

CLEANSING OUT THE LEAVEN

George Tabac 4-1-01

As part of the Passover Celebration we are told in:

Ex 13:7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

As a result we are told that every Israelite scoured and searched with a candle into every nook and cranny to remove even the tiniest crumb from their cupboards and house overall.

Ex 12:15 adds a severe penalty for non-observance of this type. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

"Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

Why such a severe penalty just for having or eating a little crumb of leavened bread?

We believe our heavenly father instituted this ritual primarily as a lesson for each of us.

Leaven, which is yeast, consisted of a small piece of fermented dough kept over from a former baking which was kneaded into a fresh batch of dough. Once inserted it quickly spread until the entire loaf was soon leavened.

This fermentation process, implies a process of corruption which we realize is a symbol of sin.

Even as Paul brings to our attention in:

1 Cor. 5:6-8 Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

The lesson of Paul is clear, if we permit even just a little sin in our lives without taking proper cleansing steps, it can very easily grow until it permeates our entire being.

Thus he is reminding us that at the first sign of leaven or sin in our lives, we must strive to purge it out quickly, lest it subtle influence overpowers our new creature.

Why did the Passover Feast of Unleavened bread last 7 days?

Seven we realize is a symbol of completeness. Thus we believe cleansing the house and eating unleavened bread for seven days, is symbolizing that everyone who will ever receive the ultimately blessing of the blood of the Passover lamb, must cleanse themselves completely from sin in every form.

(This would be true of the Church now, and all who will ever receive life in the kingdom.) All will have to cleanse themselves completely from sin in every form, before receiving everlasting life.

Another lesson that was portrayed in the Passover picture is one that we believe was intended to be followed through in the memorial season especially, but would aptly apply to periodic times through out the year as well.

The Israelites being instructed to make a thorough searching of their homes to cleanse them from even the smallest crumb of leaven, seems to be a type in itself.

The antitype being that we as God's children are similarly to make a search, not of our houses but of our hearts. To take a self examination as it were, looking for even the tiniest sin or we might say the smallest infraction that keeps us from fulfilling our consecration vows.

For that's what sin is, anything that causes us to miss the mark of perfection, or of fulfilling our consecration vows. It can be sins of commission or sins of omission.

The intent of the picture with its strong consequence for those who didn't obey, was to show us the extreme importance of this searching, or examining of ourselves. For without it, we would not realize the things we need to rid ourselves of, or to do better in.

Thus as we celebrate the Memorial of the Passover Antitype, may it bring to our minds not only the experiences of the death of our Master, but an inward look of our consecrated walk.

To examine self as we reflect on what we covenanted to do. To follow him in sacrificial service, to cleanse our selves of all impurities, and to develop the fruits of the spirit in our hearts.

Why is periodic self examination important?

In Jer. 17:9,10 (NLT) We read:

"The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I know! I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve."

Yes, our fallen natural mind is most deceitful. It doesn't like a life of sacrificial service of following in Jesus footsteps. Thus it continually tries to justify itself, it makes up excuses for our shortcomings, it tries to mislead by convincing our new creature it's doing great at all times, that theirs no need to try any harder, or live a more circumspect life.

But Gal. 6:3,4 counters our fallen flesh,

If any one thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work,

In Psa.139:24 King David realized it's often difficult to examine ourselves realistically and he prays for God to help him see himself as he really was.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

May we in a similar way pray for God to help us examine ourselves properly so that we may see ourselves as he sees us, and be able to purge out that which is unbecoming or needs improvement.

The Apostle Paul shows the importance of self examination in:

1 Cor. 11:28,31,32 NAS

But a man must examine himself,... if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Paul in essence is telling us the more we examine and judge ourselves correctly, and then take steps to improve on our shortcomings, the less chastening we will receive from our heavenly father.

In 2 Cor.13:5 (ISV) he continues:

Keep examining yourselves to see whether you are continuing in the faith. Test yourselves!

