

# Self Examination

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[ 0 : 00 ] Galatians 6 verses 7 and 8. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

If I were to be asked tonight, what is the most frequently recurring theme in the letters of the Apostle Paul?

I think I would certainly have to say that amongst those themes which recur again and again is the importance of self-examination.

And although the communion is past, we must daily and weekly, as Christians, return to this great theme, the theme of self-examination.

[ 1 : 33 ] And really that's what the Apostle is dealing with here in this chapter of Galatians. He's been calling on men and women to examine themselves in case they are deceived.

And you know, that's the first thought that I'm going to share with you this evening. The fact that Paul warns us of the danger of deception.

Paul is warning us here of the danger of being deceived. Now it's a terrible thing to be deceived in anything, you know.

People are deceived by fraudsters of every variety in this world. Sometimes you get bills round your door advertising great things.

But if you were to go and jump for it, if you were to take up the offer that is made to you, quite often you might find that these people who are hard-sell advertisers are advertising something that is really going to deceive you and going to leave you with nothing.

[ 2 : 55 ] And there are many things in which you can be deceived. But whatever, my friends, you might be deceived in tonight, see to it that you're not deceived as to the destiny of your never-dying soul.

That's the most important issue that you can face in the whole of this world. The issue of the heart. The Bible says to me tonight, to keep my heart, for from it are the issues of life.

You know, my friends, what we preach on this evening is nothing less than the issues of life and of death. Therefore, it is so important to see to it that you're not deceived in religion.

Whatever else you're deceived in, see to it that you're not deceived as to the destiny of your never-dying soul. And then the second thought that I want to share with you is this.

Paul reminds us here of the character of God. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. And as we see, there are many who try to mock God.

[ 4 : 15 ] Why is it that religion is one of the favorite topics in a pub? I'll tell you why. Because very often in the pubs and in the hostelrys of this world, people try to poke fun at religion and try to mock God.

Try to say things that will take God down. But my friend, God remembers, it's not mocked. You may try.

explicitly or implicitly, you may try to mock God. But God is not mocked. And I want to say something about this aspect of the character of God tonight.

Thirdly, Paul reiterates here an abiding principle of life. As a man's soul, whatsoever a man's soul, that shall he also reap.

And finally, and fourthly, Paul backs up this warning with a very solemn example. First of all, then, we're going to look at this.

[ 5 : 26 ] Be not deceived. As I alluded to the fact that you can be deceived by advertising, it's true, friends, that it's possible for men and women to be deceived by others.

You know, we have a saying in the world, that person pulled the wool over my eyes. And you know, it's a terrible thing to have someone pull the wool over your eyes, isn't it?

It's a terrible thing to be deceived. You feel a right clown when someone deceives you. If someone leaves you, frustrated and almost in a sense of hopelessness when you've been deceived by someone.

Yes, friends, it's possible for men to deceive you. And it's possible for others to deceive you in the question of religion.

How many there are who are deceived by false cults in respect to their religious life? How many there are that are deceived by these apostles of error who are so well put up and come round the door and they're so smart and they're such fine looking young men and women and they come knocking on your door and they're offering you the life everlasting and hereafter and there are people in their nest tonight and they're being deceived by the apostles of error.

[ 7 : 06 ] And God says, be not deceived. And you know it's an awful thing to be deceived in religion by an apostle of error.

Someone that takes your side and someone that promises you a quick fix. That's the way people are. That's the way of the world and it's the way of many religious people in the world.

They're offering you a quick fix. But sadly in religious life there's no quick fix. And there's no quick fix.

And do you know this about the cult? Those people that are making all these claims about a solution to your problems in life. Do you know it's the people that get touched into the cult?

Very often there's people who have grave moral troubles in their lives. Problems in their lives. And somehow or other the cult lashes on to this fact that there's someone with a weakness.

[ 8 : 13 ] So we can't go into that weakness and we'll get them at the point where they're down and we'll tuck them into our system and we'll duke them and we'll deceive them till they're on the way to hell along with us.

