

Check up – 10/07/2016

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23-24)***

Beloved in the Lord,

Last Monday I went to the Dental Clinic for a check up. While the dentist was probing around in my mouth, scratching at my teeth, I began to think about the whole concept of a check up. It occurred to me that many things in our daily lives need regular checkups and maintenance. Many things need a clean or a grease or an oiling or polishing.

Having regular dental checkups and a professional clean, helps avoid serious problems. Over time, tartar builds up on teeth, and if left uncleaned causes decay. It becomes very hard and difficult to remove.

Not only do we need to regularly check our teeth, but there are many other things as well. For example we have a swimming pool. I need to check the chlorine levels every few days, because if they are low, then algae grows very quickly and the water turns green. The worse it gets the harder it is to clean.

Our car’s need regular servicing. The garden, if left unattended (like mine) quickly becomes a jungle of weeds. If you don’t regularly weed the garden, the weeds take over and steal the nutrients from the good plants. As I mentioned there are a lot of things that need maintenance. Keeping this thought in mind let us delve into our text.

Our text today is the closing verses of Psalm 139. David begins the Psalm by saying:

“O Lord, You have searched me and known me.” (Ps.139:1)

David then continues by praising God for the fact that He is all knowing and ever present. He admires the fact that God knew him even before he was born. Then closing out this beautiful Psalm David writes:

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”***

David knew how important it was to allow God to do regular checkups on his heart. It was this attitude of David that led to this remarkable statement by God. ***“I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.” (Acts 13:22)***

David had a soft and pliable heart toward God. That is why The Lord blessed him. David had a soft and malleable heart because I have no doubt he regularly prayed:

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”***

When was the last time (if ever) that you found a quiet place and prayed that God would search your heart? It is so easy to go through our life day after day without stopping for a check up. Our heart is a bit like our teeth. If we are not careful and do not regularly clean out our heart and mind then it becomes hard and unpliant. The hardening process is slow but steady.

We are living in ungodly times. We are continually being exposed to and bombarded by ungodly thoughts and images. We are daily pressured by un Biblical ideas. The moral fibre of society is disappearing and the bar is set very low indeed. It is so vital that we do not give in. We need to stand strong and firm on our convictions. We must not go with the flow.

The main way to stand firm is to read the Bible, and to fill our heart and mind with God's Word. When you read your Bible it is reading you. The Word of God is very powerful. We read:

***"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."* (Hebrews 4:12-13)**

The Bible – the Word of God is living and active. When we read it, it works in our heart. It is as a light that illuminates the way. It also exposes any sin that may be lurking in our heart. You may have a garment that you think is very clean, at least it looks like it in normal light, then you shine a bright light on it and you immediately see spots, that were not visible before.

That is how the Bible works. You may think that your heart is clean, but as the Word shines on it, it exposes the spots and blemishes. The good news is that not only does God Word expose the spots, it removes them. The more you absorb God's Word into your heart, the cleaner it becomes. The Word of God empowers you to live a Godly life, it fills you with love, God's love.

There are two Scriptures that we should read on a very regular basis, and that we you should use as a yard stick for our faith and love.

The first is Galatians 5:22-23:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

We need to use this passage as a measure for a check up. Ask yourself:

Is my heart full of love? Do I live with joy in my heart? Not happiness, but deep abiding joy in The Lord no matter what? Is peace a word that describes my state of mind and heart, or am I restless all the time? How patient am I? Do I pray "Lord give me patience, but I want it right now!?" Am I a kind person toward all people? Is goodness a word that describes my

character? Am I faithful to God and man in all my dealings? Am I gentle or boisterous and blustery? Am I humble or proud? Do I exercise self – control or live by my lusts and passions?

Take this passage from Galatians and pray it alongside David’s prayer:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

²⁴ And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”

and you will undergo a serious but blessed check up. It is good practice to do this regularly. It will not take long for The Holy Spirit to show you which areas need a cleanup. We should never slide into the thought: “Well that’s just the way I am and people have to accept it.” That is neither blessed or good.

We are children of Almighty and Holy God. We are bought with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. We must strive to live holy everyday for His glory and honour. We should be submitted to God all the time and allow Him to clean and polish and shape and mould us into His image.

The other Scripture is 1. Corinthians 13 – the great love chapter. Here Paul talks about “Agape” or God’s love.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails;” (1. Cor. 13:1-8a)

Here again we have a check list that we can use for our check up. Some of the words here are the same as in Galatians but some others appear here as well. The main question that this passage raises is: “Is love my motivating force?” That is what Paul is asking in the first few verses and then he describes the attributes of love:

“Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never fails.

We need to have a dental check up every six months; but we should perform a heart check up every day. Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.