

21-DAY FAST AND PRAY: JANUARY 8, 2019

Prayer is God's way of bringing our priorities into line with His.

God's will is to make great things the consequence of our prayers when our prayers are the consequence of His great purposes.

We continue to turn ourselves inward, obediently, in self-examination. But, before we do anything else, let's read this prayer written by St. Augustine, together.

"O Holy Spirit, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding and of knowledge, come to my assistance and enable me to make a good confession. Enlighten me and help me now to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before Your judgment seat. Bring to mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by self-love. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded the loving heart of my Heavenly Father; and help me to make a good confession that all stain of guilt may be washed away in the Precious Blood of my Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN"

Self-examination, the honest assessment of one's own spiritual condition is not a new idea.

Job cried out to God, "How many are my iniquities and sins? Make known to me my rebellion and my sin." - Job 13:23

In Psalm 26:2, David cried out, "Examine me, O Lord, and try me... test my mind and heart."

In Lamentations 3:40, Jeremiah wrote, "Let us examine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord," and the Lord Himself challenged Israel and us by declaring, "Consider your ways!" in Haggai 1:5.

Self-examination is wise and is something every believer ought to do on a regular basis.

To the Corinthians, Paul wrote,

"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." - II Corinthians 13:5 NKJV

I. EXAMINE MY PRIDE

But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” – James 4:6

PRIDE is putting self in the place of God as the center and objective of our life, or of some department thereof. It is the refusal to recognize our status as creatures, dependent on God for our existence, and placed by Him in a specific relationship to the rest of His creation. Pride is a barrier to obedience, forgiveness, learning and growing in grace. God hates pride and He has a plan to deal with it.

“The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled) ...” - Isaiah 12:12

Has pride been a problem?

II. EXAMINE MY DISOBEDIENCE

DISOBEDIENCE is rejection of God's known will in favor of our own interests or pleasures. Disobedience is rebellion against the legitimate (and therefore divinely ordained) laws, regulations or authority of the church, state, parents, teachers, etc.; Disobedience is slow and reluctant obedience. Disobedience is witchcraft.

Has disobedience been a problem?

III. EXAMINE MY VANITY

Vanity. Crediting to ourselves rather than to God our talents, abilities, insights, accomplishments, good works. Refusal to admit indebtedness to others, or adequately to express gratitude for their help. Hypocrisy. Pretense to virtues we do not possess. False humility. Harsh judgment on others for faults we excuse in ourselves.

Has vanity been a problem?

IV. EXAMINE MY ANGER

ANGER is open rebellion against God or our fellow creatures. Its purpose and desire is to eliminate any obstacle to our self-seeking, to retaliate against any threat to our security, to avenge insult or injury to our person.

Has anger been a problem?

V. EXAMINE MY UNFORGIVENESS

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
- Ephesians 4:32 ESV

Genuine Forgiveness always involves a confession of wrongdoing and a willingness to make things right. An apology often takes the form of an excuse. "I'm sorry if you took offense, but..." That is not forgiveness. Our forgiveness of those who hurt and offend us is supposed to be lavish, enthusiastic, eager, freely offered, and unconstrained—even for repeat offenders. After all, we are all repeat offenders against God. If we hope to be forgiven, we must forgive others.

Galatians 6:4-10 NKJV

“But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load. Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.” - Psalms 139:23, 24 NKJV

Has unforgiveness been a problem?

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