

Examine Yourself

#0368

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—April 9, 1976

Now, our text this evening is 2 Corinthians the 13th chapter and 5th verse. What's the first word? "Examine."

Students look forward to examinations, not always with joy, but nevertheless, they do look forward to them, don't they? Now, this is an interesting examination that's spoken of here. Who is to do the examination? Each one of us. And who is to be examined? The examiner and the examined are the same. Is that right?

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..." 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Another word for "prove" there is test. So, examine or test or prove your own selves to see whether you're in the faith.

Now, in the providence of God, a few days ago, I was led to a passage that helped me understand this better than I've ever understood it. In fact, it cleared up some questions in my mind. And I'm just as sure as I stand here that there are at least a few people, and maybe many in this audience tonight, that are going to get a view of this that you'll thank God as you go out these doors tonight that God led you to this chapel tonight.

This comment on this text is found in an article by the prophet to the remnant in the *Review and Herald* of February 28, 1907:

"'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.' Some conscientious souls..." *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

What kind of people? Conscientious souls. Are there any here tonight? Well, I hope everybody is. But not everybody that's conscientious does what this says here that I'm going to read. It says, "Some" conscientious souls. If you're conscientious, you might be one of these. And there's nothing wicked about what I'm going to read. It's just factual.

"Some conscientious souls on reading this..." *Ibid.*

Reading what? Our text. Let's read it again together:

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..." 2 Corinthians 13:5.

"Some conscientious souls, on reading this, immediately begin..." *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

Now, what does “immediately” mean? Right now. They immediately begin to do something. Won’t that be interesting now, to find out what it is that some conscientious souls immediately begin to do as soon as they read this text? Let’s see. Let’s read it once again. All together:

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves...” 2 Corinthians 13:5.

“Some conscientious souls, on reading this, immediately begin to criticize their every feeling and emotion” *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

Now, you notice what they don’t do. It doesn’t say they begin to criticize other people. We know that isn’t a good thing. They criticize themselves. Well, isn’t that what the text says? No, no. It doesn’t say that.

“Some conscientious souls, on reading this, immediately begin to criticize their every feeling and emotion. But this is not correct self-examination” *Ibid*.

Well. How many of you ever took an examination? May I see your hands? Yes. All right. There’s a set of questions, and it wouldn’t do to get a set of questions for a geometry examination mixed up with one in geography, would it? Or one in history mixed up with one on agriculture or gardening.

So, in examining ourselves, we want to be sure that we have the right set of questions. That’s the only way we can get the right answers.

“Some conscientious souls... immediately begin to criticize their every feeling and emotion. But this is not correct self-examination. It is not the petty feelings and emotions that are to be examined” *Ibid*.

What does “petty” mean? It means little, doesn’t it? Yes, small. Do we all have feelings? Oh, yes. Some of us are more conscious than others, but all of us have feelings. But this is not what we’re to do what with? Examine them.

“It is not the petty feelings and emotions that are to be examined. The life, the character, is to be measured by the only standard of character, God’s holy law” *Ibid*.

What is it that’s to be examined? The life, the character. Our works, not our feelings, bear witness of us. Now, let’s see. What is it that’s to measure character? God’s holy law.

Now, do the Ten Commandments deal with how we feel? Whether we feel happy or not so happy? Whether we feel full of faith and courage or whether we feel a bit depressed? Is that what the Ten Commandments deal with? No. The Ten Commandments deal with what? Our acts and the motives that prompt them; our

worship to God and our conduct toward us fellow men. And this is the, what? The standard, this is the measure, this is the yardstick, these are the scales, these are the balances of the sanctuary in which our lives are weighed by God.

Wouldn't it be a good plan, dear friends, in our self-examination to use the same set of questions that God uses in His examination of us? What do you say? Why, sure. And so, James 2:10 says:

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all. For that law that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law” James 2:10–11 (marginal reading).

Now, together on the 12th verse:

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” James 2:12.

What's another word for “judged” in our text tonight? Examined, or tested, or proved, or measured, or weighed. All these have to do with examination to see whether we measure up or not. And what is it that's *not* to be examined? Our petty feelings and emotions. Instead, we're to be measuring our, what? Our lives, our characters.