The Greek word used here for Test or Prove yourself is stronger than used before for examine, - examine yourselves. This word, for test or prove, refers to assaying or trying metals by the powerful action of heat.

The thought being that we should make the most thorough, the most depthful, the most accurate appraisal of our character possible to see whether it will stand the scrutiny of God's testing.

It would be well for this examination to thorough and specific. To include our words, our thoughts, our feelings, our conduct, our motives, our prayer life. Are we gaining victory over the sin that so easily besets us.

In short, it would be well to faithfully and honestly examine everything which goes to make up or to mar our Christian character.

It's just good to pause occasionally in life, and take an account of our standing in the sight of God. For it would seem we would make the most progress, when we can see ourselves realistically.

Knowing what we are deficient in, is the first step in removing those things that are disliked by God, and engage in those things that are a blessing for him to see in our lives.

Before getting into some of the specifics we would like to examine, I would like consider two possible extremes we would caution against that could be possibilities.

The first could happen with someone who is truly living very close to the Lord but who wants to do perfectly. Because of a very good sensitive conscience, they may become overly discouraged with themselves because of their lack of perfection. As a result they are continually berating themselves, which only leads to paralyzes hindering proper growth.

This would be the last thing the Lord would desire. None of us are perfect, we all at times will slip, we'll fall, we'll fail, but we must pick ourselves up and keep trying to do better until our last breath.

We must ever strive to do the very best we can, and then leave the final judgment to the Lord.

Prov. 24:16 tells us, "A just man falleth 7 times and riseth up again."

The Lord knows we can't be perfect in the flesh, but what he does expect is for each of us to have perfect will and desire, and then strive to do the best we are capable of.

On the other hand we would want to caution against complacency. It's possible for one who may be making very little progress to allow the flesh's rationalizations to fool one into thinking their doing great and have no need to examine themselves.

May we avoid either of these extremes. We don't want to become overly discouraged because of lack of rapid growth.

Nor do we want to become complacent, by hiding our head in the sand ignoring our weaknesses or excusing them away.

Perhaps each one of us here – whether in the Truth 50 days – or 50 years – have something that needs greater determination and discipline on our part.

To realize it and admit it could be a stimulus for us to determine to do it!

Only each of us knows what they are. May we now go up alone into the mountains of Spiritual Thought, as Christ went alone into the Garden to look deeply into our hearts, trying to truly see them as God sees them.

Self Examination Outline:

With this point in mind, we have prepared an outline of various qualities of character, activities and practices that we might like to examine in ourselves. I could assure you I need it as much for myself as anyone. For we all have shortcomings of one kind or another.

We'll pass it out later so brethren can further reflect on it in the privacy of our homes during this Memorial Week.

The outline serves 3 purposes:

1. Helps us to consider specifically each aspect one at a time.
2. It can help us to in turn evaluate each quality in our selves.
3. Then periodically we can use the outline again as a continual reminder and to see the progress we have made since our previous evaluation.

Self Control:

Developing a greater self-control in any area can be developed in the same way we develop a weak muscle, by light exercises each day which you gradually increase in intensity.

Each day, practice some easy exercises of self discipline. Simple things of small self denials, or doing something you don't find particularly pleasant to do.

Bro. Russell did this. He loved peanuts, but to practice discipline for a time he decided he would carry a handful in his pocket but would refuse to eat them to develop further discipline.

There are many similar small self denials you may want to try.

You may try Jumping out of bed the moment the alarm goes off.

If you really like coffee breaks, you may want to refuse to partake even today, just to show yourself you can discipline yourself if you so choose.

May I suggest that we all this Memorial Week consider shutting the Television Set off entirely. Pull the plug for yourself and your children's benefit, even for the news. The self discipline I'm sure will prove helpful in many ways.

You may want to try fasting a meal from time to time,

Or go without the night time snack you enjoy so much.

In other words, go out of your way to do anything that would not be your normal preference.

