

spiritual audit!

I think it is worthwhile to do an occasional audit of our lives, to take time to assess how we are travelling in our careers, marriages and health. The problem sometimes is we tend to have an overly optimistic view of how we are travelling ... by nature thinking quite highly of ourselves. It is vital we get an accurate assessment of where we are at, and the best way to do that is simply to ask God.

This is the approach David took in Psalm 139:23-24; *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*”

The accompanying benefit of God assessing our spiritual condition is that it stops us sinking into depressing introspection that runs the risk of cutting the nerve of faith. Introspection can be used of Satan to get us to continuously focus on our sin, failings, shortcomings, our feeling of inadequacy and inferiority. His goal, of course, is to render us inoperative for the Lord.

It is vitally important that we allow God to search our hearts. This is why the first verse of the book of Job is so important in the process of a spiritual audit of our lives. Job is described as blameless, upright and one who feared God and shunned evil. The significance of this description is that it is not Job's over-inflated or exaggerated view of himself.

The amazing significance of this enviable list of character traits is that it is God's description. In

Job 1v8 *“Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”*

As this is God's description of Job it can be trusted without exaggerations or embellishments. I wonder what sort of description God would give of our lives right now as we head quickly into 2020. If we are honest, I think it would be fair to say, for most of us, we would not come close to God's description of Job.

A great verse to look at in the process of a spiritual audit of our lives is 2 Chronicles 7v14 *“If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

In an age when self-promotion is the flavour, the idea of humbling ourselves before anyone, let alone God, is considered spiritually, politically and socially out of vogue. That is sad because it is a key ingredient to maintaining a sharp spiritual edge in our daily walk with God.

Continued over

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ Positive feedback we are receiving for the content and look of the paper and also its effectiveness as churches seek to reach out in their community
- ★ A total of 16 people confirmed for July 2020 Impact Africa
- ★ Another staff member - Janice Teo (journalist) who has many years of experience
- ★ Each of our ministry team who bring various skills and abilities to the Challenge ministry

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Humility is all about abandoning our personal agenda for God's agenda. Humbling ourselves before God is an expression of our willingness to acknowledge that we are not as spiritually on track as well as we might have thought.

I have discovered that **prayer** is an indispensable aspect of our individual Christian lives, as well as the church's. Most Christians recognise and would readily agree that prayer is absolutely essential to entering into an attitude of genuine humility. You don't have to look far to see what happens in the Christian church when prayer is absent. I have lost count of the number of churches that have had a split or are experiencing conflict, power struggles and the like.

The word **seek** is all about having a determination, an unquenchable desire to pray until God reveals His will and purpose.

Turning from our sin is the evidence of the genuine-ness of the first three steps of our spiritual audit. Turning means putting aside anything that clouds our relationship with the Lord Jesus. This was what the prophet Samuel wanted to achieve when he spoke to the house of Israel. 1 Samuel

“If my people who are called by my name will **humble** themselves and **pray** and **seek** my face and **turn** from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

- 2 Chronicles 7:14

7:13 says *“If you return to the*

Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashotheths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”

When we honestly allow God to reveal to us His audit of our spiritual walk, we need to humble ourselves and return to a right relationship with the Lord. When we do, the first thing we notice is God hears our prayer.

Psalm 66:18 says *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”* When we are right with God, v19 is our testimony; *“But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.”*

This is followed by forgiveness for our sin and healing of our land. This gives us something to think about in the light of our present drought conditions in Australia. Is God saying something to the Christian church? Is God using such circumstances to get the attention of the nation? When we get right with God then we are filled with the glory of the Lord. The New Testament calls it being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is what happens when we are willing to honestly humble ourselves and return to a right relationship with God. May this be your reality in 2020.

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ Upcoming trip to the USA for Carl (17 Feb-31 Mar). He will be working in a number of different States plus Canada promoting the paper as well as meeting with like-minded partners for future projects
- ★ Continued growth of the paper and finances to sponsor the various prison editions produced around the world
- ★ Our board in overseeing what is an expanding work. They need wisdom and insight in directing and leading this work
- ★ Additional team members for Impact Africa mission trip. 25 people would be wonderful

Ongoing supply of testimonies

If you would like to share your testimony through the printed page please email carl@challengenews.org for further information