

Search Me

by Ronald Glass

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual scrutiny, inviting God's searching of our souls, and praying for purification and transformation.

Duration: 58:08

Scripture: Numbers 15:30-31, Psalm 19:7-14, Psalm 139:1-11, Psalm 139:23-24, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the focus is on the power and majesty of God as revealed in the heavens and His wisdom and holiness as revealed in His Word. The speaker emphasizes the importance of the Word of God in guiding and warning believers. He highlights the idea that revival starts with individuals getting right with God and invites listeners to invite God to search their hearts and minds. The sermon concludes with a prayer for integrity and for God to guard the speaker's lips and thoughts.

Transcript

This morning we're going to be turning to two familiar passages of Scripture, both in the Psalms, Psalm 19 and Psalm 139. So I invite you to both of these passages, we're going to read the concluding verses of each one. Psalm 19, verses 12 to 14, and then Psalm 139, verses 23 through 24.

So if you'll turn to those passages, and we'll read them together. Psalm 19, beginning in verse 12. Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.

Also, keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. And then the final verses of Psalm 139, the final two verses. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. Well, if you are an airline passenger, you are well aware of the security precautions that have been put in place to prevent acts of terrorism. You go through the line there at the airport, and you have to remove your shoes and your belts and empty your pockets.

And you have to have your body scanned electronically. Your carry-on bags are subjected to X-ray surveillance. And if any suspicion remains after you've gone through all of that, then you may well be scanned with even more intrusive and sophisticated security equipment.

And, of course, such equipment, such means are not only being used at airports, but also in courthouses and prisons and government buildings, and even today in some schools. Very few of us have not been searched in this way. Very few of us like it.

But there is, and this is my burden today, there is a searching that we as Christians should seek. And so we're going to look at that as we continue our series of studies on biblical revival. We have discovered that the revival of the church is the periodic, supernatural intervention of God into the affairs of his church.

We have seen that it is God awakening his sleeping people, the spirit of God breathing new life into saints whose zeal has grown cold. Revival is God acting sovereignly and omnipotently in behalf of a desperate people who have become dissatisfied with their lukewarm spiritual lives. Now the history of revivals, both in the Bible, primarily the Old Testament, and in the past 2,000 years of church history, has proven that revivals are temporary.

Some are very brief. They last only a day or a couple of weeks, perhaps. Some have lasted quite a bit longer.

But all of them share this in common, they are for a limited amount of time. The effect of revival, however, has been to elevate the level of the spiritual life of God's people. So what you see is God intervening in the life of his church in order to sort of elevate, pump up the level of spiritual life, which will then have an impact in the church for some time to come.

And then as spiritual life sags, again God may intervene with revival to boost the fortunes of his church. Just reminds us how much we as Christians lose our zeal, we lose our passion, we lose our thirst after holiness and after God, and we need that awakening that only God can give. Well, the impact of revival should be, and often has been, long term.

But that will not be the case unless the people of God preserve the changes that take place in a time of revival. And this work of preservation must begin in the individual believer's life, and specifically in the way that you and I as Christians pray. Now we see that in two of these Davidic Psalms, both of these Psalms being extremely familiar to us as Christians, and we want to look at them today.

Although most of us resent the government's intrusion in those inevitable airport searches, we should invite the Lord's scrutiny in our lives. We should welcome his searching of our souls. We should welcome.

Many of us don't welcome that, instead we resist and we even resent it when our souls are searched by God. But not David. David prayed two prayers in response to the Lord's revelation of his majesty.

In the first of these Psalms, Psalm 19, it is the revelation of the Creator in the magnificence of his universe. The heavens are telling of the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of his hands. David looks at the created universe, the majesty and the glory of the skies at night, and he sees the stars and the distant galaxies.

He looks upon the sun and the moon and all that God has made. He looks at the big stuff, as it were, and he is overwhelmed with the almighty power of God. He focuses on the omnipotence of God.

