

Getting Started

Have you ever had a really hard-nosed boss (or coach or parent), someone who drove you ferociously, expected better of you, never seemed to be satisfied? Describe the case.

How did you feel about that person? Was their net effect in your life good or bad?

Into the Bible

Let's begin with Ephesians 2:8-9. How much does our *justification* depend on our works? (*Justification* describes how we are saved.)

According to Matthew 11:28-30, why is the previous question important?

Now, what does Philippians 2:12 tell us about our *sanctification*? (*Sanctification* describes our Christian life.)

What do you think of the imagery in Malachi 3:2-4? How does purification of metal happen? What might that say about the ways that the Lord purifies us?

Read Paul's familiar contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:19-23. What do you think he means when he says the works of the flesh are obvious?

What do you think about his (almost sarcastic) quip at the end of verse 23? What do you suppose he's driving at?

Do you think those things are as self-evident as Paul says?

Finally, read Hebrews 10:23-25. What's the connection between our regular gathering and our growing in holiness?

Digging Deeper

People often say that we learn more from our failures than from our successes. Do you agree or disagree? How do we learn from our failures? from our successes?

Do you think the same thing holds true in our spiritual lives? How do we learn from spiritual failures? from successes?