Friends, be not deceived. Don't be deceived by anyone who comes knocking at your door promising you a quick fix to heaven.

There's no quick fix to heaven. But then although it's a solemn and unlawful thing to be deceived by others, there's something more solemn than that.

because this chapter teaches me that it's possible for me to deceive myself. Now, this is somewhere where we've got to stop and think every one of us for ourselves because it's possible to be exercised by health deception.

And how can I be exercised and taken over in the field of self-detection simply by thinking that I'm on a sure road to heaven when I'm still on the broad road that leads to hell.

[ 9 : 41 ] Do you know, my friend, there are people who think that they're on the way to heaven and that all dwell with their soul and their time for all services?

Sadly, they're still traveling on the broad road that leads to hell. Why is it called a narrow road that leads to heaven? Why is it called that?

I'll tell you why. Because you've got no room on this broad road for your sins. There's only room for faith and repentance on the narrow road that leads to life and few there may not find it.

See to it, my friend, that you're one of those who finds the narrow road that leads to heaven. Feel it, my friend, that you're not deceived by yourself into thinking that you're going to heaven when in reality you're on the broad road that goes to hell.

What an awful thing it is. Listen to the words of the apostle. For if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives tell you tell you, if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing.

[ 10 : 56 ] Let me tell you a story that I once heard a good man in my native island telling, when he was speaking to the question. There's a man once from back, I heard him speak on the question and he was telling that he had been on holiday in Harris.

There he was walking along one day in summertime and the men of Harris were busy cutting hay and stacking hay and drying hay.

And he saw a series of the most wonderfully built hay rick, hay stacks, the little hay stacks there. And he asked this man who was working in the field.

Oh, he said, how did you manage to build such a beautiful looking hay stack, he said. Oh, he said, it's marvelous the way you built that hay stack.

It's forced, the matrical, it's so well purported, everything looks so fine about it. Oh, said the Harris man, come and see the lovely hay stack, he said.

[12:08] He said, inside this hay stack, there's nothing. It looks good from the outside, but there's nothing but air inside it.

Because, you see, there had been a structure of sticks and wood set up, whereby the hay stack was built around these wooden poles, so that it would help the grass to dry.

And the Harris man said to the Harris man, look, he said, you know what we call these hay jacks. We call them Pharisees. They look good from the outside, but there's nothing inside them but wind. My friend, you know, it's possible to deceive yourself, that you look good from the outside, and everybody thinks, your life is wonderful.

You even deceive yourself into thinking that because you look so good, you'll be accepted by God. Let no man be deceived.

[13:09] Oh, my friend, be not deceived. It's an awful thing to be so close to the kingdom of God, that you know all the ins and outs of religion, but then you don't have religion.

You know what I once heard a man say? He said, it's possible he said to have so much religion, that it can inoculate you against the real thing.

And I believe that there are people in all of our churches, I believe that this world has seen that phenomenon, a man who has so much religion, that it inoculates him against a real experience of Jesus Christ, be not deceived.

And then the apostle turns from this awful stark possibility of being deceived as far as religious life is concerned to talk about the character of God.

What does he say? God is not mocked. God is not mocked. Is that true? Is that true in the world tonight? God is mocked in the world.

[14:30] You know, if you were to look at things from the perspective of this world, I believe that you could write in the Bible the exact opposite of what is written here. Because if I were to look at the way man lives in the world tonight, I think I could say, God is mocked.

God is mocked. Let me just give one or two illustrations of the way God is mocked in the world before we go on any further. Let me tell you the story of a man called William Hodge.

He was, I think, a miner in the Yorkshire town of John Gustav in the 18th century. And during that time, there was a famous preacher of the gospel, a man called George Whitefield came to preach in Donkarter.

And William Hodge was one of those who went along to hear him. But after he had heard George Whitefield preaching the gospel with all the winsomeness of that great evangelist, where did he go? He went to the pub. And you know, the way men are when they get into the pub, he started to take one drink and one thing led to another. And at last, William Hodge started to tell his foolish companions in the pubs about George Whitefield, the man that he had been hearing preaching.

