



Last week, I read the following paragraph of Fred Smith, a consulting editor for leadership magazine. *A member of one Sunday school class I taught asked me to lunch. He started the conversation by saying, "I have a CPA to keep me liquid, a lawyer to keep me legal, and a doctor to keep me healthy. But I have no one to help assess my spiritual condition.*

Hmm – How about you?

I have three vehicles that need to go through an ITV (the Spanish road test for cars to ensure they are road worthy). After 10 years, when things begin to go wrong with vehicles, the test has to be performed every year. Because we tend to drive old vehicles, it's with fear and trembling that I book up the tests and take them in each year, guessing that there will always be work that needs to be attended to. If I fail to do this and get stopped by the police I have to pay a hefty fine and can't continue to drive. So guess what? I go to the work of getting those vehicles sorted.

Imagine if our bodies had a dashboard. There was a gauge for speed or pace of life, oil or blood pressure, petrol or energy, temperature or stress level and all kinds of warning lights that told us our spiritual, mental, physical and emotional condition!

Let's think about medical check ups for a moment. This may be a generalisation but men in particular are not good with medical check ups. It's a known fact that many cases of cancer are not treated because the man may feel an abnormality but doesn't do anything about it. Perhaps it's his fear of doctors, his hope that by doing nothing it will go away, his busyness or a host of other excuses, but the fact is, he often doesn't go for check ups. It's getting the right balance from ignoring the pain or the problem to becoming a hypochondriac and going to the doctor or taking a pill for every feeling or suggestion of something being wrong.

Some time ago, Ken McGreavy, a very dear friend and mentor, who passed away just last year gave me a spiritual audit. It comprised simply of five questions from the life of Adam that basically gave me a spiritual check up. They got me thinking, so I adapted and expanded on those questions.

God asked Adam, "Where are you?" He didn't ask because he didn't know the answer but because it was a personal check up or audit time for Adam.

How is your walking? Scripture encourages us to live by faith, walk in the spirit and walk in a way worthy of the Lord. Are we walking in fear or faith? If we are afraid, we will be hiding from God's presence. God said, "You are free to eat of all the trees of the garden..." The serpent then asks, "Did God say?" He focuses on the areas of restriction or negativity. Satan loves to challenge the goodness of God. In the Old Testament we hear over 300 times that God is good, of which 80 are found in Genesis. Scripture tells us that God shines a lamp for our feet and a light to our path, in order for us to walk confidently.

We are warned in Psalm 1 not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly but to walk circumspectly and in the fear of the Lord.

I spend a lot of time in airports and often watch people. You can tell so much from the way a person walks. There's an arrogant swagger walk, an insecure tentative walk, a depressed slow walk, a relaxed calm walk and so on. Who we are on the inside, is lived on the outside, in how we carry ourselves and the way we walk. Oh that we could take each step in faith, where our foot treads claim the ground and walk in step with the Father.

How is your listening? God was calling but Adam had selective hearing. He wasn't ready to hear what God had to say. What's our view of God? Why would we not want to hear God? Doesn't he love us, want our best, know better than us what's good for us and have a far greater perspective? The list of benefits could go on. Do I listen more than I talk? Do I take special time each day to put my thoughts aside and give special attention to the creator of the universe and see if there is some wisdom for me?

Why did the enemy choose Eve and not Adam? The commandment was given to Adam before Eve was created. Therefore Eve had second hand knowledge. The devil has an advantage on us if we get revelation and knowledge second hand. Are you a first hand knower because you spend time with God to hear Him personally? God wants us to hear his voice not an echo. Adam did not know the difference between the voice of Eve and the voice of the serpent. Jesus on the other hand knew the serpent was speaking even though it was coming through Peter. Let's not just learn to hear his voice, but look forward to hearing it and pursue times to listen in.

How is your relating? Adam wasn't having a good day. He had rehearsed his defense already. The problem was the woman he'd been given. If only she hadn't suggested eating the forbidden fruit, everything would be fine. He and Eve were into blame shifting. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on! He had never been good at confrontation – he was a high C personality after all – how else could he have had the discipline to name and categorise all those animals and plants! He had never been in the wrong, so why should it start now! He still had to learn that rather than blame, he was to be bless? He was to turn criticism into prayer. Pray blessing until his spirit was sweet.

How is your repenting? Adam had never had to repent in the past, so this was a totally new situation. Besides it wasn't all his fault. Why should he say sorry when it's more the other person's problem. Do we own up or cover up. We do a fig leaf job where God does a fur coat job. Many of us haven't developed a habit of repenting and so it feels awkward and difficult. Why is it we want to cover up and hide so badly? We find failure, mistakes and blind spots too hard to own up to. We are scared of openness, transparency and vulnerability. We get overcome by shame and stop short of repenting. The problem is that repenting is the biblical way of getting free. And in fact when we are open about our lacks and failures, people can trust us all the more. We become more like Jesus in the process and develop a humble attitude. The wonderful thing is that when we repent, our Father does not remember what the Blood of Jesus covers.

What about your choosing? Adam chose sin in the midst of paradise. In Timothy it says that, “Adam was not deceived”, he pleased another person rather than God. He had clear truth in front of him. He knew what the Lord had said in black and white. Knowledge however, doesn't equal godliness. Obedience equals godliness. We face choices daily and the more we have Christ living within us, the more we will live holy lives. The more Christ-like we are, the more we will respond as Christ does. Our experiences day to day are to teach us obedience. Even Jesus learned obedience through the things he suffered. How much more must we? So we need to choose carefully. Choosing and acting creates habits and we want to establish a godly, blameless, holy lifestyle.

Here's 20 questions for you. Not exhaustive in any way but challenging questions that I have asked myself.

When was the last time that I:-

- humbled myself, apologized, took the blame or said, “I am so sorry”
- deeply repented to the Lord, recognised my sin and asked forgiveness
- asked for feedback on my leadership, received criticism and listened
- read a good book and put what I learned into practice
- set clear smart goals for growth in the next season of my life
- affirmed those that I work with, in who they are and what they do
- experienced a belly laugh and could hardly stop
- shared in a vulnerable way by communicating some of my struggles
- cried in front of people because what I was sharing touched my passion or pain
- dreamed of the future and could see what God has in store for me
- prayed and interceded until it hurt
- worshipped the Lord and felt if I reached out that I'd touch him
- felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit as I ministered to others
- experienced real peace with God, myself and others
- shared the word of the Lord with my team, friends and community
- prophesied over my spouse, friends and team
- shared the gospel with someone and prayed for them
- had a creative idea and acted on it
- was extravagantly generous
- was competitive in giving honour

Stephen Olford, an American pastor and conference speaker, many years ago said, "My brothers, I am weary of celebrity religion. I have had my share of honours, but when I die, unless my family can say, 'There is something of God in the man,' then I will have failed."