

Spiritual Preventive Maintenance



**New Caney Church of Christ
Adult Bible Class**

by Charles Willis

Spiritual Preventive Maintenance

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Self Examination

If we want to prevent ourselves from sinning, there are things we can do. This series of lessons is intended to help us understand what we can do, and how best to equip ourselves for the day of temptation. An assessment must first be taken to determine our strengths and weaknesses. Only then can we work to shore up the weaknesses. Discuss what the following passages teach us about self-examination and the importance of it.

1. Proverbs 4:23
2. James 1:23–26
3. 1 Corinthians 11:28
4. 2 Corinthians 13:5
5. Galatians 6:4

Anytime we examine ourselves we must be careful to not approve something God disapproves. We might think we are strong or doing okay. We must hold ourselves to God's standard. How do the following passages describe what our mindset should be during self examination?

6. Psalm 26:1–2
7. Hebrews 4:13
8. Psalm 139:1–2
9. Psalm 44:21
10. Luke 16:15
11. What is the benefit of thinking this way?

Self-deception is easy. Everyone wants to think they have not gained weight, their hair is not thinning or graying, or their eyesight has not worsened. When it comes to our soul we must see and think clearly about our righteousness and fellowship with God. Read the following passages and discuss the dangers of and how to avoid self-deception.

12. 1 Corinthians 3:18
13. Romans 12:3
14. Proverbs 16:18
15. Galatians 5:9
16. James 1:22
17. 1 Corinthians 6:9 (Galatians 6:7; James 1:16, 26)

If we are going to hold ourselves to God's pattern, then we must be as hard on ourselves (or harder) than we view others. I must expect of myself as I expect of others. I cannot be less critical of myself than of others. Discuss how we can avoid the hypocritical double-standard for ourselves in light of the following passages.

18. 2 Corinthians 10:12
19. Matthew 7:1–5
20. Hebrews 6:9
21. 1 Corinthians 9:27
22. Romans 2:11

Meditation and Prayer

Meditation (in Hebrew) is “to muse, meditate upon, study, ponder” (Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Dictionary). We might say we are going to “go over something in our mind” or “ruminate.” Some mystical thinking has taken the word and applied it to other things. In Scripture it is about our thinking on something. If we want to prevent sin and overcome temptation, we need to consider what we spend our time thinking about. What can we learn about meditation from the following passages?

1. Philippians 4:8
2. Genesis 6:5
3. Matthew 15:19
4. Psalm 145:5
5. Jeremiah 4:14
6. Psalm 77:6
7. Psalm 119:97

What can be learned in the following passages about the benefits of meditation?

8. Psalm 119:11, 23, 59, 99
9. Joshua 1:8
10. Psalm 1:1–2
11. Proverbs 6:20–23

Meditation accompanies and leads to prayer. “*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer*” (Psalm 19:14). It is only natural after pondering the goodness and mercy of God to pray in thanksgiving and praise to Him. What we think about is what we pray about. This is why we cast “*all your anxiety on Him*” (1 Peter 5:7) - our thoughts are flooded with worry. To prevent sin we need to change our thinking and become prayerful. What do the following passages teach us about the benefit of prayer?

12. 1 John 5:14–15
13. James 4:8
14. Psalm 145:18
15. Hebrews 4:16
16. Philippians 4:6–7
17. Matthew 6:13
18. Luke 22:42

Purposeful Study

Study of Scripture is preventive. It is harder to sin when you are studying the word of God, and His word is permeating your thoughts through the day. Sadly, many people do not purposefully study. Many will purposefully study for a Bible class they are in, or study to teach a class, or to help a friend understand a truth. How often do we purposefully sit down to study to help our personal need? The Word of God will help strengthen our understanding and strengthen our resolve to remain pure

Too often as Christians we tend to try to figure everything about life for ourselves. God has given us His word which is full of His wisdom. The more we study Scripture the more the truth is learned. We are wise to study. *“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is”* (Eph. 5:15 -17). What can be learned from the following passages about God’s wisdom?

1. Isaiah 55:8–9
2. Psalm 119:130
3. Proverbs 16:20
4. John 6:63
5. Hebrews 2:1
6. How do these truths help us desire to study?

One of the reasons to study is to gain knowledge. Wisdom is knowledge applied. *“My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge”* (Isaiah 5:13). *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”* (Hosea 4:6). Ignorance destroyed God’s people in the past, and can do so today. How much knowledge do I need to prevent sin? Will more knowledge help me? Knowledge (in any skill) is what we call “education” and “training.” What can we learn from the following passages about our need to know?

