



Pastor's Perspective — Taking Inventory

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Periodically, factories and stores interrupt their routine to take inventory to know the true condition of the firm. What they learn is often vital to their success. The same is true in our lives as Christians, even as it was for Israel in the Old Testament. In Hosea 7, the prophet challenged the people to take inventory of their lives. The four pictures he gave them may be helpful for us:

1. "A cake unturned" (v8-NKJV). It is hard to imagine something less appealing to the palate than a pancake the cook has not turned over, all burnt and black on one side and soggy and runny on the other—but in God's eyes this was Israel. She was crusty toward God and hardened to His ways, but soft toward others. The imagery raises questions about my spiritual life, "Is God at work in all of me or are there some parts of my life that I have yet to allow Him to transform?" "How deep is my spiritual life?" "Does the fire of the Word of God go deep into my life, or is my Christian life a shallow, superficial thing?"

2. "Gray hairs" (v9-NKJV). Gray hairs are usually a sign of old age and declining powers. Physically, the effects of advancing age sneak up on people and take them by surprise. Israel's alliances surrounding nations and her inattention to the LORD had left her weakened and sapped of strength. But, as is the case sometimes with those who have gray hairs, Israel was unaware of her real condition. This raises questions about my spiritual vitality. "How strong is my spiritual life?" "Am I pretending to be spiritually vigorous (or

imagining that I am) when sin has robbed me of my power?"

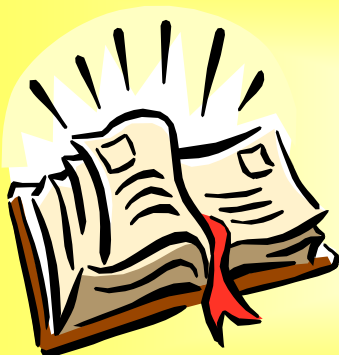
3. "A silly dove" (v11-NKJV). Expediency and human wisdom marked by vacillation had guided Israel's foreign policy for years rather than the will of God. The prophet watched his people flit between Egypt and Assyria, first leaning on one, then on the other. How like some of God's people

today—one day they walk with the Lord, the next day with the world. The silly dove that flits from one place to the other soon finds itself without a refuge, and is left alone to flounder. This imagery raises the question: "How serious is my devotion to the Lord?"

4. "A deceitful bow" (v16-NKJV). The people of Israel had looked around to other nations for help, but they had not turned their hearts and eyes to heaven to seek the LORD's help. They had become like a warped bow in God's hands. Such a weapon is unreliable because it fails to respond properly to the archer. In the same way, Israel's hostile ("crusty") response to God's grace demonstrated her unreliable, disloyal character. This description of Israel raises questions of my own reliability: "How dependable am I?" "Can God depend on me to be true?" "Can my church depend on me?"

Here are four important questions for taking inventory of your walk with the Lord: "How deep is it?" "How strong?" "How serious?" "How dependable?" I encourage you to ask them and to allow the Lord to use the answers to bring about needed spiritual transformation in your life.

...Israel was unaware of her real condition.



NOVEMBER MEMORY VERSE

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess His name.

~ Hebrews 13:15

Fall Brings New Youth Ministry Format

Youth Ministry for our teens is undergoing some big changes this fall! *PRIMETIME* now meets at church the second Sunday evening each month.

Indoor board game nights, outdoor games, movie nights, and more will be part of the evenings, with the focus on having fun and fellowship, and the goal of enriching the relationships among our teens.



In addition to *PRIMETIME*, there will also be off-site outings throughout the year which will include a mix of fun with opportunities for discussion about Biblical issues. "The English family already hosted a kayaking trip and youth dinner in October, and the Wassersteins are planning a Christmas event in December!" Randy Malota, said.

"The youth events have been a ton of fun so far," Brian Platt added. "It's great to see the youth get more comfortable with one another, and as one of the old people (i.e., parents) in the group, I've been grateful to have the chance to get to know some of the youth better."

Thanksgiving Eve Gathering

The church family will be meeting on Wednesday, November 23, at 7:30 PM for a time of sharing our thankfulness for what God has done for us and our loved ones. While enjoying light refreshments, we share testimonies, read Scripture and sing praises to Him "from Whom all blessing flow." Come join the celebration.

Calendar

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| Nov. 8 | Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM) |
| Nov. 12 | Fall Workday (8:00 AM) |
| Nov. 13 | Youth <i>PRIMETIME</i> (7:00 PM) |
| Nov. 18 | Missions Prayer Meeting (7:30 PM) |
| Nov. 18-19 | Men's Retreat |
| Nov. 23 | Thanksgiving Eve Gathering (7:30 PM) |
| Nov. 27 | NO PM Ministries |

Money Matters

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| October Giving Per Week (General Fund) | \$4,090 |
| 2016 Budgeted Needs Per Week | \$5,052 |
| 2016 Budgeted Receipts to Date | \$204,226 |
| 2016 Budgeted Needs to Date | \$222,288 |

Fellowship Baptist Church

5936 Rolling Road
Springfield, VA 22152