Now, in Psalm 139, it is something of the opposite. This is the revelation, again, of the Creator, but now not in the magnificence of his universe, but in the intricacies of human conception and gestation. David considers the birth process and marvels at how God himself can knit together the various parts of a human body.

And so he is focused on God's omniscience, the fact that God knows everything. In fact, if you remember, he asked the question in verse 7 of Psalm 139, Where can I go from your spirit, or where can I flee from your presence? God is everywhere present, and therefore God knows everything. There is nothing that escapes his attention, his knowledge, or his wisdom.

So these revelations that David has had, both of the magnificence of the universe and the magnificence of the birth process, have produced a longing in David's heart that the Lord might search him and cleanse him. He is so overwhelmed by what he understands of God from the created universe, and from what he understands of God from the process of conception and gestation and birth, he is so overwhelmed that he now asks God to search him and cleanse him. Taken together, these two prayers yield four requests that God might personally subject his saint to intense spiritual scrutiny.

I want to suggest to you today that this kind of prayer is something that we ought to pray, and we ought to pray much more often than we do. When you realize who God is, then you ought to realize how far short we fall of his greatness, majesty, glory. So this kind of prayer is calculated to promote and preserve personal revival in the life of a believer.

In fact, as I pointed out in the past, revival really begins in the lives of individual men and women. Of men and women just like you and me. Of young people, of children even, who get right with God.

How do we get right with God? Well, I think part of that is inviting God to search us. Going through the scanning process, not of some airport electronic equipment, but of this book, and of the searching power of the Spirit of God. Let's look at the two prayers that we have here, and look at these four requests that David asks.

First of all, his request in chapter 19, verses 12 through 13, search me for integrity. Search me for integrity. The focus here is on sinful acts.

David has seen the power and the majesty of the Almighty Creator as revealed in the heavens. He has seen the wisdom and the holiness of God as revealed in his word. If you look in the earlier verses, you see verses 1 to 6 focused on the creation.

You see verses 7 through 11 focused on the revelation. The greatness of God in his creation. The greatness of God in his revealed word.

Now, these two things David has meditated on. God has revealed himself in all the perfection of his glory, and that revelation, whether in creation or through the written word of God, that revelation shows David his own imperfection. When we understand the glory of God, and we see his majesty and his might, and especially his holiness, his perfection, then our imperfection comes into bold relief.

The problem that we have, however, is that we don't like to see, we don't like to acknowledge our own imperfection, and in fact, our sinful corruption as fallen human beings prevents us from even seeing all of that. Look for a moment in that twelfth verse. Who can discern his errors? That's a rhetorical question.

David isn't asking for information. He's not asking for a head count. He is asking a rhetorical question, the answer to which is no one.

No one is fully able to discern his own errors. The heart, the human mind, is deceitful above all things, is desperately wicked, says Jeremiah. Jeremiah 17:9, and then adds this question, who can know it? Same question that David asks.

We are naturally averse to understanding how sinful we really are. That's why the majority of people today, including the majority of people who are sitting in pews in evangelical churches today, regard themselves as pretty good. I'm a decent human being.

And if you would say to the average church-going American today, do you think God is happy with you? They would say, yes, I think God, I'm not perfect, but God understands that. I'm a pretty good person. That's what David means.

That's what Jeremiah means when they ask the question, who can discern his errors? Who can know it? The more we sin, the more insensitive to sin we become. We don't like to look at ourselves as we really are. The great preacher of a past generation, Alexander McLaren, put it this way, he asked this question, who is there that could bear the sight of a naked soul? We really don't realize how much sin and how much uncleanness there is.

Now here's what David prays. First of all, he asks God, release me from hidden sins. Verse 12 again, acquit me of hidden faults.

In order to live a blameless life, in order to live a life of integrity before God and others, all secret sins must be confessed and forgiven. And that's why he prays, acquit me. Acquitting is a forgiving process.