You know, I thank God for this, dear friends. And I know it's going to help us help hundreds of dear people who go along groaning and worried because they don't *feel* a certain way. And so, as this says, when they read, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith...” they look inside to see how they feel, to see whether they're in the faith or not. But that isn't the self-examination this is talking about.

Now, notice the next sentence:

“The feelings, whether encouraging or discouraging, should not be made the test of the spiritual condition” *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

If I'm breaking God's law, the fact that I feel like singing doesn't mean I'm a Christian.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”
1 John 2:4.

Where's that found? 1 John 2:4. Say it with me, will you.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”
1 John 2:4.

Now, you and I wouldn't want to call anybody a liar, but it's proper for God to call people a liar if they're telling lies, isn't it? Yes. And He says people that claim to know God and yet deliberately, rebelliously, willfully break His law are what? They're liars. I don't want to be a liar, do you?

And so, I'm to examine my life to see if I'm deliberately choosing to break one of God's commandments, as written on the stone, as magnified in His Word. If I am, no matter how happy I feel, I don't pass the examination. I don't pass it in heaven, and I shouldn't pass my own self-examination.

But on the other hand, oh dear friends, if I give my heart to Jesus and confess my sins to Him and make a full surrender, then I'm accepted in the beloved, and whether I feel lighthearted and joyous, or whether I feel weak and needy and down under, I'm still what? I'm still God's child.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God..." 1 John 3:2.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" Romans 8:1.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 5:1.

"If we confess our sins..." 1 John 1:9.

Then, what?

"...He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

Where's that one? 1 John 1:9. You know them well. That's good. Ah friends, thank God, these are the things that we're to measure by—what God has said, not how we feel. That has nothing in the world to do with it.

"The feelings, whether encouraging or discouraging, should not be made the test of the spiritual condition. By God's Word we are to determine our true standing before him. Many are bewildered on this point" *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

What does that mean, "bewildered"? They're confused, perplexed, uncertain. Many Christians are bewildered on this point—how do you stand with God. Now, I want to tell you something, friends. You want me to be frank and plain and true and factual, don't you? The Devil knows that a lot of Christians are uncertain and dissatisfied, and so he brings in an easy-going, cheap-grace program that's supposed to make them feel confident; to fix them up in five minutes, so they know they're saved, and they have nothing to worry about after that.

Dear friends, I want the reality. Paul said, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). Every day he had to face this matter of finding his feelings, his desires going one way, and the call of God going in another direction. And instead of doing the way his feelings or his desires would suggest, he did God's will. He was victorious.

Every day you and I must come anew to God's law and measure our lives. We must come anew to the cross and confess our weakness and the sinfulness of our nature, and receive anew that precious offering of the blood of Christ to cover our past failures and to keep changing our minds so that we love what God loves and hate what God hates.

"Many are bewildered on this point. When they are happy and joyous, they think that they are accepted by God. When a change comes, and they feel depressed, they think that God has forsaken them" *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

You know the difference between a compass and a weather vane, don't you? Which way does a compass point? It points north. That's why we use it, isn't it? Sure. Does it point north on cloudy days? On rainy days? Does it point north even at night? Does it? Just the same? Sure. And it doesn't quit it on sunny days, does it?

Now, which way does a weather vane point? Well, that depends on which way the wind is blowing. In fact, that's why it's used. And it's all right to use a weather vane to find out which way the wind is blowing. But it's *not* all right to use a weather vane to know which way is north. No, no. What do we want for that? A compass. And thank God, His promises are a compass. They always point in the same direction.

"Look unto *Me*, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" Isaiah 45:22.

Thank God, as we look to the cross, we are drawn as the steel to the magnet, and we know which way is home.

"God does not desire us to go through life filled with a distrust of Him. It is as much your duty to believe that God will fulfill His word and forgive you as it is to confess your sins" *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

I thought that was wonderful. Let's look at that a minute. Is it my duty to confess my sins? Sure. Is there any other way to have them forgiven? No. That's something that I'm to do.

"If we confess our sins..." 1 John 1:9.

But here's something else that's just as much my duty as confessing my sins. What is it? To believe that God forgives them. The text on that is Mark 11:24:

“...What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” Mark 11:24.

