

Life Calibrated...

Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups. You need firsthand evidence, not mere hearsay, that Jesus Christ is in you. Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it. I hope the test won't show that we have failed. But if it comes to that, we'd rather the test showed our failure than yours. We're rooting for the truth to win out in you. We couldn't possibly do otherwise. 2nd Corinthians 13:5-8 (The Message).

In the machine shop, all of the tools for inspection are checked for accuracy on a regular basis. This is called calibration. Christians need to be calibrated, as well. Therefore, I would like to remind each of us to make self-examination, with the Lord as our standard.

One of my favorite books is from over 30 years ago and was authored by Max Lucado (his first book). It is entitled *ON THE ANVIL*. In its introduction Max wrote this:

In the shop of a blacksmith, there are three types of tools. There are tools on the junk pile: outdated, broken, dull, rusty. They sit in the cobwebbed corner, useless to their master, oblivious to their calling.

There are tools on the anvil: melted down, molten hot, moldable, changeable. They lie on the anvil, being shaped by their master, accepting their calling.

There are tools of usefulness: sharpened, primed, defined, mobile. They lie ready in the blacksmith's tool chest, available to their master, fulfilling their calling.

Some people lie useless: lives broken, talents wasting, fires quenched, dreams dashed. They are tossed in with the scrap iron, in desperate need of repair, with no notion of purpose.

Others lie on the anvil: hearts open, hungry to change, wounds healing, visions clearing. They welcome the painful pounding of the blacksmith's hammer, longing to be rebuilt, begging to be called.

Others lie in their Master's hands: well tuned, uncompromising, polished, productive. They respond to their Master's forearm, demanding nothing, surrendering all.

We are all somewhere in the blacksmith's shop. We are either on the scrap pile, in the Master's hands on the anvil, or in the tool chest. (Some of us have been in all three.). And I'm sure that somewhere you'll see yourself.

People, like tools, need repair, maintenance and frequent calibration. Christians are no exception. Before starting any new project in the tool shop or a New Year by the Christian, it is important to **recalibrate** and set one's self on a course for success. Now is that time. Wherever you are is the place. *Live Life Calibrated!*

LIFE CALIBRATED

(A Study Of Psalm 73)

Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. (Psalm 73:23–24)

One of the most dangerous habits of thought among Christians is to underestimate God. We underestimate His abilities, intent, and His awareness in our behalf. Psalm 73 is about one's very personal heart confusion when a Christian underestimates God. This person looks at the ways of the world around him and sees a world upside down where evil goes unpunished (1–12). In fact, the wickedness of the world seems to produce prosperity, pride and persecution at the expense of the good. This person's heart calibration has slowly, but steadily, been ratcheted out of whack.

Verses 13–16 give utterance to the confusion of heart. The conflict rages within as the psalmist says, **"when I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me"**. The key verse in the chapter is verse 17: **"Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end"**. In the presence of God, the scope of the Eternal One comes into view. Good will prevail, the righteous will be vindicated and wickedness will inevitably be punished. God's nature specifies the recalibration tolerances for the Christian.

I believe the rest of the chapter is designed to provide the reader with a window into the thinking of the repentant believer as God recalibrates him. Verses 21 and 22 spells out repentance, which prepares the psalmist to be **recalibrated** to the divine standard. Then the author lists four touch points which reset the heart upon appropriate parameters, in verses 23 and 24. Verses 25 through 26 review the personal blessings from God true for every believer which lift the heart of the faithful ever higher in exultation.

The first calibration mark is "but as for me, I am continually with You". Do not dare to underestimate the power of the presence of God. **"And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed"**. (Deuteronomy 31:8) **"Lo, I am with you always; even to the end of the age"** (Matthew 28:26). **"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have, for He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"** (Hebrews 13:5–6).

The second calibration mark is "You hold me by my right hand". Do not dare to underestimate the power of the will of God. As when we were children and effectively forced to follow the direction of parental prerogative by a firm hold of our little hand, so God has a sure grip upon us and is insistently drawing us and prompting us along by His loving, though occasionally correcting, grasp.

The third calibration mark is "You will guide me with Your counsel". Do not dare to underestimate the power of the clear wisdom of God. Wise parents reinforce their parenting with words of wisdom repeated throughout the upbringing, launching, and the remainder of their lifetime. It is a blessed child who can freely come back to the refreshing spring of wisdom from godly parents. God is the fountainhead of every refreshing spring of wisdom.

The fourth calibration mark is "and afterward receive me to glory". Do not dare to underestimate the power of assurance of eternal life with God. Live with eternity's values in view. What causes heartbreak in your life? Can you identify the causes and your responses? Perhaps a recalibration is in order so that you can run true and not underestimate God. Trust and obey.