Setting these short relatively easy goals as exercises of discipline, can have a great effect on developing our ability, confidence, and determination to achieve the greater more difficult goals of our character development.

In 2 Tim. 2:15 we're told to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." This includes not only studying God's Word, but studying ourselves.

We must recognize what our human weaknesses are and strive with every fiber of our being to exercise more self control to overcome them.

May we each judge, how strong is my ability to control myself?

Expressing Appreciation:

Prov. 3:27

“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”

In other words, when we see another either in the world or one of our brethren who truly was a blessing to another in some way, may we tell them so, expressing our appreciation for their thoughtfulness.

We all are blessed when we feel loved, and appreciated. Especially when we may be going through a difficult period feeling hardly anyone notices us or cares.

Let us bestow our bouquets of appreciation on others while they are still alive and can appreciate it. A few words can lift the spirits so very much.

It’s something we need to do as parents and children with one another, --Husbands and wives with one another, and brethren with brethren.

“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”

How readily do we express appreciation to others when it would be appropriate?

COMPASSION:

In a similar vein we are admonished to express sympathy and compassion to others.

1 Pet.3:8 NIV Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

WE realize as we go through life’s trying experiences, it’s for the purpose that we may become merciful and sympathetic high priests in the kingdom.

But as this scripture brings out, we can begin to fulfill this privilege of being sympathetic high priest even now, to one another.

What a blessing it is to be the recipient of others love, sympathy as they desire to encourage you by prayer, visits, cards, letters, phone calls when your going through a trying experiences of illness, bereavement, loneliness, or what ever it might be.

I know It was for me recently, for which I want to express my deep appreciation. What a wonderful family we have the privilege of being part of as we all strive to lift the spirits of one another.

It helps so much to know someone has thought of you and is remembering you in prayer.

So may each of us as we examine self, reflect how well am I doing in demonstrating my sympathy and concern for others.

HUMILITY

One of the strong traits of fallen flesh is pride. Daily do we have to strive against the tendency of the flesh to call attention to ourselves, or our accomplishments.

God helps us with many admonitions:

Mt 6:2 When thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, that you may have glory of men. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

1 Pet. 5:6 God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

Luke 14:11 “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Prov. 27:2 “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.”

We have countless scriptures to show how God dislikes pride and desires no flesh to ever glory in themselves.

Gal. 6:14 “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

May we examine ourselves. How well am I doing in developing true humility?

ACTIVITY IN THE VINEYARD

Matt. 5:14-16 “Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

We ask? How long Lord? God answers in the words of:

Isa. 6:11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

As feet members of the Church we have a great responsibility.

Reaping the last grains of wheat!
Feeding the Great Company!
Bringing a ray of hope to mankind overall!

God wants us to continue “Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,”

We may wonder WHY? There’s so few results? And we know God could raise up the very stones to cry out if he chose to call out the last grains of wheat.

The most important reason he wants the Church to do it, is because what activity does for us!

That’s may sound strange. What does witness activity do for us?

It gives us the opportunity to lay down our life in sacrifice. It provides a testing ground, to show our willingness to spend and be spent.

But in all our activities may we ever strive to ever have the proper motive.

In the Reprints there’s a story of a minister that felt fairly good about his witnessing until one night he had a dream where an angel came and weighed his Zeal in a balance scale. Sure enough it was 100 percent. But then the angel analyzed the ingredients:

14 parts – to satisfy guilt feeling. 15 parts – prestige for the church. 22 parts – to be seen of others. 23 parts – love of man. 26 parts love of God.

May it not be so with us,

But rather may our motives ever be pure, and as described in:

Vol. 1 – Page 347:

“If you give diligence to the word of God, and receive its truths into a good, honest, consecrated heart, it will beget in you such a love for God and his plan, and such a desire to tell the good tidings to preach the gospel, that it will become the all-absorbing theme of life thereafter.”

Our longing to witness to God’s Plan should be an all absorbing theme of our life.

