

GOSPEL Prescription

2 Corinthians 13:5

- Intro:** Animal-game illustration...
- Detailed descriptions define
 - Comprehensive evaluation tells the story...
 - Know enough about how it lives... you know what it is

T/S: So it is in the family of faith... perhaps that's why God's Word tells us to:

***"Test yourselves to see whether you are in the faith;
examine yourselves.
Do you not realize
that Christ Jesus is in you – unless,
of course, you fail the test?"***

- 2 Corinthians 13:5

T/S: Let's do a quick exegetical "unpacking"

1. "***Test yourselves***" = NOTE: perpetual internal evaluation COMMANDED!
2. "***to see whether you are in***" (OR OUT) = don't assume!
3. "***THE faith;***" = test for Christian "faith family" vs. faulty fraud...
4. "***examine yourselves.***" = REPEATED deeper, probing COMMAND...
5. "***Do you not realize***" = underscores potential for error(s)
6. "***that Christ Jesus is in you***" = "indwelt is felt" – JDP
7. "***unless***" = escape clause... proves conditional previous statement...
8. "***of course***" = what follows is "obvious" & definitive...
9. "***you***" = NOTE: this is a PERSONAL TEST... you stand or fall alone!
10. "***fail the test***"
 - A. True evaluation often disproves assumptions!
 - B. This test is a "pass/fail" venture (no middle road!)
 - C. The "test" is definitive... Truth Trumps one's opinion...
 - D. A **failed test**, by definition = **Lost soul!**

T/S: Why do you suppose God's Word would command the Corinthian church (and ALL professing Christians) to "test themselves" to see whether or not they were really faithful followers (vs. fans) of Jesus, the Christ?

I know why... & (if you're honest) so do you...

We're told to test ourselves because...
...the "professing church" is a distressing church...
with many Christ-less "Christians."

Big Idea: The professing church is sick & needs a PRESCRIPTION

Biblical examples abound...

- Sermon on the Mount (contrasts)
- House on Sand vs Rock
- Parables: Soils, Bridesmaids, Banquet guests...
- 1 out of 10 Lepers
- John 6: "crowd vs. Church"
- Countless warnings: wolves, false teachers...
- Blind guides
- Paul's accusers in Corinth...
- Jesus' test = "gathering" or "scattering"

Bottom line: Profession & possession of faith are NOT the same.

(2) critical filters should always be applied to our testing:

1. God's authoritative Word
2. Our authenticating walk

T/S: It's my prayer that God's Holy Spirit will do a miraculous work in our midst this morning & greatly affect, through the opening of eyes & capturing of hearts, the eternal welfare of those who hear this empowering message of Truth in love!

I brought a CLASSIC to help us grasp this text on testing...

INTRODUCTION: *A Sure Guide to Heaven / Alarm to the Unconverted*

Joseph Alleine: Puritan pastor; England 1600's (Whitefield & Spurgeon)

***“I am not baiting my hook with rhetoric,
nor fishing for your applause, but for your souls.
My work is not to please you... but to save you.”***

We will explain the Bible’s position on:

1. The Confusion regarding Christian Conversion
2. The Character of Christian Conversion
3. The Centrality of Christian Conversion
4. Cancers within the UN-converted
5. Concerns for the UN-converted
6. Curing the UN-converted

T/S: *Let’s get started on gospel testing...*

I. The Confusion Regarding Christian Conversion:

Q: *The devil has made many counterfeits of conversion...*

1. ***Christianity is more than a name.***
See: 2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 1:16; Matt. 7:21-23
2. Conversion is not putting on the badge of Christ in baptism.

Q: *Whatever men do, or pretend to receive in baptism, if they are found afterwards to be grossly ignorant, or profane... without the power of godliness, they (still need to be) born again (see John 3:7), or else be shut out of the kingdom of God. They must have more to plead for themselves than their baptismal regeneration.*

3. Conversion does not morph out of moralism
4. Conversion is not a reward for conforming to religious rules

5. Conversion is not the consequence of cleaning up one's corruptions...
6. Conversion does not consist of surface convictions/superficial change

Q: ***It is one thing to have sin alarmed by convictions, and another to have it crucified by converting grace. Many, because they have been troubled in conscience for their sins, think well of their case, miserably mistaking conviction for conversion.***

Q: ***There is a vast difference between being sanctified and civilized.***

READ again:

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; examine yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

T/S: *Study your own hearts; do not rest till God has made thorough work with you; for you must be new men, or else you are lost men.*

II. The CHARACTER of Christian Conversion

Conversion lies in the thorough change of both the heart & life.

