

Examine Yourself

Text : **Rom. 12: 3-8 ; II Cor. 13: 5-10**

A. Many are going to the doctor these days.

1. This flu season has been a bad one thus far. It is officially an epidemic.
2. Most have no problem going to the doctor when they need medical treatment.
3. We don't like going to the doctor for a checkup when we don't have a problem.
 - a. We don't take our car to a mechanic unless it needs maintenance.
 - b. Likewise, men tend to go to the dentist only when they have a toothache.
4. Problems revealed when constant monitoring builds profiles, prevents problems .
 - a. Monitoring changes in one's PSA can identify cancer while it's still treatable.
 - b. A man's life was saved when doctor noticed a precipitous drop in liver enzymes.

B. We also understand the importance of measuring development.

1. Most of us experience measureable increase in body mass over the holidays.
2. We have a door in the house with marks showing the growth of our children.
 - a. Our children wanted their mark every birthday. *They did not fear it.*
 - b. When we moved they wanted their marks moved to the new house.
3. Athletes keep a close eye on their stats to monitor their improvement.

C. Monitoring is one of the differences between a goal and a dream.

1. Everyone has dreams about what he wants to become, to have or to achieve.
 - a. Be the best at their sport.
 - b. Be a straight "A" student.
 - c. Retire comfortably in a warm climate, play golf every day, travel, etc.
2. Dreams are easy; all you have to do is let them float around in your mind.
3. Goals are much more difficult.
 - a. Goals are specific.
 - b. Goals contain measurable steps to monitor progress.
 - c. Goals are locked into a timeframe. (*Not pie in the sky by and by*)

D. Our loving heavenly Father desires our progress and He monitors it.

1. **I Tim. 4: 15-16** Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. **16** Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

2. **II Pet. 1: 5ff** Applying all diligent ... Add to faith ... virtue ... knowledge ... self-control ... perseverance ... godliness ... kindness ... love
 - a. Thus, we are commanded to keep on progressing.
 - b. **WHY?** Vs – 8 ... so we will be neither useless nor unfruitful.
 - c. How horrible it would be to hear ... “You wicked, lazy slave” – **Matt. 25: 26**

I. It is important that we keep examining ourselves because God commands it.

A. Our text command the brethren in Corinth (us) to examine themselves.

1. **II Cor. 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?
 - a. When traveling we watch for signs to insure we are still on the correct road.
 - b. There are great roads that lead to the wrong place.
Prov 14:12 – There’s a way which seems right to a man bt its end is the way of death
2. Many start off on the right road, but stray along the way.
 - a. As we grow and mature we must adapt to life as it presents itself.
 - b. Our change cannot include changing the gospel.
Gal. 1: 8 – But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!
3. However, growth requires change.
 - a. Our teachers bring us up to their level of understanding.
 - b. We are responsible to continue to develop beyond where our teachers leave us.
Heb. 5: 12 – For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
 - *c. Because of this, each generation should be more discerning than the one before.

B. The brethren in Corinth were told to evaluate their motives before communion.

1. **I Cor. 11: 28-29** But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.
2. As we look at the outward acts, God looks at the motivation for it.
I Sam. 16: 7 – But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

II. It is important for us to monitor our progress because we tend to confuse motion/activity with spiritual growth. (Does most not most spiritual)

A. God calls us to serve Him so it's important that we be active in doing that.

1. We are commanded to be involved with good works that people can observe.
Matt. 5: 16 – **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**
2. We are required to come to the assemblies of the church and motivate each other.
Heb. 10: 24–25 **and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; ...**

B. Many do religious activities, but don't do them with right heart.

1. Some **sing** beautifully, but do not worship.
 - a. Have you ever sung just because you love to sing ?
 - b. Singing is an act of worship directed to God.
Eph. 5: 19 – **speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;**
 - c. Who do we think about teaching and admonishing (**Col 3: 16**) when we sing ?
 - d. As we sing are we offering up our hearts to God ?
2. Sometimes we **read** the bible, but do not feed our souls. (**Like doing homework**)
 - a. Have you ever read the scriptures just because you know you should read ?
 - b. Have you ever read just to complete your commitment to a daily schedule ?
 - c. Have you ever read to increase knowledge without seeking discernment ?
 - d. Reading is only of value if its contents are applied to one's life.
James 1: 21-22 **Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.**
(Psa 119: 11 .. in my heart)

Psa. 119: 105-106 **Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.
¹⁰⁶ I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. (ESV)**
3. Sometimes we **pray** out of habit without truly communing with God.
 - a. We sometimes pray like our children ... reciting memorized prayers.
 - b. Sometimes we pray as if we're talking to ourselves. (**Mind drifting**)
 - c. Prayer is a time to open our hearts before God. (**Not like Pharisee .. Luke 18:10f**)