Our desire should become so strong that we will want to participate in every activity we possibly can.

We will want to never ever leave our home without a tract or booklet on our person.

In our self examination may we ask ourselves:

Am I involved with witness activity as God would desire?

Do I always have a tract or booklet when I leave the house?

HOSPITALITY

Rom. 12:13 NE “Contribute to the needs of God’s people, and practice hospitality.”

1 Pet. 4:8,9 NE "Above all, keep your love for one another at full strength,... Be Hospitable to one another without complaining. Whatever gift each of you may have received use it in service to one another, like good stewards dispensing the grace of God in its varied forms."

Sometimes we hesitate feeling we have to have an elaborate dinner before we have some one over. But an elaborate dinner is not what's important, it could be plain sandwiches, hamburgers, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza, what ever.

In fact, you don't have to have a meal at all. It could be after supper and just have desert.

It's not the meal that's important but the fellowship, the uplifting feeling you give to someone, because you cared about them and wanted to share their fellowship.

We all need the warmth – the understanding – the appreciation and love of one another.

We ask ourselves, Should I be expressing my love by hospitality more fully?

STUDY

2 Tim. 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

We all realize studying God's Word is an absolute necessity for the New Creature.

It's God's instruction book to us, to know his will, his principals, his plan. We must continually feed on it that we might grow into the character likeness of Christ.

Considering how to study would be a major treatise in itself.

But if I may I would like to make just a few suggestions.

When preparing for any study, **don't stop until you have learned something you never knew before.**

Find other tie in scriptures, or look up other translations, or Greek and Hebrew definitions, or other Volume or Reprint comments, or history confirmations.

Write your findings in a notebook, which has one or more pages for each page in the volume, and then share them with the brethren in the study.

Studying till you find something that's new to you, that confirms and goes beyond what's in the paragraph or study outline, will continue to make study be alive and challenging.

May we each examine our study habits, and our attendance at meetings. Are we studying enough?

Are my priorities right in view of the number of meetings I attend and amount of studying I do?.

EVIL SPEAKING

James 4:11 “Speak not evil one of another brethren.

Prov. 26:20-22 “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”

How often a careless word of judgment of the character of another often innocently spoken, brings sorrow and heartache to the innocent.

It doesn't even have to be words. A shrug of the shoulders – a certain look of the eye, or even silence, can ruin the reputation someone has been building for years.

May we strive not to add to one another's burden the pain of our judgment. Neither in public nor with close friends, nor with husbands and wives.

May we strive to remember Pr 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Let us cultivate charity in judging, striving to see potential good in others – rather than looking to discover hidden evil. Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Could I do better in refraining from speaking about others faults?

Love:

Matt. 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

1 Cor. 13:1-3

- 1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
- 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
- 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

The Apostle Paul here in a few words brings out what the height of Christian attainment is to be.

It isn't speaking eloquently, it isn't being the greatest student who could understand every scripture and prophecy, or can thoroughly quote the Harvest Message, it isn't having the greatest faith, it isn't being the most sacrificial,

NO we realize though all these are helpful and should be striven for, **BUT** they are all, - only a means to an end.

They are all meaningless in themselves, if they are not resulting in our developing love to it's fullest degree.

But we may wonder could what Paul is saying ever really happen. That one could actually be such a great student that they could understand all prophecies and have full knowledge of all the scriptures, and all the harvest writings, and yet not have Love?

We realize Paul is speaking hypothetically, but it could happen. For there could be many possibilities to motivate such studies. To look good in others eyes – to gain respect – its expected of us – to get elected, - to ease a guilty conscience, what ever.

Unless the motive for our studies, our activity, our sacrifices, in fact unless the motive for everything we do is to become more Godlike in the development of LOVE, and the fruits of the spirit, then Paul is telling us it will be of little or no value.

R. 4443 – “None will ever have full divine approval or eternal life on any plane of being, without the full establishment in the heart of love.