1. The Author of conversion is the Spirit of God.

Q: ***So then, conversion is a work above men's power.***

2. The internal & external cause of conversion must be understood.

a. The INTERNAL CAUSE of conversion is GRACE ALONE!

Q: ***God finds nothing in a man to turn His heart, only enough to turn His stomach***

b. The EXTERNAL CAUSE: is the merit & INTERCESSION of Jesus

Q: ***The pains Jesus suffered on the cross were our birth pains!***

3. The instruments of conversion are personal & real!

Q: ***Christ's ministries are sent to open men's eyes, and to turn them to God.***

Q: ***We are begotten by the Word of Truth***

- the Word... *converts the soul (Ps. 19:7-8)*
- ...*makes us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15)*
- *we are washed by the Word (Eph. 5:26)*
- *we are sanctified by the Word of truth (Jn.17:17)*

Q: ***You that are unconverted, read the Word with diligence & flock to where it is powerfully preached.***

Q: ***Come from your knees to the sermon, and come from the sermon to your knees. The sermon does not prosper (you) because it is not watered by prayers & tears, nor covered by meditation.***

4. Do not forget the end of your calling. Let your light shine!

5. The subject of conversion is the elect sinner

READ: Acts 3:19; Rom. 8:13; Acts 16:31... *"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." If you mortify the deeds of the body you shall live. "Believe and be saved."*

Q: ***Conversion affects the whole man... it is NOT the sowing on of a holiness patch. (2 Cor. 2:17)***

him.

Q: *Sin may still dwell in him (as an unwelcomed guest), yet it has no more dominion over*

Q: ***He does not pretend piety & neglect morality.***

Q: *Here again you find the unsoundness of many who take themselves for good Christians. They take up the cheap and easy duties of religion, but they do not go thru with the work.*

6. In conversion we turn from: Sin, Satan, World, & Self-Righteousness

A. We turn from Sin: ***Sin now swells his sorrows.***

B. We turn from Satan: ***Satan may sometimes catch our foot in a trap, but we will no longer be a willing captive.***

C. We turn from the World:

D. We turn from our own Self-Righteousness:

7. Conversion requires intimacy with God the Father, Son, & Spirit:

Q: ***A man is never truly sanctified until his heart is truly set upon God above all things.***

CONSIDER:

Q: ***Have you taken God for your happiness? Where does the desire of your heart lie? What is the source of your greatest satisfaction? Look around you... If God were to give you your choice of all things, what would you ask for?***

TURNING-POINT:

Q: ***Here is the turning point. An unsound convert never takes up his rest in God; but converting grace does the work, and so cures the fatal misery of the***

fall, by turning the heart from its idol to the living God!

A. We turn to Christ

Q: *All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert. He loves not only the wages but the work of Christ, not only the benefits but the burden of Christ.*

False converts... *want salvation from suffering, but they do NOT desire to be saved FROM sinning.*

B. We turn to the ways/commands of Christ

Q: *The heart that once rejected God's ways, and could not endure the strictness... now falls in love with them...*

Q: *The laws of Christ become the Christian's love*

Q: *Christian DIRECTION is guided by obedience
Here the hypocrite's rottenness is easily discovered. He desires holiness... only as a bridge to heaven, and asks earnestly what is the LEAST that will serve his needs... But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake.*

III. The CENTRALITY of Christian Conversion

Q: *This conversion is not a high attainment of some advanced Christians, but every soul that is saved undergoes this change.*

1. Without conversion your life is in vain.

Q: *Unconverted man is like a choice instrument out of tune.*

2. Without conversion your religion is in vain.

3. Without true conversion your hopes are in vain.

Q: *To hope we shall be saved though continuing unconverted is blasphemous... it is to hope that we shall prove God to be a liar.*

IV. **CANCERS within the UNCONVERTED**

Q: *Few will, in words, deny the necessity of the new birth; but they have a self-deluding confidence.... Consequently, like Nathan to David, we are forced to get close and personal... and tell (the unconverted):*
“You are the man!”

CLASSIC EXAMPLE: church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-17)

14 ...These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. **15** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! **16** So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. **17** **You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked...** **19** So be earnest, and repent.

Proverbs 30:12

“There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.”

Ephesians 5:5-6, Revelation 21:8, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 for starters....

