

**WILL GOD'S SCRUTINY REVEAL YOUR MUTINY:
Walk faithfully before an all-knowing God:
An Exposition of Psalm 26:**

Lois Wyse, in a *Good Housekeeping* article, gives six ways to learn everything you ever need to know about a man before you decide to marry him:

1. Watch him drive in heavy traffic.
2. Play tennis [sports] with him.
3. Listen to him talk to his mother when he doesn't know you're listening.
4. See how he treats those who serve him (e.g., waiters, maids).
5. Notice what he's willing to spend his money to buy.
6. Look at his friends. And if you still can't make up your mind, then look at his shoes. A man who keeps his shoes in good repair generally tends to the rest of his life too.

God, on the other hand, doesn't need tips from Lois on how to see into a person's character. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and sovereign; He knows all things actual and all things potential. And in this psalm we have David asking for God's vindication because he claims before God that he is a person of integrity. In fact, to demonstrate that He is indeed faithful, he welcomes the omniscient God of the Bible to scrutinize his life:

Therefore, this message is:
WILL GOD'S SCRUTINY REVEAL YOUR MUTINY?
Walking faithfully before an all-knowing God:

I will begin by examining this psalm, then proceed to ask ourselves whether we can make the same request of God: invite God to scrutinize our lives to determine if it is indeed true that we are faithful believers, who pro-actively make it our singular ambition to allow Jesus Christ to be preeminent in our lives. Remember, David may be a king, but he is human.

PSALM 26: If I could summarize this psalm in one statement it would be that David asks for God's vindication because of his personal integrity:

1. **David asserts that he is a person of integrity: (vv. 1-3)**
2. **David gives proof of his integrity (vv. 4-8)**
3. **David prays for a reward in view of his integrity (vv. 9-12)**

1. Assertion of integrity 26:1-3:

¹*Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.*

²*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.*

³*For your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in your truth.*

Contextually, when David asked God to vindicate him was that he was being falsely charged by his enemies for wrongdoing. Therefore, in order to “clear” his name, “demonstrate” his integrity, he appeals to God.

Vs. 1: ¹*Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.*

1. The word vindicate, *shaphat*, usually means “judge me.” Here it implies declare righteous. Why?
2. Because David conducts his life with moral goodness; he is guiltless before God and is not liable for sin or wrong. In other words, his lifestyle and daily behavior demonstrates that he is blameless. Interestingly, this word “blameless” is the same word used to characterize Job in Job 1: “*There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.*”
3. Moreover, David asserts that his trust, his reliance is in God.
4. Then David says, “*I shall not slip.*” David’s trust in God is unfaltering because of whom his trust is in. Therefore, because he is relying on God he will not slip, waver, wobble, turn, or go out of control (Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 5:18).

²*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.*

Related to verse 1 he invites God to scrutinize his life: “Examine me Lord and prove: test my mind and my heart:

1. This word for “examine” is *bachan* which means “to probe, try, test, examine.” He invites God to examine his claim. He was confident that when the Lord would do this He would find David blameless.
2. He then adds the complementary word, “test.” The word “test” “*tsaraph* pronounced “*tsaw· raf:*” means to examine, formally, refine, i.e., try to learn the information about the true nature or moral purity of an object; it is used as well as a figurative extension of refining metals; a smelter.
3. *Where does he invite this scrutiny?* Both his mind and heart:
 - a. my mind: inmost being , i.e., heart, mind, spirit of a man as a core of the inner person;
 - b. heart , mind, soul, spirit, self, i.e., the source of life of the inner person in various aspects, with a focus on feelings, thoughts, volition, and other areas of the inner life.

4. Then he adds in verse three: *For your loving-kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in your truth.*
5. He claims that his mind is upon God's loyal love and his behavior, his conduct in life is being obedient to his truth. Both truth and loyal love are two aspects of divine quality; here once more, we see two qualities upon which David depending upon: Loyal love and truth.

2. Proof of integrity 26:4-8:

Here we see implications of this disposition in view of his association with others:

⁴ *I have not sat with idolatrous mortals. Nor will I go in with hypocrites.*
⁵ *I have hated the assembly of evildoer, and will not sit with the wicked.*

26:4-5 David cited his separation from sinners and their assemblies as evidence that he was not wicked and deceitful (cf. 1:1). He was not speaking of his social preference but of his spiritual commitment. These were enemies of the Lord.