7. 1 Timothy 3:16
8. 1 Timothy 2:4
9. Hebrews 12:11
10. Hebrews 5:14
11. 1 John 2:16; James 1:13–16
12. Titus 2:14
13. 2 Peter 1:5, 8
14. 2 Peter 3:18

Knowledge alone will not save anyone. We need the knowledge of God, but it is only a help to us if we apply it. How is this truth stated in the following passages?

15. James 1:22
16. Colossians 1:9–10
17. What can we (should we) learn from Scripture about the following? A few references have been provided, you are encouraged to study from other passages also.
 - A. Overcoming Temptation (1 John 5:4–5; 1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - B. Resisting Temptation (Matthew 4:1–11; 1 Peter 5:9)

Strong Conviction

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). I will not prevent sin in my life if I am not fully convinced to the point it is a personal conviction. Many do not study to the point of being fully convinced. They do not grow in faith to the point of a strong conviction. If we want to withstand the temptations of Satan we must fight because of conviction. How do we get conviction?

1. Acts 8:4
2. Acts 19:8
3. Acts 28:23
4. Romans 14:5
5. Romans 14:22

What are the benefits of being fully convinced?

6. Hebrews 6:11
7. Romans 6:17–18
8. Colossians 4:12
9. 2 Timothy 1:12

What will be the results in the lives of those who have strong conviction?

10. Hebrews 3:14
11. Hebrews 10:38
12. 1 John 3:18–19
13. 1 Corinthians 16:13
14. Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 6:13–14; Hebrews 3:6
15. Hebrews 4:16
16. 1 Peter 5:9

How does this conviction also help in confessing Christ?

17. 1 Thessalonians 1:5
18. 2 Corinthians 5:11

Involvement

All of us have heard and agreed with the saying: idle hands are the devil's workshop. When our children reach their teen years we want them to be involved in some after school activity like sports, music, or animal husbandry. They feel like they are part of a group and often it becomes part of their identity, wardrobe, and how they think of themselves. Parents like these activities and encourage them as something productive to help their child mature.

God has created the Church through Christ as a local group which every member can be involved and a part that contributes to the whole. Much more than any after school program, the church provides opportunity for Christians to be involved, grow, and do what God commands. *"Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good"* (1 Peter 3:13). Sadly many Christians are not involved and have in fact become lethargic.

1. Define the English word: lethargy.
2. How is this described in Scripture?
 - A. Proverbs 13:4
 - B. Proverbs 15:19; 18:9; 19:15; Hebrews 6:12
 - C. Acts 28:27; Hebrews 5:11

How does Scripture describe the Christian's involvement?

3. Galatians 6:7–10
4. Ephesians 6:10–13
5. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27
6. Romans 12:11

As more individuals are spiritually lethargic, so the congregation becomes lethargic and stagnant. No one is growing, and the congregation becomes weaker and usually smaller in number, to the point the congregation may cease to exist. What does Scripture say we are to do to prevent lethargy?

7. Galatians 6:10
8. Galatians 5:13
9. 1 Thessalonians 4:18
10. Colossians 3:16
11. Ephesians 4:16
12. Ephesians 5:16
13. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

How can we guard against lethargy? In the space below provide suggestions for how you and others can be more involved.

Pay Attention To Your Marriage

Preventive Maintenance Lesson #6

God does not demand every person be married, but those who marry have additional concerns and commands from God which, if ignored, will result in condemnation. More, a lax attitude toward marriage and giving attention to our spouse can create spiritual problems and lead us to sin. How is this described in Scripture?

1. 1 Peter 3:7
2. 1 Corinthians 7:3–5
3. Proverbs 21:9, 19; 27:15; 12:4
4. Proverbs 14:1
5. Proverbs 15:17;
6. Proverbs 17:14, 27–28; 10:19

What is God's intention in marriage?

7. Genesis 2:18, 20
8. 1 Corinthians 7:2–5
9. Proverbs 18:22

What areas of responsibility must we be constantly working on to prevent sin in our life?

10. Joshua 24:14
11. Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33; Titus 2:4
12. 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23
13. Hebrews 13:4
14. Proverbs 31:11–12, 28–29, 31
15. 1 Peter 3:1–2; Matthew 5:16

Goal Oriented

For most people, they understand the importance of goals to being successful in this life. The goal of a good paying job must be kept in view to endure the time, effort, and costs of getting an education or training to achieve that goal. People endure much and spend years to become qualified to be hired.

Christians have much to endure in this life to achieve the goal of heaven. Sometimes people quit because they lack the endurance, or unwilling to sacrifice for the goal. This stresses the need to keep the goal strong in our mind.

What do the following passages reveal about the Christian's goal of heaven and our attitude?

