

Vital Signs — A Triple Check Up

By Rev. Kim DeVries

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Opening Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit to guide us in our study today of Your Word. Help us to check the signs in our lives, learn where we need to make changes, and then empower us to make those changes. Remind us also of the wonderful signs of Your love and care for each of us. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.



Getting into the Word

When we go to a doctor, he or she checks our vital signs to see how we are doing. As we drive along a highway or street, we look at the signs to find the place we are seeking. We check the weather signs outside to determine what to wear. In life there are many signs we look at that have a great influence on our life.

Long ago, Moses sent 12 spies into the Promised Land to check the signs of the condition of that land and its inhabitants. Two of the twelve spies saw the signs of a great land and were eager to move in trusting God's promises. The other ten interpreted the signs differently and became discouraged and wanted to turn around and give up.

Read **Numbers 13** paying close attention to the signs of the land.

What vital signs of the new land were the 12 spies to check on?

What signs did the spies find showing it was a good land?

What did the majority of the spies fear about the new land?

What did Caleb urge the people to do?

What did the negative spies call themselves in comparison to the giants of the land?

Have you ever felt this way in the face of your problems and obstacles?

You and I may not be moving into a new land, but periodically we do need to check the signs of our own life and relationship with God. Take a few minutes to check the signs of your spiritual life.

CHECK UP #1

QUESTIONS ABOUT MY SPIRITUAL LIFE

Do I spend time in prayer each day? If so, when and where? _____

Do I spend some time each day in the Word of God? If so, when and where? _____

Do I worship each week with other Christians? If so, where? _____

Do I receive Holy Communion often? If so, how often? _____

How often do I remember my Baptism? _____

Am I involved in any kind of group Bible study? If so, when and where? _____

Have I learned anything new about God lately or grown in my faith walk in any way?

If so, what or how? _____

Am I serving God in at least one way in which I am not being compensated for my time and work? _____ If so, how? _____

WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY ABOUT THESE VITAL SIGNS?

Exodus 20:8

Psalm 122:1

Acts 17:11

Romans 10:17

Romans 6:3-4

1 Corinthians 11:25-26

Colossians 3:16

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

1 Peter 4:10

Take a little break to sing or read out loud stanzas 1-3 of "Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying," *TLH* 496, *LW* 318, or *LSB* 826.

The health of our relationship with God will determine the over all health of our personal life. Here our actions speak louder than our words. It is easy to talk like a Christian, but are we really walking, talking, and living as one of God's redeemed and sanctified people? Take a few minutes to check the vital signs of your personal life.

CHECK UP #2

QUESTIONS ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE

Am I honest with money? _____

Am I a person of integrity? Do I tell the truth? _____

Do I take responsibility for my actions or do I blame others for my mistakes? _____

Do I make excessive and unreasonable demands on others? _____

Am I difficult to please or get along with? _____

Do I have an explosive temper or get unduly upset over small things? _____

Do I follow through on my commitments? _____

Do I get easily discouraged and give up? _____

Am I lazy, and do as little as possible? _____

Am I disorganized and always misplacing and losing things? _____ If so, how could I do better here? _____

Am I using my time, talents, and treasure wisely and in such a way as to help others and to spread God's Word? _____ If so, how? _____

This can be an eye-opening exercise. If we are honest with ourselves, we will all see some areas where we can improve since we are all sinners. These questions point to

some important issues in our personal lives that the Bible says a great deal about. Look at these passages for some insights.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE SIGNS OF MY PERSONAL LIFE?

Exodus 20:15

Proverbs 6:16–19

Proverbs 10:9

Proverbs 11:17

Proverbs 13:10

Proverbs 15:1

Luke 12:48

John 15:5, 8

Ephesians 5:15–17

Most of us live in some sort of family situation or have close friends and associates. Our personal relationships have a great impact on our personal happiness and contentment. Take a few minutes to check the signs of your relationships.

CHECK UP #3

QUESTIONS ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIPS

Am I working hard to make sure my family, spouse, or friends feel loved and appreciated? If so, what am I doing? If not, how could I do better? _____

Do my loved ones and friends get more praise from me than criticism? If not, how could I improve here? _____

Am I dangerously flirting with someone or putting someone ahead of my spouse? If so, am I willing to stop and give it up? If I don't, what could the consequences be? _____

Am I setting a good Christian example for my loved ones? If so, how, and if not, how could I do better? _____

Am I giving my family or friends enough of my time and attention or do I often ignore them? How can I give them more of my quality time and attention? _____

Have I considered the cost of failure in my home life? _____ What harmful effect will my neglect of my loved ones have on others? _____

As we answer these questions, we need to remember that none of us is perfect. We all make mistakes and sin and are in need of God's grace and forgiveness that He freely gives us through Jesus Christ. Also, despite our very best intentions and all the romantic fantasies we see in the media, a happy home life and healthy relationships take a lot of hard work and effort.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE SIGNS OF MY RELATIONSHIPS?

Don't give up! God's Word offers us a great deal of direction on our personal life. Consider these passages.

Proverbs 5:3–5

Proverbs 5:18b

Proverbs 11:29a

Proverbs 17:6

John 15:17

Ephesians 4:26–27, 32

Ephesians 5:33

Colossians 3:19–21

Titus 2:3–6

We have checked the signs of our faith, personal life, and relationships. By ourselves we can do little to change these signs. We may often feel like a grasshopper in a world of giants. But we have a giant God who is bigger than our problems. He can change our obstacles into opportunities. In all of this, we need to remember the sign that makes all the difference: the sign of the cross. Knowing that Jesus offered Himself there to rescue us from all sin and failings and shortcomings changes everything. He gives us the desire to live a new life in response to all that He did for us. And with Him guiding and empowering us, we can become a modern day Caleb.

Read together Caleb's words in **Numbers 13:30**: "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

How can you apply this confident word of faith to your own life? _____

What signs do you have of God's love and concern for you? _____

As you trust these signs of God's presence with you, how can it make a difference in your life? _____

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, we thank You for the opportunity to study Your Word with fellow Christians. As we consider the vital signs of our life, help us to find ways to deepen and improve our walk with You, our personal life, and our relationships with others. Forgive us for our individual failures. Send us Your Holy Spirit to instruct us in Your way and open our hearts to Your teachings and guidance. Enable and empower us to apply these biblical truths to our own life. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

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