Fruits of the Spirit

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TAKING INVENTORY... OF OURSELVES
PART 1 OF 3: REASONS

December is inventory time at Stacy Plumbing Supply, where we count all the merchandise that we have available to sell to our customers. It's not the most fun of tasks, but everyone realizes that it needs to be done. As I was counting faucets this past December it occurred to me that the Bible commands us to take inventory of ourselves as well.

II Cor. 13:5 says, "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?" Like inventory, it is not necessarily a fun task, but is one that needs to be done.

So I did up a lesson comparing counting inventory at a store to examining ourselves as Christians. There are some very valuable comparisons for us to consider. This lesson will be broken down into three articles. This first one will compare the reasons a store takes inventory to the reasons we need to examine ourselves. The second will be comparing the process of counting inventory to the process of examining ourselves. Then the third will look at some specific things we need to examine ourselves for: some good things we need to be sure are in our lives, and some bad things we need to make sure are not there. I pray that all three aspects of our study will be profitable for you and for me.

So, why does a store need to take inventory? There are at least three reasons.

First of all, an annual inventory is required by the government for tax purposes. Likewise, we are required by God to examine ourselves. The apostle Paul gave a direct commandment, as we read above in II Cor. 13:5. ,"Examine yourselves..." It is a command, and one given for good reasons, to be sure we are in the faith, and to be sure Jesus Christ is dwelling in us. In I Cor. 11:28-29 we are instructed to examine ourselves in regards to the communion, to be sure we are focusing on Jesus Christ and his crucifixion when we partake of it. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of

that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Verses 31-32 go on to say. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

A second reason a store does inventory is that it is part of the process of determining profitability. The store has to compare its costs with its sales to see if it made a profit or not. And its inventory is one of the largest costs. In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, Jesus tells us we are expected to be profitable servants. Here three servants are given charge of portions of the master's goods to work with. Two put their talents to work, and increased them. One did not. In Matt. 25:16-18, we see the biggest difference is that the profitable servant gave it everything he had, and the unprofitable servant did not. "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money." Further, we must not only do what the Lord expects, but with the right attitude, in order to be profitable. I Cor. 13:3, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." To be profitable for the Lord we need to examine ourselves to be sure we are giving the Lord our best effort, that we are doing what the Lord expects us to, and with the right attitude.

A third reason a store does inventory is to be sure it has the items it needs to sell. It helps to see what is selling and what is not. Even a business that is not a store needs to be sure it has the equipment and supplies that it needs. Likewise we must examine ourselves – not only for effort and attitude, but also for specific things the Bible records. We must make sure we apply the good traits the Bible instructs to our lives, and get rid of the bad things the Bible condemns. The third article will deal with these specifics, so at this point let's just read one quick passage to establish the point. In, Eph. 4:31-32, verse 31 lists some bad things to get rid of and verse 32 lists some good things to apply. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

So just as a store is required by the government to conduct an annual inventory (count of merchandise), so we are required by the Lord to examine ourselves to be sure we are in the faith and that Jesus is dwelling in us. Like a store uses its inventory also as part of the process of determining profit, so we need to examine ourselves to see if we are profitable servants – if we are giving the Lord everything we have, doing what He expects, and for the

right reasons. And finally, as a store uses its inventory to be sure it has the specific things it needs to sell, we need to examine ourselves for the specific attributes God wants us to have, and that we get rid of the specific wrongs that He condemns.

I do not claim that these are necessarily the only reasons a store does inventory, or the only reasons that we should examine ourselves. But I do hope that studying these 3 reasons has been edifying to us all.