[15:59] Oh, said William Hodge, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get up on the table there and I'll show you the way that man preached. And he started to mock the Lord, to mock George Whitefield and to say, this is the way George Whitefield preached.

And he started to preach the gospel and to say some of the things that George Whitefield had been saying in his sermon. And if he had seen the thing in that pub and donkest, you know what you'd have written in your Bible?

You'd have written the word, God is mocked. But I want to tell you something, you know then, in that pub in Donkest there that night, God was not mocked.

Because William Hodge stood on the table and he started to speak the words that Whitefield had said. And all of a sudden he was preached in his heart.

God wasn't mocked by William Hodge. He tried to mock Whitefield, but God wasn't mocked by William Hodge. And in the spirit he was slain that night and he was brought to his knees crying for mercy.

[17:12] My friend, you might go so far trying to mock God, but the Bible is true, the Bible is right. God is not mocked.

Let me tell you another story. One day in London when the cortege, the funeral cortege of David Livingstone, the great African missionary was passing through the street.

There was a tramp standing on the street corner. And he was heard by someone to say, you were right, David. You were right.

And this Christian man approached the tramp on the street corner and he said to him, what do you mean you were right, David? You were right. I'll tell you this.

David Livingstone and I grew up together in the same Sunday school class. We had the same teacher in Sabbath school.

[18:15] We heard the same things. But I rebelled against them and I went my own way. And David Livingstone as a young lad came to know the Saviour and he came to follow the Saviour.

And I remember he said the parting of our ways. And I thought I was right. Go and the burden. But David, David was right.

You were right, David, you were right. That lamp on the streets of London on the day when David Livingstone was being buried in Westminster Abbey knew one thing.

He knew that God is not mocked. You can try to mock God with your life. And I want just to say how people try to mock God.

They try to mock God in two ways. They try to mock God explicitly. And I want to speak a word to any master of God in this place who tries to do it explicitly.

[19:21] And I want to speak a word against your lifestyle my friend. Do you really think you're going to get off with it? Joining with your good companions speaking words against God speaking out so boldly against the most high do you really think you're going to get up with it?

Oh you say look nothing has happened to me God hasn't shown his anger. I once read a plaque young man you know what the plaque says it had written on the head of it God doesn't always pay death in October and there was the story in the tract of a young farmer who was trying to mock God by going out into his fields every large day and the other farmers in that part of the country they had so much respect for the Lord's day they kept back that this young farmer was older than they and off he went with his tractor he reached a bumper harvest everything was going well for him and he was telling all these other religious men around him why don't you watch Sunday look at what I'm getting for all that

I can look a godly old farmer in the district and he said to the young man he said remember God doesn't always pay his death in October and it's a strange strange phenomenon in this world that you can go by the way of the world and you can go on in the worthy and godly and you can prosper but remember this if you're mocking god by your lifestyle explicitly or implicitly the bible says god is not mocked and how do I know that god is not mocked because god has his own harvest time that's why god has his own harvest time despite what we think and here god reiterates the abiding principle of deep time and heart listen to it as a man soul whatsoever a man soul that shall he also reap now this principle relates first of all to our present character and conduct on two fronts you know our life in the world is like a life of sowing one of the busy times that the farmer has is tea time spring time the really busy time of a farmer and that busy farmer he's got to go to sow his seed and that's the way your life is that's the picture god is making of your life and mine here tonight we sow every day in life we sow and what are we sow we sow conduct and we sow character that's the way of our life that's the picture whether you like it or not you know that's what you're doing you're sowing and that's true on two fronts you're either sowing for god or you're sowing for the flesh one or other your life you can't go both ways either you're living your life for christ you're living your life with christ or else you're living your life against christ don't don't be deceived my friend there are only two kinds of men in the world tonight wise men and fools dead men and live men there are a variety of kinds of man you're either dead or alive you're either sowing for the flesh or you're sowing for the spirit one or other now what can we say about this character and conduct well we can say that there are two kinds of fields in which men are sowing their seed tonight there are some who choose to live for the flesh oh now you say that's an awful allegation to catch up against anyone that a man is living for the flesh but

