

WHERE ARE YOU?

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" (GEN3:8-9) This personal and pointed question is the first one noted that God ever asked of man, and it is the first question He puts to individual men and women today. It simply means, 'How do you stand before God and in the light of eternity? What is your spiritual condition?' The circumstances and the fact that it is God Himself who asks the question makes it vitally important that we face up to it, and answer it honestly. *Where are you?*

Genesis 3:8–24 describes Adam and Eve have sinned against God. In disobedience to His command, they have eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They faced consequence of their sin. After falling to temptation, humans are ashamed and foolishly attempt to hide from God. When confronted with their sin, instead of confess, they attempt to shift the blame to others. Adam even blames God. They moved from being innocently naked, we see their shame and guilt drives them to hide from God. It is one of the greatest consequences of sin was the loss of those face-to-face moments with the Creator. Instead of enjoying His presence, Adam's and Eve's first instinct was to hide from Him. Sin always separates men from God. In response, mankind can no longer stay in the Garden of Eden, earthly paradise and is banished. They became mortal, and worldly. Their sin has broken their intimate relationship with Him.

Bible tell us how man was created; and the same God who created us is the One who sustains us, cares for us, watches over us and supplies our needs, and He asks, "Where are you?" Are you hiding, afraid of God, because of sin in your life? Maybe you're trying to cover your sin with the fig leaves of your good works. Perhaps, like Jonah, you are one of God's children, and yet you are running from His purpose for your life. You have sin you have not confessed to Him. Your guilt may make you think that God is after you to punish you. Bible says that God is after you to save you from the judgment your sin deserves. He is graciously calling, "Where are you?" If you will come to Him and confess your sin, He will deliver you from Satan's domain of darkness and transfer you to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom you will have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (COL1:13-14) That's how to deal with your guilt and failures.

In Psalm 139:7, King David reminds us of the greatness of God when he asks the Lord, *where can I flee from Your presence?* The expected answer is "nowhere," for there is no place in all of creation where the Lord is not at hand. (v. 8–12) Because He is everywhere present, there is no hiding from our Creator God. Make no mistake about it: God knows exactly where you are! Adam and Eve foolishly imagined their Creator would not find them out. Many assume God is blind to our wickedness vainly. Our natural inclination to offend God blunts any hint of this reality. Sin not only defects the soul, it also has intellectual effects—it renders us unable to honor or give thanks to God. (ROM1:21) God has made Himself enough to mankind that nobody has an excuse for ignoring Him. We make a willful choice to ignore His hallmarks in creation that surrounds us every day. In other words, we reject Him as Creator leads to a refusal to honor or give thanks to God. We must realize denials are a test of our faith and obedience. May God enable us to praise Him for those things which He forbids, and trust Him for those things which we need and He promises to provide.

If we do not understand God as creator and provider who must be worshiped, we cannot arrive at a right understanding of how the universe works. Our thinking about everything is futile, leads to wrong conclusions, eventually, to darkened hearts. That conclusion often leads to hopelessness and negativism: the belief that life is meaningless. Everything we end up believing is based on wrong assumptions about the universe and our place in it. God Almighty was giving Adam an opportunity to confess his sin; the Lord knew Adam and Eve had violated God's law that they were hiding among the trees. Either we will harden ourselves against the God's voice or we will respond to it with faith/obedience. According to His plan and purpose turn to Him in repentance. Let us in faith, always be first to heed the word of God.

Soul searching means evaluating how you are feeling and what is important to you. Deep thought is only possible by minimizing distractions and spending time with yourself. In order to soul search, take a day of fasting and prayer. Plan readings from Bible, thanksgivings and praise to God. Bible presents us some soul searching and challenging questions:

John, chapter 21, Jesus asks Peter 3 times, "Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"

Matthew, chapter 16, Jesus ask disciples, ". . . He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Ezekiel 37:3, the Lord ask Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

1 King 19:9 and in verse, 13, the Lord asks Elijah, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Genesis 21:17, the Lord speaking to Hagar asks, "What is the matter, Hagar?"

