

4. Am I able to distinguish between my part and God's part in response to what concerns me?
5. When and where is my first or next Sabbath-rest for releasing my concerns?

**See Appendix, Part I (p. 269) for the exercise on releasing concerns.**

## Chapter 8

### Sabbath-Rest, A Time to Review

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

(Psalm 139:23-24)

When I was young, I set out to change the world. When I grew older, I perceived that this was too ambitious so I set out to change my state. This too, I realized as I grew older was too ambitious, so I set out to change my town. When I realized I could not even do this, I tried to change my family. Now as I am an old man, I know that I should have started with myself. If I had started with myself, maybe I would have succeeded in changing my family, the town or even the state—and who knows, maybe even the world!

(The words of an old Hasidic rabbi on his deathbed)<sup>52</sup>

The longer I live the harder it is to look in the mirror, so I spend less time doing it. Not that I was ever enamored by what I saw in years past. It's just that gray hair and wrinkles are reminders that time on earth is running out. There is more to do in less time.

There are more important things to do than waste my time gawking in the mirror. Mirrors are for models, actors, and actresses. I take a glance or two in the morning and move into the day's agenda. I am just not that concerned with appearance. Besides, if my hair is out of place, my wife is sure to tell me.

If I am honest with myself, I am not that comfortable around mirrors. I must admit that it is important to take a serious look in a mirror once in a while. Mirrors don't lie! The longer I stay away from mirrors, the easier it is to lie to myself. I can think that I am something I am not. In fact I really need more than a glance at a mirror in a dimly lit room. I need to examine the image in the mirror until I admit, *yep, those are real gray hairs coming out of my head. Aha, those are wrinkles under my eyes. Wow! When did my waist start to lap over like that?*

The epistle of James refers to the Word of God as a mirror and recommends that I do more than take a casual look into it:

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.  
(James 1: 21-25)

It takes courage to look at ourselves in the mirror of God's Word. The Pharisees found it easier to look at what was wrong with others than to look into God's Word with themselves in mind. Thus they drew these hard words from Jesus: "How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You

hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:4-5). He also said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean" (Matthew 23:25-26).

It actually takes humility more than courage to look in the mirror of God's Word. I was recently handed a powerful article on humility written by William P Farley. Farley views humility as the indispensable virtue. Humility permits other virtues to take root and grow.

Humility is not self-hatred or lack of self-confidence. Rather, it is the ability to see yourself through God's eyes. A humble person increasingly sees himself as he really is: "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17). Ironically, such humility lays the foundation for contentment and healthy self-esteem.

In contrast, pride is spiritual blindness. Unfortunately, pride is also the sin to which we are most blind. In a demonic catch-22, pride causes us to chase our spiritual tails. I could not see my pride because I was full of it. Pride is a spiritual veil blinding us to the truth about ourselves.

Isaiah 66:2 says, "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." There is an important progression here. Humility always metamorphoses into something more beautiful; it is the fountainhead of the other virtues. In this verse, we see how humility leads to real contrition and then deepens into trembling at God's Word. It sensitizes us to Scripture, motivating and equipping us to hear.<sup>53</sup>

Farley's definition of humility is worth repeating: humility is "the ability to see yourself through God's eyes." I must ask myself, *what does God see when he looks at me? What does God see without a mirror?* I must ask God to show me what I am like in his sight. Only as I am humbled or willingly humble myself will I have the courage to ask God to show me what he sees in my life.

Teacher and counselor Larry Crabb maintains that an inward look is a prerequisite to true spiritual freedom and growth. He also reminds us that there is a painful price to pay for such growth:

In His rebuke to the Pharisees, our Lord declares a principle that must guide all our efforts to change into the person God wants us to be. He made it clear that there is no place for pretense. We must come to grips with what's going on behind the whitewashed appearance of our life. It seems to be His teaching that we can't make it if we don't face all that we are. To look honestly at those parts of our experience we naturally deny is painful business, so painful that the analogy of death is not too strong. But to change according to Christ's instructions requires us to face all we prefer to deny. Real change requires an inside look."<sup>54</sup>

God invites us to take a look at ourselves as he sees us, even if it is painful. Bible characters like David willingly invited God to search them. Jeremiah called an entire nation to self-examination. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). "Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD" (Lamentations 3:40).

