

TAKING INVENTORY HAGGAI 1:5-7

Introduction

Christmas has come and gone. The curtain is about to fall on another year. What does this New Year holds for us? None of us know.

As we look back on this year, there are probably some folks here who are glad to see this year come to an end! The reason for that is because this life can be full of trouble sometimes. We express that by saying “*When it rains it pours!*”

Job said in *Job 14:1*, “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*” If you have been through a difficult year, then no doubt you are hoping for a better year in 2016.

For some folks 2015 may have been great year:

- Some of you may have reached certain milestones in your lives.
- Some of you may have been EXTRA blessed by the LORD this year.
- Some of you may have had some wonderful accomplishments in your lives by God’s grace.

In business circles, the end of the year is the time for taking inventory and looking at the books to determine profitability.

When I worked in the accounting industry some years ago, I spent a lot of time at year end counting and checking inventory for various clients. We would go in and do test counts of the inventory taken by the client or his employees to determine that there was some degree of accuracy.

Could I tell you that the end of the year is also a good time to take inventory of our SPIRITUAL lives!

Inventories are important because **they can reveal both strengths and weaknesses in our lives.**

Inventories are important because **they can reveal our present fitness for meeting the demands of the future.**

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With regard to our spiritual lives, inventories can reveal:

- How we stand with ourselves?
- How we stand with others?
- How we stand with God?

Here in our passage we see that the Lord asked His people to consider their ways.

Things had not been going so well for them. God was essentially telling them they needed to look at what they were doing and look at the things that they valued because some things were just not right!

We should all look at our lives periodically and take inventory. What better time could there be than at the end of an old year and the beginning of a New Year? (It would be good for us to do it more than once a year!)

So, let’s look at this matter of TAKING INVENTORY in our lives:

I. THE PURPOSE OF A PERIODIC INVENTORY!

A. The Purpose Of An Inventory Is To Determine Whether What We Are Doing Is Profitable For Our Owner (i.e. The LORD)!

1. Are we making progress in our spiritual lives? (2 Peter 3:17-18)

1 Peter 2:2–“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”

2. Are we reaching our spiritual goals? (Philippians 3:13-14)

We can’t reach what we don’t have!

3. Are we pleasing the owner (i.e. God)?

We need to ask ourselves, “*Is our life profitable to the one who owns it?*”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20–“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

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20For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

We need to remember that we will stand before the Lord and give an account one day! (*Romans 14:12*)

B. The Purpose Of An Inventory Is To Assess Exactly What We Have On Hand!

1. Sometimes things have been pilfered by thieves.

We might be oblivious to this without an inventory. *John 10:10*–“*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*”

(e.g. Joy, Testimony, Fellowship with God. . .)

2. Sometimes things have become spoiled or damaged.

(e.g. Value system – Trading Bible values for worldly values.)

Colossians 2:8–“*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*”

Hebrews 2:1 “*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*”

3. Some things are worthless and need to be gotten rid of. (Ephesians 4:22, 25-32; Colossians 3:8-9)

4. Some things need to be acquired that are needed. (Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians 3:10, 12-17)

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C. Without Frequent Spiritual Inventory Of Our Lives, We Will Not Please The Owner (i.e. The LORD)!

Haggai 1:5 and 7 –“*Consider your ways. . .*”

THE PURPOSE OF A PERIODIC INVENTORY!

To determine profitability!

To access exactly what is on hand!

To please the owner!

**II. THE PROCEDURE FOR TAKING PERIODIC INVENTORY!
The Procedure For Taking Inventory Includes Comparing What Is On Hand With What Should Be On Hand.**

How do we know what should be in our lives?–The Word of God tells us!

A. Taking inventory of ourselves is actually what our personal time with God, our Bible study, and our Church Attendance ought to be about.

Psalm 139:23-24–“*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*”

B. Bible study should be a search for the knowledge of the things of God that will help us personally do a better job of obeying God.

Deuteronomy 29:29 “*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*”

Unfortunately, we study too much of the time with a view to improvements that need to be made in someone else's life rather than our own. **(Turn to Matthew 7:1-5)**

We need to see the value of God's word in showing us things that need to be removed from our own hearts and lives and in showing us the things that should be added to our lives.

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(Psalm 19:7-14)

*THE PROCEDURE FOR TAKING PERIODIC INVENTORY!
(Comparing what is on hand with what should be on hand.)*

III. THE PREREQUISITE TO TAKING A PERIODIC INVENTORY!

No inventory is a good inventory if it is not an honest inventory!
Most of us cherish a self-image that glosses over some serious faults in our lives.

One of the most dangerous things about being unwilling to see the truth about ourselves is that it eventually leads to our being unable to see it.

John 3:19-20 “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

We need to strive for an honesty that is willing to see ourselves as we really are. Indeed, we need to see ourselves as God sees us.
Hebrews 4:12-13 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

*THE PREREQUISITE TO TAKING A PERIODIC INVENTORY!
Make it an honest inventory!*

IV. THE PLAN FOR USING THE PERIODIC INVENTORY!

Taking inventory of ourselves is useless if we are unwilling to use it to better ourselves!

Obviously, a good self-inventory may reveal some areas where we simply need to “do better.” It may reveal some things that are undesirable without being outright sinful.

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But the thing that keeps much of our self-examination from being truly helpful is that we tend to see things the way we **WANT** to see them instead of the way **THEY REALLY ARE!**

Too often, “sin” is a word we like to **apply to OTHER** people and repentance is usually something **SOMEBODY ELSE** needs to do!

How often, in our private praying, do we specify actual sins that we have committed?

Do we not mostly pray general prayers for forgiveness, as if asking forgiveness were merely the humble thing to do, even if we cannot really think of any particular sin we have committed?

And yet, none of us can really examine ourselves **accurately and not find** things that are actually sinful and need to be repented of.

1 John 1:8-10—“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”

“Confessing our sins” means more than just a general confession that we “have sinned.”

If an honest self-inventory is not **accompanied by the repentant character** of a David, it accomplishes very little.

In *2 Samuel 12:13*, David said to Nathan, “*I have sinned against the Lord.*” And Nathan said to David, “*The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die*”

Conclusion

The philosopher Socrates once said that “*the unexamined life is not worth living.*” That is true!

“*Take heed*” is a frequent admonition in the Scriptures.

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There is no person who needs to watch out any more than the person who is sure that he or she is doing okay!

1 Corinthians 10:12--“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17--“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (what is right), for reproof (what is wrong), for correction (how to get right), for instruction in righteousness (how to stay right), that the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works”

For us, the Scriptures will not be profitable for reproof and correction if we do not use them to that end.

Why not determine now to make a fresh, thorough, and honest inventory of the person that you are before God — and make the necessary changes while opportunity lasts.

Remember, we will all stand before God one day and give an account.
Romans 14:12--“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

One item of self-inventory I hope that everyone here will make is the admonition in
2 Corinthians 13:5--“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”