Acquit me of these hidden sins, these secret sins. All of us know that we have them, all right? There are sins of which you are guilty that nobody else knows about. It may be a sinful practice that you are carrying on, a habit or something that you do in the darkness of your own privacy and nobody knows.

It may be sinful actions that you have done in the past and have largely been forgotten. Hidden sins, sins that nobody else knows about. David is very specific here.

He begins with the most private, the innermost part of his soul. Lord, he is saying, I want to be forgiven of those hidden faults. Those sins that I have done that nobody else knows about.

Those sins that I have committed and I have forgotten about. Lord, bring them to my attention. Those sins of which I am not even aware.

Have you ever prayed that way? Have you ever asked the Spirit of God to reveal to you sins that you don't even remember? Or sins that may be sins in the sight of God but you never really thought of as sins? Asking God, the Spirit of God, to put his finger right on those places of your life and show you how sinful those things are so that you can plead that God would acquit you. Of course, David was not living in New Testament times. If David were living today and he were a Christian, he would realize, of course, that that acquitting comes on the basis of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on Calvary's cross.

That's how we are acquitted. That's how we are declared righteous. It's called in New Testament terms, justification.

That's what David is asking for here. Release me from any hidden sins. And then he goes on in verse 13 to pray that he might be restrained from any deliberate sins.

You see, blamelessness also requires that sins we commit knowingly and intentionally be put away. Now, if you search your heart today, and you probably don't have to search very hard, you know there are certain sins. You know these things displease God.

You know that they are rebellion against the revealed truth of God and his word. And yet you do them, and you do them willingly, and you do them knowingly. For example, you know very clearly that not only is it a sin to lie, but God says that perpetual, habitual liars will not even go to heaven.

That's a mark of an unbeliever. And yet, perhaps you have a habit of lying in various places and at certain times, when it suits you, when it helps you in your business, or when it gets you out of a tough spot with other people, you lie. You know it.

And you know it's wrong. But you do it anyway. And you could name other sins as well for which you follow the same kind of practice.

Now, you need to remember that under the law, under the Old Testament law, these presumptuous sins were capital offenses. You see, God doesn't mess around with sin. Listen to Numbers chapter 16.

This is in the midst of God giving instructions to the Israelites with regard to the sacrifices. And in Numbers chapter 16, verses 30 and 31, I think I have the wrong passage here. Numbers 15, verses 30 and 31.

The person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, the one is blaspheming the Lord and the person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment, that person shall be completely cut off. His guilt will be on him.

Now, there were sacrifices for unintentional sins, but God said those who sin intentionally are going to be cut off from their people. A very severe judgment. So David pleads for God's mercy in holding him back from deliberate disobedience.

From deliberate disobedience. I want you to notice something. There is a progression here in these verses, 12 and 13.

When we allow for the secret sins, for the hidden faults, when we overlook them, when we say, oh well, they're not so bad, then they will yield the fruit of deliberate sin. You let those little unseen hidden faults blossom and you will see that sin begins to enter into your life. It becomes deliberate.

Now, that sin will in turn become the rule of your life. It will take over areas of your life. It keeps coming back.

You may say, well, I confess it to God and he forgives it, yes, and then you do it again and you do it again, and you get into that cycle of sin, confess, sin, confess, sin, confess. Last year, I think it was, during the winter months, there was a bug going around. If you remember it, it was like a cold, a severe cold, but the distinctive thing about that was when you got better for a few days and all of a sudden it came back again.

And then you would get better and it would come back again. Well, that's the way sin is in our lives. It is like that kind of a virus, a recurring disease, because we allow that secret sin to fester.

Well, then what happens? You will notice that that begins not only to rule over you, but then, as David points out at the end of this verse, it results in great transgression. That's the final result of sin that isn't dealt with. That's why David is praying here that he might be restrained from committing sin.

