

# Spiritual Examination

By: Pastor Troy Bunch / New Jerusalem Church Durham, N.C.

## Acts 24:16

<sup>(NIV)</sup> **16** So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

**(KJV)** And herin do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void to offence towards God, and towards man.

**Examination-** to look at critically or methodically: investigate or inspect.

**Exercise-** something performed or practiced in order to develop, improve, or display a specific power or skill.

In Acts chapter 24 Paul was accused of being a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He was considered as a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and accused of trying to desecrate the temple. The Jews asked Felix the governor to examine Paul, and then he would be able to learn the truth about all these charges, which were brought against him. Paul's responses to the accusations are in verse 12-16.

Verse 16 reads: So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

The only way Paul could exercise himself to always having a clear conscience is to examine himself daily. This examination may hurt but it needs to be done. This will help in allowing GOD to be in FULL control of our lives and to keep our conscience clear before HIM and man. Now let's begin the examination...

### ***First let's examine what we lack spiritually.***

1. The first thing we lack is a stronger prayer life. What is prayer? Prayer is how we communicate with GOD. Prayer is a request to GOD.

The **first** part of prayer is adoration- great love or devotion. A worshiper.

The **second** part is confession- to admit or acknowledge. To tell GOD a fault or crime. A SIN.

The **third** part of prayer should be Supplication- to make a humble request. To ask for something

The **fourth** part of prayer should be intercession- praying on behalf of someone.

And **last** should be thanksgiving-public expression of thanks. Praising and thanking GOD is prayer.

2. The second thing we lack is a relationship w/GOD. This is a connection between or amongst persons connected to as in thought or meaning. In order to have a relationship with God you must worship him. Worship is – an act of reverence, an experience. You cannot have worship without intimacy- which means private (w/God), personal (w/God) closely associated (w/GOD), very familiar with (GOD). Another thing you must do to have a relationship w/God is have Humility- unworthiness (believing in God's grace, The undeserved favor of GOD and mercy which is GOD loving you and being there for you even though you know you have done wrong he still has your back.) Ones limitations (knowing you can do nothing without GOD) and God's Holiness is humility,

which is God's righteousness. (This means you must have the characteristics of GOD. The motives of God. The behavior of GOD in order to be in right standing)

***Now that we've examined what we lack, it's time to spiritually examine what we need to let go of...***

1. covetness- an intense desire of something or someone that belongs to another person. Some of us want what others have. Some of us are not staying within our anointing. Anointing means to authorize or set apart a person for a particular work or service. Belonging to God in special sense. Set apart and commissioned for service. Some of us want the same anointing that others have but God did not ordain that for your life. You were not authorized or set apart by GOD to do what brother or sister so and so is doing. So if the anointing is what makes the difference and you don't have that anointing then what are you making....a huge mess. Stay within your anointing, what God has chosen you for and stop wanting what others have.

2<sup>nd</sup> thing we need to let go of is back biting- to speak slanderously or spitefully about a person. Backbiting involves an element of deceit and cowardice. Psalms 15:3 Romans 1:30. If there is anything you can't say to someone in front of his or her face then it shouldn't be said at all. Do you know that when we smile in people's face and talk about them behind their back we are practicing deceit. This is a sin. When we talk about folks we are slandering their name. We should always be about love.

3<sup>rd</sup> thing we need to let go of is craftiness- the use of trickery or underhanded means to achieve an object. Genesis 3:1 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:3. We are always trying to get people to do what we want them to do. We use folks to get what we want. WE take advantage of people. All of this is craftiness and is a sin. If you don't appreciate something that someone does for you then you are committing a form of craftiness. Why? Because you took advantage of them. You're not grateful. When you are not grateful then you're ungrateful. You don't appreciate, which means you're using people. Other things we need to let go are in Galatians 5: 19<sup>19</sup> acts of a Sinful nature, such as sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery (extreme indulgence in sensual pleasure, orgies); <sup>20</sup>idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord (tension or strife from lack of agreement, dissension), jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup>and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

***Now that we've found out what we lack and what we need to let go of, it's time to examine those things, which are not working properly in our lives and are causing us to be spiritually handicapped. Those things, which need strengthening. Our spiritual equipment.***

Galatians 5:22 Some of us have fruits which are not working/being used properly in our lives <sup>22</sup> love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Some of us have spiritual equipment, which is not working properly and not fitting right. Example: Your suit of armor. Ephesians 6:10-17

1. Your belt of truth (the Gospel. The truth, which God has revealed to you). Some of you are having problems handling the truth. Your belt keeps slipping off. Jesus tells you the truth about what you need to do such as submit and surrender.

