Spiritual Inventory (Part 1)
Lesson # 10
June 25th, 2018

Based on Principle 4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. “Happy are the pure in heart.” Matthew 5:8

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless honest inventory of ourselves. “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.” Lamentations 3:40

INTRODUCTION:
Tonight we begin the first of two lessons in which we will actually start to write out our Spiritual Inventory using the “Spiritual Evaluation” that founders of Celebrate Recovery developed for this step.

Principle 4 begins the process of coming clean, where you “openly examine and confess your faults to yourself, to God, and to another person you trust.”

Most of us don’t like to look within ourselves – to take note of the things that are bad or need work. It’s like looking in a mirror – don’t like what looks back sometimes. BUT remember what we talked about last time in Lesson 9: You need to keep your evaluation, your “inventory”, balanced. Needs to include both the good and the bad within you.

OK, let’s look at what a Spiritual Inventory, (or Evaluation) is all about:

God’s Word tells us, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life…”
Psalm 139: 23-24 tlb.

ASK: Can you define: “Character”? (brainstorm here)

Did you know that everyone has 3 different “characters”?

1. The character we Exhibit (show on the outside)
2. The character we Think We Have.
3. The character we Truly Have.
No doubt each one of our “Characters” has good qualities and bad qualities.

- Tonight we are going to look at some of the bad, some of our character shortcomings and sins that can block us from receiving all the joy that God has intended. (We will get to the good side too – patience)
- So, tonight we are also going to work on 4 areas of our character; and next week we will work on 4 more. The POINT of this lesson is to help you get started on your actual inventory as you search your heart and are completely honest as you write them out. !!

OK, in your handout:

Part 1 for tonight: OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS:

In Matthew 6: 12-14 Jesus tells us to pray: “Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Don’t bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.” Sound familiar?

Ask yourself the following questions regarding your relationships with others:

(ACTUALLY START FILLING OUT YOUR SHEETS – YOU CAN FINE TUNE IT LATER, BUT START PUTTING THE TRUTH DOWN ON PAPER.)

NOTE: The following people that you name here came from your worksheets in column 1.

1. Who has hurt you?
   a. Go as far back as necessary. Does not need to be directly related to your HHH.

2. Against whom have you been “holding a grudge?”
   a. It doesn’t take a doctor to tell you that it is better to remove a grudge than to nurse it. No matter how long you nurse a grudge, it won’t get better. “Grudges are for those who insist they are owed something....” Chris Jami. Writing the grudge down on your inventory is the first step in getting rid of it.

3. Against whom are you still seeking revenge?
   a. Did you know that seeking revenge is like biting a dog just because the dog bit you? It really doesn’t help you or the dog. “The best revenge is to be unlike him who performed the injury.” Marcus Aurelius;
   “Not forgiving is like drinking Rat Poison then waiting for the Rat to die.”
4. Are you Jealous of someone?
   a. In Song of Songs 8:6, jealousy is said to be: “as unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire!”

5. Have you tried to justify your bad attitude by saying it is “their fault” — “someone else’s fault”?
   a. When you search for someone to blame, it is better for you to look in the mirror rather than through binoculars. Hosea 4:4 tells us: “Don’t point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame.” When you point the finger at someone else there is always 3 more pointing back at you.

NOTE: The following people that you name here came from your worksheets in column 5.

6. Whom have YOU hurt?
   a. How did you hurt them?
   b. Indicate whether it was intentional or not intentional.
      i. It is amazing that the TONGUE being a wet place slippeth often! It is only about 4 inches long yet it can destroy a man 6 feet tall.
      ii. That’s why James 1:26 tells us: “...keep a tight rein on our tongues.”

END PART 1

OK, Part 2: Let’s look at what’s important to YOU: YOUR PRIORITIES IN YOUR LIFE:

We do what is important to us.
   Others see our “priorities” by our actions, not our words.

“Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.”

Personally, I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

So, What ARE the priorities in your life?

Matthew 6:33 tells us what will happen if we make God our #1 priority: “He will give back to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to.”
1. OK, #1 here: After making the decision to turn your life and your will over to God, in what areas of your life are you still not putting God first?
   a. What closet are you not letting him enter and clean out?
   b. What “thing” in your life do you procrastinate to deal with that is just bugging the heck out of you?
      i. We all have them – those areas that we know are wrong for us OR unhealthy in some way.

2. What in your past is interfering with you doing God’s Will today?
   a. For example: Is your ambition driven by serving God or is it driven by envy? Greed ?, Lust for affirmation or recognition?
   b. For Example: Are your PLEASURES found in “the world”?
      i. Proverbs 21:17 warns us: “He who loves pleasure will become poor.”
      ii. While Psalm 16:11 promises what happens when our pleasure is found “in The Lord”:
          “You will teach me how to live a holy life. Being with you will fill me with joy, at your right hand I will find pleasure forever.”

3. What have been your priorities in your job?; Your Friendships?; Your Personal Goals?
   a. Need to ask yourself: Are my priorities in any of these areas self-centered OR self-serving?
      i. “When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place OR drop out of our lives altogether. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affections, the demands for our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our Priorities.” (Ezra Benson)
      ii. “We don’t drift in good directions. We discipline and prioritize ourselves there.” (Andy Stanley)

4. Who was affected by the Priorities you set?
   a. Did you lose any friends when you made your HHH a priority? (Not working on it, but the HHH itself)
   b. Did your relationships with any family members suffer as a result of feeding your HHH and making it the #1 thing in your life?