So, watch. As I follow Paul’s text tonight and examine myself, I’m not to be studying my feelings and emotions to see whether I feel a little happy, or a little freer of guilt, or a little more courageous, or a little more hopeful. No, no. I’m to examine my life to see if there’s some sin I haven’t confessed. And if there is, what am I to do? Confess it, give it up. When? Right now.

“But,” somebody says, “but oh, Brother Frazee, that’s the trouble. I don’t know whether I’ve confessed all my sins or not.”

Well, bless your heart, just confess the ones you know about. Those are the only ones you *can* confess. God’s not unreasonable. Oh, no. He’s more anxious to cleanse us and accept us than we ever are to get accepted. And so, He says:

“If we confess our sins...” 1 John 1:9.

Obviously, the ones that we know about. We couldn’t confess any others. Then:

“...He is faithful and just to...” 1 John 1:9.

Do what?

“...forgive us our sins...” 1 John 1:9.

Somebody says, “But oh, I’m so afraid there’s something I forgot.”

Well, ask God to bring it to your mind. If He doesn’t bring it to your mind, you can’t confess it, can you? If you do confess it, it proves that it was brought to your mind. And so, when you confess that which you know about, then you’re to do what? Believe that He does what? Forgives you and cleanses you and accepts you. This is the way to conduct the examination, dear friend. So that we go away, knowing that we’ve passed, through faith in Jesus Christ. We’ve been accepted. We’ve passed, dear friends, with a hundred percent.

You know, I thank God this examination is different from the examinations of this world. Up in one of my files at home, I have my eighth-grade diploma. I have the marks that I got in the various subjects up there on the back of it, in reading and in penmanship and arithmetic and grammar and Bible, so forth.

But you know, whatever that grade was, whether it was 97 or 87 or 75 or 100, there’s nothing I can do now that changes that. Is that correct? That stands there. But oh, when we come to this examination in the light of God’s law, and we go down through the commandments and find we failed on this point and found we failed on that point, and we remember reading in James 2:10 that to break one point is to be what? Guilty of all. We come down through, and as the result of our self-examination, if we’re honest, we give ourselves a grade of what? Zero. But that isn’t

the end of the examination. Oh no. That's to get us ready for these wonderful promises we've just been looking at.

"If we confess our sins, He is..." 1 John 1:9.

What?

"...faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

You remember that beautiful vision in Zechariah the third chapter? Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord clothed with filthy garments, and Satan standing there accusing and resisting him. And the Lord Jesus Christ takes all those filthy garments away and clothes him with a change of raiment, even His own precious life, and puts a crown, a holy miter upon his head [a paraphrase of Zechariah 3:1–5].

Oh, that's to show what happens when you and I come to Jesus in our weakness, our unworthiness, give ourselves to Him and let Him take away the filthy garments and give us His righteousness. It all depends upon His *doing* it, and His *doing* it depends upon our choosing it. We cannot do it of ourselves, but He waits for our consent.

"Believe that they [your sins] are pardoned... It is as much your duty to believe that God will fulfill His word and forgive you as it is to confess your sins. Exercise faith in God... Many..." *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

Oh, I was struck with this. I marked it with a different color than anything else on the page. Listen:

"Many who long to see others resting in the pardoning love of Christ do not rest in it for themselves" *Ibid.*

Seeking to encourage others to be restful in God, but they're not restful. Seeking to help others to find the peace of God, but they haven't found it. Oh, is there anybody like that here tonight? Passing out the water of life to others, but thirsty in your own heart? Trying to get others to find the joy of the Lord, but your own heart worried, uncertain, perplexed, bewildered? Listen:

"Many who long to see others resting in the pardoning love of Christ do not rest in it for themselves. But how can they possibly lead others to show simple childlike faith in the heavenly Father when they measure His love by their own feelings?" *Ibid.*

I was struck by that last expression. They, "measure His love." Whose love? God's love. By what? Their own feelings. What a graphic way to put it.

"Does Jesus love you?"

“Well, I wonder. I wonder. I thought so yesterday. I felt so happy, but today I got a letter that I don’t know what to do about. I wonder where God is. I wonder what He thinks of me anyway. Perhaps, I’m going through some trial.”

Did Job wonder where God was when he went through the darkness? Yes. Ah friends, we’re poor, weak human beings. But listen, let’s say what Job finally said:

“He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” Job 23:10.

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him...” Job 13:15.

I *will* trust in Him. I’ll believe Him.

