

How to Avoid God's Wrath: Part 8: Genuinely Examine Your Heart

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Matthew 12:33-37

- Pharisees were those who looked in the Scriptures to try to obey every facet of the Law. They were venerated for their holiness, education, and understanding by the people. They looked the part, but Jesus has just condemned them for the wickedness of their hearts to call the works of the Spirit of God as the works of Satan in verse 12:24.
- **The Text:** V33, the fruit, or works that prove the outcome of your faith, is either good or bad. V34, Jesus calls the Pharisees a family of baby snakes, responding to their blasphemy of calling Him a worker of Satan. Their father is the serpent. V35, Jesus provides a parable of the source of good and evil; it proceeds from a person's treasure storehouse. V36-37, what does self-examination of my heart reveal about my life and faith in God? For the unbeliever, every word they speak will judge them.
- **How Do I Determine the State of My Heart? 10 Questions to Ask Myself: Am I thankful for:**
 - 1) **For the Word of God:** Do I manipulate and twist the word of God to make it fit me? When it rebukes and corrects me, do I accept it and repent? Have I tasted the goodness of the word of God, but not obeyed it, Heb. 6:5? Do I give thanks for God's righteous judgements, Psalm 119:7, 62?
 - 2) **For the People of God:** John confronts the loveless, 1 Jn. 2:10, do I love my brother and abide in the Light? 1 Thess. 4:9, do I love the brothers? 1 Jn. 3:14, love for the brothers shows you have passed from death to life. 1 Jn. 3:16, do we lay down our lives for our brothers? 1 Jn. 4:20, if you can't love your brother whom you have seen, you can't say you love God, you are a liar.
 - 3) **For the Shepherds of God:** 1 Thess. 5:12-13, do you regard and consider within yourself, the work of your shepherds? Do you respect and honor them? Eph.4:11, they are gifts to the church.
 - 4) **For the Gospel of God:** Rom. 1:15, Paul desired to teach and proclaim the gospel to the believers in Rome. For believers, the proclamation of the Gospel reveals more and more the grace of God bestowed on us through Christ. We see what God has saved us from over and over, bringing joy.
 - 5) **For the Fatherhood of God:** Ps. 103:13, Yahweh has compassion on those who fear Him. God is to be delighted in and feared. He is holy but accepts us based upon Christ. He is to be obeyed. He is our Father and we speak to Him often and regularly for guidance and giving thanks to Him.
 - 6) **For the Son of God:** Col. 1:15-20, Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He is first born of all creation and from the dead (the superior and originator of). He holds all things together, V17. He will reconcile and make peace by executing justice and correcting every wrong, V20. He is not the Jesus who blesses my life if I add Him to my life, but the God and Lord who is to be obeyed.
 - 7) **For the Spirit of God:** He opened your eyes, Eph. 1:18. Convicted us of sin and led us to repentance, John 16:8, 2 Cor. 7:9-10. The Spirit indwells us, Rom. 8:11. He seals us, Eph. 1:13-14. He illuminates our understanding, 1 Cor. 2:10-14. He intercedes for us, Rom. 8:26. He sanctifies us through the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-25. If we don't have the Spirit, we are not His, 1 Cor. 12:13.
 - 8) **For the Ministry of God:** We serve one another, 1 Pet. 4:10. For the equipping and building up of the body in love, Eph. 4:11-12. We have fellowship (partnership) in the gospel with other believers, Phil. 1:5. It is a ministry of God's mercy to us and others, 2 Cor. 4:1. It is worship unto God, Rom. 12:1. He rewards us for the good works He strengthened us to do, Eph. 2:10. Our ministry is to share the gospel of God wherever we go, 1 Thess. 1:6-8.
 - 9) **For the Discipline of God:** Heb. 12:5-8. God disciplines those He loves. God loves all Christians. All Christians receive discipline. It brings holiness, Heb. 12:10. He produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness in us, Heb. 12:11. God is conforming us into the image of His Son by the things that God ordains in our lives, Rom. 8:28-30. We are being changed from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 10) **For the Providence of God:** From Proverbs 16: In our plans we make, God directs us, V9. In the matters we consider and wrestle with, we will find good and put our trust in the outcome Yahweh has determined, V20. Finally, in the decisions we have to make quickly, God has decided (for us) the course we will take, V33.

Further Discussion and Application

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus, Eph. 1:3. This is a possession that we have already received. We were predestined to receive it and it has been sealed by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us, Eph. 1:13. Why is there a lifetime of blessings as we learn and experience all that God has done for us? What has each person of the Trinity done in regard to our salvation, sanctification, glorification, and daily life?

The providence of God is many times a sticking point in the lives of believers. They have a hard time grasping and believing that all decisions, big and small, are providentially determined by God. How can we explain this truth from the Bible from Genesis to Revelation? What great hope do we have in life if trusting the Lord in every situation brings us great confidence in the outcome whether good or bad? How are difficult things being used by God? How is discipline a sign of love and ownership by God over us?

Paul's life is one that when examined demonstrates a life of good happenings and bad. He is persecuted continuously. He is mistreated, maligned and beaten by men who desire to kill him. He tells the Thessalonian church that "in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus," 1 Thess. 5:18. Looking at the greater context in verses 12-28, does Paul cover all the bad things people do to you? What should be our response? Does God know what is happening to you in those difficult times? How can we rest and rejoice in those times and during suffering? How do we overcome? Why do we overcome?

As we examine our hearts and test these ten issues of the heart against our heart, in what areas are we coming up short? In what areas have we grown over the years? How might our understanding of each of these areas change over time? How might we see the blessing of the shepherds at different times in our lives? How can our love for Christ increase in these areas? What practical and biblical responses should we make to all 10 of these areas?