

Inward

Spiritual Assessment

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Assessment Skills

When buying a home it is often recommended to have a professional inspect it. People are trained to examine homes for any issues. Of course the outcome will depend upon two things: the condition of the home and the quality of the inspection. Similarly, our spiritual assessment will depend upon two things: our spiritual condition and the quality of our assessment.

Most of us will be at beginner levels with spiritual examination. If we compare our examination abilities with other beginners, we may easily convince ourselves we are doing well or as good as everyone else. But thinking we are doing it well would be self-deception. If everyone around us is lacking in doing the will of God, then we ought to set our goal to be higher than that. We must avoid comparing where we are spiritually with others around us. None of the Apostles set goals to be like the average Christian. Instead, they sought to be like Christ and corrected churches. We must discern carefully whose examples we are following and what goals we are setting for ourselves. Otherwise we will likely miss the mark.

It's best if we apply ourselves with a more thorough and complete inspection. This means using some sense of measuring or gauging our inward practices with our heart, mind, strength, and soul. If our inward spiritual condition is more valued to God than our house, then we ought to apply more time and resources to inspect it, learn the truth, and help it improve. We ought to examine ourselves long enough to learn the path toward improvement.

Galatians 6:4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

In this book we are going to examine our production with good and evil. We must see the spiritual truth with our inward actions. In order to have an accurate assessment we must think, study, and learn more about good and evil. This section will provide scripture discussing good and evil with guides to help. We must think long enough to learn.

Practicing new and improved ways will involve extra effort and diligence. Yet over time as we grow this process will become easier. It's best to

debrief what we learn with others who are also doing the will of God. Two heads are better than one. We can invite feedback with an open mind for new truth. Others with experience in transformation can have good insights to share and we must remain open to learn from them. It's one thing to feel confused and another to close the mind from understanding.

Assessment Decisions

We practice assessing ourselves using continuums. This practice can guide us into discerning where we are at with varieties of spiritual good and evil. At first glance we may feel confused or uncertain. In the beginning we simply make our best guess, because we cannot fully know. Assessing ourselves for the first time is like hitting a ball for the first time. It will likely be in error. We are learning to connect with the ball. Trial and error is the process. We must be trying and to learn we are in error helps guide us toward improvement. We must examine our mistakes with a focus to learn from them. We learn as we practice. No one jumps into new practices with perfection. We give ourselves over to new practices so we can learn. Our goal is to improve awareness of our spiritual condition. Learning our strengths and weakness can help us in many ways, if we learn from them.

Black-and-white thinking and all or nothing attitudes will block understanding. Ambiguous responses will limit understanding. Instead, we must refocus ourselves to look between the lines and see the grey areas. We must learn to see how each of us experiences a degree of good and evil and falls somewhere in between on a continuum.

We must persevere with the assessment regularly for new understanding to take root. Doing it once a month will have little affect. Try learning math that way, it just doesn't work. The mind needs focus and training. To be trained in God's good requires a good training process. Repetition is key. Over time patterns will develop that can prove to us aspects about our spiritual condition which can help shine the light upon corrective action.

Over time we can learn how each day is different. We may discover some patterns where we have a higher or lower score on certain situations, days of the week, or times in the year. We can use this information to discuss with others, but we must always be more focused upon our own growth.

Proud or humble

James 4:6 & 1 Peter 5:5 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

We review our thoughts, attitudes, words, actions, and demeanor to describe our position with humble and proud. Every minute is unique and different. Every situation and context is different. We can be proud in one situation and humble in another. Our job here is to learn our position with being proud or humble in all our situations. Our spiritual awareness can grow with each assessment. We ought to evaluate ourselves as we go throughout each day. The more we are aware of our inward spiritual responses the better we can position ourselves to make corrections and grow.

Proud _____ Humble _____

Self-serving
1 - 2 Points

Serving self & God
3-8 Points

Humbly serving God
9-10 Points

Thoughts, words,
attitude, actions, focused
upon doing self-will with
no consideration of God

Thoughts, words,
attitude, actions,
focused upon doing
self-will with
consideration of God

Thoughts, words, attitude,
actions, focused upon
doing the will of God with
no consideration of self

2 Timothy 3:1-9

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Let's humble ourselves from seeking a top score and instead, accept the truth of where we are at without fear, shame, or bitterness.

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor *is* humility.

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

Deception or truth

John 8:31-32 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

How well we abide in what Jesus teaches will impact the freedom we experience from truth. Truth that changes is truth that has been accommodated within our heart, mind, and soul.

Deception _____ Truth

No self-searching 1 - 2 Points	Moderate self-searching 3-8 Points	Perfect Spiritual Awareness 9-10 Points
Avoid learning new inward spiritual truth. Follow same patterns and learned system.	Improved awareness of good and evil with regular prayer, meditation, and inward corrections with God's good.	Fully changed inward and outward behaviors with God's good.
Follow instincts. Auto-pilot functioning.	Second guess decisions leading to ungodly responses.	Ready to discuss experiences—how improvements have been made. Inwardly renewed and evident with deeds.
Romans 2:1-11	Applying new ways of responding leading to new experiences.	Romans 2:12-29

Jeremiah 7:28 So you shall say to them, ‘This *is* a nation that does not obey the voice of the Lord their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.

