

Introduction

God made me into an analytical person. I analyze a lot of things, including struggles all of us have in life, failures to live what the bible tells us, and what all of us need in order to make us more effective for God.

God also made my mind work like a teacher. *"How can I teach things that are helpful to us (including myself) that would make us more effective for God?" "How can I say it so it is easy to understand, or remember?"*

The combination of those two things - analyzing, and "how can I teach it?", causes me to look for patterns of things, and to try to see things that maybe others may not first see, or realize.

Today I have put together, almost a summary, of things all christians should realize, and be doing, or some things they should not be doing. Today is also ways of evaluating ourselves so we are living like God wants us to live.

Someday I would love to write books. But, I seriously wonder if that day will ever come. One book I would love to write would be a manual on the most important things from the bible on how to live. It would be an expanded version of today's message. It would have lots of details and examples of how we get off track from what God wants from all of us.

1. How do I know if I am seeing clearly how God wants me to be in life?

Chances are we ALL think we know what God expects us to be like. We could be very accurate on many things. But, we could also be very inaccurate on other things. Hopefully, in time, we will allow God to help us get rid of what we are inaccurate about, and we truly become all of what God wants from us.

What do you think God wants you to be like?

We can look at some things like:

What does God want to do with me? Does my life have a goal God wants from me?

Am I too lenient on myself because I see God as all loving and forgiving, and not expecting much because I'm just human?

Or, am I too hard on myself, because I see God as harsh, and He is expecting things I could never do?

Do I see God as "all grace and mercy, or do I see God as the opposite of that?"

OR, do I see God somewhere in the middle - showing grace & mercy to me, but also expecting me to care about whatever He cares about?

- Expecting me to see myself as I have assignments from God while I am on earth?

[\(John 17:4\)](#)

- Do I see that God has certain people He will bring my way ([John 17:6-9](#)) whom I am to bond with and to help, as well as to influence for God?

- Does God expect me to include Him in all my decisions?

- Am I all that God wants me to be, or am I refusing to look at some things about myself?

- Do I really realize the more of my fleshly side that comes through my life, the more

turned off people will be? With that same line of thinking, do I realize the more that I am out of the way, the more people see God? ([John 12:45](#))

There are 3 ways we can learn what God wants us to be like:

1) Stop listening to one-sided (professing) Christians, who refuse to look at the balance of the bible, who think it is either all grace, or all works.

God wants us to see the balance. He is both. He is not one or the other.

2) Instead of listening to others, read the bible a lot. ([Psalm 119:105](#))

While you read it, keep asking "What can I learn from this?" "How does this apply to my life?" "Am I doing this?" "If I'm not doing this, why am I not doing it?"

We will come across verses that can really get through to us. Things like:

[Colossians 3:3](#) (NIV)

³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Is your life now hidden so people see God and not you so much?

3) Be at church to hear things we might not be thinking about on our own.

([Heb 10:25](#))

If I miss a Sunday, do I check to see what the sermon was about to see if God wanted me to hear it? Do I even bother to check? Or do I assume I didn't miss anything?

4.) Be around other Christians often, so I can learn from them. ([Acts 2:44-47](#); [2 Cor 6:14](#);))

2. How do I know if I am "spiritually off" right now? [Jeremiah 49:16](#)

When we are off spiritually, pride will normally be involved, and we must realize that it is very easy to be deceived.

When I am spiritually off:

1.) My attitudes will change. I am bothered more than usual about people, or things.

This does NOT mean anytime things bother us, we are off spiritually. Rather, it just means you can bet that things will bother us more than usual if we are are spiritually not right.

I can tell you that one of the closest times I came to resigning here was about 10 yrs ago. I had a day that I was not right spiritually. I am glad I was able to catch it so it did not last more than a day. I didn't realize it that day, but things were bothering me a lot. I met with 2 ladies from the church board who happened to be at the church. I told them I was probably going to resign. Something stopped me from following through with it. When I went home, God showed me that I needed to ask Him for forgiveness. As soon as I did that, immediately my frustration left. I realized right then that I about blew it, that all that was bothering me had actually come from Satan.

This is what I am saying. When you are not right spiritually, you are very susceptible to it effecting your attitudes, & what you say or what you do. And, if you do not correct yourself quickly with God, you can do a lot of damage until you do so.

The problem with all of this is you are very likely to miss God's will on important decisions. You are apt to make wrong decisions, and display wrong attitudes. Then if those attitudes take place in the church to where it is an attitude with other Christians, then you force them to have to decide if they are going to have an attitude with your attitude. If choose to be fleshly, get aggravated, now we have division going on. Then their family and friends hear about it, and they have to deal with their fleshly side. It becomes a

mess because someone was spiritually off, either by sinning in some way, or having a bothered attitude, and they did not ask God's forgiveness or correct it with whoever else was involved.