We realize all knowledge we lack will be given in an instant if faithful, but without proper unselfish love we will never reach other side.

Thus as we look inward in trying to evaluate our progress, may we ever strive to develop more love.

Do I love and pray for my enemies? Do I love my brethren I differ with? Do I pray for them by name? Can I show my love more fully?

Submission in Trial:

Our Father has given us many admonitions and promises to help us be submissive to God's providences.

Phi. 4:11,12 “For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound:

Rom. 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.”

1 Cor. 10:13 No trial has assailed you except what belongs to man, and God is faithful who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability, but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it.

Rom. 5:2-4 “Let us rejoice in the hope of the divine splendor that is to be ours. More than this: let us even rejoice in our present sufferings because we know that suffering trains us to endure, and endurance brings proof that we have stood the test, and this proof is the ground of hope.”

As Sr. Sundbom used to remind us, – our trials are worth millions – let’s not waste any of them. By that she meant, - let’s not murmur or rebel against them, but to peaceably acquiesce to them.

Our peace of mind is not dependent on what happens to us, or on what we have – who we are – or where we are, but on our mental attitude we choose to have as we encounter life’s experiences.

As we progress along the narrow way, may we ever develop more of the condition of heart that can peacefully accept what ever our father’s providences may permit.

We ask ourselves, how well am I doing in reaching the point of peacefully accepting what ever the Lord permits?

Forgiveness and Mercy:

We have many admonitions on the importance of forgiveness and mercy.

Matt. 18:21,22 “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven.”

Matt. 6:14,15 NE “If you forgive others the wrongs they have done, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, then the wrongs you have done will not be forgiven by your Father.”

Matt. 7:1,2 NE “For as you judge others, so you will yourselves be judged, and whatever measure you deal out to others will be dealt back to you.”

Mt 5:7 Blessed [are] the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

What a gracious provision our father has made. In direct proportion that we forgive and show mercy to others, in that same proportion our father will be forgive and be merciful to us.

With the same severity we judge others, our father will judge us.

May these principals mellow our hearts to forgive and extend mercy and compassion most readily.

May we not wait until someone has to come on bended knee to plead forgiveness – but rather may we at the slightest indication be willing to forgive.

As Jesus exemplified in the Prodigal Son Parable,

And with Stephen who while being stoned to death prays, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

Do we easily and gladly forgive from the heart, and not only forgive but forget.

Envy and Jealousy

When others seem to have much and we have relatively little, we need to be on guard that we don't allow a bit of envy to come into our mind.

However we realize that envy could come into our hearts over many things, even when we are doing quite well financially.

It's so easy if we're not careful, for the flesh to envy the popularity of others, or their talents, or their position in the ecclesia or their privileges of service, or their abundance of free time, or their seeming lack of trials, or what have you.

When ever our flesh feels a touch of envy, we realize that in measure a bit of pride may be entering the picture. Making us feel that we deserve better.

If others can have it, (what ever it might be,) I should have it to.

But may we remember each of our trials are custom made to be exactly what **WE NEED**. Others seeming abundance, or prominent position may be a greater trial for them than what you can imagine, and may not bring them inner peace and happiness at all.

Our Father reminds us:

S of S 8:6 "Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

Gal. 5:25,26 TLB

If we are living now by the Holy Spirit's power, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading every part of our lives. Then we won't need to look for honors and popularity, which lead to jealousy and hard feelings.

1 Cor. 13:4 NIV

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

Phil. 2:3 TLB

Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others better than yourself.

Sometimes envy comes because of discouragement of ones lack of abilities and thoughts of insignificance when compared to others.

May we remember there are many members to body, each and everyone of which is important and supplies a vital need to function of the body.

As Paul said in:

1 Cor. 12:18,19,22 "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? Nay, much more those members of the body, **which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.**"

Yes, when the church is complete – every talent and every trait of character will be represented – so each ones experiences are tailor made.

