

Sabbath School Panel — Second Quarter 2026

Lesson 3 (Monday)

To Know Yourself

Objective of the Lesson

The purpose of this lesson is to **challenge us to examine ourselves honestly**—to see whether there is wickedness or pride within us. It is easy to point out failure in others; it is far more difficult to recognize it in ourselves.

The hope of this lesson is not condemnation, but **transformation**. Whatever wickedness lies at the door, **God has the power to change us**.

Opening Illustration: Elder Barnes and Backsliding Jake

The lesson opens with a familiar contrast:

- **Elder Barnes** — a good, respected man, confident in his spiritual standing, yet largely unaware of the pride that shapes how he presents himself in the pulpit.
- **Backsliding Jake** — fully aware of his brokenness, entering church humbly, yet boldly, because he believes God invites sinners to come.

The point is not to rehearse the story in detail, but to ask a deeper question:

Are we identifying with Elder Barnes—or assuming we are standing outside the story altogether?

Elder Barnes is in need of prayer. But so are those who fail to see themselves in him.

A Contemporary Reflection

A similar spirit appears when church members become offended by visible expressions of praise from those with a troubled past.

In one example, a young woman—aware of her failure—comes forward boldly to praise God rather than hiding in shame. Instead of rejoicing, others judge her for not displaying what they consider *appropriate remorse*.

The question becomes unavoidable:

Are we ever guilty of this same judgmental posture?

The Biblical Diagnosis

Luke 18:9–14 — The Pharisee and the tax collector

Jesus tells this parable specifically for those “*who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.*”

This story reveals an uncomfortable truth:

- The Pharisee compares himself to others
- The tax collector compares himself only to God

The danger is not Pharisees *out there*—it is Pharisee tendencies **in here**.

Inviting God’s Examination

Psalms 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.”

This prayer acknowledges that **self-assessment alone is insufficient**. We need divine light.

2 Corinthians 13:5–6

Paul urges believers to *examine themselves*—not to destroy assurance, but to confirm that Christ truly dwells within.

How Does God Illuminate the Heart?

Scripture gives us clear pathways through which God exposes and heals what is hidden.

1. Through the Commandments

Romans 3:20 — The law brings knowledge of sin

Romans 7:7 — The law defines what sin is

The commandments do more than reveal wrongdoing:

- They define what **evil** is
- They reveal what **God is like**

By examining God's law, we learn both:

- where we fall short
 - and the holiness of the One we are meant to reflect
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2. By Surveying the Life of Christ

Jeremiah 9:23–24 calls us not to glory in wisdom, might, or riches—but in *knowing the Lord*.

When we survey the life of Christ:

- His humility exposes our pride
- His compassion reveals our impatience
- His obedience becomes a mirror for our own lives

Christ's life does not condemn—it clarifies.

3. By Surveying the Death of Christ

To reflect on the cross is not morbid or macabre.

History testifies that **countless lives have been converted** simply by beholding Christ crucified.

The cross:

- reminds us who we are
- reveals the depth of God's love

- keeps us properly humbled
- guards us from despair

We see both:

- the seriousness of sin
 - and the greater seriousness of grace
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Final Balance

To know ourselves rightly is:

- to see our sin clearly
- to see God's mercy even more clearly

Self-examination without Christ leads to despair.

Self-examination *with* Christ leads to gratitude, humility, and change.

God shows us what is wrong—not to shame us, but to save us.