“...I *know* that my Redeemer liveth...” Job 19:25.

Praise God for certainty in the Word of God.

“Let us trust God’s word implicitly, remembering that we are His sons and daughters. Let us train ourselves to believe His word” *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

Do you know how anybody trains anybody, himself or anybody else, in anything? To do the same thing in the same way over and over again. That’s what the people that train dogs are told to do. If you want a dog to do something, tell him the same thing in the same way again and again. That’s the way you train a child, isn’t it? Yes.

Now, tonight we’re learning to train whom? Ourselves. To do what? To believe God’s Word. Friends, that means, if I understand what it’s talking about, that when I read a promise in the Word of God, I’m to say, “Lord, I believe it.”

“What makes you believe it?”

“Oh, I just feel it in here.”

No, no. I don’t feel it in here necessarily. I read it in here. What’s in here, in my poor heart, may change, but:

“... the Word of God... liveth and abideth for ever” 1 Peter 1:23.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” Hebrews 13:8.

As I heard a friend of mine put it, “Think of the time in your past experience when Jesus seemed the closest to you of anything in your whole life. Remember, He’s just the same right now as He was then.”

Look ahead to the future of eternity. Think of all the wonderful experiences you're going to have with Christ in the hereafter. And remember, He's just the same right now as He will be then.

"Jesus Christ the *same* yesterday, and to day, and for ever"
Hebrews 13:8.

And I'm to *train* myself to do what?

[Audience] Believe.

Now, there's a negative side to this work of training, as well as the positive. Expression deepens impression, and so when I read the promise of God I am to train myself to say, "Lord, I believe it." Negatively, I am to utterly refuse to express a doubt, a disbelief, a question. As the prophet of God puts it in *Christ Object Lessons*:

"Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do, you will lose much" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 147.

What was the first word in that sentence? Never. How often is that? Never is never. You mean I'm *never* to allow myself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way? That's what it says. I'll tell you one very fine thing about that. A thing that you're *never* to do, you never have to stop to think, "Is this the time to do it?" It's always the time to *not* do it.

"*Never* allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 147.

You think of Paul and Silas down there in the dungeon at Philippi at midnight with their feet in the stocks and their backs bleeding, and they did what? Sang. Now, if there was ever a time to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way, I think that would be it, wouldn't you? At midnight in a dark dungeon with your feet in the stocks and your back bleeding, but *never* means *never*. And so, they didn't talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. They did what we studied about two weeks ago tonight. They sang, and song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. You remember that from two weeks ago, don't you? All right.

"Let us train ourselves to believe his word... Do you believe He will do as He has said? Then, after you have complied with the conditions, carry no longer the burden of your sins. Let it roll upon the Saviour" *Review and Herald*, February 28, 1907.

You remember in Bunyan's allegory that man that left the City of Destruction and started out for the Celestial City, and on his back was a heavy burden that try every way he couldn't get rid of. And so, he toiled along day after day carrying that heavy burden, heavy burden. He tried different ways. He listened to different people talk, but nothing worked. He still had the burden. But thank God, he still kept going.

And there are many Christians that are still going and going in the Christian way. And still they have this burden of worry and concern over their sins and over their spiritual condition.

And so, Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* goes along with that burden. But you remember that one day in his journey up the path he came to a place where there was a cross. And he stood and looked. And as he gazed, he felt those strings loosen, and the load fell off his back. And it rolled and rolled down into an empty grave.

And Bunyan concludes, "And I saw it no more." Thank God, my friends.

"At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!"
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #163 (refrain).

We used to sing that. Anybody here know that? Well, let's sing it.

"At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!"
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #163 (refrain).

Amen and amen. Now, if there's somebody who would like to speak tonight to God's glory, do it. Listen. If you spoke last week or the week before, suppose you sit back and listen for a while tonight and let the folks that haven't spoken for at least two or three weeks, let them speak.

Now, you folks that *didn't* speak the last two weeks, you press your way right *up* here. Some of you I know didn't speak because you're visitors here tonight and you haven't been here for a while. And all the visitors are invited to share their witness with us. And we'd love to hear from any of our visitors from far and near. And of course, the people on campus, or in the community, just provided that you didn't speak last week or the week before. All right.

