

Let a person examine himself

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BIG SANDY, Texas—During the spring feast days, many believers seek to examine themselves before they partake of the symbols that Christ revealed to His disciples shortly before He died.

When Paul talked about the symbols of the bread and wine in his first letter to the Corinthian congregation (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), he also wrote that a disciple should examine himself before taking the symbols (verse 28).

In verses 27 and 29 of the King James Version of the Bible, Paul is quoted as saying that a disciple should not partake of those symbols "unworthily."

The wording of that translation often influences people to seek to be "worthy" through their own human effort. However, we are reminded that our human actions cannot make us worthy of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Genuine repentance is the key (Luke 18:9-14). Notice the contrast between the good behavior of the Pharisee and the genuine repentance of the publican. (God loves good behavior, but good behavior does not make a person worthy.)

Is there a different English word that helps believers avoid the effort of seeking to be worthy?

The James Moffatt translation and others use the word *carelessly* instead of the word *unworthily*.

It is possible to partake of the symbols in a careless fashion.

I recommend that believers read through the letter identified as 1 Corinthians to see the context of carelessness to which Paul referred.

Here are just a few examples of the disciples behaving in a careless manner.

- The congregation had divisions because the members polarized around perceived church leaders (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).
- The congregation had envy and strife because it polarized around perceived church leaders (1 Corinthians 3:1-6).

- A man in the congregation was committing fornication (1 Corinthians 5:1).
- The congregation was showing excessive tolerance toward the man committing fornication (1 Corinthians 5:2-13).
- Paul listed five examples of sinful behaviors that were practiced in the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 10:6-11).
- Paul described despicable behavior of people when they came together to partake of the symbols (1 Corinthians 11:17-22). He told them that their behavior was shameful and a disgrace to the Church of God. (If you do not rush over this section, you might find his correction to be very enlightening.)

Let's try to avoid being careless in our Christian walk. Let's take some time to recognize our careless habits before we partake of the bread and wine. Let's confess our sins to God and enjoy those precious symbols.