

2 Corinthians 13

Self Examination:

Examine Yourselves

- I. Right Christian Beliefs
- II. Real Christian Experience

I. Right Christian Beliefs

A. Examine yourselves as to whether you are in **the faith**.

- 1. Not simply “faith”, not “a faith”, but “the faith”

***Acts 6:7 NKJV** Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to **the faith**.*

- 2. This was Jerusalem. These were the priests in the temple of God Almighty. They certainly believed something before this – no doubt something biblical. But the content of their faith had now changed. It had grown. It now included important undeniable elements about Jesus. Listen also to Jude:

***Jude 1:3-4 NKJV**³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

B. Jude was compelled to contend for the faith that was now in danger of being corrupted.

- 1. Paul was also concerned that the Corinthians might be led astray. He expressed this concern back in 2 Cor 11 (Jake):

***2 Cor 11:4 NKJV** For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive **a different spirit** which you have not received, or **a different gospel** which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!*

- 2. There is certainly **more** to the Christian faith than holding to the right beliefs, but there cannot be **less** to the Christian faith than holding to the right beliefs. In other words, you can't drop the doctrinal part and still be a Christian. No matter what you decide to call yourself, no matter what the sign on the church says. Christians must believe certain things.

3. Paul gave us one good simple summary in 1 Cor 15:1-8:

1 Cor 15:1-8 NKJV ¹Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

4. Another good summary is the Apostles' Creed. It wasn't actually written by the apostles, but beginning in the 2nd Century, believers started putting together these simple statements which were intended to summarize what the apostles taught. In the bylaws of our church, which we share with a number of other Calvary Chapels, we actually state that:

"We believe in what is termed "the apostles' creed" as embodying the fundamental facts of the Christian faith, the text of which is as follows:

*"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."*

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Right beliefs are an essential part of true Christianity.

II. *Real Christian Experience* is also an essential part of true Christianity. This would include:

- A. Authenticity
- B. Maturity
- C. Unity

A. Authenticity There has to be a reality to our faith that is somehow visible to those outside. From the moment Jesus Christ takes up residency within a person, He will invariably begin transforming that person's character so that he or she becomes more and more like Him.

1Jn 2:3-6 NKJV ³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

1Jn 3:14-15 NKJV ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. ¹⁵Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

1Jn 4:13-16 NKJV ¹³By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. [Note the connection between beliefs and behavior.]

Examine yourselves. Does your life reflect an authentic Christian experience? Would those who know you see the evidence of Christ working in your life? Does your behavior match your beliefs?

B. Maturity **Become complete. (v.11).** The NLT translates this "Grow to maturity." Thayer's Greek definitions says:

1. to mend (what has been broken or rent), to repair
2. ethically: to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be

Last year, the TLC network did a show on a girl named Brooke Greenberg, who was 16 years old at the time. At age 16 Brooke was 2 ½ feet tall and weighed all of 16 lbs. Essentially, Brooke's aging and development genes have been turned off. Her bones are that of a 10-year-old, her teeth are 6-years-old, her brain is less than a year old. See the article from Fox News [here](#).

It's normal for people to develop normally. It's abnormal not to develop. Paul's concern was that the Corinthians were not growing, they were not maturing as they should.

1 Cor 13:11 NKJV *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

Hebrews 5:12-14 NKJV ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Examine yourselves. Can you really say you are growing to maturity as a Christian? Or, like the Corinthian believers, does your spiritual growth seem to be somehow stunted. Is it possible that what Brooke Greenberg is physically, you are spiritually?

C. Unity The Corinthian church was a church torn by disunity. Paul encourages them to **“Be of one mind, live in peace.”**

1. Let’s read v.11 once more. In fact let’s read vv. 11-14
2. Paul ends with this benediction that highlights the Trinity (v.14.). Both right Christian beliefs and real Christian experience are indicated within this verse.
3. It’s probably worth asking at this point: Does unity with other believers characterize you? Or are your relationships with other Christians often tense or strained? One of the elements of real Christian experience is a unity with other Christians. Remember this passage we read earlier from 1 John:

1Jn 3:14-15 NKJV ¹⁴*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.* ¹⁵*Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

Examine yourselves. How is that brotherly love thing going for you? Are you truly of one mind and at peace with God’s people? Healthy Christian relationships are an indicator of real Christian experience.

In Closing:

Just as Paul encouraged the Corinthians to examine themselves, it’s healthy for us to do the same thing. Self examination can save your life, whether physically or spiritually. A simple self-assessment can be a way to prevent a lot of issues from becoming deeper and more serious than they already are.

I. **Right Christian Beliefs** The Christian faith is not a buffet, where you pick and choose which parts you want to believe while ignoring those you don’t like. Truth matters.

II. **Real Christian Experience**

A. **Authenticity** Does your behavior match your beliefs? If it does not, some people might refer to that as hypocrisy.

B. **Maturity** Are you growing and maturing in your faith? Are you more secure, more stable, more balanced than you were in the past?

C. **Unity** Examine your relationships. As Christians we ought to love one another. We ought to be like-minded. We ought to be at peace among ourselves.