

Why a Spiritual Self Evaluation?

The goal of this self-examination is to sharpen your awareness on specific ways your relationship with God could be strengthened. The goal of this exercise is not to induce guilt or to overwhelm you with feelings of inadequacy; rather this activity is designed to help you cooperate with God in His desires for you to be growing toward perfection and prepared to do His will in the world.

Jesus expresses this goal in direct terms saying “be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect” (Matt 5:48)

Paul says “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Cor. 7:1) Paul closes the same letter with “...aim for perfection..” (2 Cor 13:11).

Like other goals in our life making progress requires that we focus attention on the task of holiness.

The Process

Our spiritual health can only be measured by God and revealed to you by his spirit. Thus the process of spiritual self evaluation must be guided by God. This handout describes a **three step, 14-day** process: **Preparing** your heart, **Searching** your heart, and **Committing** your heart.

Step 1 - Prepare your Heart (7 days)

It is difficult to see our own deficiencies so we need God's guidance to point to those areas that He wants to transform. Before sitting down with a pencil and paper to make a list, prepare your heart for the task.

Each day for seven days spend considerable time in prayer asking God to open your eyes to those places in your life that need changing. Consider taking time away from work to reflect. Consider disciplining yourself to fast from food, from entertainment, from television, from books for a day or longer and focus on time in prayer.

Step 2 - Search your Heart (7 days)

Each day for the next seven days dedicate time to meditate on one area of the “Our Life in Christ” outline. This guide will provide you with a collection of questions you can use to prod your thinking, a series of scriptures to reflect on each topic and a place for you to write specific places in your life related to that day's topic where you want to focus your growth effort.



Walk with God in Bible Study

The goal of Bible study is to know God, to understand His ways, to be so familiar with His mind that it becomes our own.

Prayer – “*Speak to me through your word, Lord, that I may know you and that you would guide me*”

Consider

- Read 2 Tim 3:14-17. Studying the scriptures is connected with being trained in righteousness and a preparation for doing good works.
- Using a reading schedule
- Choosing quality vs. quantity by focusing on one passage for several days
- Finding someone to read on the same schedule as you so that you can encourage one another in the discipline of Bible study.
- Choosing one verse to memorize per week
- Be willing to start over when your habit is broken

Goal Commitments



Walking with God in Prayer

Prayer is where we invite God into our lives believing that He is willing and able to help.

Prayer – “*Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my heart, consider your servant*”

Consider

- Read Lk 6:12. Do I pray before I make decisions?
- Praying for God to change your character more than your circumstances – instead of “God help me to get over my cold” consider “God give me patience while I am ill.”
- Setting a regular appointment with God to pray. Increasing the amount of time spent in prayer. Speaking your prayers out loud to keep your mind from wandering.
- Deliberately change the phrases and words you use to keep your prayers fresh. Changing your posture when praying can effect your mental state: kneel, lie prostrate, raise your hands, look heavenward, etc.

Goal Commitments



Aiming for Perfection

God expects us to continually grow toward perfection, removing sins from our life, and reshaping our attitudes.

Prayer – “*Convict me of my sin and transform my mind so that I may imitate Christ.*”

Consider

- Read Gal 6:22-25. Which are lacking in my life?
- Read Eph 4:25-32. Does my speech reflect anger or compassion? Do I tend to argue or forgive? Is my language pure or crude and unwholesome?
- Read Eph 5:22-25. Do I demonstrate love to my spouse? Do I submit to others in love?
- Read 1 Cor 6:18-20. Am I being sexually pure?
- Read Heb 13:4-6. Has the pursuit of money or things captivated my attention and goals? Am I content with what I have? Do I honor God with my wealth?
- Read Rom 8:12-17. Do I allow the Spirit to work in me to perform God's will?

Goal Commitments



Staying Focused

Our fast paced lives can divert us away from the central purpose of our life: to honor God and build His kingdom.

Prayer – “*Lord, help me to dedicate this day to doing your will and serving you as Master.*”

Consider

- Read Matthew 10:37-39. What pursuits, interests, relationships or desires get more attention than my devotion to Christ?
- Read Phil 3:7-11. Am I willing to abandon those things that I take pride in so that Christ can be seen as my only pride?
- Read 1 John 2:15-17. Am I distracted by selfish ambitions and the pride of accomplishments?
- To what extent do I rely upon my abilities, my looks, my education, my wealth, my money, or my hard work to accomplish my goals?

Goal Commitments

Day 5 Perfecting love for others

The greatest commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: love your neighbor as yourself.”

Prayer – “Lord, fill my heart with love for others, that I may see them as your children.”

Consider

Read 1 Cor 13:1-7. Which aspects of love are lacking in my life? Who do I need to show more love to? What are some specific actions and/or attitudes which would demonstrate love to that person?

Do I allow someone’s personality to hinder my willingness to do loving things with and for them?

Love begins in the heart, but is only experienced in actions.

Goal Commitments

Day 6 Sharing Christ with others

Our mission and purpose in life is to “go into all the world” as disciples making other disciples.

We all have a story to share with others about how Christ has changed our life.

Prayer – “Lord, give me wisdom to listen, courage to share, and compassion for all people.”

Consider

Read 2 Cor. 5:16-21. How can I be a sanctifying influence on those around me? Am I willing to be devoted to others, even when they show no interest in Christ? Am I actively building relationships with others?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-16. Am I ready to share my story with others? Can I express how important Christ is in my life?

Goal Commitments

Day 7 Living in Community

Our culture emphasizes individualism over community. Sometimes we can mistake fellowship for true Christian community. True Christian community is visible when the relationships in that community are free from any trace of: pride, prejudice, race distinctions, economic distinctions, possessiveness, and judgement. We don’t favor the educated, the accomplished, the successful, the popular, the influential, or the powerful. Because our mind is that of Christ’s we can share, confess, forgive, admonish, and encourage each other.

Prayer – “Lord, I release my need to possess things for myself, I release my need to protect my images. Break down the barriers I have built around my heart that I can love others.”

Consider

- Read Gal 3:26-29. Do I judge others based on human characteristics? Are there people I tend to favor? Are there people who need my time and attention?
- Read 1 John 3:16-18.
- Read 1 Cor 11:17-22. Does my fellowship reflect a “we” mentality? Do I contribute to the closeness of the fellowship by thinking of others first? Does my taking of the Lord Supper reflect the fact that we are one body?

Goal Commitments

Step 3 - Commit your Heart

After you have completed your self evaluation, take time to celebrate and worship, thanking God for His guidance in the process. Then consider these suggestions:

- Review your goal commitments and make each commitment as specific as possible. Instead of saying “I want to be a better person” or “I want to be more loving to my wife” write “I want to thoughtfully send birthday cards to my friends.” The more specific the commitment, the more likely you will be to accomplish it.
- Select only a few and begin working on those today. Create a reminder for yourself to review the list from time to time.
- Commit your goals to paper, write them on a wallet sized card and remind yourself of them daily.

Finally, commit your heart to following through, trust that God will work in you and with you to accomplish His purposes in your life. Live expectantly that God’s power will be evident in your life.