All of these questions have the purpose stimulating us into action, into challenging us to move ahead with purpose, to do some soul searching. The most profound question asked in the Bible is found in Genesis, 3:9 where we find Adam and Eve no longer in God's presence because Adam had turned away from Him. They had eaten the forbidden fruit, hiding from God in the Garden. it says: And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "Where *are* you?" The Lord asked the questions so that Adam might know where he was in His relationship with His Lord, spiritually.

1. Where are you in your spiritual life?

Now God is asking you, "Where *are* you?" "Where are you in your relationship and walk with the Lord?" The Lord is asking that you do some earnest and honest soul searching. He is challenging you to quit playing church and get serious about the work He has for you. Why is this soul searching needed? Why do you need to get serious with the Lord? The simple answer is that Jesus is Coming. In Romans 13:11, *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.* Knowing the time. Is there any doubt that we are in the last times? that day could come at any time, hour has come for them to wake up. All the signs,

- signs concerning world politics;
- signs in the weather;
- signs in the society of men (the moral decay).
- wars, rumors of wars, nation rising against nation,
- famines, earthquakes, epidemic diseases in diverse places
- Fig Tree, represents the nation of Israel that is blossom again!

All of these signs are indicating that the time is at hand!! Jesus is coming SOON!! Because we know the time, "it is high time to awake out of sleep." Matthew 25 5, speaking of the 10 virgins in the parable is a picture of the body of believers today. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." The body of believers today is asleep and the call of the Lord is going out "To awake out of sleep" and do some soul searching for the answer to the question of the Lord to Adam. "Where are you?" Where are you in your relationship with the Lord - in your spiritual walk?

It is important to wake up because "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Salvation here is speaking of final salvation of body which takes place at the time of the resurrection-Rapture of the overcomers. It is the salvation, or the changing of this corruptible, mortal physical body into one that is incorruptible and immortal. It is nearer that when we received Jesus. The time has come for believers to cast off any works of darkness, including drunkenness, immorality, jealousy. Instead, we should live as people who walk in the light, taking on the spiritual armor of light and Christ. Every day, we get closer to the appointed time at which our Savior will return, in fact it is right at the door!

Are you pressing on in your spiritual walk, reaching forth for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The prize is being a part of the company of overcomers when the Lord returns for His bride before the Tribulation. If so you need to be reminded that Paul says, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect. and "Brethern, I count not myself to have taken hold of it..." But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and do my best to reach what lies ahead.(PHI3:12-13) Paul knew that he was saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And yet, he knew that there was this high calling to which he was not guaranteed. This is analogous to a runner in a race.

Where are you the Lord is asking, in your • spiritual life, that is your life being a reflection of Jesus or life a reflection of the world. • soul life, especially your emotional life - under control or emotionally unstable. • physical life, the lusts of the flesh and lusts of the eyes under control or out of control. • relationship with Jesus - totally in love with Jesus wise virgin, or being in the company of foolish virgins who did not have a personal intimate relationship with Jesus.

1. Where are you in your spiritual life? we want to see from the Bible, 1st of all, the characteristics of the carnal believer and then 2nd, the characteristics of the spiritual believer. Bible sets up this comparison of spiritual and carnal believer. *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.*(1CO3:1)

Characteristics of carnal believers: for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?(1CO3:3) For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.(HEB5:11-13) overcharged (*burdened down*) with cares of this life. Luke 21:34 From Scriptures we see the characteristics of a carnal believer are: • envy (jealousy); • strife (quarreling); • divisions (standing apart); •dull/lazy of spiritual hearing of spiritual truths; •lacks skill in applying God's Word to his life/conduct.

Characteristics of Spiritual believers: *giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*(2PE1:5-7) When add these qualities to our life, we will be fruitful. Christian life is the life of the Jesus reproduced in us by the Holy Spirit. A spiritual person is one who is giving diligence to his spiritual maturing by adding to his faith.

- virtue or integrity - He is a person whose life is one of honesty, sincerity and truth. Let us walk honestly,(ROM13:13)
- to virtue he adds knowledge - He is a student of the Word, growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus.
- to knowledge he adds temperance or self-control-He is person who in times of temptation has learned to say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.(GAL5:16) keep on walking, by the Spirit's power/guidance.
- to temperance he adds patience - He is a person who perseveres in times of trials. James 1:4, And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. Maturity is found only in perfect faith in God.
- to patience adds godliness-He is a person who is becoming more Christlike in his life, he doing what is right.(HEB 5:14) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Maturity involves developing ability to put faith to practical
- to godliness he adds brotherly kindness - He is a person who in submission and humility desires to be of help and service to his brothers and sisters in the church, full of compassion, empathy and forgiveness for those who wrong him.
- love of Christ flooding our souls, our love should go out to all mankind. Spirit-filled life is characteristics of Jesus.