When we are spiritually off we can do a lot of damage, and find ourselves working for Satan and never even realize it.

- 2.) **When we are off spiritually, our pride will usually increase.** The bible is FULL of verses about the dangers of pride. If our pride takes over our thinking, then you can guarantee it will come out in our words and in our actions.
- 3.) **At that point in our life, we will not be thinking enough about trying to find God's will in various areas of our life.** We tend to make our own decisions that God is not behind, whatsoever.

Let's look our #3 topic:

3. How do I know if I'm in denial in certain areas of my life? ([Romans 12:3](#))

It is difficult to know if we are in denial. *Why?* It is the nature of denial. Denial is something you either cannot see about yourself, or you refuse to see.

- 1) **If our thinking is mainly about our good points, and we ignore any areas of our life that needs to change, we are living in denial.** Christians have to be honest with God and themselves. Some people would call it **Self-reflection**.

You do not see denial in the Old Testament writings of David. Often, he was asking God to show him any areas of denial. ("Search me O Lord and know my heart") He knew he was capable of not seeing something about himself. So, he prayed often for God to help him to see himself.

- 2) **We are not open enough, or even honest enough, with ourselves and with God to allow Him to show us where we still need to change.**
It is almost like we think we have "arrived" in our faith. Openness to God to allow Him to show us ourselves is vital in keeping out our denial.

- 3) **We can be in denial because we are not reading the bible enough.**

Two thoughts on reading the bible:

- (1) **We should be reading the bible to see ourselves, the areas we still need to grow in.**
- (2) **We should be reading the bible to allow God to guide us to certain verses that help guide us in various things.**

But, it is very possible for us to read the bible to mainly see fascinating things, or mainly promises for myself (what God is going to do for me), or we are mainly reading it to find supernatural things.

There are LOTS of fascinating things in the bible. But, I will tell you my honest thoughts about this. I do not give a care what fascinating things you know that are in the bible. That means nothing to me if you have attitude issues, hold grudges, and do not allow God to show you things about yourself.

I have talked with people who chase the supernatural things of God. I would rather see people grow up and I become the kind of christian that allows God flowing through them. That is what impresses me. **If we are not reading the bible to self-reflect to see how we still need to grow, we are living in denial.**

Don't misunderstand this, all the things in the bible are fun to look at. But, there is nothing more important than growing, allowing God to flow through us more effectively, hearing God talk to us, and also being guided by God.

4) Our pride can cause us to overlook our own problems.

[Obadiah 1:3](#) (NIV) says "The pride of your heart has deceived you, ..."

Pride does not want us to look at ourselves. Pride wants to always think we are right. In addition, pride is so focussed on someone else and what we see as their problems, that our pride sees nothing for us to learn. Pride sees things as ALL the other person's problems.

On the other hand, a humble person starts their humility with God. They are open to allowing to God show them what they need in their lives. (self-reflecting while God shows us things about ourselves) Once they are truly humble with God, then that humility will portray itself in their relationship with others.

4. How would I know if I am over my anger toward someone?

At least occasionally, we are going to get angry with someone. If we have been a christian for awhile, we should already know that getting angry is not a sin. But, staying angry for more than a day is a sin. And, what we do with our anger is a sin. But, I would also say that if you are getting angry a lot, there is at least wrong thinking in you.

Anger is one of those things that can cause alot of destruction in our relationships. It is one of those things that we have better quickly work through or we can soon find ourselves working for Satan.

We are over our anger if:

1) It's been more than one day and I'm no longer angry, or most of it is gone.

[Ephesians 4:26-27](#) (NIV)

²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": **Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,** (I believe that means more than one day. During that time you need to allow God to help you process it.)

²⁷ **and do not give the devil a foothold.**

I'm also constantly checking myself on how to get rid of the rest of the anger, while trying to learn how I can get better from what angered me. If you are not trying to grow from it, and you have not stopped blaming, you are not over your anger.

I can know that I am probably over my anger if:

2) I do not nit-pick them - finding fault with most things they do. Or I have stopped distorting most everything they do. I guarantee you, if you are nit-picking everything you see someone do, you will also be distorting what they do.

If I have not stopped doing that, I am not over my anger, and I am also living in sin.

There is a decent chance I might be over my anger if:

3) I do NOT try to avoid them. AND, I do not get negative feelings, or anxiety feel-

ings when I see them.

I am probably over my anger at someone:

4) If I am telling myself "We all have difficulties. I'm not perfect either."