1. Matthew 6:19–21
2. Matthew 6:33
3. Colossians 3:2
4. Philippians 3:14
5. Philippians 2:2
6. Ephesians 5:15–16
7. John 6:27
8. 2 Corinthians 5:9

Discuss what can cause us to lose sight of our goal.

9. Mark 10:17–31; Matthew 16:26
10. Lot chose Sodom (Gen. 13:10–13).
11. Revelation 3:16; Galatians 5:16–17; Matthew 12:30
12. James 4:1–4

Discuss what helps us keep our goal in sight.

13. Hebrews 12:1–3
14. Romans 15:4; James 5:10–11; Hebrews 11
15. 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13
16. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18
17. Proverbs 16:9
18. How do these principles help prevent sin?

Avoid Temptation

While this has been the overall concept of this workbook, this lesson will focus on specific concepts that truly help us greatly. God has not left us without instruction about how to avoid and overcome temptation. Most are familiar with 1 Corinthians 10:13 *“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”* Yet, many do not seek the way of escape nor take it. For each of the following passages identify what we are to do in order to avoid temptation.

1. Matthew 6:13; Luke 22:42
2. Matthew 4:5–7
3. 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14
4. 1 Peter 2:11
5. Romans 13:14
6. Mark 14:38; 1 Thessalonians 5:6

Take another look at the gospel armor in Ephesians 6:11–17. Identify how each figurative “piece” helps us avoid giving in to temptation?

7. Truth (v.14)
8. Righteousness (v.14)
9. The Gospel of peace (v.15)
10. Faith (v.16)
11. Salvation (v.17)
12. Word of God (v.17)
13. How do we put the armor on (v.13)?

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). We are to *“walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk”* (Ephesians 4:17) but rather, *“be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth”* (Ephesians 4:23–24). What do the following passages tell us about our habits?

14. Proverbs 21:5
15. Hebrews 10:25
16. Hebrews 10:35–36
17. 1 Corinthians 15:58

In what ways will the “new man” in Christ think differently? Identify in the following passages how we are helped to avoid temptation.

18. Psalm 28:7; Proverbs 3:6; Luke 6:46
19. Psalm 37:4, 23; 40:8; 119:35
20. Luke 14:28; Galatians 5:19–21; Galatians 6:7

How do we *“watch over”* (*“guard”*, KJ) our heart? (see also Galatians 6:1)

Keep Good Company

“Depart from me, evildoers, That I may observe the commandments of my God” (Psalm 119:115). As long as people have lived in communities and associated with one another there has been an easy understanding that you cannot keep company with those who do evil. It does not take long for a young person to learn that some friends “get you in trouble.” Many teens are led into sin and worldly crime by keeping company with those who do evil. This truth is again seen in Proverbs 12:26, *“The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, But the way of the wicked leads them astray.”*

1. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says *“Bad company corrupts good morals.”* Provide from Scripture some examples of those who kept bad company, and state what their result was. Consider also 1 Corinthians 5:9–11.

A.

B.

C.

2. What is learned from bad company?

A. Proverbs 22:24–25; Psalm 26:4–5

B. Proverbs 13:20

C. Proverbs 1:10–19

3. How do parents help their children learn this truth?

4. Why do religiously minded people keep “bad company”?

Keeping good company is much wiser.

5. From Scripture provide some examples of those who kept good company, and state what their result was.

A.

B.

C.

6. What is learned from good company?

A. Psalm 1:1–2

B. Proverbs 27:6, 9

C. Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

God wants Christians to keep company with other Christians. What is the benefit of this in avoiding temptation?

7. Proverbs 27:1

8. Psalm 119:63

9. 1 Peter 4:8–9

10. Hebrews 10:24–25

11. Philippians 3:17; 1 Peter 5:3; John 13:15

Cling To Hope

Some may not see the point at first, but hope really is something that prevents sin. The “*hope of salvation*” is figuratively described as our helmet (1 Thessalonians 5:8). A helmet protects us, as does our hope. What is “hope?”

1. Definition:
2. Hebrews 6:19
3. Romans 8:19–25
4. What is our “*one hope*” (Ephesians 4:4)? (Colossians 1:5, 27; 1 Timothy 1:1; Titus 3:7)

Why should we trust in God’s promises?

5. Titus 1:2
6. 1 Corinthians 1:9
7. Hebrews 10:23
8. Joshua 21:45
9. How is our hope a “*living hope*” (1 Peter 1:3–4)?
10. Romans 5:5

How strong is our hope supposed to be?

11. Hebrews 6:19
12. Hebrews 3:6

Our hope is supposed to be “*steadfast*” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). We are to “*hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering*” (Hebrews 10:23). A wavering hope is not enough to sustain us through troubling times and temptation. How do we grow in hope?