Scripture implies that I need some kind of soul surgery from the Word of God: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-

edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

### **SABBATH-REST, A TIME TO REVIEW MY LIFE**

In chapter seven I described the physical breakdown I endured at age thirty. Mandatory bed rest forced me to accept that if I didn’t learn how to rest, I could work or worry myself to death. When I began to practice a form of Sabbath-rest, I began to release my concerns to the Lord on a weekly basis. Releasing my concerns naturally led to reviewing my life before him. I began to ask myself: *Is my manner of thought or behavior generating unnecessary concerns that are robbing me of joy and energy? Do I have dysfunctions which seem perfectly normal to me and my surroundings, that are grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit* (I Thessalonians 5:19, Ephesians 4:30)?

As I began to review my life, thoughts surfaced that I had long suppressed. I probably would not have faced them when I did had I not experienced physical and emotional exhaustion. Energy had been draining out of me like water gushing out of a bucket full of holes. I had to admit that I was not emotionally healthy. I was restless and driven. As I faced my drivenness, I began to go through an evaluation process similar to that described by Peter Scazzero in his book, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*:

I passed on to the leadership of our church a driving passion to grow bigger, better, and stronger every year. The pace was exhausting, much like my Dad’s. I attributed it to the opportunities for God’s kingdom to expand. In fact, I was seeking to find value and worth in the church, not in Christ. In the process I neglected the people closest to me—much like my father. <sup>55</sup>

Like Scazzero, I came to the realization that drivenness was a behavior that I had absorbed from the home where I grew up. My home was probably very similar to that of Peter's.

I come from a line of workaholics. My grandfather drove a bulldozer with cancer raging in his body at age sixty-eight. When he was too ill to work as a road construction contractor, he reverted to climbing onto his bulldozer pushing dirt around his property until cancer took him. My father ran a trucking business until his death at age eighty-five. For the last few years he was supposed to be on oxygen for pulmonary fibrosis, the same disease that took the life of Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. However, Dad responded, "If I am on oxygen, I can't go to work. If I can't go to work, I won't be on oxygen." Eventually the oxygen tank went with him to work; but not until he was frequently found teetering on the top step all out of breath after climbing the stairs to his office.

I do not fault either my father or grandfather for the way they responded to life situations. Both of them tasted the deep poverty of the Great Depression. They were driven to work hard so I wouldn't have to eat beans and soda crackers three meals a day. But the day had come for me to discover a better way of life for myself and family.

I believe it takes spiritual discernment and courage from the Holy Spirit to sort out what to keep and what to discard when it comes to attitudes and behaviors from our parents and grandparents. There is a tendency to continually act as if our families were model families, not subject to analysis. Or there is the other extreme of ruthless rejection because we are appalled by our dysfunctional home life. The truth is we can all improve on our heritage, and wise parents are proud when we do.

I praise God for my family and the home where I grew up. I also thank God for the pilgrimage through which he has led me to discover Sabbathrest as a means of sorting out and passing on what is worthy to the next generation. I

must also praise God that I am not alone on this pilgrimage; others are on the path ahead of me: “Only through this commitment to reflect seriously on my family history in light of the values of the gospel have I been able to get off the ‘fast track’ of working and producing. Instead, slowly, I am learning to follow him in Sabbath rest, contentment, joy, peace (Romans 14:17), prayer, and reflection.”<sup>56</sup>

Reviewing your life may be compared to peeling the layers of skin off an onion. You may be wondering: *where do I start?* The review process usually begins at a different place for each person. The Holy Spirit may lead you to a passage of Scripture that has been perplexing to you for some time.

Sabbath-rest is time set aside for intentionally pondering a verse or passage of Scripture with your life in mind. It may be a Scripture read in church, a sermon you heard on the radio, or a discussion among friends. You have put off the Holy Spirit while he has been tugging at your heart with a particular passage. But you said “later.” Sabbath-rest is your appointment with God, a time to cease avoiding his prompting. It is the time you need if you are going to be serious about your relationship with God.

A more systematic approach to reviewing your life in light of God’s Word is to examine various facets of your personality.

