

AN EXAM YOU MUST PASS

TEXT: **1 Cor.11:28** *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

THESIS: To show the importance of self examination prior to partaking of the Lord's Supper.

INTRO.: A. The purpose of an examination is to discover faults, problems, illness, incompetence, & failures or to discover the proficiency or health of an individual. For example you might be tested on your proficiency in math & learn by your grade that you are failing. You might have an annual physical exam & find that everything is O.K. as far as the tests are capable of revealing, or you may find out you had an undetected problem. Passing or failing will either bring joy or disappointment (or worse).

B. The purpose of the examination Paul writes of in connection with the Lord's Table will often highlight problem areas, sin, hypocrisy, failure, improper attitudes or motives or some deep rooted rebellion...if the examination is as thorough as it should be. An examination involves a calling to mind of certain "lessons" or events of the past, a responsibility for certain material learned & a giving account to the best of our ability. So it is with the examination during the Lord's Table. But this is **"AN EXAM YOU MUST PASS..."**

I. THE NECESSITY OF SELF-EXAMINATION:

A. Confessing Transgressions: v.28b

1. The word "**examine**" means to prove, evaluate, or test.
2. When something is discovered by way of this evaluation it should be confessed & forsaken.

Prov.29:1 *He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. The Lord's Table presents us with a regular "check up" or exam time, to keep our account w/the Lord up to date.*

B. Avoiding Chastisement: v.30-32

1. There are only 2 alternatives:
 - a. Either we judge ourselves...simple & efficient.
 - b. Or God sends chastening....painful & complex.
2. There are 3 possible results:
 - a. Weakness: perhaps denoting spiritual sluggishness as well as poor physical health.
 - b. Sickness: definitely speaking primarily of physical illness & perhaps mental illness as well.
 - c. Death: physical.

ILLUS.: Only a fool would tempt God to chasten him or her by failing to confess our faults, sins & transgressions.

C. Preparing Spiritually:

1. Moses removed his shoes before the Lord at the burning bush, because He recognized he was in God's presence & thus he referred to the place as "**holy ground.**"
2. The O.T. priests had to wash their hands & feet at the laver before approaching the sacrificial altar to serve the Lord.
3. N.T. priests (believers) need to examine their thoughts, motives, desires, actions & attitudes before partaking of the Lord's Table.

II. THE NOURISHMENT OF SELF-EXAMINATION:

A. The Purpose: v.28b

1. The act of examination cannot have as its result staying away from the Lord's Table.
2. The "nourishment" derived from the examination is that of cleansing & restoration to fellowship, something beneficial to the soul of the believer.

B. The Person: v.28a **"...let a man."**

1. The object of the exam is a person: **"but let a MAN..."**
2. God knows our frame: our weaknesses as humans.

Ps.103:14 *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*

3. The examination enables us to remember our weaknesses & by confessing them, we are restored to fellowship & receive spiritual nourishment.

4. We cannot go on serving the Lord w/out this examination, so this is **"AN EXAM WE MUST PASS."**

C. The Performance: **v. 28a "...examine himself..."**

1. Thank the Lord, He did not leave this task to the preacher, or to our friends, or our neighbors!
2. Praise Him that He gives us the privilege of SELF-examination, before He examines or chastens us!

D. The Product: v.28c **"...so let him eat...& drink..."**

1. The result of this exam is to help us clean up any hindrances to partaking in a **"worthy manner"**.
2. The purpose & product is to encourage, not to hinder us.
3. When we "pass" this exam, we are back in fellowship w/Him & He w/us, & we are in a position of receiving spiritual nourishment again.

II. THE NATURE OF SELF-EXAMINATION:

A. To Determine Our Standing:

1. Paul admonished us to examine ourselves to **"see if we be in the faith."**
2. Sometimes the Holy Spirit uses the Lord's Supper to reveal our need.

ILLUS.: I remember the first time I was in a Gospel preaching church where the Lord's Supper was being served & my friend told me not to partake because I wasn't saved! What conviction! But of course that is not the primary object of this command.

B. To Determine Our State:

1. It is not to see who is **"worthy"...**none are!
2. But to examine our attitude, motives & spiritual state right now!
3. It is designed to make us careful not to approach the table w/irreverence, carelessness or with an unloving, unforgiving judgmental or defiant spirit.

ILLUS.: 2 Christians were discussing the Lord's Table service in their church the day after. One man said he noticed that several people took Communion who were hypocrites. He said that had they properly examined themselves, they would not have partaken. The other man said *"I too know someone who should not have taken Communion...YOU!...because instead of examining yourself, you were too busy examining someone else."*

CONCL.: This is indeed **"AN EXAM YOU MUST PASS."** You do so not by being self righteous, nor unrighteous, but by being willing to accept His righteousness through His shed blood & broken body, manifested by these elements of bread & juice. The only way to pass this exam is to examine yourself...& then **"let us eat & drink"** together.

QUOTE: *"Full joy & abundant life are the spiritual birthright of every believer; but we cannot enjoy that birthright if there is anything between us & the Savior."*

NOW IT IS "EXAM TIME!"