



## Self – Examination

By: Clay Barnes

The beloved apostle Paul boldly proclaimed, “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?” (2 Cor. 13:5). The word “examine” comes from peirazo and means to prove or to scrutinize. The Greek word refers to trying metals by the powerful action of heat; and the idea here is, that we should make the most thorough trial of our faith, to see whether it will test as we examine it along side of the Word of God.

Self-examination is very important in many aspects of life. As the sailor travels the sea, he must continually refer to his compass to make sure he is sailing in the desired direction. As a mason lays brick, he must persistently look to his string line to make sure his rows of bricks are plumb and level. The carpenter will

frequently study the blueprints to make sure that the house he is building will meet the inspectors and owners approval. The man with high blood-pressure will check his pressure often to make sure it is within safe parameters.

It is very sad that much of the religious world do little in the area of self-examination. Many hold firm to their traditions, never questioning their validity. Others fail to examine their beliefs because they have a greater desire to please self than they do to please God. And, perhaps, most fail to examine their beliefs out of mere ignorance or unfounded trust in man.

The Bible is replete with passages demanding and encouraging us to be involved in self-examination. James encourages us in this fashion as he says:  
But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he

does. (Jam. 1:22-25)

We must use God's Word as a mirror and look for our imperfections, and make the appropriate changes. Using God's Word as a mirror, we will see ourselves as we really are; the mirror does not lie!

Amos shows the need for self-examination in his use of the "plumb line." This great prophet writes:

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam." (Amos 7: 7-9).

The plumb line is, because of gravity, the perfect vertical standard. The Lord is seen standing in the midst of Israel, holding a plumb line, seeing how they measure up to His Standard. We need to hold the plumb line of God's Word alongside of our lives to see how we are measuring up. Are we out of plumb with the Word of God?

The Hebrew writer, as he writes of Moses, declared, “who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For he said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain” (Heb. 8:5). The word pattern comes from tupos, and means “a die, a stamp, a model, a figure, a form, a pattern, or a print.”

Albert Barnes states, “The allusion is to a pattern such as an architect or sculptor uses; a drawing or figure made in wood or clay, after which the work is to be modeled. The idea is, that some such drawing or model was exhibited to Moses by God on Mount Sinai, so that he might have an exact idea of the tabernacle which was to be made.” As we look at our lives are we living up to the model that is set forth for us in holy writ?