

# Critical Spiritual Assessment



#1484 0130 11P

To make an honest spiritual evaluation of our believing faith in the Blood of Christ, and of our trust on the divine power of God, is necessary, because He requires our absolute loyalty concerning faith and trust on Him. *“Faith is lifeless if it is unaccompanied by obedience”* James 2:26. Just *speaking* about faith in God, but *not obeying* what His Word teaches, is deceptive. James 1:22 *“Prove yourselves obedient to the Message, and do not be mere hearers of it, imposing a delusion upon yourselves.”*

A righteous standing before God comes *only* by combining our belief in the resurrection power of Christ, with acting in faith on the divine power of God. James 2:22 Abraham’s *“faith was co-operating with his actions, and that by his actions his faith was perfected.”* It is why Jesus said Matthew 5:48 *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* Our faith in God must be *perfected—not divided* among other plans, policies, or prescriptions.

Making an honest spiritual evaluation of our faith is being willing to see our spiritual *condition* in light of God’s Word. We must be sincerely trusting God in faith, to receive answers to prayer. There are only two classes of people in the world—those who are *willing* to be spiritually honest before God, and those who are *not willing* to be shown spiritual requirements. John 12:46 *“I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”*

We may *think* that we are making an honest effort to trust God, but may also be justifying

ourselves and placing the blame on God. The devil tries to convince us that we are doing our best, so something else is the problem. A *dishonest* spiritual evaluation will hinder the spiritual *light* and the answer to prayer God wants to give us.

To assess our spiritual honesty, is to ask ourselves if *we* are hindering the answer to prayer that God wants to give. God is always right, so there *has* to be a spiritual lack in *us*. If we will be spiritually honest with ourselves, and take an attitude of humility before God, He promises to give the spiritual wisdom we need to meet a situation right, or to receive an answer to prayer. Psalm 51:4 *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”*

If we are willing to forget any preconceived ideas and be open to the divine light God wants to give, we are sure to receive it. Ephesians 5:13-14 *“Everything can be tested by the light and thus be shown in its true colors; for whatever shines of itself is light. For this reason it is said, ‘Rise, sleeper; rise from among the dead, and Christ will shed light upon you.’”*

The Holy Spirit is ready to enlighten our mind to understand spiritual truth, if we are willing to make a spiritually honest assessment of our faith in Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:12 *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”* The spiritual benefits of the Atonement of Christ are waiting to be given. James 1:17 *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.”*

We must be alert to deception because Satan can get us to see things opposite to what God’s Word says they are. An honest spiritual evaluation of our attitude *toward* God will bring

spiritual wisdom *from* God. It is a promise James 1:5 *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* Our responsibility is to be spiritually *honest* with our evaluation, and to place the blame on our *own* spiritual condition.

The Bible gives examples of honest spiritual evaluations. The criminals crucified with Jesus show two opposite attitudes. They were both in the worst situation possible, but one was honest in his assessment, and the other was not. One was willing to admit that his *own* sins *caused* him to be in that horrible situation. He blamed himself—not God.

These two criminals were at the very gate of Hell, and only one thing stood between them and the flames—a *change* of attitude! One was spiritually honest before God and *changed* his attitude—which enabled God to change his direction to Heaven. The other criminal justified himself, blamed Jesus, and went to Hell forever. Only an *attitude change* separated the two men—only an attitude separates Heaven from Hell!

Making an honest spiritual evaluation of our attitudes, and being open to spiritual *light*, is a salvation issue. The only difference between them and their opposite destinations was their attitude. That example is recorded for our spiritual benefit and our eternal interest. Luke 23:39 *“Now one of the criminals who had been crucified insulted Him, saying, ‘Are not you the Christ? Save yourself and us.’”* Satan caused that man to take that wicked attitude.

<sup>40</sup> *“But the other, answering, reproved him. ‘Do you also not fear God,’ he said, ‘when you are actually suffering the same punishment?’”* We are at the jaws of death, he meant, and yet you show no fear of God! How can you have that rebellious attitude when you are facing

eternity? This is valuable spiritual light for everyone today.