So, if you are NOT doing that, you are probably not over your anger. Reminding ourselves we are not perfect either, helps to be more reasonable on how hard we are on other people.

5) If I am thinking about how I do not want to offend God by my own attitude this is a good indicator I may be over my anger. Not only do I not want to offend God, but I have a healthy fear of God using the same measure of judging I am using on someone else, and then using it on me. ([Matt 7:1-2](#))

And, so I'm constantly checking my own attitude. I know God can see what I am thinking, and I don't want Him unhappy with me.

I may be over my anger if:

6) I do not feel the need to keep complaining to someone else about who you are angry with.

We complain to others because we are still bothered about something. Keep in mind one thing here, if you keep up the complaining, you may find God even more unhappy with you because you are now effecting someone else having a grudge.

I think of the story of Ananias and Saphira, the married couple that did wrong together. Neither one was doing right, and God struck them both down. If you do not get over your own attitude issues, you may find you are helping Satan take down your spouse as well, or anyone else you constantly complain to.

may be over my anger if I am telling myself:

7) "God is merciful to me, I need to be merciful to others, too."

[Ephesians 4:31-32](#) (NIV)

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

9) I realize that my wrong attitudes toward others may say a lot more about me than what I don't like about them. By, telling myself this helps us to deal with our anger.

I have seen people get angry at someone else, and now the angered person ends up handling BY FAR worse than what they got mad about. *So, in essence, their wrong attitude said more about them than it did about the person they were angry at.* When we live in sin there will always be some hypocritical parts to our thinking or doing.

I am probably over my anger at someone if:

10) I'm able to think about all the good qualities of the person I am angry at, even though I may be currently disappointed with what I don't like. Along the same lines, I am also able to think about the good things they have done for me in the past.

The pattern that is seen when people are still angry, is they completely forget any good in the other person, or any good things they have ever done for us. It becomes ALL or nothing thinking. The angry person, when angry, categorizes the person they are angry with as all bad. In essence, they negate them. Or we can use what liberals do: They "cancel them." *Are you the type of person who cancels people you are angry with?*

I may be over my anger if:

- 11) **I'm double checking myself to make sure what I got angry about wasn't partially my own issues with something I need to grow in.**

A lot of times our growth doesn't happen until we change our thinking. If our thinking about things does not change, then all we are doing is trying to put up with something.

I need to see all frustrations, even with people, as a chance for God to show us something about ourselves that we need to change in.

Romans 5:3-4 (NIV)

³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that **suffering produces perseverance**; (*We start with that. Then we learn things and it goes to ----->*)

⁴ **perseverance, (produces) character; and character, hope.**

I may be over my anger of someone if:

- 12) **I'm not praying "attack the person" prayers.**

There should be two bottom lines when we become angry:

- (1) **Have I grown from the experience? Am I better for going thru it?**

Why is that important? Because it helps take away some of your thinking of what you did not like.

- (2) **Does my love from God cause me to "cover over a multitude of someone else's sins"?**

(I Peter 4:8) *And, do they see the love of God coming through my life? If I was the only Christian they knew, would my attitude toward them want them to get saved, or would it turn them off?*

5. What causes me to struggle with judging others more than many people?

There are some similarities to this question to some other things I have already talked about. I include it in today because it can provide extra insight to those who struggle with judging.

The following things CAN BE involved in my difficulty in judging others:

- 1) **I'm very opinionated, and I use that on what I think others should do, or don't do.**

- 2) **I do not watch for my own pride to see if it is involved in my thinking or actions.**

We should ALWAYS ask ourselves things like: "When I am thinking like this ____, is that pride or humility?" "When I did this ____, was that prideful or humble?"

If those questions are never on our mind, you could definitely have more struggles with with judging than many people

A lot of times when people struggle with judging, it has a lot to do with:

- 3) **They are stuck on not completely forgiving someone else in their past.**

I have seen this more than once where it caused the person to continue to have attitudes and conflict with others, and they were prone to judging.

- 4) **Things bother us about people, or circumstances, more when we are not doing all that is in the bible, or all God wants from us.**

There are probably at least 2 reasons this is the case:

- (1) **We are not hearing God's insights on things that would have helped change**

our attitude.

(2) Our weakness makes us a easy target for Satan to use.

5) God has tried to speak to us before about this, or somethings else, and we haven't changed.

6) I have not grown in the area of "being hard to offend." (In other words, I'm too easy to offend)

6. How can I get better at loving others?

It is easy to think of ourselves as loving when we are loving to people we know real well, (family or close friends) or people who are easy to love.

Really, the true test of love is when we are dealing with people who, at least occasionally, are harder to love. Some counselors call it "difficult people."

