

THE DANGER OF JUDGING OTHERS

Romans 2:1-16 Part 4

Rick Edwards

I. NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE OTHERS Romans 2:1-5

Definition: "krino" It literally means to condemn. It means to sentence, pass a verdict.

LP Judging is the favorite pass time of the self righteous.

4 characteristics of a self-righteous person:

- **He accuses others and excuses himself. V 1**
 - 1) We label our own sin.
 - 2) We conveniently forget our own sin.
- **He measures other people by the wrong standard. V 2**
- **He thinks that judging others puts him in a better position. V 3**
- **He misinterprets God's blessing on his life. V 4**

The results of being judgmental: V 5

- A self righteous attitude of "I'm OK and everybody else is not"
- Storing up wrath

When is it wrong to judge others:

Romans 2:1-3 **When you practice the same sin.**

Matt. 7:1-3 **When it blinds you to your own faults**

John 7:24 **When you draw conclusions based on outward appearance.**

John 7:51 **When you condemn somebody else before hearing the facts**

Col. 2:16 **When you judge a person's spirituality on the basis of external observances.**

James 4:11-12

1 Cor. 4:5 **When it causes you to speak evil against, or slander, another believer**

II. ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE OTHERS Romans 2:6-16

When God will judge people:

- **On the day of judgment. V 16**

How God will judge people:

- **Truthfully V 2**
- **Impartially V 11**

What we will be judged for:

- **According to our conduct V 6-10**
- **According to our conscious V 12-15**
- **For our character V 16**

How do you get past the final exam?

You make sure your name is in that Book of Life. John 3:16. The fact is Jesus wants to save us from the judgement. He wants to be your savior not your judge. He didn't come into the world to condemn it but to save it. **Paul is simply trying to show our need for God, our need for salvation, our need for grace.** Our only hope: Rev. 20:12-15; John 3:16-17; John 5:24

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- Part 4

Romans 2:1-16

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We began this new section on sin in the book of Romans. Tonight I want us to look at what Jesus attacked more often, more severely, more directly than any other sin.

It wasn't adultery, it wasn't taking drugs, it wasn't watching TV.

But it was the sin of self righteousness.

I agree with Churck Swindoll who calls this the deadliest sin in the world.

You can find it anywhere. Whether you're rich or poor, educated or uneducated, Christian or non Christian, you can find this attitude of judging others -- politicians, prostitutes, pimps and pastors.

Everybody is guilty of this sin. You can find it everywhere.

It's one sin we tend to make excuses for. "I'm not really judging; I'm just a fruit inspector." This sin Paul talks about as being a major problem in our lives.

We talked about how all of mankind are guilty before God. We looked at what is probably the most realistic picture of what sin does to people in the entire Bible. It was graphic and gruesome. In Roman culture you could find every single vice. Likewise in American culture you can find every single vice.

But Paul imagined people reading that and thinking "That's not me! I'm no pervert! I'm a decent law abiding citizen! I'm a respectable person." If that's the way you feel, Romans 2 is for you. The moral self righteous person is just as guilty as the immoral person. In fact, no body is innocent.

I. NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE OTHERS

The key to this section is in the first verse. It's the word "judgement". *"You therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgement."*

The word judgement does not mean evaluate, analyze or discriminate or be discerning.

It literally means condemn. It means sentence, pass a verdict.

He's not talking about having discernment.

You who condemn other people. You who judge other people..

. Judging is the favorite pass time of the self righteous.

He says no one has the right to judge other people and then he says only God has the right to judge other people.

He starts off in the first four verses about **four characteristics of the self righteous person**, the person who thinks "I'm not so bad. I'm OK. I'm no gross sinner! I have a few faults and weaknesses but I'm all right." He says four things about this self righteous person:

1. He accuses others and excuses himself.

v. 1 *"You therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgement on somebody else. For whatever point you judge the others, you are condemning yourself, for you who pass judgement are doing the same thing."*

Isn't it typical about human nature to be unrealistic about ourselves?

Everybody else is guilty but we're innocent. It's everybody else's fault.

The common word for this is hypocrisy which means we're inconsistent.

- The worse kind of pride is religious pride. "I've got it together and you don't!"

