

2 Corinthians 13:5
**“Examine yourselves as to whether you are
 in the faith”**

The ditches

Laziness	Guilt
Complacency	Worthlessness
Arrogance	Hopelessness

Legalism can lead to either ditch

Practical Questions

- How much time to devote to employment?
- How much time for family?
- How much Bible study?
- How much prayer?
- How much giving?
- How much relaxation?

- The Bible does not give measurable standards for any of those questions.
- The general statements are open to many applications.
- Church leaders supply standards:
 - Because that is what they were taught
 - To manipulate people through guilt
 - To retain people by false confidence
 - Because they believe that it is their job to fill in the details that God left out

Examples of Common Standards

- Not working on Sunday
 - All Christians for almost the first three centuries had to work on Sunday.
 - The church met when believers were available.
- Giving
 - The tithe was part of the Law, not the church.
 - Paul’s idea of sharing was greater than 10% (2 Corinthians 8 – 9)

Examples of Common Standards

- Bible study
 - The early church did not have one.
 - “Study” to show thyself approved (2 Timothy 2:15) means “be diligent,” not book work.
 - A scripture is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - The authors wrote to impart wisdom
 - “Always be ready to give a defense” (1 Peter 3:15)

Examples of Common Standards

- Prayer
 - Special words, positions, or places are not given.
 - Frequency is not given.
 - Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
 - Many examples of subjects are given.

Concepts that put Examination in Context

- Baptism symbolizes that your whole life, not part, is reserved for godly purposes (1 Corinthians 6:1, Ephesians 5:26).
- “Church work” is not just preaching, teaching, and counseling. Gifts from God also include hospitality, encouraging, wisdom, serving, giving, *et al.*
- James 4:13 – 17 reminds us that business plans need to include God.
- Is “God stuff” fun or not?

Making “God stuff” fun

- Ephesians 4:28, 1 Thessalonians 4:11 – 12 Work in order to have something to share.
- Figuring out how stuff works is much more satisfying than entertainment.
- Learning should not be boring.
- Entertainment is not education.
- Understanding is within our grasp.
- We make time for things we enjoy.

The mindset of examination

- Celebrate forgiveness, not guilt.
- Rejoice in the successes of faith
- Trust that God will fix your mess
- Be flexible
- Search the Scriptures for ideas
- Seek advice
- You do not understand advice until you see its flaws. Keep just the good parts.
- Identify my excuses

Am I in the Faith?

- Am I growing? (2 Peter 1:2 – 8)
- Have I accomplished what I thought I could not? (2 Corinthians 4:7, 1 Peter 4:11, Romans 8:13)
- Do I seek nutrition? (1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 10:24 – 25, 5:12 – 6:3)
- Which fruit is growing? (Galatians 5:19 – 23)
- Is my objective transformation? (2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29)

Examining if I am in the faith

- As God has dealt a measure of faith (Romans 12:3). We are all different.
- Growth, not benchmarks.
- Frame everything with faith and love:
 - By the strength which God supplies
 - Doing what’s best for the other person regardless of its effect on me.
- Does Jesus live in me? (Galatians 2:20)