The man who reproved the other had the right attitude, and said Luke 23:41 *"We indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving due requit-al for what we have done. But [Jesus] has done nothing amiss."* If God can find one soul any-where in the world who will take that attitude, and be open to spiritual light, He would give it. It would enable them to Romans 12:2, *"Be trans-formed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is."*

The honesty of the man's prayer showed the sincerity of his heart—he said Luke 23:42, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* He would be acquitted and justified by his faith in Christ. It was a humble attitude and an honest prayer—like Luke 18:13 *"God, have mercy on me, a sinner."* Jesus answered that man's prayer, and promised paradise Luke 23:43, *"Verily I say to thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."*

It is the same promise of Luke 18:14 *"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself [by making an honest spiritual evaluation] will be exalted."* Our words are vitally important; Matthew 12:37 *For by your words you will be ac-quitted, and by your words you will be con-demned."*

These examples are for us today, and they show how important it is to be humble, repen-tant, and ready to change wrong attitudes. The man with humility and a willing heart was given eternal life—just by reversing his attitude to-ward God. He went from no faith to complete trust. One man will suffer the tortures of Hell forever, and the other will praise God through the endless ages of eternity in Heaven. What a

contrast between an honest and a rebellious heart!

John the Baptist recognized spiritual pre-tense. The scribes and Pharisees looked reli-gious, but their hearts were rebellious. If those Pharisees were here today, most denominational churches would consider them believers on their way to Heaven, because they do not recognize the rebellious attitude in their *own* heart—much less in someone else. Outward piety does not justify our sins, but a genuine believing faith in the Atonement of Christ *does* justify our sins.

The religious leaders in the first century *looked* pious, and they *tried* to follow the Law. They were careful not to carry a carpet, nor light a fire on the Sabbath. Jesus said that such people appeared righteous Matthew 23:27 *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and every-thing unclean."*

They wanted to be baptized, but John the Baptist was enlightened to see their hypocrisy. Luke 3:7 *"You brood [generation] of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"* He was calling them *children of the devil*, which was what they were, because they wanted John to *think* they were sincere in trusting God, when they were not.

They were hypocrites because they were not willing to admit they had no change of heart—a heart that would accept God's Son. A *generation of vipers* would mean they were descendants of that wicked serpent who de-ceived Adam. Jesus said Luke 20:46 *"Beware of the Scribes"* who look pious on the outside, but are wicked on the inside.

John knew their intentions so he had to warn them of God's wrath. They had *no* inten-tion of accepting Christ as their Savior, and they

had no willingness to trust God for anything— but they wanted to be baptized. John said Luke 3:8 *"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance [live lives which shall prove your change of heart]."* They were not willing to change, so he told them—*Do not just profess faith, but actively show that you are trusting God, and living by faith in the Atonement sacrifice of His Son.* It was a strong rebuke—but just what they needed to hear.

If there was ever an issue where an honest spiritual assessment is needed, it is when our eternal life is at stake. John spoke the *truth in love* Ephesians 4:15 and said Luke 3:9 *"The ax is al-ready at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."* John was just telling them where they *were* spiritually—in the sight of God.

A logger places the ax against the tree when he stops for lunch, with the intention of cutting down that tree next. God has already placed an ax at the feet of those who are not producing spiritual fruit by trusting Him in believing faith, for— healing without drugs, for protection without de-vices, for avenging wrongs without lawyers, for provisions without laid up money, and for every other issue that involves believing faith in a living God who promises to do those things for us.

If the religious leaders would have been spiri-tually honest, and had truly repented before God, He would have done as much for them, as He would for anyone else. From what the Bible records, they did not repent, and they continued to be controlled by the devil, so they would find themselves in the flames and pleading for relief. A critical spiritual assessment of our faith *is* an eternal life issue!