1) We have to see "loving and caring about others" as the 2nd most important thing God expects of all Christians. (The 2nd greatest commandment)

2) *Always compare what you don't like to "what did other believers in the bible did to handle things? And, "what did Jesus have to put up with?"*

3) When you have to try harder to keep loving others & handling things right, what thinking do you need to change in order to accomplish that?

Here is a good question:

4) *When you are trying to love others, would others see God coming thru you? Or, would they see the ugly side of you? Does our body language show disapproval and lack of love? Remember, "You died and your life is now hidden with Christ.."*

5) True loving happens most when it involves 2 things:

(1) Loving difficult people

(2) When loving others involves having to be unselfish in order to love.

An example of that would be I make time in my life to hang out with an unsaved person, just to love them. *How is that unselfish?* Because I have to add to my weekly things in order to do that.

Another example would be I have to tolerate a little more, not make a big deal out of little things, in order to love them.

7. Do I realize what brings darkness in my life to where I cannot see God, or hear God?

I do not care one bit that you have had God show you things or tell you things in the past. *What I care about is "Can you hear Him and see Him today because you are allowing nothing to hinder your ability to hear God?"*

People's pride can cause them to think because they heard God in the past, they not are an expert in hearing God today. Your ability to hear God will be depending on how you are currently living for God, and you are NOT disobeying scripture. Your ability to not disobey scripture is what can hinder you in hearing God.

Isaiah 59:2 (AMP)

But your wickedness has separated you from your God. **And your sins have hidden His**

face from you so that He does not hear.

[1 John 2:11](#) (NKJV)

But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, & does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

[Isaiah 8:20b](#) (NLT)

people who contradict his word are completely in the dark ...

8. How can I hear the Holy Spirit better?

- 1) **The more consistent you are in being who God wants you to be**, doing all the Bible says, and truly loving people, not holding grudges, being capable of looking at yourself instead of others, basically being sure I am doing everything to live right will cause God to trust you with telling you more.
- 2) **Make sure I do not have any sin in my life that I have not corrected & asked forgiveness of.** Make sure if I have offended others and it was my fault, (or at least partially) that I ask forgiveness.
- 3) **Make sure I have no hatred in my heart for anyone**, including people of different races. Make sure I'm not a judging person. God loves everyone, and I should to.
- 4) ***In what areas of my life do I have too much pride and it's killing my humility? God will talk to and guide the humble more.***

[Psalm 25:9](#) (NIV)

⁹ He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

[Phil 2:5-9](#) [James 4:6](#)

- 5) ***Do I treat Christians with honor and respect?*** [1 Peter 2:17](#)
Am I gentle with others? [Colossians 3:12](#) [Ephesians 4:2](#)

- 6) **Am I trying to have a one-sided relationship with God, whereby I want Him to mainly do things for me? Therefore, I am not regularly trying to find out what God wants from me.**

God speaks most to those He can trust. If you are trying to have a one-side relationship with God, there is a high chance you will hear very little from Him

- 7) **Do I make time to be quiet so God can speak to me in His still small voice?** [1 Kings 19:12](#)

- 8) **Do I read the Bible often so I can see myself in how I need to grow. ALSO, so God can bring me to certain verses that bring correction to me.**

[Isaiah 66:2](#) (NIV)

"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

- 9) **Am I active in being at church, being around other Christians, and financially supportive of God's work?** These are all things that show God you care about what He cares about.

- 10) **Am I capable of being busy, while still praying and "looking" as I do so?**

Summary -

Today we have looked at a summary of scripture on some of the most important ways a true

Christian should be living. The list of what God helped me to put together is a great tool you can use to check yourself.

If you asked me what I believe God feels are some of the most important things for how we] should live I would tell you this:

It mostly has to do with the 2nd greatest commandment, and that is to truly love people.

Judging, holding grudges, having anger issues, not learning when we get angry, not looking at ourselves will ALL interfere with the 2nd greatest commandment.

Then, hearing God is VITAL to the Christian life. How can we do what God wants us to do on earth if we do not know how to hear God? I can tell you this I have met many professing Christians who see like they have no ability to hear God. I have always wondered why this is the case.

WE HAVE TO HEAR GOD, or we are going to make lots of bad decisions in our life.

Most everything I talked about today has to do with these 2 things: Love others, and hear God. There is more I wanted to include in today, there just wasn't enough time to get to it all. I have notes for a Part 2 of this message, but I do not know if there will be one or not. Next Sunday I anticipate starting the 4 Part Easter series that will go from April 6, 13, 20 (Easter) and the week after Easter.

Closing Prayer Lee Conner