This is why we need the Lord to enable us to overcome sin's power. See, David understood the progression. Now, I don't know for sure whether he wrote this before or after his great sin of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Bathsheba's wife, Uriah.

I rather think it was probably written afterwards. And if so, David can reflect back and he can see exactly what went on in his life. When we're told that David walked on the roof of his house and he saw Bathsheba bathing, do you think that was the first time David ever thought about sitting with Bathsheba? Probably not.

She lived near the palace. He probably saw her a number of times. He may have seen her bathing before as he walked in the evening up on his roof.

Remember, her husband was with the army. They were out fighting. She was by herself.

He was there in the palace. And I rather imagine that before David had the gall to send some of his men and basically order her to come to the palace, David had thought about that over and over and over again. And his secret sin became a sin that ruled over him.

And then the sin that ruled over him caused him to stumble in a great transgression. I hope you see this progress of sin here. That's why David prays that God would search him for integrity.

Acquit me of these hidden faults, Lord. Nail those sins in their infancy when those things first come up. Forgive me for those.

Take those sins away from me. And hold me back from any presumptuous sin. So the goal of our praying then becomes the elimination of personal sin and the cultivation of a life of integrity before God.

Now the secret for doing this, of course, is twofold. David had just sung the praises, the preceding verses, of God's word, of the law of the Lord, which is perfect and restores the soul. Notice in verse 11, The New Testament tells us much the same thing.

In Hebrews 4, verse 12, By that illustration, the writer means that it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight. You see, you may have hidden sins that nobody else knows about, but you realize God knows it all.

You aren't fooling him. There is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. So God's word and then, of course, God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies us by using the word in our lives, those are the two great instruments of this process of being restrained from sin.

This is why you need to keep your mind focused on the word of God. Stay close to the scriptures. Lord, search me for integrity.

I want to be blameless before you. Let's come to the second request. We find it in verse 14.

Search me for purity. Search me for purity. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

Now the focus becomes the sinful mind. It becomes that inward part. In the previous verses, he was focusing on outward, really, the acts of sin.

Here is the inward disposition to sin. Now, this is the root of impurity. Look how he describes it.

First of all, he is asking the Lord to convict him of unworthy speech. Lord, convict me of unworthy speech. Let my words be pleasing to you, O Lord.

Now, I'm sure that you can associate with that. I imagine this request resonates with you as it does with me because there are so many things we say that we wish, in hindsight, we didn't say. Here is the way James describes speech, the tongue.

James chapter 3, verse 8. But no one can tame the tongue. It is restless, evil, and full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord our Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God.

From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing, my brethren. These things ought not to be this way. In fact, in the 141st psalm, the psalmist there prays these words, verse number 3. Set a guard, O Lord, over my lips.

Keep watch over the door of my lips. What he's saying is, post a guard, like an armed guard at my lips, and don't let anything unworthy come out of them. Now, evil speech is a problem, but it is a symptom of a much deeper problem, and that problem is an evil mind.

That's why David goes on to pray, Not only the words of my mouth, but let the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight. Now, again, as I've often pointed out to you, the main focus of that word heart is the part of us that thinks. It is the mind.

Where do you meditate? In your mind. He's talking about thinking now. This is the root of evil speech and evil behavior.

You may remember the famous verse in Proverbs, chapter 23, verse 7. As he thinks within himself, so is he. The old version said, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. As you think, so are you.

You want to know what you are really like. You want to know the quality of your life. Don't look at what you do on the outside.

That's bad enough, but you can fake it. The point is that on the inside, in your mind, that's what will tell you what you really are. Now, unless you, or if you have any doubt about that, let's let the Lord Jesus himself dispel us of any misapprehensions here.

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 7, Jesus said this in verses 20 and following. He was saying, that which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. See, he had been challenged about eating unclean food, and he says it's not food that comes into the man that defiles the man.

