

MINISTRY TO OURSELVES

Loving Yourself

"Love the Lord your God with all, your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour AS YOURSELF" Matthew 22:37-39

How we care for ourselves is how we should care for others. We are only able to minister to others to the degree that we ourselves have the mastery in our lives. For example: we can only impart faith if we have faith ourselves; we can only encourage someone else if we ourselves are feeling encouraged. Peter's words to the cripple at the temple gate are true also of us:

"What I HAVE I give you" Acts 3:6.

For this reason, in order to have a ministry of blessing to other people, it is important that we first of all minister to ourselves. The Scripture tells us a number of ways that we are to do this:

1. Nurturing Ourselves

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" 1 Peter 2:2.

The Bible is like spiritual food. We grow in our spiritual life through the nourishment of God's Word. The Apostle Peter exhorts us to crave and consume it just as a baby does milk. As we grow spiritually, so will our appetite, and the Word will become like solid meat to us (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Hebrews 5:12-14).

Craving is a strong desire that can't be stopped by whatever is happening around you.

That being newly begotten and born of the new seed of the incorrupt word, drinking and sucking greedily the same word as milk, we should grow more and more in that spiritual life. And he calls it, sincere, not only because it is a most pure thing, but also that we should take heed of them which corrupt it.

The figure is very expressive: as a child newly born shows an immediate desire for that nourishment, and that only, which is its most proper food; so they, being just born of God, should show that the incorruptible seed abides in them, and that they will receive nothing that is not suited to that new nature: and, indeed, they can have no spiritual growth but by the pure doctrines of the Gospel.

It is worthy to note that it is your duty to seek for the nourishment otherwise you will not grow in the faith.

Some Christians wait for people to feed them; but this contradicts the scripture above. The desire should be the drive to get milk; this shows that we are the people that hinder our growth.

The pastor and all the five fold ministers can't feed people who have closed their hearts, God has never forced people to feed it is the hunger for him that drives people to feed; Jesus said,

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."
Matt 5:6

2. Reminding Ourselves.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" Psalm 103:2 (read also verses 1-13).

We are to continually remind ourselves of all that the Lord has done for us. This keeps us in the position of victory the Lord has given us in Christ over every circumstance and the forces of evil that would come against our lives (see Ephesians 6:10-18). This is one of the main purposes of the Communion Table. It is a continual reminder of the complete victory that the Lord Jesus Christ won for us on the Cross.

The benefits which God bestows are daily renewed, and should be acknowledged with daily thanksgiving.

Human beings are forgetful and this is the reason we need to remind our souls about the good things God has done in the past.

It is by this we get equilibrium in life when we remember his benefits and the future promises written in the Bible.

The prophet Isaiah Says in Isa 46:9

"Remember the former things long past,

For I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is no one like Me, NASU

The prophet is reminding the people to remember the things God has done in the past but warned people of remembering their past weaknesses: Isa 43:18-19

18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. KJV

The shows us that we need to remember Gods Doings and forget our past weaknesses.

Make sure you remind your heart regularly of Gods grace in the Past; remind it of his marvelous works lest you forget and think that it is normal.

God warned Israel because he Knew All humans are forgetful.

Deut 8:18

18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. KJV

3. Judging Ourselves.

"But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment" 1 Corinthians 11:31 (read also verses 23-32 and 2 Corinthians 13:5-6).

To judge yourself does not mean to condemn and punish yourself. It simply means to

recognise the sin for what it is, to be honest with yourself about it, to be truly sorry, and to take it immediately to the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing .

God has given us his Spirit that discerns our Wrongs before we go for the Final Judgement. One can tell whether he will pass the judgement or not. The goodness of the whole matter is that we can deliver ourselves from Gods Judgement long before we appear before it. John says:

1 John 3:19-21

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. KJV

If we would sit in judgment on our spiritual condition, and correct ourselves, we would avert God's judgments.

That is, if we would examine, try, censure, and sentence ourselves, and so come to the Lord's table as penitent believers, with a purity of aim, and a sincere intention; we should thereby escape the castigatory punishments, and condemnatory sentence, of God.

Learn hence, That as it is our duty often to examine and judge ourselves, so self-judging in particular, before The Lord Comes, will preserve us from the judgment and condemnation of God; we must first summon, then examine, then convict and repent.

4. Encouraging Ourselves.

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God" Psalm 42:5.

In the face of problems and difficulties we are to encourage ourselves in the fact that God is faithful in keeping his promises to help.

The Bible recommends we encourage ourselves because it can reach a time when even your best friends will be against you getting an example from Jobs friends.