In Christian love,
Terry Warford

YUMA, ARIZONA

Good morning Brothers and Sisters:

Yesterday was Easter Sunday and what a wonderful day we all had. Brother Robert Davis gave us a lesson and it was a very good lesson but we've come to expect that kind of lesson from him. Our numbers were small especially when considering the numbers that were at other churches around Yuma. Some, I was told, required traffic officers just to direct the flow of traffic in and around the churches. It would be nice if that were the case for our little church but I'd be afraid that we would have given in to the ideas of man instead of God's idea of church services if we had those kinds of crowds. I've always considered these next verses in Matthew when I get to feeling down about the size of our congregation. Matthew 7:13-16, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Anyway consider this, that broad way will be spacious, roomy and filled with wonderful sights. You would probably, if you continued on that "way" see a lot of acquaintances traveling right beside you, people that you've met over your life time, people that you may have liked or even thought a lot of. These people that you might meet on that broad way would probably be the ones that you never saw in church except on Easter Sunday or maybe they said that they didn't need a God to be a part of their lives. They may have said that they knew God and that they had an understanding with God, but we know different, God is no respecter of men so their understanding with God must have been a misplaced thought that sounded good to them at the time. In the end that road that is so congenial and appealing to your thoughts or the thoughts of

your friends has a string attached to it, everlasting destruction filled with misery and pure sorrow. It will be a sorrow so deep, and if wishes at that time could be granted, you would want to start your life all over again and take a less traveled road or perhaps like that rich man that wanted Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool his tongue or even to warn your family or friends not to take this well traveled road. Now to the contrary, that other road. It is called strait and narrow, narrow because there will be few that will travel on it. That road won't need to be broad because only a few will walk it with you, a sad circumstance, but we have been warned so if we miss the turn for this narrow road it won't be because we didn't know that it was coming up. This road will most certainly be filled with pot holes, bumps and little signs that say your last chance for gas, food turn here or turn here and have a wonderful time, Don't be suckered in by those ravening wolves that will be at every rest area or every side road. I've gotten off the main road at times and it seems to be so hard to get back on the right road. Try pulling a thirty-foot trailer on some of these small town roads and then you can perhaps understand how difficult it is sometimes to get right again. Stay right all the time if you can.

How do we avoid these traps in our lives? Jesus Christ our Savior has given us all of the necessities to avoid getting lost on our way. Bible- Webster's says; a bible is a publication that is preeminent especially in authoritativeness or wide readership, "The Fisherman's Bible," "The Mechanic's Bible" etc. The bible for any topic is an authoritative book of "how to's." How to do this or how to do that. The words of this King James Version , I like this one, is how to avoid taking the wrong road, it will keep you from getting lost. You could consider the bible your road atlas or more contemporary your GPS device. A couple of quick answers: One comes out of Romans 10:13-14, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? The first tenet necessary for becoming a Christian that makes it viable for you to travel that strait and narrow road. If you study this word and find it to be in your heart to continue then by all means available to you attempt to use it, utilize God's Word to head you in the right direction, study and approve yourself. 2 Timothy 2:15, Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. With this study and examination of yourself then you can avoid those that would teach other than the truth and that guide you to places that you really don't want to go. One final thought for me, now this isn't all that you need to do and remember but only very basic summary of the needs of man. This one is out of 1 John 2:1-4, My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins:

and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. We do occasionally get turned around on the highway but as we can see from these verses we do have someone that can help us to get right again, headed back on the right highway. Unlike those that we may see on that other highway they don't know Jesus, we know Jesus and want to follow the righteous man to our final destination. Don't for the love of God be considered a liar by not following these commandments. Matthew 11:28-29, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

His commandments aren't grievous but that rest that we can get from them is so very pleasant in a world that is filled with anguish and tears. Now back to my original thought, I don't grieve long over the size of our congregation though I would love to grow in size and strength but more than that, one person that is truly changed to a knowledge and trust in God's true Word is worth all that the earth has to offer. May God bless you one and all.

Denny Davis
The Yuma Congregation

YUMA, ARIZONA

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today is Monday April 13th the day after Easter and two days before our taxes need to be paid, April 15th which by the way is the day that I was baptized, tax day. My taxes weren't paid on that day but my debts for my sins were. We have across the nation, in fact over the entire world have celebrated the death of someone and as celebrated on Easter the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So many people with hopefully the same thoughts and the same fears and that being of our Lord Jesus having suffered for our very souls. I have at times in my past thought Jesus wasn't the only one that was ever crucified on a cross or died in other seemingly more vicious and painful ways but not in my lifetime has anyone ever stood up in front of me and said, "no don't crucify this man I will do it for him, I will take his place" "don't make this man suffer because I will suffer for him". Jesus did that for me and for you. Thank you Lord God for sending the sinless Christ to die that we may have a salvation for our sins.