13. Hebrews 11:1
14. Hebrews 6:11
15. Psalm 31:24
16. Romans 15:4
17. 1 Corinthians 11:26
18. 1 Timothy 4:10; 5:5; 6:17; 1 Peter 1:13

How does our hope help prevent sin?

19. 1 John 3:3
20. 2 Corinthians 4:7–18
21. Psalm 42:11

Identify what can we learn about hope from the following examples.

22. Romans 4:18–21
23. Job 13:13–16

Patience Is A Perventative

Galatians 5:22 lists “*patience*” as a fruit of the spirit. The King James use the word “longsuffering” which is the meaning of the word. A person with patience is willing to suffer long. Therefore, some of the concept of patience involves endurance, a word found in several of the definitions of patience.

1. Describe the patience of man (or lack of it).

2. Describe the patience of God.

A. 1 Peter 3:20

B. Romans 2:4

C. Romans 9:22–24

D. Romans 12:12

E. 2 Peter 3:15

We are taught to add to our faith “*patience*” (2 Peter 1:6). This word is more about endurance and constancy. It is translated “*perseverance*” in the NASB. How do the following passages tell us to be patient?

3. James 5:7–11

4. 2 Timothy 4:2

5. Ephesians 4:2

6. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

7. Hebrews 6:12

8. Psalm 37:1–10

How do we grow our patience?

9. Colossians 1:10–11

10. 1 Corinthians 13:4

11. Colossians 3:12

12. James 1:3–4; Romans 5:3–4

What can we learn about patience from the following examples?

13. Hebrews 12:1–3

14. Hebrews 6:13–15

Give Your Heart Fully To God

It sounds simple, but it is very true. We CHOOSE to serve God. He gives us that choice. Most Christians who are weaker in faith and unhappy as a Christian are trying to serve God with less than all their heart. **From the following passages describe what is wrong with this attitude.**

1. Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13
2. Revelation 3:15–16
3. Hebrews 6:9–12
4. 2 Kings 10:28–31
5. 1 Kings 11:4–8
6. Jeremiah 17:10

If we want to prevent sin in our lives, if we want to maintain our faith, then we must give God ALL our heart. Our commitment must be full. **From the following passages identify what God demands from us.**

7. Joshua 24:15, 23 (in the context)
8. Mark 12:30
9. Jeremiah 24:7
10. Acts 8:36–37

Most of us know and understand the truth from the passages above, but many times we fail in our application. We fail in understanding the importance of doing what Scripture says. Doing things that are for our own good. **From the following passages identify how we give our heart.**

11. Jeremiah 29:10–13
12. Colossians 3:12–14
13. Proverbs 3:5
14. Proverbs 23:17
15. 2 Kings 23:3
16. Psalm 101:2; 1 Kings 9:4; Psalm 15:1–2; Psalm 26:1
17. Acts 11:23
18. Psalm 51:10
19. Psalm 9:1; 86:12; 111:1; 119:7; 138:1

Sound Judgment And Sober Spirit

We live in a society and world of sin. It surrounds us. We must avoid it, step over it, and not fall into it. Sin will defeat us if we give it any opportunity. Part of our defense therefore is to be diligently alert and think clearly about temptation. 1 Peter 4:7 says, *“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.”*

1. Define: Sound Judgment
2. Define: Sober Spirit
3. How are these two attributes described in Romans 13:12–14?

Why are we told to be of sound judgment and sober spirit?

4. 1 Peter 5:8–9
5. Mark 14:38
6. 1 Corinthians 15:34
7. Titus 2:6–8
8. Mark 13:33–36
9. 1 Peter 1:13

How do we become a person of sound judgment and sober spirit?

10. Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2
11. 1 Peter 1:13–16
12. 1 Peter 1:13
13. 2 John 7–9
14. Romans 12:3
15. 1 Thessalonians 5:6–8
16. 2 Timothy 4:5

What are the results of becoming of sound judgment and sober spirit?

17. Hebrews 5:14
18. Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2

CONCLUSION OF THE WORKBOOK

People often think and ask, “how do you grow as a Christian”? A very large part of growth is in changing our thinking to prevent sin and to maintain righteousness. The more we study and grow in knowledge, the more alert we become to sin and temptation. Prayer becomes a necessity for maintaining righteousness and seeking God’s help to overcome temptation. The more we work hard at preventing sin, the more successful we will become. Satan cannot force us to sin. When we resist, he will flee from us (James 4:7). Answer the following questions for your own benefit (they will not be covered in class).

1. Which lesson in this workbook has helped you?
2. What are you going to do differently moving forward to prevent sin?
3. When do you plan to re-study this material to keep it fresh in your mind?