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Before taking action, conduct self-examination.

In an era marked by social strife and division, the necessity for genuine dialogue and action to address pressing social issues has never been greater. However, watching media programming, reading social media, and even observing local elected bodies leaves viewers in a condition of hopelessness as the active participants are accomplishing little other than losing whatever trust remains. Sadly, participants believe they are on the right side of the issue and consider those who do not see things exactly their way as unworthy, irrelevant and should be ignored. The good news is there is hope as there is another path and it resides within each of us. An often-overlooked barrier to societal progress is the lack of self-examination concerning motives. When individuals, organizations, and society at large fail to reflect their underlying intentions, they inadvertently foster a culture of hubris that hampers meaningful progress and undermines our collective ability to tackle social challenges effectively. Trust becomes non-existent as society continues to fragment into counterproductive groups.

Self-examination entails a deep and honest introspection about one's motivations, biases, and the impact of one's actions on others. Without critical self-reflection, individuals operate on autopilot, driven by preconceived notions or societal norms rather than genuine concern for the issues at hand. This results in actions that, while well-intentioned, fall short of addressing the very real needs of communities.

Hubris, defined as excessive pride or self-confidence, often emerges when self-examination is absent. It can make people think they know everything, leading them to ignore others' valuable wisdom and experiences. This attitude not only alienates potential allies but also stifles collaborative efforts, which are essential for meaningful progress. The best solutions arise from partnerships where different voices are each acknowledged and valued. Philippians 2:3 encourages us: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." A lack of humility limits our capacity to listen, learn, and grow, which is vital for creating workable solutions to challenges, as compared to force alone.

Humility plays a pivotal role in fostering authentic connections and collaborating to solve social issues. When individuals approach challenges with a humble mindset, they are more open to learning from others. Human beings often forget that everyone has flaws, and no one is perfect in any respect. Stephen Covey's **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** suggests Habit #5: understand others before being understood yourself.

Furthermore, humility encourages individuals to accept responsibility for their roles in creating a problem rather than promoting a solution. As stated in Romans 12:3, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought but rather think of yourself with sober judgment." By cultivating a sober judgment of our positions, we can engage more effectively with all including those of differing opinions. People should be asking themselves where I could be wrong, what can I learn from others?

This brief article would be incomplete if it does not address those who profess an adherence to the Christian philosophy which acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Christians are not immune to the previous issues, but they do have profound ways to avoid falling into the trap of ignoring self-examination.

First, recognizing Jesus as the source of truth provides a solid foundation for self-examination. In John 14:6, Jesus declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This truth helps believers assess their thoughts and actions against His teachings.

Secondly, when one acknowledges Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells within them, guiding and convicting them of sin. John 16:8 states, "And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." This internal conviction encourages believers to confront their shortcomings honestly.

Understanding Jesus' sacrifice allows believers to approach self-examination without fear of condemnation. Romans 8:1 reassures us, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." This assurance fosters a spirit of true humility before man and God.

To achieve change, we must stop reacting impulsively and start engaging after thorough self-examination. It might be contagious, and trust will again flourish as the glue that unites us.