[Testimony meeting follows]

[Elder Frazee] Thank you, brother. I'm glad you said that because it leads me to pick up a thought, I'm not sure that I clinched when we went through it. I was speaking about my own examinations back when I was in the eighth grade, and I didn't get a hundred in all of them. And we were looking through the law, and we agreed that if we were honest, we'd give ourselves a grade of what? Zero.

But the beautiful thing about this examination is when Jesus leads us to His cross, and we let go the burden of sin, and His righteousness is put to our credit, then we pass not 75 percent or 85 or 95 or 99 but how much? A hundred percent. Is that really true?

Are you accepted just as if you had not sinned? Folks, you can't get any better than that. That's a good passing grade.

All right, brother.

[Testimony service continuing.]

[Elder Frazee] You know, there would be about four billion ways to say this because there are four billion people in the world, and every one of us must know it for himself. But let me make this aspect of it very simple, dear friends. Sin is not so much something we do. It's an attitude. Not so much an act—it's a state of mind. Sin is rebellion against God. Sin is rebellion against God. Sin is spitting in the face of Jesus in the judgment hall. Sin is driving the nails in His hands, on Calvary. Sin is mocking Him in His dying agonies. That's what sin is.

Now, God can deal with our weakness, and He can deal with our past rebellion if we give it up. God isn't waiting until we, I was going to say brush our teeth after every meal and do all the other health habits and have a card that has the stars, you know, for everything that we've done. No. God can accept me and wants to accept me right now, provided I'll lay down my arms and make a full surrender, give up my sword and accept Him as my Lord and Savior.

Now, I'm to do that moment by moment, and I'm not to be looking to my failures or to my attainments. But there is *one* thing that I must settle moment by moment: do I this moment say to Jesus, "No more rebellion. I'm yours. No more rebellion. I'm yours."

This doesn't merit us anything, but it opens the way for Christ's merits to be applied to our account. Jesus can cover all our failures, and He can cover all our past sins. But Jesus cannot cover present, active, deliberate rebellion. He can't do that. This would be treason to the government of God, and Christ is not about to engage in that sort of treason.

And that's what's involved if we confess our sins. It isn't just some legal acknowledgment of them. It's a matter of choosing that what we chose yesterday to do, this moment we repudiate. In other words, we wish we hadn't done it. We choose to give it up.

...Thank you, brother. So glad for this. This helped me—what you said and what you gave me a chance to say.

"At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!"
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #163 (refrain).

The great reason why we're to come to the cross day by day isn't so that we can put in so many minutes and chalk up a good mark for ourselves. It's so that

beholding, our attitude will be deeper and deeper in love toward that man that hangs on the tree and in sorrow for what we've done to hurt Him. This is the change that took place in that dying thief on His right. At nine o'clock Friday morning, that thief was in rebellion against God, against society, against righteousness, against everything. But by noon, bless the Lord, beholding that Man on the middle cross, under the influence of the Spirit of God, His spirit had become so softened and tendered that he cried out, "Lord, remember me."

And Jesus said, "I tell you today, not after you've spent so long doing this and that and the other thing, but right *now*, you will be with me. I'm telling you *now*. You have my word for it. You're assured. And he died safe [a paraphrase of Luke 23:43].

And if any of us are ever saved, we'll be saved the same way the thief was, beholding Christ and giving ourselves to Him, giving up our rebellion and accepting His blood to cleanse us.

[Testimony meeting continued]

[Elder Frazee] Well, we'd better sing it again, hadn't we?

"At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!"
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #163 (refrain).

Now, there's plenty more in the kitchen, folks, and if any of you'd like a second helping, put down page 111 of *Messages to Young People*. That's easy to remember in case you didn't bring a pencil, one, one, one—MYP 111. There's a chapter that begins there on living faith, one of the most wonderful things ever written. It'll just thrill your soul.

All right. Shall we stand? If anybody here tonight has a special burden and you'd like to be remembered in the closing prayer, just raise your hand. Bless your hearts. Friend, God sees yours, as if you were the only one here.

Dear Lord, we know you've heard us tonight as we have looked to the cross. And we're leaving our sins and letting the burden roll on Jesus. And we're so glad that we can go out to tell others the good news that as they surrender, Thou dost accept them. As they give up their rebellion, Thou dost enlist them as soldiers in the loyal army. And we thank Thee in Christ's wonderful name, amen.

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