

Lesson 11

Spiritual Inventory Part 2

Principle 4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

“Happy are the pure in heart.” (Matthew 5:8)

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”

(Lamentations 3:40)

Introduction

Tonight we are looking at the second part of our spiritual inventory, where we pray, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life” (Psalm 139:23–24, TLB).

Last week, we discussed in Part 1 of our spiritual inventories four areas of our lives. We asked ourselves some hard questions.

We looked at our relationships to others, our priorities, our attitudes, and our integrity. We talked about how our past actions in each of these areas had a negative or a positive effect on our lives and the lives of others.

Tonight, we are going to finish our spiritual inventory. We will look for some of our additional shortcomings or sins that can prevent God from working effectively in our lives and our recoveries.

Evaluating each area will help you complete your inventory.

Your Mind

Did you know that the most difficult thing to open is a closed mind?

Romans 12:2 gives us clear direction regarding our minds: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Some questions to ask yourself in this area:

1. How have you guarded your mind in the past? What did you deny?

Once again you need to see and examine how your coping skills—your denial—may have protected you from pain and hurt in the past. It may have done so, however, by preventing you from living in and dealing with reality.

Do you know that two thoughts cannot occupy your mind at the same time? It is your choice as to whether your thoughts will be constructive or destructive, positive or negative.

2. Have you filled your mind with hurtful and unhealthy movies, internet sites, television programs, magazines, or books?

Your ears and your eyes are doors and windows to your soul. So, remember “garbage in, garbage out.”

Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking. It just is not going to happen.

Remember Proverbs 15:14 (NLT): “A wise person is hungry for truth, while a fool feeds on trash.”

3. Have you failed to concentrate on the positive truths of the Bible?

I believe that three of the greatest sins today are indifference to, neglect of, and disrespect for the Word of God. Have you set aside a daily quiet time to get into God’s instruction manual for your life?

Next, let’s look at how we have treated our bodies. Did you know that with proper care the human body will last a lifetime?

Your Body

“Haven’t you yet learned that your body is the home of the Holy Spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you. For God has bought you with a great price. So use every part of your body to give glory back to God, because he owns it” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, TLB).

1. In what ways have you mistreated your body?

Have you abused alcohol, drugs, food, or sex? This was, and still is, a tough one for me. In the depth of my alcoholism my weight dropped down to 160 pounds (my normal weight is 220 pounds). I almost died. I kept getting my suit pants taken in, and finally, the tailor explained to me that he couldn’t take them in any more—the back pockets were touching. I asked God to help me get my strength and weight back. He truly blessed me. Boy, did He bless me! Now, it’s time for moderation in my eating.

It is through our bodies or flesh that Satan works, but thank God that the believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God freely gives us the grace of His Spirit. He values us so much that He chose to place His Spirit within us. We need to have as much respect for ourselves as our Creator does for us.

2. What activities or habits caused harm to your physical health?

Remember, it was the God of creation who made you. Look at Psalm 139:13–14, 16: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well... Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Many people say that they have the right to do whatever they want to their own bodies. Although they think that this is freedom, they really become enslaved to their own desires, which ultimately cause them great harm.

Your Family

In the Old Testament, Israel's leader, Joshua, made a bold statement regarding his household: "If you are unwilling to obey the Lord, then decide today whom you will obey.... But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15, TLB).

1. Have you mistreated anyone in your family? How?

Perhaps you have physically or emotionally mistreated your family. Emotional abuse doesn't have to take the form of raging, yelling, or screaming. Tearing down a child's or spouse's self-esteem and being emotionally unavailable to them are both ways you may have harmed your loved ones.

God designed families to be our safety from life's storms. As much as it depends on you, you need to provide a haven for your family. If that isn't possible and you yourself don't feel safe there, let Celebrate Recovery be your family.

2. Against whom in your family do you have a resentment?

This can be a difficult area in which to admit your true feelings. It's easier to admit the resentments you have against a stranger or someone at work than someone in your own family. Denial can be a pretty thick fog to break through here. But you need to do it if you are going to successfully complete your inventory.

3. To whom do you owe amends?

You identify them now and work on becoming willing to deal with amends in Principle 6.

All you are really looking for is your part in a damaged relationship.

4. What is the family secret that you have been denying?

What is the “pink elephant” in the middle of your family’s living room that no one talks about? That’s the family secret! Remember Jeremiah 6:14 (TLB): “You can’t heal a wound by saying it’s not there.”

Your Church

One of the main reasons I started Celebrate Recovery was that I found most members of secular 12-Step groups knew the Lord’s Prayer much better than they knew the Lord.

“Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25, TLB).

1. Have you been faithful to your church in the past?

Your church is like a bank: the more you put into it, the more interest you gain in it.

2. Have you been critical instead of active?

If you don’t like something in your church, get involved so you can help change it or at least understand it better. Turn your grumbling into service!

3. Have you discouraged your family’s support of their church?

If you aren’t ready to get involved in your church, that’s your decision. But don’t stop the rest of your family from experiencing the joys and support of a church family!

We’ve made it all the way through the eight different areas to help you begin and complete your inventory.

Once again, listen to Isaiah 1:18. Memorize it! God says, “No matter how deep the stain

of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow.”

A couple of reminders as we close:

- Use the “Balancing the Scales” verses found in Participant’s Guide 2.
- Keep your inventory balanced. List your strengths along with your weaknesses.
- Find an accountability partner or a sponsor. I cannot say this enough: The road to recovery is not a journey to be made alone!

God bless you as you courageously face and own your past. He *will* see you through!