5. NOW, What was GOOD about your priorities?
   a. There had to be some good here. Write about it.
Now, Part 3: This next area of your Spiritual Inventory is where you examine your attitudes.

YOUR ATTITUDE:

Ephesians 4:31 starts us off here: **“Get rid of all bitterness, (misplaced) passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults. No more hateful feelings of any sort.”**

1. **Do you always try to have an “attitude of gratitude” OR do you find yourself always complaining about your circumstances?**
   a. Scripture encourages us to be “thankful” every time we come to prayer, but this should (and could) spill over into every area of our lives.
   b. Many people over the years have crossed my path as a Pastor who have been mostly negative and critical in their spirits. They seem to end up with more problems and physical issues and generally have few friends. Most people just don’t like being around them. (This goes for people who also have no depth to their souls, but we will hold that for now.)
      i. Cloud hanging over their heads
      ii. EGR’s

2. **Do you have a CRITICAL SPIRIT?**
   a. Remember the stages of Relapse?
      i. Starts with Critical Spirit – leads to Isolation – leads to Relapse
   b. If you find yourself changing from an optimist to developing a critical spirit then something else is going on in your life.
      i. Fear is overcoming you.
      ii. Road ahead looks too difficult
         1. “Losers Limp” HS Track Coach

3. **In what areas of your life are you Ungrateful?**
   a. We really can’t (and shouldn’t) be grateful for the bad things in our lives, but we can at least be thankful for the things we have escaped – right?
      i. God always seems to provide a way out of destructive options in our lives.
         1. Sometimes we “dodge the bullet” fired at us, but other times we CHOOSE to take the right path.
a. 1 Corinthians 15:57 says it best: “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

4. Have you gotten angry, resulting in you blowing up at people?
   a. Could do a whole lesson on anger, but remember this one principle: “Blowing up at people OR venting our anger is almost always an expression of our own insecurities about something in life.”
      i. May or may not be related to issue we are blowing up about.
      ii. Also more related to our FEARS and not the alleged “offense”.
      iii. If you are angry it means: “You have unfinished business with God.”

5. Have you been SARCASTIC?
   a. Did you know that sarcasm can be a form of “Verbal Abuse”? 
   b. Root words that form word: “sarcasm” are TORN FLESH.

6. What in your past is STILL causing you Fear or Anxiety?
   a. Remember that your fear imprisons you; your faith liberates you.
   b. Fear paralyzes; faith empowers!
   c. Fear disheartens; faith encourages!
   d. Fear sickens; faith heals!
   e. FAITH in Jesus Christ will allow you to face your past fears, and with faith you can be free of fear’s chains.
      i. 1 John 4:18 says: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is NOT made perfect in love.”

Now then, the LAST area we are going to talk about tonight is your INTEGRITY:

YOUR INTEGRITY:

1. In what past dealings (work, private, etc.) were you dishonest?
   a. Do you know what I mean here? Anyone confused by the question?
   b. “An honest person alters his ideas to fit the truth. While a dishonest person alters the truth to fit his ideas.”
   c. Did you cheat at school, games?
   d. Did you falsify records to the IRS?
   e. Remember that a partial truth is as much a lie as telling a falsehood.
      i. Truth, whole truth, nothing but the truth.
2. Have you stolen things? (ASIDE: I told you that your inventory was not going to be easy.)
   a. May be something physical – an item, money, prescription drugs, etc.
   b. May be credit for something you didn’t do.
      i. Can be major as in a work related thing OR minor like taking credit for a kindness you didn’t perform.

3. Have you exaggerated yourself to make yourself look better?
   a. OK, this is a tough one – because a LOT of people exaggerate.
   b. Did you know there are NO degrees of “honest”? Either you are or you are NOT!!!
   c. ASK: Why do you think people “exaggerate”?
      i. To look better, to appear more clever, to put themselves in better light with others.
      ii. BUT the underlying MOTIVE is always INSECURITY!!!!

4. Have you pretended to live one way in front of your Christian friends and another way at home or at work?
   a. Are you a “Sunday Christian” OR a “Seven-day – full time follower of Jesus Christ?”
   b. Do you try to practice the 8 Principles of CR all week or just on Mondays?
   c. Do you “Work” the 12 steps?
WRAP-UP:

- Well, that’s enough work for one week – whew!
  - Next week we will dig in to Part II of our Spiritual Inventory.
    - We will explore our “Old Way” of thinking;
    - We will look at how we have treated (or mistreated) God’s temple – our bodies;
    - How we did nor did NOT walk by faith in the past;
    - And, our important past relationships with our family & the Church.
- As you work on your Spiritual Inventories, remember these two things:
  - First, in Isaiah 1:18 God says: “No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow.”
  - Second, - and we can’t say this enough – KEEP YOUR INVENTORY BALANCED!
    - List the positive new relationships that you have,
    - List the areas of your life that you have been able to turn over to God;
    - How your attitude has improved since you started recovery;
    - And the ways you have been able to step out of denial into God’s truth.

**PRAY: SEND TO GROUPS:**