## **REVIEW YOUR LIFE BY EXAMINING YOUR ACTIONS**

There are several avenues through which we can review our lives in the light of Scripture. Since behavior is much more visible than thoughts or feelings, it is a good place to begin. Our actions can be examined by others who can help in this process. Galatians 5:19-21 lists the deeds of the flesh by which our actions can be examined. A pound of flesh on a believer is capable of the same deviances as a pound of flesh on an unbeliever.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:19-21, NAS)

Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself without comparing himself to somebody else (Galatians 6:4).

### **REVIEW YOUR LIFE BY EXAMINING YOUR SPEECH**

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

(Ephesians 4:29)

Speech runs a close second to behavior as a means of reviewing our lives. The Word of God has much to say about the words that come out of our mouths. Once again James weighs in, this time with one of the heftiest warnings about the tongue:

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, <sup>8</sup> but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

(James 3:6-8)

Psalms and Proverbs depict a sharp contrast between the speech of the wise and the speech of the foolish, that of the righteous and that of the wicked;



they reinforce the truth that words reflect character. “The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just ” (Psalm 37:30). “Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Proverbs 12:18). “The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly” (Proverbs 15:2).

The words we speak are more than sounds and syllables. The words we speak expose the inner chambers of our hearts. Jesus said, “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). The easiest way to find out what lurks in the deep, dark crevasses of our hearts is to listen closely to our words. We need to develop the art of listening to ourselves. We need to ask ourselves and others if we speak differently at church than at home or on the golf course. Wives and children are willing assistants if we are willing to ask, “Am I inconsistent?”

The book of James warns about the tongue: “With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be” (James 3:9-10).

Recently I was found to be inconsistent in my use of words. No, I did not cuss or curse. My weakness was off-color jokes on a four-day Canadian fishing trip among men who didn’t mind, but prodded one another on with one silly story after another. For the want of laughter I contributed my share to the shades of discolored humor.

When I got home and entered my Sabbath time, I was convicted of my gross inconsistency. I had led in prayer, talked about Scripture on several occasions, and told stories with sensual overtones on other occasions. I humbled myself and apologized to several of my fishing buddies. Even more painful was the time I spent before God contemplating what must be in my heart. *Why do I find such stories funny? Is it just another convenient*

*way of getting attention? Is it male chauvinism coming through? Can I honestly just pass it off on this sensuous culture that thrives on perverting what God has created as a sacred pleasure between husband and wife (Hebrews 13:4)?*

My words indicated there are plenty of fleshly notions left in me. The solution goes beyond watching my words. I must guard my heart. In the words of Solomon, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23). I have begun to listen to myself more closely, realizing that my words portray my core being.

### **REVIEW YOUR LIFE BY EXAMINING YOUR ATTITUDES**

Attitudes must also be evaluated. Attitudes can be negative such as selfishness and conceit, or positive such as humility and compassion for others. These contrasts of attitudes are obvious in this well-known passage exhorting believers to live out the attitudes of our Lord:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

(Philippians 2:3-7)

A case can be made for right actions arising out of righteous attitudes. The fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians chapter five appear to be more like attitudes than actions, implying that if our attitudes are righteous, right actions will follow: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against

such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-25).

Right attitudes are essential when it comes to giving to the Lord. Paul calls for willing and cheerful attitudes to accompany any financial gift: “For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have (II Corinthians 8:12).” Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (II Corinthians 9:7).

## **REVIEW YOUR LIFE BY EXAMINING YOUR EMOTIONS**

Another gauge remains by which spiritual health can be measured. God has made human beings with a wide range of emotions. Emotions are windows into a person’s life. Neil Anderson explains: “I believe that God has designed us in such a way that we can know on a moment-by-moment basis if our belief system is properly aligned with God’s truth. God has established a feedback system which is designed to grab your attention so you can examine the validity of your goal. That system is your emotions.”<sup>57</sup>

Anger is one of the most common emotions. Anger may be rooted in righteous causes like Jesus’ display of anger when the money changers turned the temple court into a convenience store, robbing the Gentiles of an opportunity to draw near in prayer: “And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?” But you have made it “a den of robbers”’” (Mark 11:17).

In contrast anger can be triggered by inadequacy as in the case of Cain who killed his brother Abel (Geneses 4:1-15). Or a lack of trust as in the case of Moses who struck the rock when he was instructed to speak to the rock:

He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” <sup>11</sup> Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. <sup>12</sup> But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”  
(Numbers 20:10-12)

Moses had a tendency to take matters in his own hands. Early in life he killed an Egyptian in an impulsive attack against slave abuse in Egypt. In response to the Israelites’ revelry he dashed the freshly engraved stone tablets of the Ten Commandments to the ground. I hesitate to speculate, but perhaps he would not have disqualified himself from entering the Promised Land had he traced his angry modes to his lack of trust in God to perform his will among his people.