Today, in our world, the environmentalists and all of those kinds of people are more concerned about the purity of the food that goes in than the quality of what comes out. Now, what is it that comes out? Well,

here's what the Lord Jesus said. For from within, out of the heart of men proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

All these things proceed from within and defile the man. So when we speak in an unkind, evil, unclean way, it is just reflecting what's in the heart. So David goes on to say, not only let the words of my mouth, but also the meditation of my heart, the way I think be acceptable.

Lord, search my heart for purity. Like David, we should pray that the words we say and the thoughts we think will be acceptable in our Lord's sight. But they will never be so unless he is, notice the last phrase, our rock and our redeemer.

What does it mean that the Lord is our rock? He is our stability. He is our foundation. He is the one upon whom we stand in difficult times.

He is our fortress who protects us from evil. Not only is he our rock, but he is our redeemer. And David understood that not as well as we do, because now we have hindsight to look at the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross.

He is the one who through his blood has purchased our redemption. And as we have pointed out in our studies in recent times, including in this study on revival, that the redeeming work of Christ, the blood of Christ, is that which reconciles us to God. In faith, as we receive that work, we are united to the Lord Jesus Christ in his death and in his resurrection.

Therefore, we take on ourselves that person of Christ. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ is the one living within me, Paul says.

The life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. He is our redeemer. He has purchased our salvation.

And because of that, we owe a great debt of obedience to him. David said, Lord, you are my rock. You have rescued me.

So many times I can't count. You have fortified me against the enemy. You have encouraged me in times of discouragement.

Lord, you are my redeemer. You have purchased my salvation. How then can I speak in an unworthy way or think unclean, impure, unworthy, self-seeking thoughts? How can I do that? Search me, Lord.

Search me and know my heart for purity's sake as well as for integrity. All right. Let's come to the fourth request.

And for this now, come with me over to the 139th Psalm. And we will look at verse 14 first. 139, excuse me, verse 23 first.

Verse 23. Psalm 139, 23. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my anxious thoughts. Now the focus is a little different. David opens this Psalm with a decisive affirmation.

What do we mean? Well, look at verses 1 through 6. Lord, you have searched me and known me. Now wait a minute. Here he says, you have searched me.

In our text, he's saying, search me. Well, that's just the point. David is aware of the fact that God has searched him and known him.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You understand my thought from afar off. You scrutinize my path and my lying down.

And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Do you see this, ladies and gentlemen? Do you see this, young people? You cannot escape the attention of God. He knows when you sit down and He knows when you get up in the morning.

And He understands what you're thinking, even though He's in heaven and you're on earth. He scrutinizes your path. Not only does He know what you're doing, He makes an evaluation of what you are doing.

And even your lying down. He's intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it all.

You know what I'm going to say before I ever say it. You have enclosed me behind and before. In other words, I can't escape from you.

You laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. This is more than I can handle, David says.

The very fact that your eye is upon me every moment of my existence. Sleeping or waking, you're watching me. That you know intimately the very thoughts that go on inside my head that nobody else knows.

It's too high. I cannot attain to it. The Lord's knowledge, he goes on to point out, extends to the womb where He fashioned us.

His thoughts are precious to us. Verse 17, how precious also are your thoughts to me, O God. How vast is the sum of them.

We see only a few of them revealed in this book that we call the Bible. This is what God has chosen to reveal to us. And it is the revelation of His mind to us.

How precious also are your thoughts to me. If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. But sometimes, sometimes, David says, our thoughts are not always so gratifying.

Sometimes our thoughts slip into even hatred. Verses 19 and following. Oh, that you would slay the wicked, O God.

Verse 21. Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? Do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with the utmost hatred. They have become my enemies.

Now, David is claiming a righteous hatred here, but still it's hatred, and that's not pleasant. And so, David, in light of the fact that God knows every thought, even before we think them, that there is nothing hidden in the sight of God. And yet, David here is acknowledging hatred in his heart.