I want to tell you something about this man who's living for the flesh in some cases this man is a highly moral man he can't be he can't be accused of any immorality that's not the kind of flesh we like this man have he's a good living man the world would see him as a beautiful husband a beautiful father a man that lived according to his duty and yet the bible makes this sweeping statement about these men that they are men who are living for the flesh so how do I know a man that is living for the flesh as all that I think a man that is living for the spirit I'll tell you how there are two types of men in the world tonight there's first of all a man that is self centered a woman that is self centered and there's also a man or woman whose life is

God centered Christ centered what kind of man are you are you a self centered man or woman here tonight or are you God or Christ centered in your living that's the only two kind of people that are in the world the Bible says about these men as a man soul their soul shall he also weep for if say it very he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption this man he's sowing his teeth he's living for himself he's doing his own thing he's enjoying himself in his own way he's doing everything that pleases him that's the kind of life this man has the Bible makes this one say this one thing about you he's living he's sowing for the flesh that's the kind of life he's living for himself his whole being is centered around himself he thinks nothing of

[ 26 : 26 ] God his thoughts when they stray to God they're filled with terror that's all he doesn't want to meet God in the judgment because he knows that he's living for time and he's going to live his life for time that's all that matters how he gets on how his ambitions are fulfilled that's what matters the man is sowing to the flesh what I feel to live in and yes you know this I'm quite prepared to say tonight that the great majority of men in the town of Inverness that's the kind of life they're living men who are living for the flesh living their lives and sowing their seeds in the process they're quite happy to live in this world build their houses raise their children have their families and all the opportunities that that might bring and then to die because they're happy to live for the flesh it's not the story of your life quite happy to just drift along through life do all the normal things live in the normal way just be like your neighbor no confident going and coming from your work day by day building your empire and at last you're going to die and you're going to leave it all behind but my friend let me ask you tonight what will you have for it for eternity because remember this you're on the journey to the great eternity soon soon you and

I must meet around the great white throne and what will it be for us if after the flesh we have sown to the flesh and we've lived our lives and we've been so so diligent day by day living in life so diligent in fact that we haven't had time to give any thought to God and his Christ is that true so diligent that we haven't had time to think about our soul so diligent that we've had time for everything else but no time for Jesus have you any room for Jesus my friend in your life tonight you know what we're like we're like the words of that hymn that sometimes we've heard quoted room for business room for pleasure but for Christ the crucified not a place where he can enter enter in there to abide no room for Jesus is that the story of your life you're far too busy you've got far too many concerns at the moment you're pushing

God into a little corner of your convenience and you're saying oh I'll have time for God before I die it's that the way people are I'll have time for God before I die how many there are who are like that and sadly sadly so often it proves that they've had no time for God and they've died and they've gone to eternity and they've gone to meet their maker and they've gone Christless to a throne of judgment they're living to the flesh and they're sowing to the flesh sowing to the flesh but there are other people and they're sowing to the spirit they're sowing in another field they're living spiritual lives listen to the distinction the way Paul puts it in another place he says to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace tonight I know that there are people in this world and in this church and there are people who are spiritual people who have a new life in their hearts they're living in their life is facing a completely new direction they're going in a different living in a different dimension because you see they've been turned to the spiritual life and now what matters is that they please God and that they please Christ and that they do the will of God in life is that a concern to you are you concerned about doing

God's will in your life well God's people are because God's people are of the spirit sowing to the spirit that people who have been turned by the spirit of God God has come into their hearts come into their lives come into their experience and he's changed them and they're now seeking him and they're wanting above all else in this world to know Jesus Christ listen listen to this great apostle Paul and listen to the great aspirations of his life now that I might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering be made conformable to his death that's a man that was sowing to the spirit a man who wanted to know Christ and to please Christ and to look by the power of Christ's resurrection that's the kind of man the spiritual man really is and these two men are going to have a harvest if you are one of those that close to the flesh