I can certainly identify with Moses’ fits of rage. I have been angry with people in various congregations for receiving grace while withholding it from others, for doubletalk, apathy, and a whole lot more. As I look back, God wanted me to trust him through such frustrations. When I did trust him, he showed up in marvelous ways. When I took matters into my own hands, I compounded problems, becoming my own worst enemy.

I can also identify with those whose limited trust produces worry. Worry and fear are very common emotions that cripple one’s ability to accomplish the simplest tasks. Jesus had wonderful words for those whose fear exposed their feeble trust:

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his

kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

(Matthew 6:31-34)

Jealousy is another emotion that commonly has its roots in a lack of trust. I remember on more than one occasion feeling jealous of pastors whose success in ministry was apparently far greater than mine. They had larger congregations, budgets, and buildings. As I walked through church facilities I sometimes felt jealousy welling up from within me. When I established a practice of Sabbath-rest, I began to process just what was going on when I entered those fine church edifices. Pondering the emotion in stillness before the Lord led to taking responsibility for my lack of trust in God’s plan for my life.

Many negative emotions proceed from a lack of trust in God. We question God’s goodness or ability to perform toward us. Each of us has to process our own emotions before the Lord. No one can do it for us. Failure to do so leaves us vulnerable to Satan’s devious devices. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Ephesians 4:26-27). “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many” (Hebrews 12:15).

If this sounds more like work than rest—it is! It is work that leads to rest. I recently made an appointment to see my chiropractor. Back pain and neck tightness had crept up my spine until I surrendered to getting help. After heat packs and a manipulation, the doctor ordered a massage. Moments later a massage specialist entered the room. She was a petite five foot two, possibly one hundred and five pounds. I volunteered that I once enjoyed a massage that was part of a vacation plan. She informed me that it was probably a relaxation message, designed to help me feel good at the time. I

was about to receive a deep muscle massage, designed to help me feel better later. She was right about one thing: it didn't feel good at the time. It hurt! When she asked if the treatment was too much, I groaned, "I'm fine." My masculinity was not about to let me scream, "Enough!" Yet I pondered what it might be like to be tormented until I gave my torturers what they wanted. She was also right about making me feel better afterwards. The relief was definite. Even while it hurt, there was a sense of relief. The help I received was not cosmetic; it was real, lasting, and thorough.

I recommend being thorough when reviewing your life, even if it hurts. It is worth it. It is not temporary or cosmetic. It is deep therapy. It takes courage and humility to review your life. It is work that brings deep relief and the freedom to rest. I recommend being thorough even if it takes months of weekly Sabbath-rests before working through your actions, words, attitudes, and emotions.

While Sabbath-rest is of great value to all believers, it is very important that pastors and church leaders go through such a process of reviewing their lives before God. Peter Scazzero tells why: "Without doing the work of becoming aware of your feelings and actions, along with their impact on others, it is scarcely possible to enter deeply into the life experiences of other people. How can you enter someone else's world when you have not entered your own?"<sup>58</sup>

My pastor recently used an illustration in a sermon that compared reviewing our lives under the light of God's Word with examining a carpet under a black light. The illustration was originally submitted to Preaching Today by Stephen Kingsley of Craigmont, Idaho.

In our family carpet cleaning business we offered a special service for removing pet urine odors. To show potential customers their need for the

service, I would darken the room and then turn on a powerful black light. The black light caused urine to glow brightly.

To the horror of the homeowners every drop and dribble could be seen, not only on the carpet, but usually on walls, drapes, furniture, and even on lamp shades. One homeowner begged me to shut off the light: “I can’t bear to see anymore. I don’t care what it costs. Please clean it up!” Another woman said, “I’ll never be comfortable in my home again.”

The offence was there all the time, but it was invisible until the right light exposed it. It would have been cruel to show customers the extent of their problem then say, “Too bad for you” and walk away. I brought the light so that they might desperately want my cleaning services.

