

SEARCHING AND TRYING OUR WAYS

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Lamentations 3:40 says, “*Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.*” In the same manner, Psalm 119:59 says, “*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*” There is no way that we can change (turn) ourselves until we first examine ourselves and think on our ways. This vital principle is taught throughout God’s word, and is one we must learn and follow if we are to inherit eternal life.

Not deceiving ourselves

It is the nature of mankind to rationalize behavior and to refuse to be humble and admit that one is wrong. Proverbs 16:2 says, “*All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.*” And Proverbs 21:2 says, “*Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.*” Both of these verses also remind us that God knows the truth about us even if we are deceiving ourselves. In 1 Corinthians 13:12, the divinely inspired Apostle Paul said, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” Thus, we must know ourselves as God knows us so that we can change. Otherwise, to be deceived about ourselves will result in our continuing in our erroneous ways and that will prevent repentance. Jesus Christ taught, “*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3,5). Therefore, being convinced we are right when we are wrong will cause us to lose our souls. “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Prov 14:12; 16:25). In that state, we remain in the devil’s snare and are opposing our own selves (2 Tim 2:25-26). That is why Proverbs 12:15 says, “*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*”

Examining ourselves daily

In the New Testament, we are commanded, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves*” (2 Cor 13:5). We should particularly examine ourselves when we take the Lord’s

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Supper (1 Cor 11:28-32), but not only then. This is a *daily* work we must engage in. “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet *the inward man is renewed day by day*” (2 Cor 4:16). We need *daily* diligent effort to grow spiritually (2 Pet 1:5-10). Hebrews 3:12-13 says, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Therefore, to avoid departing from God and being deceived by sin, brethren need *daily* effort in examining themselves and exhorting one another.

The pathway of understanding

Receiving correction from God’s word is the pathway of understanding (Prov 9:6-9; 15:31-32; 19:25). John 3:19-21 says, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. *But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*” We must always come to the light of God’s word to have our deeds revealed to see whether or not they are according to God’s word. Similarly, James 1:21-25 says, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. *For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*” We must look at our inner man in the mirror of God’s word and then change whatever needs to be changed.