Our celebration wasn't celebrated with an elaborate showing or extravagant and expensive decorations but was a simple every Sunday type of

lesson. A lesson that goes over the things that Jesus and His apostles brought to us. We didn't have a parade and scourge ourselves with whips or actually nail our hands to a cross, Jesus did that for us, so to do it again would be suggesting that what Jesus did wasn't enough, demeaning His effort. Anyway, our service was edifying to the congregation. And if we didn't take anything away yesterday then we must have been asleep.

I want to let everyone know how we are doing down here in Yuma. I can't go into too much about our health but to say that we are still about the same as the last letter that was published, same aches and pains. Sister Flo Fuller seems to have withstood the chemo and radiation treatments and though we haven't received the final report she seems to be doing quite well. Thanks for all of the prayers.

As is usual, the big let down is in effect, no more big crowds, the singing now, though still wonderful, isn't as loud and we are back to singing the songs that we know. Don't get me wrong even though we didn't know a lot of the songs they were still beautiful to hear and to hopefully learn. Our crowds ran around sixty or so, more or less, every evening. The lessons were all very well prepared and thoughtful, and thought provoking". Thank you all for the time that you spent gathering the scriptures together and putting them to lessons. I have them written down and can go back over them and study through each one to refresh myself on your thoughts. We are so very blessed to have so many people to have been here and from so many different congregations across this country. You know that I have to thank Brother Gene McKinney and Sister Pat especially for coming down here and Gene for suffering his ailments here rather than staying home and suffering them there. We didn't get to hear a lesson from Gene so he will have to give us two next year. They did have a bit of a rough start to even get here but they made it in spite of all of the stumbling blocks that were placed in front of them.

Susie has asked me to send out a special thank you to all of the ladies and gentlemen that were there to help her in the kitchen. It was greatly appreciated by her and she said that she wouldn't have been able to make it without all of the assistance. We all are deeply appreciative of all that was done in our behalf. Sister Fern said that it was their meeting too and that they were happy to be able to help, she is so right. It is your meeting too and without everyone coming together it wouldn't have been much fun or we wouldn't have received that blessing of God. Thank you everyone and we hope to see you again next March. Susie and I are hopeful to see a good many of you this summer, if God wills. Love you all.

Denny and Susie Davis
For the Yuma Congregation

PLEASANT VIEW
STILLWELL, OKLAHOMA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Just a note to say hello to everyone and to let you know what has been going on at Pleasant View. We had a very bad ice storm in January and were without electricity and water for 13 days. Some members went even longer without electricity. We were very blessed to have Brother Steve and Sister Cheryl Baird that let us invade their home and shower during that time.

On the 16th of March, our son Robert Fuson Jr. was hospitalized due to a pressure sore. Once in the hospital the sore became infected with MRSA and had to be surgically closed on March 20th. He came home from the hospital on March 30th. Since the day of his surgery he is not allowed to sit up or roll over. We had to get a hospital bed at home for him to recover in. He is going back to the doctor on April 16th and we hope to at least get the news that he can began to sit again. This has been a very trying time for him and our whole family. Thank you for the prayers for his recovery and please continue to pray for him as he has a long road ahead of him. This is his senior year in high school and he is missing a big chunk of it. He would love to hear from anyone that could send him a card or message. Robert Fuson Jr. Rt. 5 Box 6860 Stilwell, OK 74960.

Other than that, everyone seems to be doing well. Our congregation is very small and we would love to have anyone that can to come and worship with us. So if you are coming to visit or just passing through we would love to fellowship with you.

Robert and Christina Fuson
Pleasant View Congregation

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

Good afternoon Brethren,

I am in the process of putting out info concerning the meeting in OKC (actually Nicoma Park, a suburb of OKC) for the weekend of June 12-14, 2009. The particulars are in the attached document. If possible, please print in the Courier and the Fruits of the Spirit. We would appreciate the notice.

Thanks for all you do in communicating with the members and the Churches. Hope to see you this summer at the meetings.

