

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

March 7, 2010

Examine yourself

by David King

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Cor. 13:5).

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Cor. 11:28).

The church in Corinth was a motley mix of believers from wildly different backgrounds, who had a difficult time getting along with each other. Their faith in Christ was poisoned with carnal attitudes and petty behaviors. This church was at the top of Paul's list of long-term projects.

It is significant, therefore, that in all the letters Paul wrote, the only time he directly challenged his readers to examine themselves was in the two letters he wrote to Corinth. These people had a hard time seeing the connection between their problems and the bad attitudes and behaviors behind those problems. If they really wanted to fix what was broken, they had to start by looking within themselves.

What was true of the Corinthians long ago is just as true of us today. We fail to recognize that many of the challenges we wrestle with in our lives — bad relationships, dead-end careers, financial setbacks — are the result of our own character flaws. And those problems won't get resolved until we deal with the underlying causes. That requires some serious self-examination.

Of course, examining ourselves is easier said than done. Humans are very good at employing strategies that circumvent the

examination process. For example, we much prefer to examine other people and their mistakes, criticizing their character defects. By shifting the focus to others, we let ourselves off the hook—and in many cases look quite good in comparison.

Sometimes we will rig the examination so the result is always positive. Jesus frequently dealt with people who sought to "justify" themselves (Lk. 10:29; 16:15); that is, they would plead special circumstances or define terms in such a way that they avoided any culpability. This is self-deception, not self-examination.

And therein lies the challenge. Examining oneself requires a high degree of intellectual honesty, a willingness to put **all** the facts out on the table and deal openly and fairly with every one. It also requires that we use the right standard to measure ourselves against. Comparing ourselves to other imperfect humans might make us feel better, but it does not draw us closer to God, which is the real objective here.

The whole purpose of self-examination, in other words, is self-improvement. That's another word for **change**. No matter how far we have traveled in our spiritual journey, there are always more improvements that we need to make in our characters. We "are being transformed [present tense] into the same image" of our Savior (2 Cor. 3:18), a process of continual growth that never ends. But that growth cannot occur in a heart that is closed to honest self-examination and resists the changes that must be made.