Now, he realizes he needs God to search him. And that's why he prays as he does at the end. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

The first thing we need to be sure of is that our motives are right. See, we can worry, and we can fret, and we can succumb to irritation and anger, and even degenerate into hatred, and that's why we need to pray, Lord, search me for the iniquities that distract me. This searching process never ends.

Now, the word search here is an interesting word. It means to spy out. You've watched films or you've watched television programs that are based on the activity of spies.

And you know some of the intricate things they have to do, the uses of technology, the uses of disguises that spies go through in order to find the information that they want without being caught. Well, that's the idea of this word. This word also has the idea, also has a legal use.

It is the use of trying a legal case or cross-examining. So we can put it this way, Lord, spy out my life. Go inside and look around and search it out, Lord.

Or, Lord, put me on trial before your bar of justice. Cross-examine me for the information you need to find out. Psalm 141 again, verse 4, Do not incline my heart to any evil thing to practice the deeds of wickedness.

Search it out, Lord, and get rid of all of that stuff in there. That would lead me into that kind of sin. David is, what he's doing here is opening his heart up to penetrative, exhaustive, divine inspection.

He's opening the doors of his heart and saying, Lord, come and shine the light on me. Show me myself. Show me where I'm wrong.

A heart of devotion longs to be a heart of purity. There aren't very many of us that invite God, much less other people, to show us where we're wrong. But he's saying, shine the light of your holiness into the darkest recesses of my soul.

See, because where the light of God does not penetrate, that's where sin breeds. For a number of many years here, I took care of the sign out in front. I'm not doing that anymore.

I'm thankful for that. But I did it for a long time. Now, it's very interesting.

If you go out and if you sometimes take a look at the sign very carefully, I mean, you've got to walk up to it and look at it. The north side of the sign, this side that faces this way, is full of mildew, sort of nasty kinds of stuff that grows in there. The south side of the sign, this side, hasn't got any of that.

Why? Because the sun shines on that side and not on this side. In fact, if you want to see it even more clearly, when you leave today, look at this side of the building. You won't see any of that green stuff or mold growing on this side of the building.

Come over here on this side and take a look. You'll see it. Why? This side gets the sun.

This side doesn't. And that's the way it is in our life. When there's no light shining into areas of our life, that's where sin breeds and all that nasty stuff grows.

So, David opens his heart up to this penetrating investigation on the part of God. Now, how is this done? Well, this searching is done, again, by God's Word as we read the Word, by God's Spirit as he applies the Word and brings us conviction. Lord, search me! Think of parents.

Parents who have a teenage kid. This teenage kid they're suspecting is messing around with drugs. So, they go into the teenager's room and they say, we want to search your room here.

We suspect you have drugs. Now, the average teenager who is innocent of these charges would say, fine, search the room. Go ahead, look anywhere you want, because they know mom and dad aren't going to find any drugs.

However, if the teenager has stashed some drugs somewhere, they're going to say, you can't search my room. I've got my rights. I have privacy.

You can't do that. Now, here's a third response you never hear. Mom and dad, feel free to search the room.

You will find drugs here. Go ahead and search the room. Right? Right? That's what David is doing, though.

He's saying, Lord, go ahead and search, and you're going to find all kinds of nasty stuff there, but go ahead and shine your light. Search me in every corner, under every nook and cranny. Open every closet drawer and every desk drawer and pick up every piece of furniture.

Lord, look everywhere in my life, and I know you're going to find sin there. You're going to find garbage there. But show me.

Now, there's not many of us, I would dare say, that pray that way. But that's the way David is praying. Search me for the iniquities that distract me.

And then he says something else, which I think is interesting in verse 24. And that is, or in verse 23 still, try me and know my anxious thoughts. Test me for the anxieties that disturb me.

Test me to discover any disquieting thoughts. The word here is disquieting thoughts, anxieties, worries. Now, he uses the kind of language that was used of metals in those days.

