

Hard Questions

Today's Reading Proverbs 27:1-10

True story...A pastor shook hands with his parishioners after having delivered a Sunday morning message. One woman complimented him on the sermon and said, "You are God's gift to Ohio." Meanwhile, the preacher's wife rolled her eyes!

Now, I was not that pastor, but I do know that those who don't know me well don't always have an accurate, well rounded perspective of my life. To be sure, we all love to hear the wonderful words people like that may share about us. But, as the author of Proverbs 27:7 put it, "Wounds from a friend can be trusted." Those closest to me have the best vantage point on my life. Though their words shared in love may at times hurt, I need to listen to them. In fact, I have found it helpful over the years to even invite the regular input and pointed questions of some of my closest friends. We encourage each other and hold each other accountable with questions like these:

1. Have you been a testimony for Christ in your words and actions?
2. Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to en-

tain inappropriate, lustful thoughts about another this week?

3. Have you lacked integrity in your financial dealings or coveted something that doesn't belong to you this week?
4. Have you been honoring, understanding, and generous in your important relationships this past week?
5. Have you damaged other people by your words, either behind their back or face-to-face?
6. Have you given in to an addictive behavior this week?
7. Have you remained angry towards another person this week?
8. Have you secretly wished for another's misfortune so that you might excel?
9. Did you spend time reading God's word and talking to Him in prayer? What are you doing about it?
10. Have you been completely honest with me?

Granted, those are hard questions that necessitate vulnerability. Are there people in your life to whom you would give permission to be that open with you? What is holding you back from intensifying your spiritual growth through that kind of accountability?