2. Where are you in your soul life?

- 3 -

In respect to our soul life, we are a 3-fold being, having a spirit, soul and body. Likewise, being salvation is 3-fold. Salvation accomplished, refers to the eternal salvation received when you were born again; salvation which is the process of be accomplished (progressive salvation)-this refers to the salvation of your soul; and salvation yet to come or salvation of your body which will take place when Jesus returns. Soul refers to a living, breathing conscious.

Your soul is not yet totally/completely saved, delivered from the things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life; nor will it be in this life, Paul says, *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect . . . I count not myself to have apprehended.*(PHI3:12-13) Your spirit is already conformed to the will of God; your soul is being conformed to the will of God. Now your soul consists of your mind, will, and emotions. The soul-life is man's natural life. When the soul is joined to the body, the soul becomes man's life. "a soulish body" (1CO15:44) The activities such as love, hatred, knowledge, counsel, rejoicing, decisions are all functions of soul-life.

The *mind* of carnal soul says, I am in control of my own destiny. Knowledge/education is the answer to man's problems. The *will* of the carnal soul, says I will do what I want, the way I want to do it. I am a free spirit. God wants me to be happy, and I am happy when I can have my way. and do what I want to do. The *carnal soul* is controlled by how he feels, by his emotions – • anger • frustration • self-pity • disappointment • doubts • worry • fear • condemnation

God is working in your soul, both the willingness/desire and the doing of His good pleasure. That is to say bringing your soul into submission to the spirit; rooting out these negative feelings, so that your emotions will be expressing, love, joy, peace, thanksgiving and the like. Now what are you to do when these negative feeling rise up in you? *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*(GAL5:17) Bible now describes a conflict that goes on in the heart and mind of every Christian. Our flesh wants one thing, and God's Spirit wants something very different. Human beings want to feel good, to be honored, and to possess what looks good to us. All of these, coming from our human nature, are tainted by our selfishness and pride. Bible identified these things as worldliness.(1JO2:16) The Spirit of God, wants to honor God and serve others with His love. When the Spirit comes to live in our hearts, a battle sometimes rages. However, we must allow the Holy Spirit to lead. When we don't, our selfishness will lead us into all kinds of sinful lifestyles. When we live by the Spirit, we gain more than just being able not to live in sin. we won't indulge our own desires.

What are you to do when these negative feeling rise up in you? *Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*(2CO10:5) The battlefield is in the hearts and minds of the people in Corinth. In God's power, Paul and his co-workers for Christ are able to destroy all the arguments, impressive-sounding opinions his opponents put forward against the knowledge of God. Using godly tools, destroy the feeble arguments, in order to motivate them to obey Christ. In posing this as spiritual war for the mind reveals essential truth. Wrong teaching leads to wrong thinking, which leads to disobedience to Christ. Understanding the true knowledge of God leads to right thinking, which leads to obedience to Christ.

Ephesians 4:26, Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

Proverbs 3:5, Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Psalms 118:8-9, It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man, and put confidence in princes.

James 1:2, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.

Col 3:15, And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Romans 8:1, *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The salvation of the soul is dependent on the life that we live after our spirit is saved. If we allow the Holy Spirit to control our life, we become faithful overcomers who will be qualified to rule and reign with Christ in the coming Kingdom. We allow the Word of God to sanctify us in order to realize the salvation of our soul.

Where are you in your soul growth, soul salvation?The rod for making determination is seen how effective you are in

- taking every thought captive;
- not letting the sun go down on your wrath;
- counting it all joy;
- trusting in God and not your own understanding or in others;
- letting the peace of God rule in your heart;
- speaking to your soul;
- letting who you are in Christ Jesus direct your thinking, your desires and your emotions
- walk after the spirit; means to conduct your life, make progress by faith in the Spirit of God.

