

Development Through Inventory

Introduction

1. Most Christians are aware of Paul's admonition:

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourself

2. Yet this may be one of the most disregarded commandments in God's word.

3. We need frequently to "take stock" of ourselves in relation to the Lord.

Self-inventory Is Necessary Because Life Is Full of Change

1. The danger of "drifting" is present as long as life lasts.

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away

2. Sometimes sin can creep into our lives with astonishing quickness.

Galatians 1:6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel

3. Without frequent appraisals of exactly what is going on in our lives, it is likely that we will depart from the Lord.

Acts 20:28-31

4. Complacency is a deadly enemy of every Christian.

From an unknown source:

Complacency is a blight that saps energy, dulls attitudes, and causes a drain on the brain. The first symptom is satisfaction with things as they are. The second is rejection of things as they might be. "Good enough" becomes today's watchword and tomorrow's standard. Complacency makes people fear the unknown, mistrust the untried, and abhor the new. Like water, complacent people follow the easiest course -- downhill. They draw false strength from looking back.

Romans 11:22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, **if you continue in His goodness.** Otherwise you also will be cut off

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but **let us watch and be sober**

Christ said to the church in Sardis:

Revelation 3:1-2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God

Development Through Inventory — By Bible Study

1. **Ideally, Bible study, most of the time, should be a search for the know-how that will help us personally do a better job of obeying God.**

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work

2. **Unfortunately, some study with a view to improvements that need to be made in someone else's life.**

Matthew 7:1-5

3. **We need to see the value of God's word in showing us errors that need to be removed from our own hearts and lives.**

Psalms 19:7-14

People who matter are most aware that everyone else does too

Self-inventory Must Be Honest

- 1. Most of us cherish a self-image that glosses over some serious faults.**
- 2. One of the dangerous things about being unwilling to see the truth about ourselves is that it eventually leads to our being *unable to see it*.**

John 3:19-20 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness

- 4. We need to strive for an honesty that is willing to see ourselves as we really are.**
 - A. We need to see ourselves as God sees us.**

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account

Inventory Is Useless If We Are Unwilling to Repent

1. Obviously, a good self-inventory may reveal some areas where we simply need to “do better,” some tendencies that are undesirable without being outright sinful, etc.
2. But the thing that keeps much of our self-examination from being truly helpful is that we tend to see nothing but such things.

Many people use mighty thin thread when mending their ways.

3. **Sin** is a word we usually apply to other people and **repentance** is usually something somebody else needs to do.
 - A. John the Baptist and Jesus emphasized the need of all to repent.
Matthew 3:7-9
Luke 13:1-5

If we put off repentance another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.

- B. How often, in our private praying, do we specify actual sins that we have committed?
1 John 1: 8-10
 - 1) To “Confess our sins” will usually mean more than a general confession that we “have sinned.”
4. If an honest self-inventory is not accompanied by the penitent character of a David, it accomplishes little.

2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die

Conclusion

1. **“Take heed” is a frequent admonition in the Scriptures.**

A. There is no person who needs to watch out any more than the person who is sure he is doing okay.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed lest he fall**

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction**, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work

B. For us, the Scriptures may as well not be profitable for reproof and correction if we do not use them to that end.

Proverbs 22:3 **A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself**, But the simple pass on and are punished.

2. **Why not determine now to make a fresh, thorough, and honest inventory of the person that you are before God — and if necessary, make the appropriate changes while opportunity is still available to do so.**

Invitation

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Richard Thetford, March 2001 – Revised June 2009 (Based on a lesson by Gary Henry)