Repent which means change but we have difficulty with change. We are afraid to step out of our comfort zone. We need to trust God more. His Word never lies. Jesus is the way the TRUTH and the life. (period)

2. Breast plate of righteousness (having the motive, character and behavior of GOD) TO many of us want to wear our own breastplate. That self-righteous breastplate and guess what it doesn't fit right with the spirit. You can't be what you want to be. You have to be what God wants you to be, What GOD has created you to be. It's not about you but about God.
3. Your feet fitted with preparation and readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. (Being prepared and ready to serve GOD which comes from the truth/Jesus-the prince of peace) For many of us our shoes don't fit they are either too small or too big. Either you're trying to take on too much or not enough. Either way you're not going anywhere. You're complaining how you want peace but you aren't ready to serve GOD. You are still trying to do things on your own. You do not trust him like you should.
4. Shield of faith (what you believe in shall protect you) for many of us our shield is not big enough to protect us because our faith is not big enough. Oh ye of little faith. How can you be covered or protected by GOD with little faith. If you don't believe you cannot receive. With the shield of faith you can extinguish everything the devil throws at you. But you must have enough faith.
5. The Helmet of salvation (the spirit which protects and frees your mind of all things) for many of us our head is too big or too small for the helmet. You've got too little or too much on your mind. An idol mind is the devils workshop and too much on your mind can cause stress and burn out. Many of us we need to do more for GOD. We are sitting around complaining about what we don't have. The devil is having a field day in our minds. We are kept in bondage when Jesus has already set us free. Some of us are allowing ourselves to be slaves to the enemy. We keep falling for his tricks. We keep allowing him to control our minds with depression and insecurities. The devil is overloading our minds with evil thoughts. We need to recognize, let it go, and be free. We need to rebuke the enemy. We need to fight back.

Are you a soldier or more than a conqueror?

A Soldier is someone with human power. To some, a soldier is often referred to as "just a number". A child of God is more than a conqueror. He or She can operate like a one man army!

Too many of us are content with being just soldiers. Always defending but never defeating but GOD said that we are more than conquerors. I find it very interesting when I hear that song "I'm a soldier in the army of the LORD." No, I'm more than a conqueror in the LORD because I have supernatural power "The Holy Spirit". I can do ALL things through Christ.

Allow the Holy Spirit to work, heal, deliver, and restore you. Yield to the spirit. Let HIM lead and you follow. The Holy Spirit will keep you, if you desire to be kept.

By now many of us have found out through our spiritual examination that we have some discrepancies, flaws and things, which are not right-eous, or in place in our

spiritual life. So what do we do now? We go see the doctor (Jesus) and get a prescription. We go see the one who was birthed, persecuted, crucified, died and resurrected to set us free from sin, so that we may have the right to the tree of life.

### **Final Thought/Prayer Focus:**

Make it your business to schedule an appointment with Jesus DAILY. NO-SHOW's are not acceptable. The cost could mean the difference between life and death INTERNALLY and ETERNALLY.

Remember to exercise/examine yourself spiritually on a daily basis, for it will help keep your conscience be clear before God and man.

## **Unity**

By: Minister Duane Graham Foster / By Faith In Christ Church Richmond, VA

***Psalm: 133:1-3 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down the on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing - life forevermore.***

***Psalm: 133:1 "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"***

Unity is not only "Good" to the Lord, but it is also "Pleasant". The word *Pleasant* evolves from the word *Pleasing*. Meaning that when we unit according to the WILL of God, we are pleasing Him, and we are fulfilling Kingdom purpose instead of our individual wants and needs.

A True United Body represents unification through its members by cohabitating together and working together to complete the total success of how it's design to function. An ordained body and/or family of people are designed to strengthen, heal, and support each member through the various gifts that each member has been endowed with by God.

