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Examine Yourself

"For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." 1 Corinthians 11:31-32

I recently read an article penned by H. B. London, Jr. He writes:

... but for a moment, consider the following flaws that Satan can and will use to keep us in bondage and even despair. Things like (my definitions):

Judgmental — a negative assessment, opinion or estimation of another person (perhaps a ministerial colleague).

Cynicism— a tendency to be suspicious of the motives and virtues of others.

Fear — an emotional reaction to the unknown; a reluctance to trust.

Control — a need for power over others and to dominate circumstances.

Jealousy — envious of another's success, position, possessions.

I am certain that in my life I have allowed each of the aforementioned flaws to create difficulty for me, both in ministry and also in relationships with others. All of this in spite of the admonition of the Apostle Paul to "live above all of this." *"Therefore, as God's chosen people ... clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you"* (Col. 3:12, 13).

When Paul was writing to the Corinthians regarding the Lord's Supper, he mentioned the importance of self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28) before they participated. Good advice for all; especially those of us in the ministry. **Examine yourself**. Are there those things that need to be addressed before you stand in the pulpit or go about your sacerdotal duties? Just asking.

What London has written is, no doubt, "good advice for all," and not just for preachers. The beginning of a New Year is a great time to take stock of things. We may need to take a little spiritual inventory to see how well our shelves are stocked for this year. There may very well be some things we have on the shelves that we need to remove. If we find an abundant stock of jealousy there is probably nothing that could make for a happier year than to remove it and restock with a good supply of generosity.

Self-examination can be painful, and that is probably why we don't do more of it. It is much more entertaining to judge others than to judge ourselves, but being judgmental of others certainly is not a good recipe for happiness.

"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Matthew 7:5