In the same way, God shines the light of His commandments not just to make us feel guilty and leave us that way. He has a cleaning service to offer salvation through Jesus Christ.<sup>59</sup>

The courageous process of identifying sin in our lives necessitates another definite response known as repentance. Identifying sin without repenting is like sweeping the floor and not bending over with a dustpan and broom to pick up the dirt and throw it out. Repentance by definition requires a change of mind about sin. You and I are going to have to give up sin and do whatever is necessary to remove it from our lives. Without repenting we could feasibly enjoy reviewing our lives as we relive the sins of the past. Repentance agrees with God’s opinion about sin, “It has to go!” I like Mark Buchanan’s vivid description of repentance:

Repentance is a ruthless dismantling of old ways of seeing and thinking, and then a diligent and vigilant building of new ones.

Change begins with fresh eyes, in other words. It begins with an awakened imagination. You turn away, stubbornly and without apology, from that which formerly entranced you, and you turn toward that which you once avoided. You start to see what God sees, and as God sees it.<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps you think that reviewing your life and repenting of your sins in front of the mirror of God's Word will send you spinning into deep despair. You might think, *surely God will cast me out of his presence if I confess my sins and failures to him*. In all truth, standing before God stripped of your sin prepares you for his enormous embrace.

Lois and I maintain a close relationship with a particular family. Steve served as Elder Chairman at a church we once served until a job transfer occurred. Nancy now works as a marriage and family therapist. She counsels as one who has experienced God's love and embrace at the point of acknowledging sin:

When we see in truth the reality of God's love for us, it then becomes possible to extend that same love toward others. The powerful, unconditional love of God becomes ours—ours to live in, and ours to give. We become free to love. This ability to love others can only happen when we no longer fear the truth about ourselves. God's love for me allowed me to look honestly at myself. Knowing that nothing could separate me from His love allowed me to look truthfully at my shortcomings and imperfections.<sup>61</sup>

The book of James speaks not only of the mirror of God's word, but of the gracious response of God: "Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8). Every time you dare to peel off a little more of the onion skin of denied sin, God will embrace you. I never felt really close to God until I dared to look into the mirror of God's Word and started peeling, confessing my sins after each layer. Contrary to my belief system, God did



not torment me; he embraced me with the fullness of his love. His wrath is toward those who hide their sins and “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18, NASB), not toward those who come boldly before him seeking mercy. Hebrews chapter four describes God’s readiness to grant mercy, while knowing everything about us:

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

(Hebrew 4:13-16)

Sabbath-rest is a weekly appointment for such a merciful embrace. It feels so good to peel back the layers of dead skin, you won’t want to stop. Without such Sabbath-rest appointments we may crave acceptance like children with rickets as described in Jim Smith’s biography of Rich Mullins:

It is said that children with rickets “scratch lime from the walls.” So, too, when we do not feel loved we “scratch acceptance from the walls.” We will do anything to get it: climb the ladder of success, try to be funny, acquire possessions, alter our bodies, etc. If we are religious, this will often translate into becoming scrupulous. We will try to be perfect or saintly in order to find acceptance from God. Every attempt to find this acceptance in anything but God will eventually fail, and we will either have to deny the pain and try to ignore it or medicate it with a drink or a pill. But we must have it. The human soul cannot endure to be unloved.<sup>63</sup>

As I commune with God in Sabbath-rest, I am reassured of his unwavering love for me. When I neglect that cathedral of time, I begin to act like an unloved person. I seek attention from people and search for significance in sources that disappoint. Without intimate times with the Lord, I behave as unloved and driven. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

### **Prayer**

Lord God Almighty, this day I present myself to you for review that I may please you fully. There are the sins that I know about and all the rest that you know about. I ask that you search out every corner and crevasse of my being and remove all that is offensive to you for your sake. I repent of all my sin giving it to you for disposal. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for paying the penalty for my sins by your death on the cross. I take up my cross and follow you anew and flee from the old. In Jesus’ name and for his sake I pray, Amen.

### **Questions to Ponder**

1. Do I stand in front of the mirror of God’s Word on a regular basis?
2. Have I noticed family traits that have been passed on to me that need to be challenged and changed?
3. What is one trait in my life that I need to repent of?
4. Have I felt God’s tender embrace lately?
5. When and where is my first or next Sabbath-rest for reviewing my life going to take place?

**See Appendix, Part II (p. 270) for the exercise on reviewing your life.**