1. Idolatrous morals are men of worthlessness: they are those who give themselves to the pursuit of vanity.
2. Hypocrites are those who ways and motives are hidden from others. Literally, they are those who ways are hidden.
3. Gathering of evildoers: and will not sit (dwell, remain) with the Wicked. Evildoers denote wickedness: it denotes the negative behavior of evil thoughts, words and deeds, a behavior not only contrary to God's character, but also hostile to the community and which at the same time betrays the inner disharmony and unrest of a man.

So, he is not identified with the vain, those with hidden and wrong motives, or those who are hostile toward God

⁶ *I will wash my hands in innocence; So will go about Your altar, O Lord,* ⁷ *that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works.* ⁸ *Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where your glory dwells.*

1. Rather, he identifies himself with worshipping God. What an identity!
2. 26:6-8 He preferred the sanctuary of the Lord to the meeting places of the wicked (cf. v. 5). Washing the hands in innocence is a figurative way of saying that his actions were righteous (cf. Matt. 27:24). He offered sacrifices to God in worship and praised God rather than ignoring Him as the wicked did.

3. Prayer for reward 26:9-12:

⁹ *Do not gather my soul with sinners, Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,* ¹⁰ *in whose hands is a sinister scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes.* ¹¹ *But as for me, I will walk in my*

integrity, Redeem me and be merciful to me. ¹² *My foot stands in an even place; In the congregation I will bless the Lord.*

1. 26:9-10 David asked God to spare him from a premature death in the company of the wicked. Evidently he expected God to judge the wicked this way and wanted God to separate him from them in His judgment as David had separated himself from them in his behavior. It appears that some people were grouping David together with others who were wicked in their thinking, but he did not want God to do that.
2. 26:11-12 Having called on God to do right, the psalmist promised to do the same. He would continue to do right as he waited for God to redeem him from his trouble. "Redeem" (Heb. *padah*) means to ransom or purchase out of trouble. This word often refers to the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt in the Old Testament (e.g., Deut. 7:8; 2 Sam. 7:23; Mic. 6:4).
3. David felt he was on solid footing in his request and looked forward to praising God publicly for saving him from his accusers.

David can appeal confidently for vindication from the false accusations of spiritual enemies because he has a righteous standing before Him. This was not a claim to being sinless but to being righteous because of God's work in his life. The upright behavior of the righteous is evidence that David, by God's grace, different from the wicked.

How Should We Then Live?

1. If God has called us to be holy, to make Him our singular passion, then it seems that it would be spiritually profitable to invite God's scrutiny in our lives.
 - a. Can we as believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, make the same assertion to God as David did? Can we say to him, God, I have walked in my integrity; I walk in such a way that it reveals that I trust you. Examine me, God. Scrutinize my heart and mind, and you will see that it is the case. I have walked in your truth! If we can, we should keep asking God to scrutinize our lives? For no-one is immune to sin. It can lead us to places we never thought possible. Moreover, if we don't continually invite God's scrutiny, we may forget that it is all about Him. Thus, our spirituality becomes our pride. If we can say to God that we are faithful, blameless believers, it is not because of our own effort, but because we have allowed the Holy Spirit to work in us; we are people who yield to God in the moment-by-moment details of daily living. Be careful of pride.
2. **If you and I are reluctant to ask for God's scrutiny, why?**
 - a. Has sin has become more attractive than God. If that is the case, there is a tremendous danger here if that is the case: Let me illustrate:

Dr. George Sweeting wrote in Special Sermons for Special Days:

“Several years ago our family visited Niagara Falls. It was spring, and ice was rushing down the river. As I viewed the large blocks of ice flowing

toward the falls, I could see that there were carcasses of dead fish embedded in the ice. Gulls by the score were riding down the river feeding on the fish. As they came to the brink of the falls, their wings would go out, and they would escape from the falls.

“I watched one gull which seemed to delay and wondered when it would leave. It was engrossed in the carcass of a fish, and when it finally came to the brink of the falls, out went its powerful wings. The bird flapped and flapped and even lifted the ice out of the water, and I thought it would escape. But it had delayed too long so that its claws had frozen into the ice. The weight of the ice was too great, and the gull plunged into the abyss.”

The finest attractions of this world become deadly when we become overly attached to them. They may take us to our destruction if we cannot give them up—and as Sweeting observed, “Oh, the danger of delay!” Brother and sister in Christ, beseech God that you would have a greater passion for Him than that of the world. Pray every day that you would be passionate for Him.