They tested or tried metals. By that, what we mean is that they heated the metals up very hot in order to skim off the impurities, the smelting process. That was called testing.

How was it done? Well, it was done by heat, by circumstances. David is praying, Lord, test me in my life, my sinful life, just like that heat tests the metal and proves where the impurities are so that they can be removed. Once again, I would suggest to you this is not a prayer that we pray.

Listen to Peter. 1 Peter 4, verses 12 and 13. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you which comes upon you for your testing as though some strange thing were happening to you.

In other words, Christians don't think that the persecution you're enduring, the hostility that you endure, is somehow strange, that this shouldn't be happening to you. This has come upon you for your testing, but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. Peter is telling the Christians that the fire gets hot in order to bring

out the sin that we might be purified, made holy, and prepared for the day when we see Christ.

In a sense, that's what David's praying for here. Try me, test me, turn up the heat, Lord, and know my anxious thoughts. So as we said that when he prays to search me and know me, that's the Word of God, the Spirit of God.

Here, he's talking about the circumstances of our lives. God uses difficult circumstances, trials, hardship, pain. He uses those things in order to test, to smelt, to heat us up, skim off the impurities.

So David is essentially regarding God as the expert metallurgist who picks up the metal and says, that's got impurity, put that one in the fire. This one needs really hot fire. There's a lot of impurities in that one.

Heat that up and skim off that stuff. So David invites God to do what most of us probably would not do, would not want God to do in our lives, but David says, search me and test me. Search me for all of that anxiety, all of those things that are in my life that cause me anxiety, my anxious thoughts.

And then he says something else. Search me for adversity. Verse 24, and see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way.

Now, revival can be hindered by circumstances other than sin. I don't think he's talking about sin now in verse 24. But hardship and suffering can drag us down and can render us spiritually useless.

David underwent this in his life. He was fleeing from Saul for several years, hiding out in caves and in mountain fortresses, running from Saul to save his life. Later on in his life, David had to run from his own son's Absalom.

Not only that, but of course he had conflicts with enemies, all of the ites, you know, the Amalekites, the Amorites, and all the other Canaanites that were around and tribes of peoples, constantly at war, constantly fighting. David had sorrow, great sorrow, even within his own family, of course. And so there were times when David probably was a discouraged man.

Well, he was. We can see it reflected in the Psalms. And we get like that at times.

We get just really discouraged. We get spiritually down. We suffer perhaps.

Perhaps we're ill. And the illness won't go away. Or perhaps we have a family member, a child, that is disobedient and out of the will of God and it just never gets any better.

And we're hurting. Perhaps we have financial stresses in our lives that just there seems to be no answer to that. Well, whatever the circumstance may be, it's something that drags you down.

And because it drags you down, you find yourself being useless. You find yourself not spending time in the Word of God. You find yourself not praying.

You find yourself not the least interested in serving God. You don't realize sometimes how much you've been affected by these things. Now, what David says here is that the way of adversity demoralizes us.

See if there be any way of adversity, any painful burdens and circumstances causing suffering that prevent me from being all that I can for you. So for David, it was hardship that was caused by his enemies and problems among his family and eventually an illness, I think, in David's own life. A hardship that

offended David, a hardship that had hurt him, and as a result had caused anxiety that left him spiritually crippled.

His soul had been beaten up. But that's not the way David wants to live. That's not the way he wants to go.

He doesn't want to live in a state of being beaten up spiritually. So he prays, Lord, search me and see if there is any hurtful way, any way of adversity. And if there is, Lord, lead me in the everlasting way.

Because while the way of adversity demoralizes us, the way of eternity energizes us. Lead me in the way of eternity. The purpose of all this searching is that we may walk in this everlasting way.

In other words, that we might not live as slaves of mortality, but rather as candidates for immortality. Live or seek to live in the light of your glorious future. That's what David seems to be saying.

