselves should we partake of the Passover symbols. Those of us in God's church have formed the habit of performing this self-examination every year around this time, and so we should, as we attempt to rededicate our lives to God and become more like Christ. It should not be a glance in a mirror, and off we go, forgetting what we even looked like ([James 1:24](#)). Thoroughly examining ourselves should become a way of life.

The Greek word for "examine," *dokimazo*, means "to test," "to discern," or "to prove," which is much more involved than a glimpse in a mirror. It implies scrutiny, investigation, inquiry, searching, and correcting. In [I Corinthians 11:31-32](#), Paul explains: "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with [the world](#)." He is saying that, if we do things the right way, God's way, there will be nothing to judge! He advises that we put ourselves on trial, interrogate, and judge ourselves. God would rather not judge us or send some trial to get our attention, but He will, if necessary, because He loves us.

God is looking for humble people who govern themselves by His Word with outgoing concern and respect for others. Such people, who judge themselves, do not have to be governed. This is what Paul means when he says we are not [under the law](#) ([Galatians 5:18](#)). There is no judgment when we keep the law. A cop will never write you a ticket for driving the speed limit!

In [II Corinthians 13:5-6](#), Paul returns to the message of self-examination:

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. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

He exhorts them to prove themselves, test their faith, and examine their fruit. If Christ truly dwelt in them, they should be able to detect the [image of God](#) in their behavior. If not, then they were counterfeits or reprobates, people who are anti-God, and such people God will judge.

Self-examination is a necessary, commanded duty requiring diligence and brutal honesty. If God commands us to do this, He will give us the ability to put ourselves on trial, see ourselves as we indeed are, and make the proper judgments. Because of human nature, this task is often difficult. It is natural for a human to think well of himself, as an old saying teaches: "Every man is his own flatterer and so conceals himself from himself." Our carnality will lie to us, deceiving us into thinking we are something we are not. Lying to ourselves still breaks the ninth commandment.

Stephen Charnock, an English Puritan clergyman who lived in the seventeenth century, penned a discourse on self-examination, writing in it:

Natural conscience is often silenced by a pretense and a show, and a man is naturally apt to make his own corrupt judgement, sometimes also his passion, the standard of good and evil, and not only to frame grace according to his own affections, but a god.

In other words, his passion, right or wrong, becomes the standard, and he makes it his god. In effect, he worships himself!

Several men in the Bible had similar experiences in this regard. David's passion drew him away from God. He became blinded by it and could not see himself. Even after Nathan told him the vivid story about the poor man with one lamb, which a more powerful man took to prepare a feast ([II Samuel 12:1-4](#))—the story even made David furious—he still could not see

his fault! Then Nathan said, "You are the man!" (verse 7), and David was crushed. He had lost sight of God and sinned against Him. David repented, but God's judgment on him was very painful.

While Job did not [sin](#) in all that he endured, he somehow thought he could interact with God as an equal! He could not see the vast difference between the awesome, powerful, eternal God and puny, weak, transitory man—him. When God questioned Job, the man was, like David, crushed that he had been so blind to the obvious greatness of God and His authority over His creation ([Job 42:1-6](#)).

Peter provides another example. In the scene in [Luke 5:1-8](#), the disciples had been fishing all night and caught nothing, and Jesus approaches them as they are cleaning their nets. After boarding one of the boats and leaving the shore, Jesus tells Peter to throw the nets out for a catch. Peter had probably grumbled the whole time, saying something like, "Look, Lord, I'm the fisherman here, and there are just no fish! We have been fishing all night, and we've caught zilch, nada, nothing! But just because You say so, I'll throw in the nets!" After so many fish came into the net that it was breaking, Peter sees himself for what he was in contrast to his Creator and says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

All three of these men had their eyes opened so that they could see themselves in relation to God. Their lives from that point on were changed forever. So, let us examine ourselves, humble ourselves, and judge ourselves so that we will worthily partake of the Passover and not fall under judgment.

- Ronny H. Graham

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Will You Be Accounted Worthy for the Kingdom?](#)

by John O. Reid

Like businessmen reviewing plans, making forecasts, and anticipating accountability, God expects us to define and follow through on spiritual

objectives. Accountability has both a negative and a positive aspect. We need to know what we will be accountable for. Our job is to fight our human nature, understanding that without God's help, we are doomed to failure. With this spiritual help, we must bring our human nature under subjection, making our salvation operational by incrementally taking on the nature of God. He will not give up on us if we don't give up on ourselves.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[What Does 'Examine Yourselves' Mean?](#)

by Staff

In II Corinthians 13, the apostle Paul advises the Christians in Corinth to examine themselves periodically to determine how faithful they are to God's revealed way of life. He urges them to undertake an honest, rigorous self-evaluation to see if they provide a righteous dwelling for Christ. Examining oneself before Passover helps a Christian prepare to take it in faith, knowing he or she is in a right relationship with God.

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