Bro. Roger Walkingstick

Oklahoma City Meeting Notification

The Moore Ave. Church of Christ is having a weekend meeting in Nicoma Park, OK (suburb of Oklahoma City) on June 12-14, 2009. Church service each night (Friday and Saturday) will begin at 7:30. Sunday morning service is at 10:30. Sunday afternoon service will be at approximately 2:00 p.m. Bro. Richard Johnston and Bro. Bill McCay Jr. of the Yakima, WA. congregation will be speaking. All are welcome and we hope you will come. Come and enjoy gospel worship, good fellowship, food and fun, church activities and sight-seeing during the day on Saturday. Dinner on Saturday evening before church and lunch on Sunday after morning service.

Directions to Moore Ave Church of Christ in Nicoma Park, OK (just east of Oklahoma City)

As you travel on Interstate 40 (I-40) exit on the 159B exit onto Douglas Boulevard and continue north for 4 miles. At the intersection of Douglas Boulevard and NE 23rd, turn right (east) onto NE 23rd. Proceed 1 mile east and continue through the intersection of NE 23rd and Post Road. Continue east on 23rd approx 1/4 mile and take second street south (Moore Ave) on your right. Travel south on Moore Ave. approximately 400 feet. Church is located on east side of Moore Ave.

For additional directions and information call:

Roger Walkingstick	-	405-373-1344
Geary Johnston	-	405-567-3348
Tony Thoma	-	405-598-6465
Donna Taylor	-	405-341-6245

FLORA VISTA, NEW MEXICO

Dear Brethren:

We had some good news yesterday. (Easter Sunday) One of our youths came forward and was baptized. It was Devin Thompson, and I think she is 17 now. It is especially great to see a young person make that start on the road that leads to Heaven.

The Sunday before this, Brother Tony, and his wife, Jamie Shell, was here from the Cedar Edge, CO congregation and he preached for us. He is going to be a good one.

Tina and I are still hanging in there. I'm having some skin cancers taken off. Four down and one to go. We are all doing pretty well. Brother Abe Lobato is getting better all the time, but his wife, Gail, had some heart

problems and had to have two stents put in. The next day, the plug broke loose and she almost bled to death before he could get her to the hospital. But all is well now, thank the Lord, and we are all feeling blessed.

Enclosed is some money to help with the paper. Love to all,

Rex and Tina Mickey

DENTON, TEXAS

Greetings to all:

I am glad to report that we here in Denton, TX. are doing well. I hope and trust this finds all in the brotherhood doing well.

We are happy to report the birth of our first grandson. He was born 2/5/09 to our son Keith. They named him Kash. He is growing like a weed, healthy, and spoiled by grandma already (grandpa helped).

We continue to meet in our home on Sunday morning at 10:00 am. There are 7 of us. We enjoy any visitors we get coming this way, and invite each and everyone that is planning a trip to or passing through our area of the world. Together we have 5 extra bedrooms and enjoy the company. Our home is just minutes off of I-35 and easy to find. (20 minutes from DFW airport).

Anyone planning to be in the DFW area, please feel free to worship and fellowship with us. You can contact: Mick Boen 940-580-0129.

Again we wish all of our sisters and brothers are doing well.

With brotherly love,
Mick Boen

NEWCASTLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Would like to invite you and yours to a weekend of Christian fellowship, spiritual singing and Gospel preaching on May 8th, 9th and 10th
We will hear some good gospel sermons from Bro. Jerry McCay of the Lorenzo Church of Christ.

Friday the 8th –services at 7:00 PM with fellowship, Ice cream and cake to follow!

Saturday the 9th – dinner at 6:00 PM - services at 7:30 PM

Sunday the 10th – services at 10:30 AM with lunch, fellowship and singing to follow!

We will make arrangements for places to stay – PLEASE let us know when

you can be with us.

Contacts:

Stanley & Judy Goodwin	(H) 940-521-0259	(C) 940-550-5619
Steve & Darla Fikes	(H) 940-564-3267	
Wade & Edwana Fikes	(H) 940-564-5095	
Desley & Sherry Altmiller	(H) 940-564-3767	

In Christian love,
Newcastle Church of Christ

BROKEN BOW, OKLAHOMA

Update on Robert Fuson Jr.

