

## A Painful Operation

In 1809, Dr. Ephraim McDowell's examination of a patient revealed that she had an abdominal tumor that would soon kill her. Though abdominal surgery was unheard of in those days, the woman finally persuaded the doctor to operate.

After a twenty-six minute surgery the doctor removed a twenty-two pound tumor. Since there were no anesthetics in those days, the woman's pain was almost unbearable. Why, then, would she so forcefully insist that the doctor inflict this agony upon her? Quite simply, because she preferred the pain to its alternative – death.

One of the most painful examinations that any sincere seeker of truth must experience is the self-examination that God requires of us all. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified" (2 Co 13:5).

Our goal should be to examine our life with the same objectivity that God uses in evaluating our character. Since He knows all about us (Heb. 4:13), and because His "gauge" is the only accurate one, we should appreciate any proper correction in our life.

If the exam reveals a flaw in my character, and if I want to avoid spiritual death, I will gladly accept the correction. If I want to die, I can simply ignore the warnings or refuse to take the examination. It's that simple.