

A Call to Honest Self-Examination

Many people today believe they're in good standing with God, thinking they know exactly where they're going in life. But the reality is that most folks don't realize they're spiritually lost. They've convinced themselves they're "pretty good" people, but this self-deception can be spiritually dangerous.

Using God's Standard to Locate Where We Stand

The Ten Commandments serve as an excellent tool to help people understand their true spiritual condition. When we honestly examine ourselves against God's standards, the results can be eye-opening. Have you ever lied? That makes you a liar. Have you ever stolen anything? That makes you a thief. Have you ever used God's name in vain? That's blasphemy.

People often resist these labels because they've never thought of themselves this way. They justify their actions or point to others doing the same things. But God's judgment isn't based on majority opinion or comparative righteousness - it's based on His perfect standard.

Why People Avoid the Light

The Problem with Self-Deception

Many people live in spiritual darkness, lying to themselves about their true condition. They avoid honest self-examination because they know their deeds are wrong. This avoidance of truth keeps them bound in spiritual blindages and prevents real freedom.

Christians Can Struggle with Light Too

Even believers can resist certain aspects of God's truth. They may welcome some light but reject other areas where God wants to bring correction. This selective acceptance of truth limits spiritual growth and freedom.

The Key to Spiritual Freedom: Continuing in Truth

Jesus said to believers, "If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Notice the condition: we must continue in His word. It's not enough to start well - we must endure to the end.

The Danger of Stopping Short

Consider the Israelites marching around Jericho. If they had stopped after six days instead of seven, they would have been defeated. Many Christians give up just before their breakthrough because they don't continue believing and obeying God's word.

Peter walked on water when he believed, but he began to sink when his faith wavered - even in Jesus's presence. Continuing in faith is essential for maintaining spiritual victory.

The Importance of Regular Faith Examinations

Examining Ourselves

Paul instructed believers to "examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5). This isn't a one-time event but an ongoing process. We need regular spiritual checkups to ensure we're still walking in faith and not just coasting on past experiences.

Why We Need Others to Help Us See

We all have blind spots - areas we can't see clearly on our own. This is why we need church, pastoral guidance, and fellow believers who can help us identify areas that need attention. Self-examination alone isn't always sufficient.

Growing in Faith: Adding to What We Have

Building on the Foundation

Second Peter 1:5-7 instructs us to add to our faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. This isn't about earning salvation but about growing in spiritual maturity.

The Progressive Nature of Truth

Spiritual growth involves receiving more and more light. As we walk in the light we have, God reveals additional areas that need attention. This process continues throughout our Christian journey.

Receiving Correction with the Right Heart

Love Speaks Truth

When someone truly loves you, they'll tell you what you need to hear, not necessarily what you want to hear. Real love involves speaking truth, even when it's uncomfortable.

The Blessing of Divine Correction

God only corrects those He loves. If we never receive correction, it may indicate a lack of spiritual life or growth. Like a gardener who only prunes fruit-bearing branches, God invests correction in those who have potential for greater fruitfulness.

Breaking Free from Spiritual Complacency

The Danger of Cooling Off

Many denominations and individual believers start with fire and passion but gradually cool off over time. Each generation can become more complacent than the last, eventually becoming monuments to what once was rather than living expressions of faith.

Stoking the Fire

We must actively maintain our spiritual passion. Like tending a fire, we need to add fuel, stir the coals, and keep the flame burning bright. This requires intentional effort and ongoing commitment.

Walking in God's Abundant Life

Freedom from Self-Destruction

Apart from God, humans are more self-destructive than they realize. But through honest self-examination and continuing in God's truth, we can break free from destructive patterns and walk in the abundant life Jesus promised.

Becoming Lights in a Dark World

As we allow God's truth to transform us, we become effective lights in a dark world. We can help others find freedom, but only to the degree that we ourselves are free.

Life Application

This week, commit to honest spiritual self-examination. Don't settle for surface-level Christianity or past spiritual experiences. Ask God to reveal areas in your life that need His light and truth. Be willing to receive correction from His Word, from mature believers, and from the Holy Spirit's conviction.

Consider these questions as you examine your spiritual condition:

- Am I continuing in faith with the same passion I had when I first believed?
- Are there areas of my life where I'm avoiding God's light or making excuses for sin?
- Do I welcome correction, or do I become defensive when challenged?
- Am I growing in spiritual maturity, or have I become complacent?
- What "walls" in my life need to come down through continued obedience to God's Word?

Remember, the goal isn't condemnation but freedom. God's truth is designed to set you free, transform your life, and enable you to help others find the same freedom you've discovered in Christ.

Quotes

1. "Most lost people don't realize they're lost—they think they know exactly where they're going."
2. "Folks like to hide behind what everybody else does to make themselves feel better about what their doing."
3. "Truth is not decided by a majority vote."
4. "People lie to themselves. They don't think truthfully about their own condition. That's what it means to live in darkness."
5. "Jesus died for you because you were a sinner—because you were a liar, a thief, a blasphemer, and more. He had to suffer terribly because of how terrible you were."
6. "You won't know the truth unless you love the truth and are willing to live by it."
7. "It's not about how you start—it's about how you continue. You've got to keep going. You've got to endure to the end."
8. "Everybody knows they marched around Jericho seven times—but what if they had stopped at six? They had to continue until their obedience was complete for the walls to fall."
9. "You've got to keep believing. You've got to stay with God. You can't quit, you can't give up—you've got to remain faithful."
10. "The Bible says we're to examine ourselves to see whether we're in the faith. In other words, you need a regular faith checkup."

11. “A lot of times people can’t examine themselves very well—they need someone else to help them. That’s one reason God gave us the church.”
12. “Some people don’t stay with it long enough for their walls to come down. Breakthrough often comes after the point where many quit.”
13. “We all have blind spots—areas we can’t see clearly. That’s why we need truth from different angles to fully understand what God is showing us.”
14. “I was so lost that to save me, Jesus had to suffer brutally and go all the way to the cross. That’s how far He went to rescue me.”
15. “You only get offended when there’s something in you that’s being touched.”

Verses

1. John 8:31-32
2. Second Corinthians 13:5
3. Proverbs
4. Second Peter 1:3-5
5. Second Corinthians 12:14-15
6. Acts 7

Summary

Many people believe they're spiritually secure, but honest self-examination reveals a different reality. Using God's standards like the Ten Commandments exposes our true condition and need for His grace. True spiritual freedom comes through continuing in God's truth, not just starting well. Regular faith examinations help us identify blind spots and areas needing growth. Like the Israelites at Jericho, we must persist in obedience to see breakthrough. God's correction comes from love and leads to greater fruitfulness. Breaking free from spiritual complacency requires intentional effort to maintain our passion for God.