

Standards of God's Judgment *Romans 2:1 - 16*

¹You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ²Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? ⁵But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹For God does not show favoritism. ¹²All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

The Bible reveals that God is the ultimate Judge of all things, including humanity. God's judgments are always right, fair and impartial. While Paul devoted time and space in Romans 1 to write about God's displeasure with and judgment of the heathen and pagans, Paul turned toward the so-called respectable and religious crowd in chapter two. No one is beyond the scope or setting of God's judgment. Some in Paul's day, no doubt, thought of themselves as righteous and good...especially when compared with the crowd described in Romans 1. But "good" in human estimations and judgments is not the same as "good" in God's sight and sovereignty.

God judges "hypocrisy" and "pride" just as sternly as idolatry, immorality and iniquity. There are no exceptions. For those who consider themselves religious, or at the very least knowledgeable about God and His ways, Paul declared in chapter two that God's judgment would take six distinct forms...

1. God judges according to *reality*. The absence of vice does not mean the presence

of virtue. While we may hide our guilt by judging others, God can clearly see reality.

2. God judges according to *integrity*. There is only one standard of judgment and that is God's. We cannot change or impose different standards upon ourselves or others.
3. God judges according to *opportunity*. As God's people we have blessings, gifts, knowledge and advantages that many others lack. God has given us many ways and openings to repent. A failure to do so forfeits the opportunities we have been given.
4. God judges according to *morality*. God never judges based upon position, possessions, prominence or posture. God looks at the fruit of our lives - how we have lived and served. God looks at how well we have lived out His plans and purposes and brought glory to Him.
5. God judges *impartially*. God never plays favorites. He judges weak and strong, wealthy and poor just alike. His judgments never vary based on gender, race, intelligence or prominence.
6. God judges with *certainty*. The day will come when God will examine the life of everyone. All will have a private audience with the Lord to examine how one has lived and served with what one has been given.

Thankfully, through faith in Christ and His work at the cross, we do not have to face judgment for our sins. Christ accepted that judgment and penalty in our behalf. But God does judge, evaluate and review our lives based upon how we have served, loved and represented Him. We approach that prospect of judgment with humility, confession and repentance. John MacArthur has written that *"No one can understand or appropriate salvation apart from recognizing that he stands guilty and condemned before God, totally unable to bring himself up to God's standard of righteousness."*

Applications . . .

1. Ask God to correct any judgmental spirit or disposition that may reside in you. *It is often easy to judge others while neglecting ourselves.*
2. Begin preparing now for God's final exam of your life. *The Bible makes clear what that exam entails. Make preparations now.*
3. Spend a few moments expressing your gratitude for the death of Christ at the cross in your behalf. *Consider the great penalty Christ accepted for you.*
4. Review the standards to which you hold others. *Do you see any harsh or rigid standards that you certainly could not meet? Ask God for the grace to lessen the judgments you impose on others.*

In his book, In the Grip of Grace, Max Lucado has this to say about Romans 2 and the kind of person Paul is trying to reach: *“He is a judgmentalist: ‘I may be bad but as long as I can find someone worse, I am safe.’ He fuels his goodness with the failures of others. He is the self-appointed teacher’s pet. He tattles on the sloppy work of others, oblivious to the ‘F’ on his own paper. He’s the neighborhood watchdog, passing out citations for people to clean up their act, never noticing the garbage on his own front lawn.”*