Robert Jr. recently had surgery to help heal a pressure sore that had formed on his back. He was in the hospital for several days, but is home now recovering. The healing process prevents him from walking at this time. Robert has to spend the majority of his time while in bed lying on his sides instead of his back. An appointment is scheduled for April 16th to allow doctors to check progress. Please pray for a complete and speedy recovery, as this is Robert's senior year of high school and he would very much like to attend the end-of-year events such as graduation, prom, etc.

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON

Dear Brethren:

Well, spring is about on us, as it is starting to warm up. Well, in the 70's and 80's anyway.

All here are about as well as can be expected. Brother Leon Edmondson is still under treatment for pancreatic cancer, but has been able to be at services most Sundays. Our Cinde is having some different treatments for Parkinson's, and we are hopeful that this will help her. Please keep these two in your prayers, as well as the rest of us.

It is gratifying to see so many meetings already scheduled. I am sure we will be truly blessed by attending as many of these as we can. I look back in fond memory, at the many meetings that we attended when our children were so young and still at home. I am so happy for the many lasting friendships that we acquired over the years. The only sad note being that so many have passed on before. Prayerfully, we will be united in the hereafter.

Veda and I will not be able to travel around as much as we have in

the past, but are looking forward to seeing many of you in the three meetings here in the NW.

I will use this opportunity to urge you all to send us the news of your congregations. Without your participation, we have nothing to print.

Yours in Christ,
Bill McCay Sr.

Editor's Note: We are asking you all to let us know if we are sending you too many copies of the paper or not enough. We want to make sure that you are getting enough, but with the cost of everything rising so much, we don't want to waste our resources. Thank you.

Cypress Lake Camp Meeting 2009

The Church of Christ camp meeting held at the Cypress Lake Campground in Broken Bow, Oklahoma is scheduled for June 20-28, 2009. We have many inspirational, exciting, fun activities scheduled for this year's camp. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow Christians of all ages and grow in God's Word. We encourage all who can to attend and enjoy the fellowship, singing, and events planned. Dorm rooms are available, as well as R.V. hookups and tent sites. A workday will be scheduled in the coming weeks to help prepare the campgrounds. For more information on the workday or camp information you may call Dan Treat at (580) 584-2377, Doug Ferguson (580) 981-2243 or Gerald Buckner (918) 696-3249.

In Memory of Edwin W. Crowell
January 14, 1939-March 15, 2009

Edwin W. Crowell, age 70, of Broken Bow, passed away Sunday, March 15, 2009 at his home. He was born January 14, 1939 in the Redland Community, the son of Roy W. and Estelle L. (Mitchell) Crowell. Edwin was a retired radiator repairman, and had worked at Weyerhaeuser for several years. He attended Broken Bow High School, and was a veteran of the Army National Guard. He enjoyed studying the bible, hunting, fishing, and spending time with his children and grandchildren. He attended the Church of Christ in Broken Bow for many years. His parents, his wife Mary Jane Matthew Crowell, and a stepson preceded him in death. Edwin is survived by his children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and a host of friends. He was a strong Christian example to all who knew him and will be greatly missed by everyone, especially his church family at the Costilow

Street Church of Christ.

BIRTHS

Kash Boen To Keith Boen	2-5-2009	Denton, TX

PASSINGS

Edwin Crowell	March 15, 2009	Broken Bow, OK

BAPTISMS

Devin Thompson	4-12-2009	Flora Vista, NM

MEETINGS

May 8-10	Newcastle, TX	Jerry McCay
May 15-17	Pleasant View, OK	Jerry McCay
June 12-14	Oklahoma City, OK	Richard Johnston Bill McCay Jr.
June 20-28	Cypress Lake Camp	Guest speakers
July 1-8	Lorenzo, TX	Mark Perigen
July 19-24	Glenwood, WA	Eric Harper Kevin Lamb
July 26-31	Gleed, WA	Eric Harper
August 2-9	Yakima, WA	Jerry McCay