

## Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

## Look Within

## Read Section Introduction

Read pages 55-56 *Relationship With Self: An Inward Focus*

## Scripture

Psalms 139:1-18 (NRSV)

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
<sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
<sup>4</sup> Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O LORD, you know it completely.  
<sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.  
<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.  
<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
<sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,"  
<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.  
<sup>13</sup> For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
<sup>16</sup> Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,

- when none of them as yet existed.
- <sup>17</sup> How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!
- <sup>18</sup> I try to count them—they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end—I am still with you.

## Sermon Focus

We all want to be better people. We all have an image in our minds of what our “best self” looks like. Our ideal lifestyle, how we want others to perceive us, the erasure of things we don’t like about ourselves. Often, the pressures to be the “best version” of ourselves seem to come from within, but are actually influenced by outside sources, by what others think and by what the world tells us we should be. One of the most radical ideas that the Bible proposes to us is that God knows us and loves us exactly as we are. Not what we will be tomorrow. Not who we will be if only we made those few changes to make our life better.

Sometimes when we are doing our personal self-examination, we are measuring our answers by a measuring stick that the world offers, and not the one that God does. Because our waist line isn’t a certain measurement, or because we don’t have a certain amount of money in the bank, we bash ourselves.

But those things don’t define our worth, God defines our worth. And God has deemed us worthy of love and of life. The Look Within self-examination questions for this week are meant to help us be honest with ourselves about areas of our life that will actually fulfill us as disciples and as people. These questions have depth and are not rooted in the rat race of “keeping up with the Joneses.” Remember, God knows you. God loves you. You deserve rest, and contentment, and to be free of the entrapments of this world.

## Questions of Self-Examination

1. Am I proud?
2. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
3. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?
4. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. How do I spend my spare time?
7. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?

## Wesley Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.