

Self Examination – Coming into the Light Prophetic Plans for Personal Growth



“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.”
2 Cor. 13:5

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”
Psalm 139:23-24

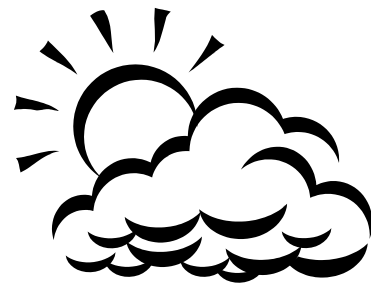
“The unexamined life is not worth living.”
Henry David Thoreau

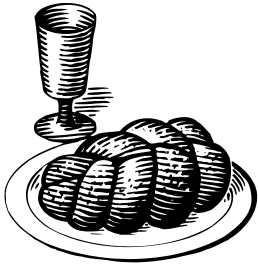
“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the wind of the storm, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’”
Genesis 3:8-10

Sunlight is the best disinfectant.
Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

In this Lesson we learn...

- ***Why examine one’s self – The importance of healthy introspection***
- ***What does it mean to “walk in the light?”***
- ***The four quadrants of self-knowledge – of light***
 - *Our public self*
 - *Our blind spots*
 - *Our private areas*
 - *Our unknown self*
- ***Ways to walk in the light***
 - *Action*
 - *Confession*
 - *Correction*
 - *Revelation*
- ***How to identify areas of growth***
- ***How to make prophetic plans for personal growth***





Why examine one's self?

Self-Examination – A matter of life and death

Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-33



Why is it critical that we examine ourselves before partaking of the Lord's Supper?

What is the purpose of this self-examination? (11:31)



Transparency – *the critical ingredient of walking in the light*

Read 1 John 1:5-9

According to this verse, what are some benefits of “walking in the light?”



1.

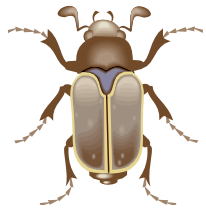
2.

3.

According to 1 John 1:8-9, how do we enter the light?

Denial = Darkness

Cockroaches and rats dwell in dark places. We flick the light switch and they scatter furiously, seeking new shadows. Likewise with demons, fears, neuroses, and emotional bondage, etc. When we come into the light, when we choose to be transparent, that which is evil and vile within us begins to shrivel and heal. No one finds self-examination and admitting faults to be easy or pleasant. We feel shame, quite naturally, and prefer to avoid dwelling on that which is unpleasant about us. Adam and Eve reacted to this sense of shame by hiding in the bushes and covering themselves with fig leaves. This human tendency to hide or cover our sins is what the Bible calls, “*walking in darkness.*”



When we sweep our sins under the carpet, we sacrifice God's cleansing and blessing.

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Prov. 28:13



Quadrants of Light ³

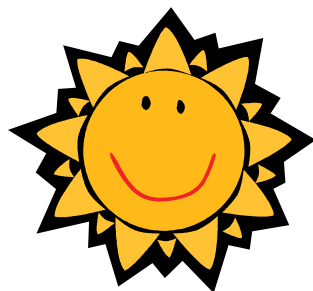
<p>1. Our Public Self</p> <p>That which we know about ourselves ...</p> <p>... And others also can perceive.</p>	<p>2. Our Blind Sides</p> <p>That which we do not realize about ourselves...</p> <p>.... But others can plainly see.</p>
<p>3. Our Private Self</p> <p>That which we know about ourselves...</p> <p>... But others do not.</p>	<p>4. Our Unknown Self</p> <p>That which we do not realize about ourselves...</p> <p>... And neither can others.</p> <p>Only God knows!!</p>

Review: *Fill in the blank with the appropriate quadrant, in each case.*

1. If I know that I am an impatient person and others also know this about me – *it's obvious to all* – then this problem falls in Quadrant # _____.
2. If I smoke, *but no one knows*, then this vice falls into Quadrant # _____.
3. According to Revelation 2:17, each believer has a new name written on a white Stone in heaven. No one on earth knows this name, not even ourselves, this side of heaven. This secret name falls into Quadrant # _____.
4. If I have coffee breath, and everyone knows, but I do not realize it, then this problem belongs to Quadrant # _____.

³ Also known as “Jihairi’s Window.” Public domain.

How can I walk more fully in the light?



1. *Take Action*
2. *Receive Correction*
3. *Practice Confession*
4. *Seek Revelation*

1. *Take Action – to change obvious defects and problems*

Quadrant #1: Our Public Self – Obvious problems that are obvious to all

Spirit led action is required to bring about change.

Some sins and weaknesses are *obvious* to ourselves and others. These issues already have come to light. *Action* is needed, with the help of God and others, to effect change.

