

1 Corinthians 11:28-ff. But **let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For **if we would judge ourselves**, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

**Self-judgment** Have you seriously considered the purpose, practice, and priority of self-judgment? It is not a common theme among us these days. But without it, we risk certain divine chastisement, even of the most serious kind, and remain oblivious to carnality of soul that motivates and permeates the inner life.

Active participation in the Lord's Table serves many purposes. It provides a sensory reminder of the cost of our forgiveness. This sacred ritual requires mutual participation, emphasizing the unity of His followers. **It calls us to look back**, as it pictures the awful anguish and suffering of our Christ for us. **It calls us to look ahead**, as it is celebrated *until* He returns. And lastly, **it calls us to look within**, as it requires self-examination before participation.

Our Savior knows us so well! He knows that we all tend to let things slide and allow unholy attitudes, ungodly motives and self-destructive habits to go unchecked in our lives. While His fatherly chastisement is inevitable in time, there is something better. And that something is rigorous, constant, and thorough self-judgment. While it is true that some will go overboard and practice spiritual self-flagellation, condemning themselves for examining their motives with impure motives for examining their motives! (And if you tend towards this, back off and remember Romans 7:18.) Most of us, however, err on the other extreme of hardly ever practicing self-judgment.

**The purpose of self-judgment** is to expose and repent of sinful attitudes, motives, thought patterns and habits that we have allowed to go unchecked in our lives. While the Spirit gives discernment, the activity is given to us to perform.

**The practice of self-judgment** is done in silent self-reflection, in dependence on the Spirit, as I examine my various relationships (God, family, work, church, neighbors, etc) and responsibilities (to God, family, work, church, etc) in the light of foundational, spiritual expectations of Christ for me. Am I seeking *self-glory* or the *glory of God*; am I *Christ focused* or constantly *comparing myself with others*; Do I *seek to serve or wait to be served*; am I *forgiving or resenting*; am I *diligent or lazy*; am I *content or covetous*; am I *investing or wasting* the time, money, talents, spiritual gifts, and opportunities God has given me? Such questions are good to ask at the start and end of each day.

**The Priority of self-judgment is clear.** Self-judge or be judged by God. Self-judgment is a priority since to fail to do so means to live lives unworthy of the God we represent, dishonor His name, confuse others as to His character, and bring upon ourselves His chastening rod. Shall I carelessly cause my God to be ashamed of me and grieve my God by forcing His hand of discipline when He would far prefer to bless me? God is worthy of glory and obedience, and self-judgment is one means by which I seek a pure life, a clean conscience and a hunger and thirst after righteousness that will honor Him and fill me with the joy He so desires to bestow.

**For further study:** Psalm 77:6; Psalm 26:2; Psalm 139:23; Lamentations 3:40; Mark 7:20-23; 1 Corinthians 3,10,11,13; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:22

Lord, thank You for Your Spirit who never ceases to convict me of sin. Thank You for Your word that never ceases to instruct me in righteousness. Thank You for Your table that constantly calls me to examine my own heart as I stand once more before Your cross. Thank You that You have purposed to make me pure and to transform my inner motives as well as my outward actions into Your own holy image. Search me, cleanse me, and make me pure today, O God of my salvation. In the name of Him whose image I shall one day fully shareõ Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.+

**Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually. A Blessed 2009 be yours...  
Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.