C. The point is .. it's easy to confuse the fruit with the root. (*heart = root*)

1. Sometimes we do things only because they are expected of us. ... **DUTY**
 - a. Girl at Subway builds sandwiches like a zombie until a handsome hunk walks in.
 - b. We do our duty even when we have no heart for it.
2. When a guy gets up before dawn and hurries to the deer stand or the duck blind, it's because he has a heart for it. *That's the heart God wants serving Him.*
3. Sometimes we abstain from evil, **but** long to do it. **Matt 5: 28** .. **adultery in his heart**

D. The new birth creates a new life which produces a new heart. (*desires change*)

1. **II Cor. 5: 17** – **Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**
2. No one can or should be evaluating your heart, **but you should be; God is.**
 - a. **Prov. 4: 23** – **Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. (*What do you have a heart for ?*)**
 - b. We must lay our hearts before God.
Psa 139: 1-2 ... **O Lord, You have searched me and known me. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.**

III. It is important for us to monitor our progress because sin is deceitful.

A. One of the functions of the church is to guard Christians from deceitful sins.

1. **Heb. 3: 13** – **But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**
2. Sin attacks through our flesh so, while in the flesh, we must be constantly on guard.
Eph. 4: 22-24 in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted through deceitful desires. (ESV) ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

B. This admonition has been needed from the beginning until now.

1. The very first woman was deceived by Satan. (**2 Cor. 11: 12-15, 2 Jn 7, Jn 8: 44**)
II Cor. 11: 3 – **But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.**
2. Cain was warned that "sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." **Gen. 4: 7**

3. Israel of old was told :

Haggai 1: 5-7 Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, "Consider your ways!
6 You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." **7** Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Consider your ways!"

C. We never rise to a level when we are above being deceived by Satan.

1. **I Cor. 10: 12** – Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.
2. The elders at the Ephesian church were warned to monitor themselves.
Acts 20: 28 – Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

D. There is always a danger that we will become desensitized to the sin around us.

1. A family purchased a snake for a pet, it was a python but not to be feared because it was less than a foot long. Over the years it grew to 11 ft., but no one in the family was afraid of it because it had been like a member of the family. One morning they went to awaken their 15 yr old son for school and found that the snake had attacked him while he slept and killed him.
2. You and I have lived in the presence of growing sin, but have not developed a healthy fear of it because it is every before us. (*No longer vexes our souls*)
 - a. 35 years ago today's television and movies would've been banned as pornography.
 - b. The lyrics for American songs of various genre are degenerate at best.
 - c. Half of the world look at the attire of American women and call them prostitutes.
3. Evil is pervasive today so we need to monitor our response to the evil around us.
 - a. Job was a righteous man, but lost his family to Sodom's sin. (**II Pet. 2: 7-8**)
 - b. **Eph. 5: 11-12** Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; **12** for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
 - c. **Rom. 1: 32** ... We must not allow ourselves to be entertained by the evil of others.

IV. The only standard for self-examination is the scriptures.

A. We can never use others as a standard for evaluating our own growth.

1. **II Cor. 10: 12** – For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

2. No matter how bad we are, we can always find someone who is worse.
In bible study group in a maximum security prison one inmate (3 time loser) said the worst crime he ever committed was killing some cats in his grandmother's neighborhood. Several agreed that was the worst offense ... among those agreeing was one who had raped a woman and killed her and her husband.

3. Jesus told us about a Pharisee with that kind of attitude.

Luke 18: 10-14 Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.**12** I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' **13** But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14** I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

- B. We only know the condition of our heart when we look into God's perfect law.**

James 1: 21-25 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** 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; **24** for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** 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.

CONCLUSION :

- A. It is the will of God that we all monitor our progress ... examine ourselves.**

1. Examine ourselves because God commands us to examine ourselves.
2. Examine ourselves to insure we don't confuse action with growth.
3. Examine ourselves because sin is deceitful.
4. Examine ourselves by His standard.

- B. Self-evaluation is for our good, not to create doubt within us.**

1. The worst possible fate would be to hear the words :
Matt. 7: 23 – And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me,
2. When you stand before God ... **will you hear :**
Matt 25:23 – Well done, good and faithful servant .. enter into the joy of your Master.

Lesson Text :**Romans 12: 3-8**

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. **4** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

II Corinthians 13: 5-10

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? **6** But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. **7** Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. **8** For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth. **9** For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete. **10** For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.