Impediments to action

- *Procrastination* – “I’ll work on this problem when my life is more settled...”
- *Fear of Change* – Our sins have become “normal” and familiar to us.
- *Rebellion* – “This is my life and I won’t change!”
- *Excuses* – “It’s just the way I am. You can’t teach an old dog new tricks!”

Reflect on your own life. When you struggle with an obvious problem or sin, what is the most common impediment that keeps you from pursuing change?

2. *Receive Correction – in order to recognize hidden sins*

Quadrant #2: Our Blind Sides – Sins of which we are unaware.

Correction is needed to bring these issues to our attention.

We all have sins, defects and weaknesses which are plain to all those around us, except ourselves!! We are blind to these problems and need *correction* in order to become aware of them. Just as a driver who attempts to change lanes without seeing a vehicle in his “blind” spot, the honking horn can make all the difference to prevent serious injury.

No one enjoys correction!! - but it is necessary for our sanctification

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.”
Prov. 12:1

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Prov. 27:6

A variety of people bring us correction.

- *A spouse*
- *Parents or Children*
- *Our boss*
- *Co-workers*
- *Employees*
- *Spiritual leaders*
- *Our enemies*
- *The police*

In your life, who are some people who bring you correction?

1. _____
2. _____

Excuses we use to avoid accepting criticism

- *“They just hate me and exaggerate my faults to make me feel bad.”*
- *“He’s my enemy and wants to make me look bad.”*
- *“She doesn’t really know me.”*
- *“He’s crazy and doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”*
- *“She’s so rude. She said this in such an unloving way.”*

Which is an excuse that you tend to use not to receive criticism that you hear?

_____.

Describe an instance in which someone corrected you in some way.

_____.

How did you respond?

_____.

3. Practice Confession— to bring secret sins to God’s healing light

Quadrant #3: Our Private Self – The sins we hide from others.

Confession brings hidden sin into God’s healing light.

Like Adam and Eve, our natural tendency is to hide our weaknesses and sins because of shame and fear. Confession is a precious gift from God, which helps us to bring these sins out of darkness and into God’s disinfecting light.

Confession can be difficult. Why?

- *Bad memories of religiosity from past religious background. (Perhaps confessing to a priest as if he were God.)*
- *Fear of being exposed before another person*
- *Fear that the person will criticize or look down on you*
- *Fear that personal information will be spread to others*
- *Natural human shame – we are embarrassed!*

Which of these might be an impediment for you to confess your sins to another person?

Why confess to another person and not only to God?

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you might be healed. The fervent prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16)

According to this verse, what is the benefit of confessing to another human being?

Qualities of an appropriate person to hear a personal confession

Do not confess to “just anyone!”

It should be a person who is...

- *Discreet* – who can keep a secret!
- *Spiritually mature* – and can help provide Biblical guidance and support
- *Of the same gender* – because of the intimate nature of confession

Note below the names of two or three people in your life who you think could be appropriate people to hear a personal confession from you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



4. Seek Revelation – from the Holy Spirit to be free of unknown sins

Quadrant #4: Our unknown Self – Unconscious sin

Revelation is needed to bring these unknown problems to light.

Some sins and weaknesses remain at the unconscious level – unknown to both ourselves and others. The Holy Spirit can reveal such hidden sins and bring them to light, so we can be free of their influence.

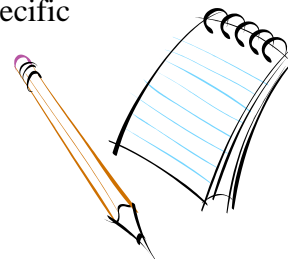
Our Part – Prayer

“Search me, Oh God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and guide me in the everlasting way.”
(Psalm 139:23-24)

Why do you think it is so important to pray before practicing introspection? How can introspection be dangerous and even harmful if not done by the Spirit’s guidance?

Goals – Who needs them? -- We do!

As we clarified in the previous lesson, ***we do not believe in holiness by human effort, but neither do we believe God calls us to be passive in the process.*** As Christians, we make goals not as “New Years Resolutions,” but as prophetic prayers, aiming at personal change. The first step in any goal making process should be specific prayer related to the goal. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Apart from him, we are helpless. But along with prayer, we do well to take action and “swim along” with the Spirit’s current in our sanctification process.



How to identify a goal for personal growth

- *Is there an obvious problem in my life which needs changing?*
- *Does a particular character flaw repeatedly “get me in trouble?”*
- *Does a secret struggle hamper my life, without anyone else knowing?*
- *Does a particular habit or attitude get me into regular conflict with others?*

Three areas for self-examination:

- ***The Self***
 - Emotional issues (Anger, depression, anxiety, rejection)
 - Character issues (Patterns of deceit, immorality, addiction)
 - Spiritual issues (Bondage from past spiritual activity)
 - Self Concept (inflated or inferiority)
 - Health issues... etc.
- ***Interpersonal Relationships***
 - Conflict with family, friends, or co-workers
 - Speech
 - Resentment and forgiveness
 - Immorality
 - Neglect of important relationships
 - Over-dependence on others
 - Desire to control others
- ***Life-style***
 - Work ethic
 - Time management
 - Financial stewardship
 - Destructive habits...etc.