But then you may say, Paul, I try to live faithfully before God, I actively seek to be pro-active in my spiritual life...but I find myself repeatedly committing the same sins. If that is the case, this evening may be liberating to you: *Let me tell you how to turn your sinful appetites and tendencies into victory.* How to recover from habitual sins to not only walk by means of the Spirit, but regularly mortify the flesh: *Put to death* the deeds of flesh (Colossian 3).

The Mortification of Sin: (Principles adapted from Dr. John Hannah’s discussion of mortification of sin):

1. **Consider the dangerous consequences of sin** (guilt; loss of peace & strength, grieve the Holy Spirit, & wound Christ). And you know if this is true in your life: For if you and I are walking in sin Christian sins, we know what happens: Consider the following 6:

a. *His Fellowship or intimacy with God is hindered, grieved, smothered, or quenched.* David, when backslidden, mourned, “Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Psalm 32:4). As *Clouds hide the sun for days*, so **Sin** comes between the soul and God.

b. *The Joy of salvation becomes peripheral, no longer central to the believer’s life.* One loses all relish for spiritual things: the heart is empty. David, in this condition, confessed, “My sin is ever before me” and “Restore unto me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with your free Spirit” (Psalm 51:3, 12).

c. *Power for service is lost.* The Holy Spirit’s power is **Essential** for any real witness for Christ. It cannot be **Faked**. David prayed, “you desire truth in the inward parts” and “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:6, 10).

d. *Instead of asking God for blessing, we receive divine chastisement.* Hebrews 12:6-7—“Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives....What son is he whom the father does not chastise?” (Psalm 89:32-33—“I will visit their transgression with the rod, and

their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”

e. *There is loss of reward.* (Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.) Out of **Fellowship** means out of **Service**—out of service means that one is *failing to lay up treasures in heaven*. He is building of “wood, hay, and stubble” which cannot endure the test of the rewarding day (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Don’t suffer a loss of an eternal reward (2 John 8).

f. We may end up leaving a poor legacy. As Solomon knew from personal experience, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold (Prov. 22:1). A reputation has more value than possessions or wealth. A name cannot be replaced easily

2. Load the conscience with the guilt of sin (consider God’s infinite patience & forbearance).

3. Consider the state of one’s self all times in terms of frailty, because of depravity, (potential of) vileness, and inherent selfishness

4. Trace the particular manifestation of sin to its root. We need to ask why we do what we do!

5. Don’t hurry to gain relief for your sin. Though we are to immediately confess our sins (1 John 1:9) we need to understand the “angst” of and consider the seriousness of yielding to sin. In other words, we need to send ourselves into a room and deeply consider all the ramifications why we do what we do (motivations why), who we hurt, inflict pain upon, and where it could potentially take me.

6. Act quickly against the first temptations toward sin: Flee! If we could only see sin from God’s perspective...the stench that sin really is, we would flee from it instead of entertaining the fleeting satisfactions and eventual destruction it brings. Let me illustrate:

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman told of a distinguished minister, Dr. Howard, from Australia who preached very strongly on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers came to counsel with him in the study. “Dr. Howard,” he said, “we don’t want you to talk as openly as you do about man’s guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin.

“The minister took down a small bottle and showing it to the visitor said, “You see that label? It says strychnine—and underneath in bold, red letters the word ‘Poison!’ Do you know, man, what you are asking me to do? You are suggesting that I change the label. Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, ‘Essence of Peppermint’; don’t you see what might happen? Someone would use it, not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die. So it is, too, with the matter of sin. The milder you make your label the more dangerous you make your poison!” Flee from sin: starve it!

7. Allow God to speak peace rather than assume you have it. We can delude ourselves into thinking that we are godly people, spiritually mature. Rather, what we are doing is

suppressing the truth, the “true” reality of the situation. And you know if you are suppressing the truth when you are reluctant to invite God’s scrutiny!

8. Mental Weapons in the struggle against persistent sinful appetites and tendencies involve whole hearted trust, faith, & obedience; the presence of right thoughts; recognition of God’s sovereignty, the effects of sin, the love & kindness of God, the wonder of our salvation, & the reality of wickedness, enslaving potentialities of sin, and the stench it is before God.

Conclusion: Conclusion is simple: Be faithful: Routinely, regularly ask God to scrutinize your faithfulness to Him. Pray every day that you would have a passion for Him! Routinely examine your intimacy with God.