

Time for a Check-Up

by Bryan Gibson

Most of us are concerned enough about our physical health to get regular check-ups. If only we had the same concern for our spiritual health. We need to examine ourselves spiritually (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31; Galatians 6:4), because something could be seriously wrong. In doing that, let's keep the following points in mind.

Let's start with the obvious—it **must be a personal examination**. Let's take our eyes off others for awhile and focus on ourselves. This focus on ME is important for at least two reasons. Each of us is responsible for our own sins, a point clearly made in James 1:13-15. Secondly, each of us will stand alone before God in the Day of Judgment—"each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

We must use the right standard. If we wanted to measure the length of something in inches, we wouldn't use something marked off in centimeters. That would be using the wrong standard, something we are also prone to do when measuring ourselves. Some use society's idea of a "good moral life" as their standard—"I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't run around on my spouse," etc. That's great, but there is much more involved in being a faithful Christian. Others use their own feelings as a standard of measurement—"I just know in my heart I'm right"—but feelings of the heart can be very unreliable (Proverbs 16:25; 28:26). And then some like to use other people as their standard—"I'm better than..." We can always find favorable comparisons, if we look hard enough (2 Corinthians 10:12). The only acceptable and completely reliable standard of measurement is the word of God. We must measure our lives by it, because after all, it will be the standard used in the Day of Judgment (John 12:48). Still need SOMEONE to measure our lives against? Use Jesus (Ephesians 4:13), because that will certainly keep us humble and keep us working diligently to improve ourselves.

This exam must be thorough, with no stone left unturned. Why? "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). We've all heard stories of those who went to the doctor, got a clean bill of health, only to discover shortly afterward that they had a serious illness. The problem? The exam was not thorough enough.

We must deal honestly with the sin that this exam may reveal—don't deny it, ignore it, explain it away, or try to make it seem less serious than what it is. We need to honestly confess our sins and turn away from them (1 John 1:8-10; Proverbs 28:13).

This exam must be done over and over again. One physical exam in a lifetime certainly wouldn't be enough, and neither would one spiritual exam. The Lord continually examines us (Revelation 2:23), and so we must continually examine ourselves.

Let's get started today. It may be the last chance we have.