

Examine yourself before Passover! (Part 1) By Frank Borg

God's Word tells us to "Study to show yourself approved unto God" (2 Tim 2:15). This scripture emphatically tells us that we are to *study* if we are to be acceptable before God. The question is: what *exactly* is this section of scripture admonishing us to study?

The word "study" is a translation from the Greek word "Spoudazo". Strong's Concordance defines this word as, 'to use *speed*, that is, to make *effort*, be *prompt* or *earnest*, do diligence, be *diligent*, endeavor, *labor*, *study*'. Whatever it is that we are to study, we are encouraged to do it diligently and with a sense of urgency.

Back to the scripture: What is it that we are to study if we are to show ourselves approved unto God? The study of our bible will certainly *help* us. However, studying the bible of and by itself, will not make us 'approved unto God'! Essentially, we can study all we like but without applying what we learn, our study is largely in vain. To get a clearer understanding of what the first part of 2 Timothy 2:15 is admonishing us to study, we could take a look at other Bible translations. The Amplified Bible for this scripture gives this rendition: "Study *and be eager and do your utmost* to present *yourself* to God approved, *tested by trial*..." This translation includes more of the literal meaning of the Greek word 'spoudazo', thus giving us a clearer interpretation. We must certainly study God's Word to know what to apply, and how we can apply it, to be able to take on His character. We must study Christ and His character so that we know what to emulate, and know how we have to become. However, there is more to 2 Timothy 2:15 which we need to understand and which we might not notice at first glance. Interestingly, many foreign language Bible translations state the following for 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study *yourself* to present yourself before God as a man approved!" There it is! This is possibly *the most* concise and true translation of this section of scripture! Read that translation again! It tells us that we are to also study *ourselves*! We must do this to see how we measure up to Christ and the character of God! This is all about 'self examination'! It is by taking a *close* look at ourselves, seeing how we measure up to the character of Christ, acknowledging our error, and doing the right that will prepare us and make us "approved unto God"!

The Bible admonishes us to 'examine' ourselves before Passover (1 Cor. 11:28). This 'self-examination' includes testing, discerning, proving and trying ourselves. "Spoudazo" (study: 2 Tim. 2:15) tells us that this is to be a *laborious* examination and therefore indicates that it is to be detailed. Importantly, the attitude and manner in which we examine ourselves reveals something about us to God: it shows how badly we want to be ruled by Him, and how deeply we desire to become like Him! It also reveals the depth of our conversion.

God emphasizes that we are to examine ourselves, repent and overcome (Rom 12:21). We are to exercise the mind of Christ and let His mind be in us (Phil 2:5)! How can we do this effectively if we continue in sin? If we compromise with the tiniest of sins, we run the risk of it growing and getting out of control making it much more difficult to overcome. (Always remember the mustard seed parallel – it is the tiniest of seeds but grows into a six to twelve foot tree! The same is true with sin – it starts out small and often grows). If we are serious about repentance and overcoming, we must cut sin down and root it out of our lives.

In the run-up to Passover, we must take the time to search every crevice of our being, "bringing into the captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). No matter how well we know our bibles, or how long we may have been in the Church, we are all still sinners (1 John 1:10). We are all carnal and subject to human nature which is hostile toward God and His ways: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). We need to be especially careful at this

time - Satan knows he has but a short time (Rev 12:12) and will do everything in his power to try and make us overlook sin. We must also beware of becoming complacent with sin!

Sin can hide itself in many places in our lives, therefore, detailed self-examination is important otherwise we risk partaking of the Passover in an unworthy manner: "For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body".

Following are a number of areas with related scriptures designed to help with our self examination. This should help us with some of what we should be looking at as we endeavor to prayerfully and carefully examine ourselves before Passover:

- ***How important is "self-examination" to me?***

1 Cor. 11:28-29 "Let a man examine himself...for he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself"

2 Cor. 13:5 "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Gal 6:4 "Let every man prove his own work..."

Lam 3:40 "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord".

- ***Do I ask God to help me examine myself?***

Psalms 26:2 "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart".

Psalms 139: 23 "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts".

- ***How badly do I want God's Word to rule me?***

Heb 4:12 "For the Word of God...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"

Col 3:15 "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts..."

Psalms 119:165 "Great peace have they which love thy law..."

Rom 7:22 "I delight in the law of God..."

- ***Do I see my own carnal nature?***

Rom 7:14 "...the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin"

Rom 7:18 "For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing..."

Rom 7:21 "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present within me"

Rom 7:23 "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"

Matt 19:17 “And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments”

· ***Am I striving to repent and overcome?***

Acts 3:19 “Repent...and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...”

Acts 26:20 “...turn to God, and do works meet for repentance”

Rom 12:21 “...overcome evil with good”

2 Cor. 7:10 “Godly sorrow worketh repentance”

Heb 12:1 “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us...”

Matt 5:29 “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell”

Rom 6:1-2 “Shall we continue in sin...? God forbid!” (Rom 6:1-2).

Rom 7:24 “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

· ***Do I put my faith and trust in God or do I rely on my heart?***

Jer 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Prov 28:26 “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered”.

· ***Am I solid in the faith?***

2 Cor. 13:5 “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves”

1 John 2:29 “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him”

John 14:23 “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him”

1 John 5:4 “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”

Gal 2:16 “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified”

· ***Is my attitude right with God?***

Isa 50:10 “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God”

Psalm 111:10 "The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom"

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O lord"

Prov 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee"

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment"

· ***Is my attitude one of wanting to do the right thing?***

2 Tim 4:2 "...be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"

Gal 5:22 "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..."

· ***Is my attitude right with my brethren?***

Gal 6:1 "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"

Rom 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another"

Col 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"

1 Cor 6:8 "Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers"

· ***What is my attitude toward authority?***

Heb 13:17 "Obey then that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you"

1 Peter 2:13-15 "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"

· ***What is my attitude toward disappointment?***

Ps 62:5 "My sould, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him"

Job 13:15 "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him"

Rom 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”

- ***What is my attitude toward success?***

Prov 16:18 “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”

Jam 4:6, 10 “...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble...humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up”

- ***Do I study and meditate on God’s Word so that I can better apply it in my life?***

Jos 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart out of my mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein...”

Ps 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”

2 Tim 2:15 “...a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”

- ***Am I allowing my light to shine through a positive example?***

Matt 5:13 “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is therefore good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men”

Matt 5:14-16 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”

Luk 8:16 “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light”

- ***Do I ask God to correct me?***

Jer 10:24 “O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing”.

(To be continued)