

Self-Examination in the Christian Life
Class 1: What Is Self-Examination?
August 16, 2026

I. What Is Adult Christian Education?

Discipleship—Head, Heart, Hands

Hebrews 10:23-25, ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 3:13, ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

1 Thessalonians 5:11, ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Romans 12:10-14, ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Galatians 6:1-2, Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

II. What Is Self-Examination?

Activity: Write down what you think it means for a Christian to examine himself or herself. Also, is there anything that scares you or worries you about self-examination?

III. How Do You Grow as a Christian?

1. Scripture Reading
2. Meditation
3. Prayer

“The Reformation Triangle”

1. Scripture Reading¹

2 Timothy 3:16-17, ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Colossians 1:25-28, I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

2. Meditation

Psalms 1:1-2, Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
² but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

“Meditation is a middle sort of duty between the word and prayer, and hath respect to both.” – Thomas Manton (1620-1677)

“Functioning as this middle duty, meditation involves taking God’s word to heart, chewing it over, pondering it, and working through its implications in every facet of life... meditation entails an intentional sort of reflection that seeks to build on a bare understanding of what the text is saying and press further into its personal significance for the reader.” – Matthew Bingham, *A Heart Aflame for God*, 131-32, 136

Colossians 3:1-4, If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

¹ We have done a CE Class on the Doctrine of Scripture that delves into this topic a bit more. You can see the recordings of that class at www.trinitymboro.com/adult-ce-words-of-life-the-doctrine-of-scripture

3. Prayer

Psalm 34:1, I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

1 Peter 5:7, ... casting all your anxieties on [the Lord], because he cares for you.

Philippians 4:4-7, ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

ACTS: Adoration, Confession, [Lamentation], Thanksgiving, Supplication

IV. How Does Scripture Reading, Meditation, and Prayer Relate to Self-Examination?

Psalm 23

- What would it look like to meditate on those verses?

What about Psalm 103?

Galatians 5:16-26?

“If asked to explain self-examination, one might well describe it broadly as a sort of meditation on yourself. In self-examination you are reflecting on the shape of your life, on God’s providential care for you, on your growth in grace and godliness, on your conduct toward others, and on your indwelling sin and need for ongoing forgiveness and inward renewal.” – Matthew Bingham, 201

What is Self-Examination?

Self-examination is meditating on your own life and heart before the face of God, looking through the grid of Scripture, meant to direct you to prayer of confession, thanksgiving, and supplication and to living out the truth of your identity in Christ more fully.

Your Life

- Looking at God’s providential care and direction for you. Looking back with thanksgiving, looking forward with trust, and often looking at the present with questions.

Your Heart

- Looking at God's past work of grace in your heart (e.g., forgiveness for particular sins, sanctification in your loves and desires), at your present indwelling sin, and asking God to continue to change you more and more into the image of Christ.

Before the Face of God

- This is not meant to be a time where you turn away from God to look at yourself, but where you look at yourself in the presence of God.

Looking through the Grid of Scripture

- This self-examination is meant to be done with the Bible in hand. Not simply asking, "Do I like what I see when I look in the mirror?" but, "Do I see myself the way God sees me and live my life in light of the truth of His Word?"

Directed toward Prayer and Living

- Naval-gazing is the spiral of focusing on self that leads nowhere but back to self. Christian self-examination is intended to direct us to God—in our minds, our hearts, and our lives.

Activity: Go back and look at your fears and worries about self-examination. Has anything changed about those fears?

V. The Plan for This Class

Today – What Is Self-Examination?

Aug. 23 – Understanding Why Self-Examination Matters and What Makes It Difficult

Aug. 30 – Practicing Self-Examination: Your Life (Part 1)

Sept. 6 – BREAK

Sept. 13 – BREAK (RUF Sunday, Potluck)

Sept. 20 – Practicing Self-Examination: Your Life (Part 2)

Sept. 27 – Practicing Self-Examination: Your Heart (Part 1)

Oct. 4 – BREAK

Oct. 11 – Practicing Self-Examination: Your Heart (Part 2)

Group Discussions: What are you most looking forward to in this class? What do you hope God does in your life and heart through this class? What lingering questions do you still have about self-examination?