If we are discouraged with our seeming insignificance, may we just look around us to see how each and everyone has an attribute that is outstanding, including yourself.

As we look inward may we ask ourselves:

Do I find myself envious of one of our brethren's possessions, talents, knowledge, popularity, amount of free time, lack of trials or position?

Sacrifice:

In Luke 9:23,24 Jesus says to us:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

This scripture prompts each of us to ask ourselves the questions, to what degree am I losing my life in our Lord's cause? Should I be denying myself more?

Each of us is a free moral agent, with liberty to choose for ourselves what we will do, or not do, to what degree we will deny ourselves, to what degree we will loose our life in serving the Lord the truth and the brethren.

WE know the flesh will prompt continually in the direction of saving our life. It whispers don't go to an extreme, you know tomorrows another day, let someone else do it, you've served enough it's time to relax.

May our New Creature counter with a reminder echoing this scripture, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

Virtue went out of our Lord as he healed the multitude – so must it be for us when we're fulfilling our sacrificial vows. Strength, vitality, energy must be freely given with Pleasure, not with a half hearted long faced attitude of I guess I have to.

Rom. 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present you bodies a living sacrifice.

"If so be that we suffer with [him], we shall reign with him."

Thus when decisions confront us may we ask ourselves

Will it be saving my life more or losing it more?
Will it be denying self or serving self?
Will it give me more time to serve – or less?
Is it possible for me to work less so I can serve more?
Will it be pleasing the flesh more or the New creature.

Luke 9:23,24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”

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Prayer

We realize that proper prayer is absolutely crucial for the New Creature.

Communion with our Heavenly Father should begin, the moment the alarm goes off, continue repeatedly throughout the day, until on bended knee we end the day.

In our self examination we want to reflect on our prayer life. Is it as we would desire?

For a few moments may we reflect on some possible hindrances from having the communion we would desire.

Our prayers may possibly be too short at night because we are quite tired. A remedy would be to pray earlier in the evening.

Or we may find kneeling is very difficult or causes pain. Our father understands our condition. Thus it would be better if it results in deeper communion, to sit, or lie down. As long as our heart is in a proper figurative kneeling condition, we can come to our father in prayer in any position, location, or condition.

If our mind tends to wander, try praying out loud, or in a whisper looking up, with eyes open if it helps.

Our prayer may be too general. Thanking the Lord for all his blessings is not as desirable as going over specific blessings of the day.

Praying for the Lord to just in general bless all the brethren, is not as desirable as pausing and mentioning specific brethren by name reflecting on their condition.

This will in turn remind us to follow through if possible in sending them a card, visiting or phoning them to help uplift their spirits.

Praying for the Lord to just in general forgive all our sins and shortcomings, is not as desirable as mentioning the specific shortcomings of the day, and praying for the fathers forgiveness and help to overcome them.

Recalling Heb. 4:15,16 NE “For ours is not a high priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who, because of his likeness to us, has been tested every way,

only without sin. Let us therefore confidently approach the throne of our gracious God, where we may receive mercy and in his grace find timely help.”

In any case, as we examine self, may we reflect on whether our communion with our heavenly Father is as close, warm, and deep, as we would desire?

In Conclusion:

As we each examine ourselves I'm sure we all find areas we would like to do better in.

It could result either in our being discouraged, or trying harder.

May we remember the reason why our Lord has admonished us to examine ourselves from time to time. It's not to discourage us, but for us to get to recognize the areas we need to do better in, and to instill a greater determination to improve upon them.

Hopefully to achieve The Height of Christian character attainment as expressed in a paragraph on R. 5913:

“Some Christian writer has well said: “Wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated heart, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed.

Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life.

A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested;

pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of His will;

sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle;

a yielding to the wishes of others (where there is no conflicting principle involved).

And an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety; deliverance from care and fear, -

all these, and many other similar graces are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is hid with Christ in God.”

May we each examine ourselves to see what we must yet change to have this fully describe our spiritual condition.