God, Show Me Myself

(A Request for Divine Inspection)

Psalm 139:23-24

3-24-2021

INTRODUCTION:

***<u>Ask the omniscient God to inspect</u> the true condition of your inner life.**

Are you willing to say this to God?

I. "SEARCH ME" (v. 23a)

(A prayer that God would uncover what lies buried in your heart)

II. "TRY ME" (v. 23b)

(A prayer that God would reveal your true motivations)

III. "LEAD ME" (v. 24)

(A prayer that God would control you to go His way)

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Inspection: of car, of taxes (audit), of business, of dorm room ("White glove inspection") , of the shop (OSHA - Occupational safety & hazard…), in the army, etc.

Many inspections are for our good (Food inspections; aircraft (plane) inspections – making sure the landing gear and instrument panel is working properly).

God is certainly qualified to do an inspection of our lives: He is…

1. Omniscient (Psalm 139:1-6)
2. Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-12)
3. Omnipotent (Psalm 139:13-18)

After speaking about the enemies of God (v. 19-22), and their bloodshed (v. 19), their blasphemy (v. 20), their hatred for God (v. 21b), and their rebellion against him (v. 21b) . . . David, who had a tender heart, abruptly shifts the focus from "them" to himself.

It's easy to see the faults of others. It's delightful to wish the scrutiny and rebuke of God to fall upon others. It's not so palatable to become introspectful and ask God to do a "spring cleaning" of our lives.

"David does not confine his attack to the evil around him: he faces what may be within him." (Kidner)

NOTE: the repeated personal pronouns calling for a personal inventory - "me...my...me...my...me...me"

The words "heart...thoughts...in me" - reflect the true life of man. The true value of our life is not measured by mere outward appearances, but internal reality.

He "prays God not to give him over to the judgment of self-delusion, but to lay bare the true state of his soul" (Delitzsch)

Verses 23 & 24 are a prayer; perhaps one of the most infrequent, rare prayers offered up by man.

***Ask the omniscient God to inspect the true condition of your inner life.**

Are you willing to say this to God?

I. "SEARCH ME" (v. 23a)
(A prayer that God would uncover what lies buried in your heart)

"Search" - the same word as in verse 1.

David is asking God to mine down into the deepest crevices of his life and to see what he is truly like.

"O God" - a phrase expressing much emotion, desperation, surrender

"Heart" = is the will of man as it is influenced by the intellect and emotions.

It is the center or core of man. From it flows our actions.

"Heart" = N.T. - kardia (Eng. cardiac, etc.) - "the chief organ of physical life ("for the life of the flesh is in the blood - Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition, the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life." (Vine, p. 206-207).

"The heart is the center of the inner life of the person where all the spiritual forces and functions have their origin" (TDNT)

Our heart (kardia) is that inner aspect of man that **thinks** (Lk. 9:47), **reasons** (Mk. 2:6, 8), **ponders** (Lk. 2:19), **imagines** (Lk. 1:51), **remembers** (Lk. 1:66), **purposes** (II Cor. 9:7), **wonders** (Lk. 3:15), **determines** (Lk. 21:14), **questions** (Lk. 24:38), **believes** (Lk. 24:25; Acts 8:37; Ro. 10:9, 10), and **motivates** (Mk. 7:21).

The heart encompasses man's intellect (Mt. 13:15; Prov. 23:7); emotion (Jn. 16:22), and will (Ro. 6:17, Col. 3:15). It enables him to think, feel, and do.

The heart is your "hidden man" (I Pet. 3:4); the real you that lies deep beneath that part of you that everyone sees.

By nature, our hearts are depraved. Such depravity is evidenced by sin.

Because of the inner, deep-rootedness of our hearts, we often do not even know our hearts (Jer. 17:9).
"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Prov. 30:12).

"The problem that caused God to destroy the earth in the flood was a heart problem" (MacArthur, p. 202). (Gen. 6:5 - *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.")*

By asking God to know my heart, I am really asking him to reveal to me so that I can know my heart. (God already knows my heart; I must be willing to have Him show me what He knows about me.)
Due to our sin nature, our heart is deceitful (Jer.17:9-10 – "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins…")

The heart's true condition often eludes our conscious awareness.

> Our Daily Bread April 12, 1996
> Mirror Of The Heart
> Have you ever looked into a mirror of curved glass that was designed to distort the image it reflects? Perhaps you are short and stocky, but in the glass you look tall and lean.
> These "distortion mirrors" illustrate the human heart, which is totally unreliable in reflecting our spiritual condition. Our "heart mirror" is clouded with evil and completely awry with the serpentine twistings of the fall. It is wicked and deceitful above all things.
> That being the case, our text then inquires, "Who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Certainly not man himself, for "he who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28:26). There is only One who can tell us anything about our true spiritual reflection, and that is God who searches our hearts (Jer. 17:10).
> God, who knows, says we deceive no one but ourselves if we think we have no sin (1 Jn. 1:8). His Word clarifies the picture, for it is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Only as we measure ourselves by God's standard will we see that we fall short of the glory of God. Only then will we realize the urgent necessity of salvation and accept His gracious offer of cleansing. --Henry G. Bosch

Often times in life we do not really want to know the true nature of our hearts; we are afraid of what we might find. We are fearful that some treasured vice will be exposed and will need to be expelled.