It reaches a time when one is left with God as the only source of comfort an example is David:

1 Sam 30:6

6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. KJV

The men wanted to stone David as if he is the one who had caused the problem but he encouraged himself in his God; for God had promised He will never leave us nor forsake us.

5. Singing To Ourselves.

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" Ephesians 5:19-20

It means playing and singing with an instrument." But it should come from the heart not only lips. It should be directed to the Lord but not for the satisfaction our sensual desire for Music.

It is worthy to note that if you don't know how to play instruments you can play pre-recorded Music which will can tune your heart towards God.

Singing expresses praise and thankfulness to God and releases the joy that He has given us. When you are down sing songs of praise and you will overcome the situation; because the joy of the Lord is Our Strength Neh. 8:10.

6. Building Up Ourselves.

"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit" Jude 20.

When we pray in the Spirit we build ourselves; praying in tongues brings self edification. When we pray with our minds we can get what we pray but in tongues we get and also edify ourselves too.

1 Cor 14:2-4

2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

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That is, the truths which are communicated to him by the Spirit, and which he utters in an unknown language, may be valuable, and may be the means of strengthening his faith, and building him up in the hopes of the gospel, but they can be of no use to others.

Praying not in the spirit leaves us with a missing ingredient in our growth.

I challenge every one who is not spirit filled to thirst for Him and I assure God will honor His word and you will be filled.

We become stronger in our experience in God through our faith in Him. The Christian life is a daily walk of faith. Each trial and difficulty we face becomes an opportunity to trust God (1 Peter 1:6-7) and, as we do so, more of the Lord is revealed to us Coupled with our faith is its expression to the Lord in prayer.

7. Keeping Ourselves.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God . . . " Jude 21 (KJV).

We are to keep, or confine ourselves, within God's love. In other words, we are to remain in close fellowship with Him, sharing our hearts continually with Him and knowing that the Spirit of His love fills us and surrounds us

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" Romans 8:35,38-39.

It is our responsibility to place ourselves where we belong bearing in Mind the Bible says:
2 Tim 1:12

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. KJV

God will not keep what you have not entrusted unto him; you may be having problem in life but the Lord will not intervene until you surrender to him whatever is troubling you.

We must keep ourselves pure by avoiding anything that can defile ourselves; we can't live carelessly and blame God for the same.

One person said, "We should not hunt for serpents because it is written we have power over serpents"

This means we should not go to dangerous zones because God has promised protection.

8. Focusing Ourselves.

" . . . Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" Jude 21 (KJV).

As we keep our eyes on God's eternal call and purpose for us, the fullness of which will be ushered in when Jesus returns, we will see this present life in the right perspective.

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" Colossians 3:1-4.

One of the things that make us achieve our goals is remaining focused by looking unto Jesus irrespective of the things that are on the sides which are used by the devil to distract us.

One of the people who cross from one building to the other using rope was asked, "how do manage to do this and never fall down" he had a simple answer, "I Avoid looking back and stick my eyes to where Iam heading to"

I wish all the Saints can imitate this Man and cast their eyes on Jesus Who is the Author and Finisher of our Faith. Heb. 12: 2

It is the focus that makes us not to park on the way until we achieve our purpose.

9. Opening Ourselves.

"I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands . . ." Psalm 119:131 (see also Acts 16:14).

Ps 81:10: "I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

Let thy desires be ever so extensive, I will gratify them if thou wilt be faithful to me. Have large expectations of God, and offer large prayers to him, then shall great things be your joyful portion. Who would not ask largely if he believed that his requests would be granted?

We should not be like Jericho:

Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in. Josh 6:1

We should have an open mind to receive and also give out to avoid the Jericho spirit. God will never force any one to be blessed but we must all be in the stage ready to receive His blessing.

The most important key in our ministry to ourselves is in opening our whole lives to Him and allowing HIM to minister to us.

" . . . it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"
Philippians 2:13.

There must be a will to do Gods will. God is not a robber he knocks the door but does not break it.

He does not compel or force us against our will. He leads us to "will" as well as to do. The will cannot be forced; and the meaning here must be that God exerts such an influence as to make us willing to obey him.

It is not a physical force, but it must be a moral influence.

A physical power cannot act on the will. You may chain a man, incarcerate him in the deepest dungeon, starve him, scourge him, apply red-hot pincers to his flesh, or place on him the thumb-screw, but the will is still free.

You cannot bend that, or control it, or make him believe otherwise than as he chooses to believe. The declaration here, therefore, cannot mean that God compels us, or that we are anything else but free agents still, though he "works in us to will and to do." It must mean merely that he exerts such an influence as to secure this result.

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