

7 Principles of Self-Examination

I. Introduction

A. A responsibility all Christians have is to regularly examine ourselves. Consider seven principles Scripture teaches related to proper self-examination. **2 Corinthians 13:5**

II. Fix Self First

A. What can be much easier than examining oneself is examining others. This is especially true when it comes to finding fault. While Scripture does not demean the importance of helping others make needed correction, the one each of us should foremost fix is self. **Matthew 7:5; 2 Samuel 12:7**

III. Use God's Measure of Success

A. Self-examination is not about comparing ourselves to the *world's* standard of success. It's easy to have an inflated view of oneself based on possessions, popularity, earthly accomplishments, education, and the like. The Lord's assessment of what makes one's life fruitful uses very different criteria. **Revelation 3:17; 1 Timothy 6:17**

IV. Use God's Doctrine

A. Self-examination is also not about seeing how we measure up to man's standard of right and wrong. Examining ourselves based on our opinions of righteousness (or that of another fallible person's) is another easy way to develop an inflated view of self. **Mark 7:5; Colossians 2:23**

V. Compare Self to the Perfect Standard

A. Similarly, self-examination is not about examining how we measure up to the *conduct* of other people. While God-pleasing Christians can be looked to as good examples whose faith can help strengthen our own (cf. **1 Cor. 11:1**), generally speaking, self-examination is about asking how we measure up to the perfect standard of God's Word and the perfect life of God's Son. **2 Corinthians 10:12; John 7:48**

VI. Examine All of God's Will for Us

A. As we compare ourselves to the "measuring stick" of God's Word, it's key to consider *all* parts of God's will for our lives. "Picking and choosing" certain commands to emphasize while ignoring others can be a recipe for pride and self-deception. **Matthew 23:23; Luke 18:9-12**

VII. Look At Things Honestly

A. When we examine our lives, we must do so with honesty. To see ourselves as God does, we need a sincere approach to self-evaluation, instead of a pre-determined conviction that we have nothing to change. **Acts 17:11; Luke 8:15**

VIII. Seek to Grow

A. Part of examining ourselves honestly is doing so with a desire to grow and improve. The Word of God has the ability to yield such growth, but we must *enable* the Word by desiring and pursuing this growth, instead of being afraid to find areas of our lives that need improvement. **1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18**