As Jesus said: many do not come to the Light "lest their deeds should be reproved."

The Pharisees did not see their true condition before God's all-seeing eyes and before His all-knowing mind. Hence, they were deluded into thinking they were spiritual, when in fact they were full of "dead men's bones" (SEE: Mt. 23:25-28)

John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Multitudes of the self-righteous will be in Hell, who all the while they lived, thought they were rightly related to God, but never knew Him personally.

Beware when you ask God to perform such an inspection. You may be horrified at what He uncovers.

"God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15)

God will expose what is really on the inside of men's hearts (I Cor. 4:5 - *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts; and then each one's praise will come from God" NKJV)*

What lost sinners need is a spiritual heart transplant (Ezek. 36:25-26)

Rather than patching your exterior to hide the interior, why not ask God to create in you a clean heart? (Ps. 51:10).

We should spend more time on being what we ought to be, rather than hiding what we are."

Applic. for Christian - Just as one would remove dirt, filth, and contamination from a glass or drinking container before filling it and drinking out of it, so God must purify a heart before He can fill it or use it.

A cluttered life will choke and confuse your life:

> Our Daily Bread
> June 27, 1996
> Cleaning Out The Clutter
> The Learning Annex, a chain of adult-education schools, says that more than 200,000 people have completed its popular class on controlling household clutter. Who takes the course? People who keep empty mayonnaise jars, manuals for appliances they no longer have, broken buttons, out-of-date phone books, and keys to houses they lived in 20 years ago.
> Household clutter occupies space, saps energy, and creates frustration. Spiritual clutter is much the same-- unresolved conflicts pile up in our hearts; unconfessed sins gather a thick layer of guilt; unspoken prayers litter our minds.

II. "TRY ME" (v. 23b)
(A prayer that God would reveal your true motivations)

"Try" = to test, like gold is tested through fire. EX: Job said: "Try me as gold" (Job 23:10 - "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.")

"Put me through whatever fires You deem necessary so that I will be pure gold."

“Fools Gold” looks real until tested. Cubic Zirconium looks real until examined.

Tests (trials) are not easy to ask for, but are necessary (see: James 1:2-f)

"Would you say your attitude is 'good' or just 'untested'? It is possible to seem to have an acceptable disposition and temperament, yet. ... through lack of conflict and challenge not to be sure of your attitude when the chips are down. It is not how you act when you have had a chance to think and prepare, but how do you react when you are caught off guard. Subtly we spend much time in learning to be actors." (Foster, p. 64)

It’s not how you conduct your life when everything is going your way; The question is: How are you under pressure? How do you act and react then? Those are the times when our inner sewage rises to the surface!

When the heat of Calvary was on, observe what happened to the 12 disciples:

Judas - sold out for a cheap price
the 3 - slept in the garden
Peter - blatantly denied the Lord
All forsook Him and fled

"Thoughts" = worries, cares, or anxious thoughts; the thoughts that motivate us
In this context, David speaks of the “wicked thoughts” that lead one to a wicked way.

"Wicked way" = hurtful way, any way that would hurt God or man. Any sin that would grieve God. An offensive sin.
The wicked way is contrasted with the everlasting way (v.24).

How is your thought life?

"any wicked way" – singular: The request is for God to reveal (expose) to my consciousness any evil way in my life: Whether it be:
Materialism; Pride; Self-centeredness; Lust; Perversion; any "idol of the heart"
Ezekiel 14:1-8

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne
And worship only Thee. --Cowper

An idol is anything
that takes the place of God.

We need to be transparent before God! The heights of foolishness is to attempt to hide something from God. We often spend more time covering over what we are than changing what we should.

Paul recognized that in ministry, he could not get away with deceit or trickery because he ministered "not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (I Th. 2:4)

III. "LEAD ME" (v. 24)
(A prayer that God would control you to go His way)

"The way everlasting" = the everlasting way
Psalm 1:6- For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.
Prov. 4:18-19- But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.
Psalm 16:11- Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

God's everlasting way is <u>singular</u> (there are not many ways from which to choose)

Pr 14:12 ¶ There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.
Pr 16:25 ¶ There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

God's everlasting way is <u>eternal</u> (man's ways come & go; God's ways are as old and eternal as He is. His way does not change with the times! His moral ways are consistent with His moral attributes and such are eternal. The ways of sin are but for a moment.

CONCLUSION:

Can you seriously pray verses 23 & 24?

To sincerely pray such, a person must be willing to admit:

1) That he is a sinner

2) That his heart has the potential of being extremely deceitful (Jer. 17:9)

3) That he really wants to know the truth about himself

4) That he is open for God to reveal (expose) areas of hidden sin

   Is any room of your heart "off limits" to God? Are there any secret closets in your life that He is not allowed entrance?

   Be willing to let go of that which is going to destroy you, if you don't!

   Illustration: the trapped monkey with his hand caught in the narrow necked bottle.

5) That he is willing to have God change his heart and mind (repentance)

God knows what is best for your life! Who knows more about us the creator or the creation? Who knows more about a product, the manufacturer or the consumer?

Illustration: Henry Ford and the broken down Model T Ford.

EX: Jesus' questioning the motivations of Peter - "Do you love Me?"
(SEE: Jn. 21:15-17)

ILLUS: The hymn - "Search Me, Oh God"