These people judge other people particularly these people in chapter 1 who are really blowing it in an obvious way but to themselves they say, "I'm not so bad!"

How do we excuse our sin? He says, You're not really without excuse but you try to.

1) We label our own sin. We don't gossip, we're just sharing a concern. "I'm not critical, I'm discerning. I'm not lazy, I'm mellow." We relabel our sin. "I'm not negative, I'm realistic. I'm not unreliable, I'm flexible." We take what we judge in other people, but when it comes to ourselves we say it's not wrong, it's just our characteristic, "just the way I am". How many respectable do you know that do that?

2) We conveniently forget our own sin. "The person who thinks he has a clear conscious just has a poor memory." A lot of times we think there's nothing in our life, but we may not have thought enough about it.

2. "We know that God's judgement against those who do such things is based on truth." He measures other people by the wrong standard.

He compares others to himself. "I'm the arbitrary standard. I'm better than" We contrast that with the way God judges because God judges based on the truth.

The problem is we are blind to the truth.

All of us have blind spots, areas of weakness we don't see.

I don't see my own weaknesses.

You don't see your own weaknesses. Many times we don't see where we're at fault but we only see where other people are at fault. **It's ironic but we tend to judge in other people what we dislike in ourselves.**

If you have a problem with pride you're going to be very quick to judge people who are full of pride.

If you're very lazy you'll be very quick to judge people who are lazy. It's just our nature. When we start to judge things, we have the tendency to judge the things we dislike about ourselves the most.

When you see someone violently reacting to a certain sin it may be they have a fear of it or they are guilty of it. **We measure by the wrong standards and tend to play God.**

3. We think that judging others puts him in a better position.

v. 3 *"So when you, a mere man, pass judgement on them and yet you do the same thing, do you not think that you will escape God's judgement?"*

You who judge other people, do you think that's going to win you points with God? Do you think that's going to make it less serious for you? That by judging others we'll escape judgement ourselves?

The reason we like to judge others is it makes us feel better, superior, like we're not so bad. There's some faulty logic here. Let's say you and I both owe money to the same man. I'm in debt 20 million dollars and you're only in debt 10 million dollars. You say, "Since you're in more debt than I am, therefore I'm free from debt." Does that make sense? No. "His sin is worse than mine!" Does that negate your own sin? No.

We think by judging others, we're put in a better position, that we're going to escape judgement. God doesn't grade on the curve.

Paul says don't think that by pointing out other people's sin, that you're off the hook. **When you point a finger of criticism at somebody, you've got three fingers pointing back at yourself.**

4. He misinterprets God's blessing on his life.

This is the fourth characteristic of a self righteous person. v. 4 *"Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience not realizing that God's kindness leads you towards repentance."*

A self righteous person shows contempt. In Greek, what he's really saying here is **you treat it lightly, have low regard for it, take it for granted.**

Many people presume on God's goodness. They take it for granted. It's the attitude of "Everything is going great, therefore God must think I'm great.

Everything is going smooth, therefore I must be in with God. He must think I'm special, a chosen person."

The self righteous person thinks he deserves God's blessing.

He doesn't realize it's all of God's grace and if God gave him what he deserved he wouldn't even be here.

He's saying we misinterpret God's blessing. We think that since everything is going great therefore I must be without sin. And the Bible teaches that God blesses our life even when there is sin. He does it because of grace.

It's amazing that God knows everything about you and about me and yet He's patient and loving.

How many times has God had a legitimate reason to zap you? You know lots of time. He's saying that our attitude should be one of knowing that we didn't get what we deserved! We ought to not underestimate God's goodness or take it lightly.

The purpose of God's goodness and kindness is to lead you towards repentance. The purpose of God blessing your life is to motivate you to change. That's the purpose. He wants to motivate you to change. It's like the old saying, "You catch more flies with honey than vinegar." The positive approach. God's goodness, not God's judgement, is what leads people to repentance.

Look at the results of being judgmental:

v. 5 "But 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 judgement will be revealed."

The result of **this self righteous attitude** of "I'm OK and everybody else is not" all we're doing is **storing up wrath.**

One day the dam is going to break.

