

Introspection First

Scripture

“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that [is] in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the plank that [is] in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye.” (Lu 6:41-42 NKJV)

Devotion

If we would spend as much time looking at our own faults as we do those of our brethren, we would likely find fewer faults in them and be more effective in ministry. The principle taught by Jesus was sin inhibits ministry. The hypocrite has no idea how to remove his brother’s faults because he has no idea how to remove his own. Of course the end of this blindness is death if no repentance is found.

The main characteristic of this blindness is a judgmental attitude. In a preceding verse Jesus said, “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” (Lu 6:37 NKJV) So the context tells us that our subject verses are not just good teaching, but also a condemnation. His audience was guilty of being judgmental.

The logic of Jesus argument deals with the root of faulty or inappropriate comparison. The judgmental person compares the one he judges against God’s Word but compares himself against other sinners. By finding faults in others he is able to elevate himself to create a false sense of wellbeing. God, however, judges the heart with a perfect judgment and rightly declares him a hypocrite.

If we follow Jesus’ advice and look carefully at our own lives, we will discover how far from the standard we are. This will humble us and cause us to be less judgmental because in comparison to the perfect law we are arguably as imperfect as the one we would condemn.

However, on the positive side, introspection causes us to be sensitive to sin. While we will always be far from perfect until we enter into heaven, by carefully silhouetting our lives against the Word of God we will learn better how to walk in holiness, and consequently how to pray for and lovingly minister to others who are in sin.

This is why the Scriptures say, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who [are] spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” (Gal 6:1 NKJV) Ministry requires spiritual maturity, and will you notice the introspection in the passage? “Considering yourself lest you also be tempted”

It is much easier to compare ourselves to others than it is to God’s Word. Against others we can convince ourselves that we are doing pretty well. However, when we look at God’s word we see how wicked we really are. We gain an understanding of our corrupt flesh which causes us to humbly cling to cross and the blood of Christ.

My dear friends look carefully at your lives today. “. . . Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 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.” (Jas 1:21-25 NKJV)

It’s time for some introspection. Amen?