Galatians 5:7-8 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

Hypocrisy—pretending or without hypocrisy—sincere

Hypocrisy	Without Hypocrisy
Play acting 1 - 2 Points	Developing sincerity 3-8 Points
Fake smiles, false flattery, putting on an act, etc.	Focused upon seeing truth in thoughts, words, feelings, and demeanor.
Not getting real with self or others.	Letting our yes be yes and no be no. Our words follow our actions. Our faces match our feelings.
Saying and doing what we think people want or to control them and how they see us.	Responsible for choices, attitudes, and actions.
Blaming & excuses. Avoiding personal responsibility.	Standing more right with God, with less influence over others.
Avoid getting real.	Applying inward corrections evident by our words and actions.
Creating a worldly, superficial image.	Transparent about spiritual inward struggles with good and evil.
Matthew 6:1-30	Our growth is evident. We share sincere truth about our growth and the new corrective actions we've taken. Our words and actions are with all sincerity.
	Matthew 6:31-34

1 Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread of sincerity* and truth.

Ephesians 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in **sincerity**. Amen.

Bitterness or Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15, Mark 11:25-26 For if you **forgive** men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you. But if you do not **forgive** men their trespasses, neither will your Father **forgive** your trespasses.

Bitterness	Forgiveness
Condemnation 1 - 2 Points	Practiced Forgiveness 3-8 Points
Bitterness or condemning thoughts and attitudes toward self or others.	Identifying bitterness in thoughts and senses with experience in forgiveness.
Holding Grudges.	Learn the difference between forgiving and forgetting.
Retaining wrongs of others in heart, mind, attitude, and/or words.	Experience in the ease and comfort from the practice of forgiveness.
	Walking through life with a forgiving mind and heart.
	Not easily disturbed by loss or tragedy.
	Discerning how repentance and forgiveness work together.

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. **Forgive**, and you will be **forgiven**.

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he **repents**, **forgive** him.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all **bitterness**, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Hebrews 12:15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of **bitterness** springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to **forgive** us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Favoritism—partial or just—fair

Leviticus 19:15 You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be **partial** to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

Just—fair—not partial _____ Favoritism—partial

Poor Judgements
1 - 2 Points

Judgements done quickly and lacking investigation.

Going with the crowd.

Practicing Fair Judgements
3 - 8 Points

Examination and discerning facts from opinions. Learning personal bias, herd mentality, group think, and powers of influence.

Practicing unpopular truth.

Skilled with Fairness
9 - 10 Points

Ability to stay right in judgement to point of being hated by your closest friends or family.
Doing what is right because it is right.

Acts 10:34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no **partiality**.

Romans 2:11 For there is no **partiality** with God.

Ephesians 6:9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no **partiality** with Him.

1 Timothy 5:21 I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with **partiality**.

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of glory*, with **partiality**. (Read 2:1-13)

1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without **partiality** judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear;

Indifferent—uncaring or compassion—empathy

James 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by the Lord*—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

No Compassion _____ Compassion

Don't care attitude 1 - 2 Points	Practicing empathy 3 - 8 Points	Emotionally Present 9 - 10 Points Ability to sense what others feel when they feel it.
Avoid, repress, and/or distract self from feelings.	Understanding emotions better through experiences.	Others sense your empathy-understanding. They feel validated and heard.
Don't make time to feel. Feelings are weak or not important.	Facing feelings and grieving where appropriate.	Enhanced discernment regarding Jude 1
Lacking discernment. Romans 1:28-32	Emotionally present. Sensing how others feel. Practicing affection and empathy. Building discernment on when and how to have mercy.	1 Peter 8:3-12

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of *you* be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

Love of money—debt or generosity—charitable

Love of money	Charitable
Serving money 1 - 2 Points	Practice sharing 3 - 8 Points
Spending more than your means.	Experience giving freely to others
Increasing debt.	Decreasing debt
Not lending or giving to help others.	Learning inward thoughts & feelings while giving to others. Watching their responses while keeping in mind their experiences with forgiveness, mercy, & compassion.
Thinking mostly of selfish gains.	Building empathy.
Not inwardly moved to help others.	Feeling moved to help others to the point of taking action to do so.
Lacking empathy—too focused on self. Me first attitude.	Learning how to help those we disagree with or find difficult to be around.
1 Timothy 6:6-10 2 Timothy 3:1-9	Renewed connections with others due to our humble and compassionate helpfulness. Understand the trends—patterns in growth with helping others.
	Experience the joy in spiritual good by helping others.
	Matthew 6:1-4 Luke 6:27-36

1 John 3:17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother **in need**, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Peace—calm or hurry—anxious

