

Diligently Seeking God (Hebrews 11:6)

PRAIRIE VILLAGE CHURCH OF CHRIST
4616 VALLEY STATION ROAD

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Scripture of the Week



2 Corinthians 13:5

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test?”

The brethren in the city of Corinth were testing the Apostle Paul’s patience. Because some false teachers had come in among them and poisoned their minds, they were questioning Paul’s abilities, motives and credibility. Instead of testing Paul to determine if Christ was in him (verse 3), Paul said they needed to be testing themselves to see if they were in the faith and if Christ was living in them. If they passed that test, then Paul passed his as well, because he had brought them to Christ in the first place and established their faith. If they failed the test it was because they had been lax in their spiritual dedication and they needed to make the necessary corrections before their final exam. The Corinthian Christians

just had a knack for doing the wrong things and they really needed to test themselves, but that is something all Christians need to do from time to time. The verb “test” means to closely examine or scrutinize, and it is in the present tense indicating an on going process. Christians cannot afford to take their faith and their salvation for granted. Satan is hard at work throwing distractions, deceptions and discouragement in our paths to try and cause us to “fail the test.” That term actually means to be “cast away” or “rejected”. If Christ doesn’t hold the position of preeminence in our hearts, He will reject us when we stand before Him to be judged. Examine your life by the Bible’s illumination and make certain you are walking in that light!

Pharisaism

Is it possible to try to obey the Bible too closely? Sometimes when you try to obey the laws of God to the letter and teach other people to do that, you may be accused of being Pharisaical. That is a term unknown by most people in the world, and quite often misused by many of the people who are familiar with it. In Matthew 23:13-33, Jesus pronounced eight “woes” against the scribes and Pharisees because of their duplicitous religious practices. The conspicuous word in this text is the one Jesus used seven times to rebuke these blind guides of the blind—“hypocrites!” The problem wasn’t that they kept the law too closely, but that they were hypocritical

in their application of it. They laid heavy burdens upon the shoulders of the people, but were unwilling to touch them with one of their own fingers (verse 4). On the outside they looked righteous and holy, but inwardly they were greedy and corrupt (verse 25). The Lord’s rebuke in verse 23 is very telling of their hypocrisy: *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”* They insisted upon tithing even to the point of giving a tenth of their garden herbs, but they

completely ignored the more significant matters of God’s law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. This made them hypocrites in the extreme, but Jesus didn’t say that tithing the mint, dill and cummin was unnecessary. He said they should have done that as well as obeying the weightier matters. God fully expects us to keep all the requirements of His law, from the least to the greatest. He said, *“Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it”* (Deut. 12:32). *“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:2) is different than the Law of Moses in many respects, but God still expects us to obey it completely.