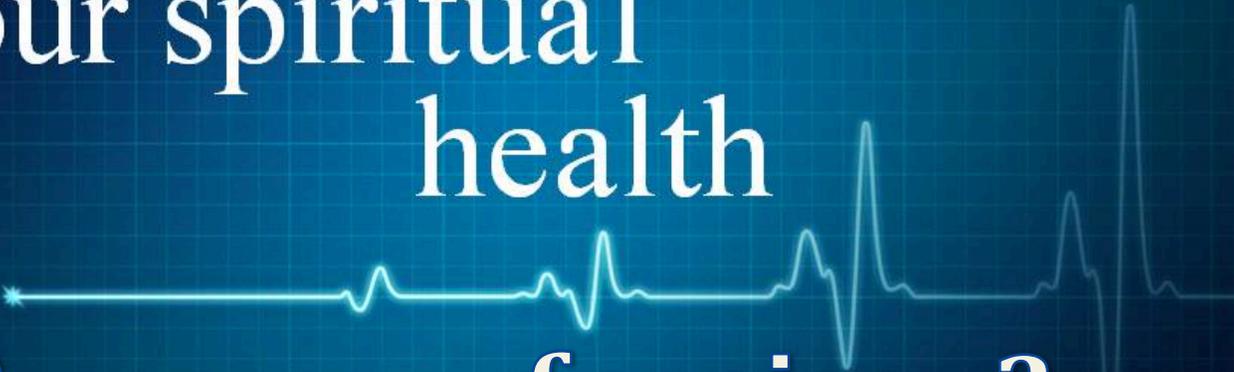


10 questions to diagnose your spiritual health



Are you a forgiver?

Recap:

- Our aim is spiritual diagnosis, to see how spiritually healthy we are, to see what areas need attention in our lives.
 - So, just as a doctor asks questions to help diagnose physical health, we are asking questions to diagnose our spiritual health.
- Do you remember question 1?
 - Do you thirst for God?
 - How often do you experience a longing for God? Do you want to know Him more?
- Question 2? Are you increasingly governed by God's Word
 - God's word should control and influence our lives
- Question 3: are you more loving
 - Do we have a genuine affection for others and do we express love in tangible ways
- Question 4: are you more sensitive to His presence
 - A growing and maturing Christian is more and more aware of God's presence throughout the day and moments of life, following the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Question 5: do you have a growing concern for the spiritual and temporal needs of others.

- Question 6: do you delight in the bride of Christ
 - Do you have a genuine joy and affection for the church?
- Question 7: are the spiritual disciplines increasingly important to you?
 - Are you disciplined as to grow in faith and godliness?
- Question 8: do you still grieve over sin?

Chapter 9: Are you a quicker forgiver?

- “The unforgiving spirit... is the number one killer of spiritual life.” James Coulter
- Whether our hearts are moved towards forgiveness is a strong indicator of our spiritual health
- There are many scriptures that call us to be forgivers, but let’s Look at **Ephesians 4:31-32**
 - What are some things that we are called to do in this passage?
 - Get rid of **all** bitterness, anger, slander, malice, etc.
 - Not just some, not just when it suits us, not just under certain circumstances... - All
 - Be kind and tender-hearted
 - Forgive
 - Let’s consider some of the context
 - We are called to put on the new self, which is created in the likeness of God -**v24**
 - See also **5:1** – be imitators of God
 - Do not give the devil an opportunity by dwelling on anger **v26-27**
 - Do not grieve the Holy Spirit – **v30**
 - If the Holy Spirit is working in a life, If we are fulfilling God’s call on our life, then we will be quicker forgivers. Forgiveness will be the ruling reality in our life.
 - The contrast is true too. If we are not forgivers, then we are working against the Holy Spirit and giving the devil opportunity in our lives and relationships.
 - What is the standard of forgiveness mentioned in this passage? **v32**
 - The Forgiveness that we’ve experienced from Jesus Christ.
 - We must forgive, just as He has forgiven.
 - **5:2** reminds us that Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice for us, because He loved us and to purchase our pardon.
 - We’ve been forgiven so much in Christ and Christ bore our punishment. When we understand that, we can forgive others.
 - Not to make light of an offense, your pain is real, but it’s nothing compared to what Christ has forgiven of us and what He endured for us.
 - We have sinned against God; we have committed High treason against the Lord, but He has forgiven us.

- Jesus endured so much suffering and pain on our behalf to set us free.
 - Yes, your pain is real, but because of His pain, you can forgive.
 - See **Matthew 18:21-35**
 - Peter as a reasonable question; is there a limit to forgiveness? 7 times?
 - Of course, Jesus answer of 70x7 indicates that forgiveness is unlimited, not 490.
 - And Jesus tells a story to help Peter understand why forgiveness is unlimited.
 - In the story, a man is forgiven much. He has a debt that he cannot pay. He was going to lose it all. But the master was moved to forgive the man his debt. Under the circumstances, he should have been of the mindset to forgive someone else a small debt.
 - When you realize how much you've been forgiven by God, you should be in the mindset to forgive anything, of anyone, of any amount of times.
 - But that's not what the man did, so the man had to pay. And Jesus links our willingness and ability to forgive others to our ability to be forgiven by God.
 - Something Jesus said before, see **Matthew 6:14-15**
 - So, if we want to be quicker forgivers, we must **Remember the forgiveness of Christ.**
- Another thing we can do is **Be Ready to Forgive**
 - The word "forgiving" is a present participle, which means it's something that is supposed to be ongoing and present in our lives.
 - We shouldn't have to work up the nerve to forgive; we must be ready to forgive; it must be a continual, present reality in our lives.
 - 5:2 tells us to walk in love
 - Walk is word in scripture used to describe our daily lives. We must always be walking in love.
 - Some people may never seek our forgiveness or even want it, but we cannot allow bitterness or anger to take hold and dwell within us.
 - **Romans 12:17-21** calls us to not get even with others, but to seek peace with all.
 - We must give up on getting back. We don't see revenge, but we trust that God's vengeance. One day, all sin will be accounted for. Either the person will die in their sin and pay all eternity for it, or the person will trust Christ, and Jesus will pay for their sin. We don't have to beat up anyone.
- Another important component is that **Forgiveness involves Releasing Others.**
 - The word "forgive" means to release, to pardon, to free from debt

- It may not be possible to forgive and forget, but you can free others and release them
- **Colossians 2:14** states that Jesus erased our record of debt on the cross. It's as though all your offenses were written out, and then Jesus came and wiped them all off, eliminating the offense or debt.
- We may not be able to forget what someone has done, but we can choose to not hold it against them any longer. This is how forgiveness is active, not passive. Forgiveness is not passive, just trying to forget an offense, but it is active, actively choosing to forgive when that offense comes to mind.
- Remember, Love keeps no record of wrong – **1 Cor. 13:5**
- Does that mean that we must not have accountability or discipline? No, Jesus instructs us on how to have accountability in **Matthew 18** and we see examples of it in scripture:
 - Nathan confronts David about his sin in **2 Samuel 12**
 - Paul confront Peter about his sin in **Galatians 2**
- We need to help people in their sin, but we must also forgive, releasing person and no longer holding the offense against them.
- When we Forgive, we are Like our God
 - “Nothing causes us to so nearly resemble God as the forgiveness of injuries.” John Chrysostom
 - **Micah 7:18-19** states that God is great because He pardons iniquity and is rich in love.
 - This is our call too. This is how we imitate Him