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Anxious _____ Peaceful

Hurry & Worry 1 - 2 Points	Slowing & Growing 3 - 8 Points	Calm & Content 9 - 10 Points
Keep busy. Focus on tasks and things.	Increasing meditation. Focus on being in the present with thoughts and feelings.	Walk peacefully. Think peacefully. Speak peacefully. Feel peaceful.
Avoid meditation & introspection.	Practicing peaceful thoughts. Redirecting pace of thoughts and movement to be more peaceful.	Affecting others with peace flowing outwardly. Inspire others to calm down.
Idle time is wasted time. Never really knowing self.	Practicing waiting calmly and moving more slowly.	
Matthew 6:25-34		Philippians 4:6-9

Luke 1:79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

Romans 4:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Self-seeking or seeking God

James 3:16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

Self-seeking 1-2 Points	Practicing Self-control & repentance 3-8 Points	God-centered 9-10 Points
Own comforts		Death to self-seeking
Own understanding	Daily adding conscious awareness of God's good with pondering how to do it.	and own understanding
Selfish ambition		Seeking God's kingdom throughout each day
Vain conceit	Redirecting thoughts to serve trust & God's good.	
Proud		Consciously discerning God's good & doing it.
Romans 2:4-9	Discerning attention to evil & practicing corrective actions.	Romans 2:10
2 Corinthians 12:20-21		Galatians 5:22-26
Galatians 5:19-21		

2 Peter 1:5-9 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

Mark 3:35 For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.

2 Corinthians 3:4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

Stewardship—have to or Willing—wanting to

1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but **willingly**, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

Unwilling & Stewardship 1-2 Points	Practicing willingness 3-8 Points	High willingness 9-10 Points
Heartless involvement.	Service with compassion, connection, & friendship.	Full sincerity with compassion. Love & Service together.
Service done with little love for God or others.	Practicing empathy while serving.	Yoked with Christ as we serve & enjoying it.
Task focussed.	Service done with a growing sense of sincere love and care for God or others.	Being spiritually fed while serving.
Low sincerity in connections.	People are heard and validated.	Established deep relationships.
John 5:38-47	Witnessing affects from sincere love in service.	1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Luke 17:10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our **duty** to do.’

1 Corinthians 9:17 For if I do this **willingly**, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

1 Timothy 6:18 *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, **willing** to share,

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, **willing** to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Not helping or Mercy—helping the weak

Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain **mercy**.

Unmerciful 1-2 Points	Practicing mercy 3-8 Points	Christlike mercy 9-10 Points
Don't care.	Practicing mercy and learning how to care.	Many good spiritual experiences through practicing mercy.
Don't know & don't care. Why should I?	Learning how mercy is good through experiences.	Seek out opportunities to experience mercy with others.
Know the good that ought to be done, but don't do it.		
Practicing not thinking about helping others.		Luke 10:25-37
Self-indulgence.		
Matthew 23		

Matthew 9:13 But go and learn what *this* means: 'I desire **mercy** and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Mathew 12:7 But if you had known what *this* means, 'I desire **mercy** and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

Luke 10:37 And he said, "He who showed **mercy** on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Labor for God

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, **zealous** for good works.

No good growth 1-2 Points	Some good growth 3-8 Points	Much continued good growth 9-10 Points
Stagnant	Continuing growth	Growth is a way of life

Acts 20:35 I have shown you in every way, by **laboring** like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

Matthew 9:37, Luke 10:2 Then He said to them, “The harvest truly *is* great, but the **laborers** are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out **laborers** into His harvest.

John 6:27 Do not **labor** for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.

2 Timothy 2:15 Be **diligent** to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Romans 10:2-3 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Galatians 4:18 But it is good to be **zealous** in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be **zealous** and repent.

Life's Situations Sample Sheet

Each day we have some situations that are common and some that are unique. Many of us may have never really given them much thought regarding our cooperation with good and evil. The Sample sheet is a tool to help prompt thoughts for reflection as we assess ourselves with good and evil inward experiences. We can find some situation on this sheet or another one we experience not noted here and then reflect upon it with our inward attitude.

Transportation: whether driving, riding, or walking we will likely experience others who get in our way, slow us down, or behave in ways that can create bitterness. What good or evil thoughts do we have in these situations?

Here is a list of scenarios to ponder our inward attitude with:

Work, homework, groups, classes, tests, trainings, seminars, etc.

Family, spouse, kids, pets, friends, neighbors,

Clubs, church, gym, or other things we are members of

Grocery shopping, malls, outlets, big box stores, coffee shops, fast food, etc.

Chores, cleaning, repairs, house improvements,

Insurance, DMV, phone & internet companies, or other service providers

Sports, games, or other hobbies

People we avoid or hope not to speak with

Meditation, prayer, and even this assessment process

Ourselves with mistakes, falling short, successes, achievements

Money, status, winning and losing, prestige, image, (our words and thoughts—what are they)