Choose an area of life that needs change

Example - Depression

Note the area you want to “work on” - _____

_____.

State the goal in a positive way

Example - To choose joy and hope in the midst of negative circumstances

Note the positive goal that corresponds to the issue you wrote above - _____

_____.

Elements of an effective goal for personal change

- ***Specific!!***
Not -- “I would like to be more patient.”
Instead, “I would like to be more patient with my wife when dealing with the stress of getting the kids ready for school in the mornings.”
- ***Make realistic, achievable goals***
Not -- “I want to pray all the time for my kids – 24/7.”
Instead -- “I would like to try to pray for my kids at bedtime for ten minutes.”
- ***Set dates***
Not -- “I want to read the Gospel of John”
Instead – “I want to read the Gospel of John by Thanksgiving”
- ***Work with a mentor/friend***
 - Share your goals
 - Get suggestions for strategies
 - Help evaluate your progress, or lack thereof

Be encouraged!

We all have a plethora of weaknesses and personal defects that need work. Thank God, He does not ask us to change all at once. As a patient potter who molds the clay, he works with long processes that move towards his beautiful goals.

“... Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus...”

Romans 8:1

Assignment

Using the models included... Fill out a Prophetic Plan for Personal Change

Review Questions:

Why is it so important to examine ourselves regularly, and especially before partaking of the Lord’s Supper?

List the four “Quadrants of Light.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What are the ways we can enter more fully into the light of God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What are some reasons that we do not take action to change areas of obvious sin in our lives?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some excuses one might use to reject a word of *correction* from another person?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some characteristics of an appropriate person to receive a confession from us?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some features of a well crafted goal for personal change?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Prophetic Planning Sheets – Bad Example!

<i>Prophetic Goal</i>	<i>Specific Steps</i>	<i>When? Where?</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>		
			Nov.	Dec	Jan
Problem: <i>Bad money management</i> <hr/> Goal: <i>Be a millionaire</i> <hr/>	1. <i>Spend less</i> <hr/>	1. <i>Always</i> <hr/>	1. <hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2. <i>Play the lottery</i> <hr/>	2. <i>Every now and then</i> <hr/>	2. <hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3. <i>Give to the Lord</i> <hr/>	3. <i>A lot!</i> <hr/>	3. <hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

What are some ways this prophetic planning sheet can be improved?

Prophetic Planning Sheet – Bad Example!

<i>Prophetic Goal</i>	<i>Specific Steps</i>	<i>When? Where?</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>		
			Nov.	Dec.	Jan
Problem <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Depression</i></div> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Rejoice in the Lord</i></div> <div>1. _____</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Pray</i></div> <div>2. _____</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Don't be sad.</i></div> <div>3. _____</div>	<div style="text-align: center;"><i>Always - everywhere</i></div> <div>1. _____</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>All the time</i></div> <div>2. _____</div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Never – no where</i></div> <div>3. _____</div>	<div>1. _____</div> <div>2. _____</div> <div>3. _____</div>	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>

How can this prophetic planning sheet be improved?

Prophetic Planning Sheet: Positive Example

<i>Prophetic Goal</i>	<i>Specific Steps</i>	<i>When? Where?</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>		
			Nov.	December	Jan
Problem: <i>Depression</i> Goal: <i>“Learning to choose hope and optimism when facing negative circumstances”</i>	1. <i>Sing praise songs during my daily prayer times</i> 2. <i>Do a Bible study on the word, “hope”</i> 3. <i>Start jogging</i>	1. <i>Daily @ 6:30 a.m. In my kitchen</i> 2. <i>By Thanksgiving</i> 3. <i>Tuesdays and Thursdays after work</i>	1. 2. 3.		

<i>Prophetic Goal</i>	<i>Specific Steps</i>	<i>When? Where?</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>		
			Nov.	December	Jan
Problem <i>Bad money management.</i> Goal <i>“To spend and save money in a responsible way.”</i>	1. <i>Call Alpha to sign up for Crown classes</i> 2. <i>Start tithing</i> 3. <i>Burn Credit Card</i>	1. <i>This Thursday a.m.</i> 2. <i>Every Sunday</i> 3. <i>Today!</i>	1. 2. 3.		

Assignment: *Fill out this prophetic planning sheet with specific and realistic goals and action steps.*

Prophetic Planning Sheet

<i>Prophetic Goal</i>	<i>Specific Steps</i>	<i>When? Where?</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>		
			Nov.	Dec.	Jan
Problem: <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; margin-top: 5px;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>	1. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	1. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	1. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>
Goal: <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; margin-top: 5px;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 15px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>	2. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	2. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	2. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"></div>
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