He's saying, God, so elevate my eyes beyond the miserable circumstances of this life that I keep my eyes fixed on what's coming. And David knew less about that than we do. Let me give you insight from the Apostle Paul, writing in Philippians 3, verse 7, Whatever things were gained to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish that I may gain Christ. In other words, Paul is saying, everything in my life before the time I became a Christian and a servant of Christ, all of that, I disregard as so much rubbish. I don't regret giving it all up so that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.

I am not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ. The righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. That's much more precious to me.

That's the way of eternity. And what's the outcome? Or what's the objective in Paul's mind? Verse 10, That I may know Him, enter into an intimate relationship with Him, walk with Him day by day, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings and they don't exist independently. If you want the power of the resurrection of Christ in your life, you have to accept the fellowship of His sufferings.

Being conformed to His death in order that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. Do you see that? I'm looking ahead. Now, here's the way Paul goes on to explain it.

Not that I've already obtained it. No, I haven't. I'm not there yet.

Or I've already become perfect. Absolutely not. But I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet. But, one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Now that is a marvelous explanation.

A marvelous exposition of what David says in very few words when he says, lead me in the everlasting way. I'm energized by the way of eternity. So search me, Lord, for adversity.

And all of that adversity, take that out of my life and help me to overcome, to look above the circumstances and live in the light of eternity. So what has David said here? Release me. Restrain me.

Search me. Try me. Look at me and examine me.

To live in this way is to live what the older writers used to call the examined life. The examined life. But let's be honest, we really don't want the Lord to search us.

Over a year ago now, as you well know, I had a stress test which said there's something wrong. And so on a Monday morning, I had to go to Stony Brook Hospital and have an angiogram. What did they do? An angiogram searched my heart physically.

And it didn't take them long. They found trouble. And they said nothing less than multiple bypass surgery is going to fix you.

They wouldn't even let me out of the hospital until it was done. No second opinions. We've got to do it now.

How many of us, knowing that there is something wrong, are willing to submit to the Spirit's angiogram? Searching our spiritual hearts and finding the trouble in order to fix it. We will never be spiritually healthy until the Lord has searched us and identified the trouble. So prayerfully hold up your behavior to the mirror of God's Word.

Subject it to the perfect scrutiny of the Scriptures as applied by the Spirit. Pray continually for light from the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin. Like David, pray for release from sin and restraint from sin.

Pray that you will live under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ according to His Word. Pray. Pray often.

Search me, O God. Invite Him to test you in the blazing cauldron of hardship. That's a tough one.

You know, should we, should we all, each one of us, pray and live in this way, there would be a profound reformation in this church such that one day we would look joyfully at each other and we would be able to say, Brethren, this... Let's pray together. Perhaps there is no better time, our Father, than before we come to the communion table for us to ask You to search us. And perhaps while I have been speaking, the Spirit of God has also been speaking to individual hearts here.

And Lord, I pray that any conviction, any sin that has been identified by Your Spirit in the lives of our people might be dealt with even before they rise from their seats to leave this building. During our communion service, in the quiet moments that we have during this service, and even right now at this very moment, I pray that Your people may be doing business with You. Praying, Lord, search me.

Find out where my heart trouble is. Lord, shine Your light upon my life. Lord, You search, and we know You're going to find stuff there that we don't like, but go ahead and search anyway.

Pull it all out. Lay it all out before us so that we can confess it. And then, Father, release us from the guilt of our sins and restrain us from further sin that we, none of us, may be guilty of a great transgression.

And Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters who are undergoing adversity today, who are in that cauldron of testing. The issue is not sin in their lives as much as it is just being weighed down with the heaviness of testing. I pray that in these quiet moments they will give all of that to You.

Lead them in the everlasting way. Lead all of us, Father, in the way of eternity. Whatever needs to be done in our souls, do it now, we pray in Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19903.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ronald-glass/search-me/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net