Unification is not something that is automatically given by people. It is something that is worked on and achieved by individuals who have a strong desire to interact with one another and learn how to overcome each weakness through strength of team efforts.

True unification only comes by way of sacrifice and understanding by each individual. Growing pains will preside as each member begins to be jointly fitted together. Purging and pruning is also a necessary part of development. ~ ***Ephesians 2:19-22 / John 15:2***

Humility plays its greatest role in unification when each person's attitude and personality is shaped and molded uniquely for the Masters Plan and Purpose. Remaining soft and pliable as clay in the Masters hands is an important key to the molding process. Hard hearts and hard ground will have to be broken and watered until each person spiritual field becomes fertile ground for the Lord and His work.

For the children of God are considered to be His field and His *word* is *seed* that proceeds out of His mouth, giving us healing, clear guidance, and instruction as we

are renewed in the spirit of our minds. ~ **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:9, Luke 8:11, James 1:21-22, Romans 12:2**

When unity with Christ and brotherly love is fully played out, a series of harmonic notes are manifested by a people of individual instruments who sound out their unified purpose on one accord! For where unity dwells, the Lord commands blessing to dwell also...

**Thought of the day:**

Unification is not a one night stand...it's the calling of God and also His command! \*Supporting scripture - Ephesians 4:11-13

**Prayer Focus:**

God sometime uses a hardship to help unite people for a greater purpose. Ephesians 4:1-3 (Please read and Pray for enduring unity)

## **Iron-Sharpens-Iron**

By: Pastor Troy Bunch / New Jerusalem Church Durham N.C.

~By: Minister Duane Graham Foster / By Faith In Christ Church Richmond VA

In order for us to be the Iron that sharpens Iron we must perform a spiritual examination on ourselves regularly. We must interact with and learn one another to touch each other effectively in spirit and deed. That sharp touch can never tack place unless two people and or two objects unite.

Being sharpened requires more listening than speaking. You can not be sharp unless you are sharpened. You can not sharpen unless you are sharp. In order for you to receive (*your life*), you must first give (*your life to Christ*). In order for you to give (*sharp wisdom*) you must first receive (*sharp wisdom from the Word of God*). You can not be effective with the Word of God until you have been affected by the Word of God.

When Iron sharpens Iron the two must touch and agree and sometimes disagree, only to again reach an agreement point to be fine tuned. When two objects rub against each other it creates a friction or fire. When two or three gather in the name of Jesus, He said; "*there I am in the mist.*" Jesus is the FIRE! He is the Friction that causes us to have a desire to unite and ignite a flame! When anointed bodies of people come together in the name of Jesus, Iron sharpens Iron and creates an atmosphere for the FIRE of God to Rain down His glory among the body of believers and overflow to everyone in and around the general area. That's why God says in His word; "do not forsake the assembly of the SAINTS". **Heb 10:23-25**

This is how we **SUPERIMPOSE** as a unit for Gods great anointing and Glory!

We had to be first sharpened by God and then we had to learn how to sharpen one another before we could go out and TOUR the highways and byways to reach the multitude of people that we are predestinated to reach!

We are partners of the Thief in the night, whose been entrusted and empowered by God with the ability to go into places that have not been entered and speak sharpened words that can cut and heal like a two edge sword. We have been through the fire and refined as fine medals or stones to go in and teach those who are labeled "un-teachable", and reach those who are labeled "un-reachable", and touch those who are

labeled “un-touchable”, and Love those who are labeled, “un-loveable”. We are the chosen generation... a royal priesthood... (Read) **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9-10**

We are the virgins who have their oil! We are prepared and lit for the Masters ceremony. We will not only be in the wedding ceremony but also witness the wedding of those who are lost and will be united or reunited with their Heavenly Father because of our obedience to serve and deliver the oracles of God! We are **Saints With Invincible Minds** because we did not stop, quit, or have a nervous breakdown. Through it all we leaned on Christ. Through it all we learned how to Love our neighbors as ourselves.

We are Iron that sharpens Iron and we are the Iron that will sharpen...  
In Jesus name; Amen, Amen, and Amen...

God’s Choicest Blessings!

Poetry In The Light Co-Founders

Duane Graham Foster & Troy Anthony Bunch