I'll tell you friend you'll have the harvest that you deserve you won't lose out on your harvest but listen to the kind of harvest the fleshly man is going to have he shall of the flesh reap corruption let me put it in another Pauline way for the wages of sin is death that's it death and I want to tell you my friend that the harvest time of the fleshly man or woman who lives for self without God or his Christ

it's going to be death threefold all you've got to look forward to if you live your life in this world for the flesh is this you've got to look forward to death which is the separation of your soul and your body there's going to come a day when your body and your soul will be separate the one from the other and that's an awful thought physical death do you cringe from it and yet you know there's an inevitability about it for every one of us here because mankind sinned as we read this morning mankind sinned and the wages of sin is death physical but then there's another death that man is the heir to because of his carnal life and it's this his dead spirit what does that mean it means that there's a separation between the soul of the carnal man as God you know you who are sowing to the flesh already you're experiencing that death which is separation from God in your soul in your spirit you're experiencing it already but I want to warn you about another death to which you're open tonight eternal death eternal death what is this this is when your soul and your body and your whole person will be separated from the life of

[ 34 : 58 ] God in a lost eternity does that mean that there will be no God in hell hell is called outer darkness my friend you must wonder is God in hell God is in hell God is in hell the awful presence of the living God will go through you and be with you for all eternity if you go to a lost eternity you know the sinner going to a lost eternity going to hell on the brink of hell the sinner wants to hide himself from God that's why as the reverend mr.

mcdonald who used to be the minister here at one time said once in a sermon there will be people on the day of judgment in a prayer meeting who were never in a prayer meeting before and what will they be crying in that prayer meeting on the day of judgment they'll be crying to the hills to cover them and the rocks to fall on them to hide them from the presence of him with whom they have to do my dear friend oh isn't it time that you began to pray here and to sow to the spirit here lest of the flesh you reap corruption in a lost eternity in hell isn't it time you sought the Lord isn't it time you sought him now but there are those who have been sowing to the spirit they're spiritual men they've been touched by the work of the spirit of God they've been brought into relationship with Christ they've been brought to seek him they've been brought to make him their choice and they of the spirit will reap life everlasting do you remember the cry of

John Bunyan's pilgrim when his burden fell off and went into the tomb and when he was free free as a bird coming out of the fowler free for time and free for all eternity do you remember his cry his cry was this life life eternal life my friend do you want it tonight well let me tell you something about it tonight let me tell you that eternal life isn't just pie in the sky when you die eternal life is something that begins now tonight in the experience of men and women who are born again of the spirit of God men and women who have been touched by the grace of God in the gospel and who have been changed and who have been given new life in Jesus and who live now not as once they lived but who live now deciding to please him who has called them to be his soldiers it begins now but you know what it is it's life that shall never end there's no end and I think it can be called everlasting life from two ways it can be called everlasting life quantitatively and it can be called everlasting life qualitatively and there are some of you in this gathering tonight and you don't believe it you know you don't believe that a Christian has the best kind of life you don't believe the joy that a Christian knows in a soul you don't believe what a Christian has on the way to heaven you think it's all long droopy faces but you young folk and not so young folk who think like that you're showing your ignorance if you had one taste or if you had one taste of the sweetness of the honey of God's life in your soul you'd never want to go the way of the world again you'd never want to live for the flesh anymore just one taste of

Jesus for your soul for time for eternity and you be turned on to a new life a new life that will never end oh my friend that's the blessing God commands today that's the blessing men have who know Jesus they have joy unspeakable and full of glory they've got life they've got peace they've got everything somebody put it like this life so rich and abundant joy so full and triumphant peace that nothing can mar and no man take away light no shadow of turning oil still keeping me burning oh this wonder of wonders Jesus is mine is he yours tonight is he yours for all eternity let us pray oh lord how we long that our friends here would share with us in the

Jesus of Calvary in the Christ of our faith Lord we ask thee by the spirit of the living God that thou come come and work in hearts who have lived as thine enemies still know and bring them to be thy friends we ask it in Jesus name Amen