We want strength in Christ to produce good deeds for others so that the glory of God will be seen in our life. God does produces these good deeds. Col1:10 teaches us to pray for growth and spiritual strength. *That [we] will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

3. Where are you in your physical life?

- 4 -

God is challenging you to examine yourself as to how well you are caring for your physical body. Does your physical body and its wants, desires, lusts have a control over your life or do you have your body under subjection. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:27, *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.* Concerning your physical body, keep in mind that you, as a child of God, belong to God, this includes your body. Paul has been describing his life of self-sacrifice to win others to faith in Christ using the metaphor of competition. He has compared himself to an athlete who practices self-control in training in order to win the race. Paul remains in this state of continual training because he does not want to be disqualified. The prize he is running for is the crown of recognition from Christ that he has served well. Paul recognizes that it is possible for even him to be disqualified of his prize. Every participant strives to do his best in the hope of winning the top prize. In a race, there is always possibility of stumbling/falling. The runner may not even be able to finish the race.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.* To defile the temple of God is to corrupt or pollute it. Those in the Corinthian church who had attitude about sexual immorality. Your body is not yours do treat and do with as you please. You are to glorify God in and with your body. A Christian's body is where the Holy Spirit lives. In a sense, our bodies to the level of being temples, holy places, that house the Spirit of God. God gives His Spirit to every person who trusts in Christ for salvation. He paid for our redemption from sin with the blood of Jesus. Our bodies will be resurrected at the rapture.

Let's identify some of the problem areas in the physical life which can keep one from glorifying God in their body. These problem areas can be classified under two headings as seen in 1 John 2:16, *"For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes . . ."* lust of the flesh - inordinate desires of the flesh - that is to say "lacking restraint or not under control" Sexual sin, such as: pornography - Pornography leads to actual sexual sin. Fornication is defined as any sexual act which is done outside of the marriage bed. That is to say, any sexual act which is not done between a man and woman who are married to each other is fornication. Eph 4:27, *Neither give place to the devil.*

1 Cor6:15-16,18, Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. Flee fornication. he that committed fornication sinned against his own body.

Overeating- The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, But the stomach of the wicked shall be in want.(PR13:25)

Drunkenness -lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, cares of this life, and that Day-(LUK21:34)

Lust of the eyes-seeing something and wanting it. This has to do with: a. coveting and greed. Thou shalt not covet . . .

Envy/jealousy-Rom 13:13, Let us walk honestly, not in . . .envying. for whereas there is among you envying.(1CO3:3)

What to do to keep the physical body in control: Pay attention to yourself as to what you are doing, or not doing - examine yourself. Luke 21:34, Take heed to yourself. Bring/Keep your body under subjection, that is to say, do not let the appetites of the body control how you live, what you do, eat, drink, or wear. Not placing yourself in situations of temptation. 2 Corinthians 2:11, *lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

Seek First the Kingdom of God. Matthew 6: 25-34 is a passage for those who struggle with anxiety. *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.* When Jesus instructed people to pray for "daily bread," it resounded with their life experience. They might have struggled more with Jesus' teaching: not to obsess over wealth, but to focus on godly and eternal rewards.(MAT6:19-24) He commands His followers not to worry about their lives, what they will eat or drink or wear, and in constant worry about money. "You cannot serve God and mammon" that is, God and money. Jesus tells to trust God to provide what they need.

"love your neighbor as yourself", This implies that in order to be kind, compassionate, and generous to our neighbor, we must first be these things to ourselves. A physical body is given to each of us by our loving Heavenly Father. He created it as a tabernacle for our spirit to assist each of us in our quest to fulfill the full measure of our creation. if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. The pride of life is sinful temptation for excess greatness or power that we all feel to attain.

The gauge for determining where you are in your physical life is contentment. Biblical contentment is an inward trust in God's sovereignty and goodness that produces the fruit of joy and peace and thanksgiving in the life of a believer. Whether you are in need or in plenty today, trust in God. Delight in his Word; meditate on it day and night. He will strengthen and supply all you need. be satisfied with what you have. *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*(HEB13:5)

To the extent you are content when you are taking heed to yourself by • keeping your body under control/subjection, not allowing the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life to have their way; • not placing yourself in situations of temptation; • not making provisions for the flesh; will determine where you are in your physical life.

