

Church of God, The Eternal

P.O. Box 775
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Learning to Judge the Self

October 1977

Dear Brethren:

Another warm greetings from Oregon. We trust all continues well with you.

God so magnificently blessed us with beautiful weather for the Feast of Tabernacles. Even the weathermen were amazed at the "high" which protected Newport for the entirety of the Feast. Several comments were made, by them, relative to the strange phenomena which we experienced. During that time, considerable precipitation was received in the interior valley. Now, however, very balmy weather has returned to the valley. We are all most grateful for God's blessings. Sufficient rain has been received to partially satisfy a parched terrain. Now the return of beautiful, balmy weather can be enjoyed fully.

It is our prayer that all of you who attended the Feast returned to favorable circumstances and weather back home. God so loves His children—children who possess a right outlook in life and are grateful to Him for His continuous intervention.

How blessed we all are! God does love obedience and responsiveness. For, such obedience is the way by which we live the full, abundant life.

Grace and Knowledge

Brethren, the Bible is replete with positive instruction which is for our good. Because God called us, the truths of that priceless book have been revealed to us—revealed in the past and abundantly augmented recently. But knowledge is insufficient of itself. It is of no value except as it is applied. We must live what we have learned.

If we listened carefully; effected an emotional and intellectual commitment to live by the received instruction; developed a favorable, realistic program of action and set about the task of overcoming, we are well on the way. In such a situation, the need of an expanded instructional letter is of little value. We all know. The task is now ours. We must change ourselves—not God's way of life. We must overcome—apply the knowledge acquired. A personal resolve will be significantly enhanced by God's powerful, spiritual aid. We can count on Him, if we will do our part—act on the Word.

The greatest step forward is when we learn to judge the self and manifest maximum tolerance and understanding for others. We must not criticize and speak evil of others. Preaching the truth is the responsibility of the ministry. Obedience is the responsibility of each of us. But if some are weak in "the faith," it behooves the rest of us to bear their burdens with them. In process of time, all who are converted will grow and conform to the ultimate standard established by Jesus Christ. We are the servants and workmanship of God. And to Him, alone, we stand or fall. Therefore, let those who are strong in conviction beware of censure, lest they should be guilty of destroying a babe for whom Christ died.

I am convinced that personal overcoming will be, this year, a way of life for God's chosen. We are determined to create peace and stability. God gave us a measurable beginning at the Feast this year. We must now go on to perfection. Why should we pick out the defects and failures of conduct of anyone, at any time? For any who know the truth, the fact we are not yet perfect is awesomely apparent. Does it not make sense to see the good in any person or group? I prefer it that way.

Peace—The Result of Honest Self-Evaluation

I saw significant stability manifested in God's chosen. Despite individual trials or problems, there was an overt attempt to master and live the real way of life. Therefore, in a very real way, this was the finest Feast ever experienced. We have a better sense of what is expected of us and what performance is required. The real proof of our conviction and conversion will be manifested in necessary changes effected in the coming months. The product of those changes is peace—peace which we have created and augmented by diligence and determination.

In order to facilitate the development of that peace, and the character changes required, let us ask ourselves several questions. Answers to these questions will reveal those areas where change must be produced.

Here they are:

1. Do I talk too much? Am I opinionated? Remember, God says: slow to speak and quick to hear.
2. Am I an opportunist? Do I take advantage of other people's generosity?
3. Do I assume? Are my decisions and actions predicated on factual information?
4. Do I judge myself as critically as—or perhaps more so than—I do others?

5. Do I tend to act partially toward family or friends? Or, do I act impartially—regardless of people involved? Remember, God is no respecter of persons.
6. Can I see my faults specifically—see myself as I really am? Too many of us hide behind generalizations.
7. Am I as tolerant toward others as I expect for myself?
8. Do I evaluate thoughts, opportunities, motives or offers before acting?
9. Am I genuine, open and honest in my personal relationships with others—especially those of the household of faith?
10. Am I, by nature, too critical? Do I tend to see the negative and not the positive?
11. How do I view my conceptions, ideas and convictions of right and wrong—that which goes beyond the basics of law, statute and revealed doctrine?
12. Am I a peacemaker? Or, do I generate strife and ill feeling? (What characteristic seems to follow you?)
13. How do I view my evaluation of conditions and circumstances—in the world, in the Church, in my personal relationships and in general? Always right? Or, ameliorating toward others? Remember, only revealed doctrine and God's way are absolutes!
14. What basis or premise do I use for any evaluation which I make? Do I speak from a premise of prejudice and emotion? Or, do I stand on the foundation of data, historical information, Biblical proof or incontrovertible facts? Remember, real conviction can be sustained only by fact—not by guesses, emotions or prejudices!

Many questions could be added to the above list, but I am confident an analysis of contents will assure us of considerable introspection. NOW is the time. For, our salvation is on the line. Others live in darkness, but you and I must make good the call God gave to us. We are the servants of light—the unalterable way of life.

We look forward to seeing many of you, at various times, this coming year. If God so wills and makes the necessary provision, we will serve you in a very personal and real

way. We are acutely aware of the fellowship void generated by the great apostasy of the last days. Please pray about the situation. God is aware of our needs. Who knows what He may do in the next few months!

All our love and prayers, until you hear from us again.

Respectfully and lovingly written,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'R' and 'C'.

Raymond C. Cole