

Spiritual Discipline Self-Examination

Self-examination is a spiritual practice that challenges us to take an objective look at our spiritual condition at any given moment. Many times, we find it's really much easier for us to focus on the character flaws of another, rather than paying attention to and seeing our own.

[Jesus asks] ⁴¹"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴²How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

- Luke 6:41-42

Developing the practice of routine self-examination is one way to live out the challenge of this scripture. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, practiced this discipline and encouraged others to do the same. He came up with 22 questions that he asked himself daily during his personal devotion time specifically for this purpose (see other side of sheet).

Practical suggestions / challenge:

1. Set aside time to reflect on these questions regularly. What question(s) is God drawing your attention to?
2. Create an accountability relationship with another person where you can openly and honestly discuss the challenges these questions present.
3. Dedicate a couple of minutes in your small groups, meetings, and gatherings to discuss one or two questions each week.
4. Ask God what spiritual discipline, practice, act of service, etc. will help you grow in a particular area of your discipleship?

John Wesley's 22 Questions

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?