1. **The UNCLEAN:** (a.k.a. “the goats”)

2. **The COVETOUS** (a.k.a. “idolaters”)
3. **DRUNKARDS**
4. **LIARS** (the children of the father of lies... John 8:44)
5. **SWEARERS**
6. **BACK-BITERS** (a.k.a. gossips)
7. **THEIVES**
8. **Those who NEGLECT the WORSHIP of GOD**
9. **Those who KEEP BAD COMPANY**
10. **SCOFFERS** (a.k.a. skeptics, atheists, & the-like...)

Qt: *I imagine many will begin to bless themselves, and think all is well, because they cannot be reproached with these grosser evils. But I must tell you that there is another sort of unsanctified persons, who carry their mark not in their foreheads but more secretly & covertly (in their hearts). These frequently deceive themselves & others, and pass for good Christians... Many pass undiscovered until death and judgment bring everything to light. These self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven's gate with confidence... and yet are turned away at last (Matt. 7:21-23).*

T/S: *Multitudes perish by the hand of these 12 hidden sins*

1. **GROSS WILLFUL IGNORANCE**

Q: This sin kills in the dark while its victims think they have good hearts

2. **SECRET WITHHOLDINGS FROM CHRIST** (a.k.a. unsundered)

3. **EMPTY RITUALISTIC RELIGION**

4. **SINFUL, Self-Serving MOTIVES**
5. **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS** (a.k.a. “good person”/ “good enough”)
6. **BEGRUDGING “OBEDIENCE”** (a.k.a. spiritual manipulation)
7. **CALCULATED “OBEDIENCE”** (a.k.a. hell-haters vs. God-lovers)
8. **WORLD-LOVERS** (a.k.a. hypocrites of the heart)

1 John 2:15 = *“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*

Q: *How many professing Christians are there with whom the world has more of their hearts & affections than Christ?*

Q: *Yet ask these people, and they will tell you confidently that they prize Christ above all...*

9. **UNFORGIVENESS**
10. **PRIDE**
11. **FLESHLY PLEASURE-LOVERS**

Q: *A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God.*

Q: *They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh and are careful to keep it under as their enemy.*

- 12: **PRESUMPTIOUS CONFIDENCE** (a.k.a. “luke-warmness”)

V. CONCERNS for the UNCONVERTED

Q: *What tongue can tell the heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery... This cannot fully be done.*

1. **The infinite God is engaged against you.**
2. **The whole creation of God is against you.**
3. **Satan has full power over you.**
4. **The guilt of ALL your sins weigh... upon you.**
5. **Your raging lusts miserably enslave you.**
6. **The heated furnaces of hell haunt you.**
7. **God's Law effectively curses you.**
8. **Even the Gospel declares you damnable.**

VI. CURING the UNCOVERED

Q: *Before you read these directions, I advise you, yea, I charge you before God & His holy angels, that you resolve to follow them.*

1. **Accept the IMPOSSIBILITY of "UNCONVERTED SALVATION"**
2. **Work & PRAY to SEE, SENSE, & FEEL YOUR SINS deeply**

Q: Only those who see themselves as dead will come to Christ for life.

3. **Ask God to BREAK YOUR HEART over your LOSTNESS**

4. **Accept your TOTAL DEPRAVITY & inability to save yourself**
5. **Henceforth, GIVE-UP ALL YOUR SINS**

Q: Your sins must die or you must die for them
6. **Make CHRIST YOUR TREASURE & LAY DOWN your IDOLS**
7. **Accept (w/ life v. lips) CHRIST as BOTH LORD and SAVIOR**
8. **Present your LIFE a LIVING SACRIFICE to Him** (Rom. 12:1-3)
9. **Accept & Embrace AUTHORITY of God's WORD** (2 Tim. 3:16)
10. **Commit to CONSISTENT INTIMACY with God**
11. **Live with BIBLICAL URGENCY** (for your own salvation & others)
12. **Live IMMERSED in God's WORD**
13. **Seek, Sense, & Surrender to the Holy Spirit's work in you**
14. **PRAY FERVENTLY... WITHOUT CEASING**
15. **Forsake EVIL COMPANY... & SINFUL ENVIRONMENTS**

Q: *If you will be nibbling at the bait, and playing at the brink, and tampering with the snare, your soul will surely be taken.*
16. **PRAY & FAST regularly... ask God to break & fill your heart**

CONCLUSION:

READ again: **2 Corinthians 13:5**

Test yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; examine yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

And now... What do you intend to do?

Here's the whole test in a nutshell...

1 John 2:3-6 = *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*

So what are you going to do?

Will you go on and die.... or turn, repent, & live?

How long will you linger in Sodom?

Do you not see how Satan cheats & deceives you?

What if God should requires your soul today?

Let's PRAY!