4. Where are you in your relationship with Jesus?

- 5 -

Now concerning our relationship with Jesus we want to understand that it is a two-fold relationship. This is seen in the parable of the 10 virgins - Matthew 25:1-12. All ten were believers, but the 5 foolish did not have an intimate relationship with Jesus. First of all as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a *Positional* relationship with Jesus? We are in Him and He is in us. So let us understand without any doubt that through the positional relationship with Jesus we have eternal salvation full and free - we did not do anything to earn it nor can we do anything to lose it.

Ephesians 2:8, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Bible has indicated that those who are in Christ can look forward to a future of sharing in God's glory. For now, we suffer along with the rest of sin-ravaged creation. We groan in longing for our home with the Father. We patiently wait for the hope to be fulfilled.(v.19–23) however, that though suffering continues, God is still for us. Our salvation is entirely, absolutely secure on account of His great love and He has proven His love for us. Paul builds a list of some of the worst things that can happen in this life, including trials, hardship, persecution for our faith in Him, hunger, lack of clothing or shelter, physical threats, or death by violence. None of this can separate us from Christ's love.

Secondly, we have a provisional relationship, and where you are in your provisional relationship is determined by your love for and intimacy with Jesus. The Bible tells us, '*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,*'(LUK10:27) The first commandment alone requires total dedication to the Lord throughout our whole life. The demands of this commandment require commitment of full time of our life. Are you absolutely, totally in love with Jesus; or perhaps you must say with Peter, Lord, I have a great affection for you? Is your love for Jesus constraining you to live unto Him? We all face times in our walk with faith that test our commitment to God. Now, what standard is there by which to determine, *How much you love Jesus?*

1 Corinthians 13:1-8, *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.* What is the standard for measuring your love for Jesus? Is it not your love for your brothers and sisters in the body? Now what is the standard/gauge of our love for one another? Lack of love was at the heart of most of the Corinthians' problems and divisions. God's kind of love sets self aside, over and over, endlessly, for the good of others. Spiritual gifts are for the building up of the church, but believers will live in love for eternity. Christ-like love is the greatest of all the virtues, and it should be the priority of every Christian. *..Love never fails.*

Bible teaches that every spiritual gift was given by God for a reason and was essential to the church, the body of Christ. And urge believers, to desire the "higher" gifts. But concluded by promising to show them a still more excellent way to serve and love each other. Bible describing spiritual gifts are when not applied from the standpoint of love. Displays of tongues, prophetic powers, and supernatural spiritual knowledge may be impressive, but they are worthless if not used as intended by God, out of a heart of love for Him and other believers. Even the most spiritual of activities, selling everything to give to the poor and sacrificing one's life to be burned for the sake of others, gains a person nothing if not given in love. God's love—agape—described as "unconditional love" by Christians. It is unconditional in the sense that it does not depend on the one being loved, but on the commitment of the one acting. Love is patient and kind. It actively waits and actively moves for the good of others. On the other hand, love doesn't envy or boast, not even regarding the spiritual gifts of one's self or others. Love is not arrogant, convinced of one's superiority over others. Love is not rude, meaning that it does not act indecently, sinning and breaking cultural norms to bring attention to one's self. Love also means truly letting go of past hurts instead of storing them up and keeping a record or wrongs.

Put on love, which is the bond of perfection. In this love has been made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because in this world we are like Jesus.(1JO4:17) The standard to which the believer is to attain is absolute perfection. "*So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*"(MAT5:48) A perfect love is such that both loves GOD, and loves it's brother. God's purpose for us is nothing less than Christ-likeness. "*For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,*"(ROM8:29) The goal of every believer is to conform into the image of Jesus Christ—and to be like Jesus Christ—this is pleasing to God the Father and Glorifies God.(1CO10:31)

My Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for showing us that we can't attain to the perfect standard that You require for entrance into eternal life. We praise and thank You that Jesus paid the price for our failure to attain to the perfect standard by grace through faith in His finished work on Calvary. Bless us with Love, that we may Love as you Love! that we may show patience, tolerance, kindness, caring and love to all! to Him be all praise and glory for ever and ever, Amen.