In life you can store up one of two things: **wrath or treasure in heaven (Matthew 6).** What are you storing up? Store up the goodness of God.

Judgmentalism makes God mad. Why?

Why is it that the people Jesus got the most upset at were the Pharisees not the adulteress? It's **because they were judgmental. And they destroyed the dignity of other people.** Being judgmental is playing God.

Paul says only God has the right to judge. When I judge somebody I'm playing God. That's why cursing is wrong for a Christian.

All of this is accumulating and one day the dam is going to break. Then watch out! You who think you are spiritually cool are just as guilty as the person who has fallen into all kinds of gross problems like the person we looked at last week.

I thought tonight while we're on this subject it would be important to look at the seven passages of scripture on when it's wrong to judge.

When Is It Wrong To Judge

Seven times when you should not judge another person.

1. Romans 2:1-3. It's wrong to judge when you practice the same sin.

2. When it blinds you to your own faults. Matthew 7:1-3 *"Do not judge! [That's a command. Right from the mouth of Jesus!] or you will be judged. In the same way you judge others, you will be judged. The measure you use, it will be measured to you."*

If you're critical of others, people are going to be critical of you to the same degree. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

Jesus is using Hebrew humor -- humor by exaggeration. When he told this I'm sure the disciples fell over laughing. Why are you worrying about a speck of sawdust in your neighbor's eye when you have a plank hanging out of your head?

You're out there walking around and the plank is hitting everybody. It's the difference between nitpicking and log pulling. We are great speck analyzers. Don't do that. **It's wrong to judge others when it blinds you to your own faults. The results are you reap what you sow. The results of judging another person are you are judged also.**

3. John 7:24. It's wrong to judge when you draw conclusions based on outward appearance. *"Stop judging by mere appearance and make a right judgement."* When you look at a person and judge them by their hair, clothes, style, color of their skin, zits on their face, it doesn't matter... when you judge by outward appearance that's wrong. 1 Samuel 16:7 *"God looks at the heart but man looks at the outward appearance."* When you judge according to the outward appearance it's wrong.

4. v. 51 "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he's doing?" No. **It's wrong to judge when you condemn somebody else before hearing the facts.** Get the facts first. Even if your conclusion proves accurate ultimately, you're wrong anyway because you judged without getting the facts.

How many times do we make judgements based on hearsay? There's always more than one side to a story. There's your side, their side, God's side. Don't judge before hearing the facts.

5. Col. 2:16 "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to religious festival, a new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day."

You are wrong when you judge a person's spirituality on the basis of external observances.

What you eat, what you drink, what day you worship on -- three common areas of conflict in Christianity. Diet, drink, days. Don't get into disputable matters. Don't get hung up on these external things.

When you start judging a person's spirituality by external things like diet (one's a vegetarian, another eats meat), drink (one can drink alcohol and one can't), their lifestyle (one goes to movies, another doesn't), what day they worship on (one goes on Saturday, the other goes on Sunday).

What are these things? Later he says *"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. It's righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*

These are external standards. Christians disagree on these things. That's obvious. There's a lot of confusion. We all have our own list of don'ts. In certain areas of the country it's a don't for women to wear make up. In another area it's OK to wear make up but you can't play cards. In another area it's OK to play cards but you can't go to dances. In some places it's OK to go to dances but you don't smoke. In some places it's OK to smoke. Don't let the external standards be the basis for how you judge a person's spirituality.

How many church meetings do you go to? If you go on Sunday morning every week you're a good Christian. If you go on Sunday morning and Tuesday night you're a great Christian.

If you go on Sunday morning, Tuesday night and a home Bible study you're a spiritual giant!

We rate our spirituality on how many meetings we attend. I've wondered what would happen if all of a sudden we cut out all the meetings in Christianity, what would be left?

I know some people who think they're really great Christians because they go to church every night of the week. T

hey go to a different Bible study every night.

No doubt they're probably learning something but that does not necessarily be a true measure of their spirituality.

You can have tremendous knowledge of the word and be carnal. Don't base your spirituality on external things -- these do's and don'ts.

6. James 4:11-12 *"Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. And when you judge the law you're not keeping it but setting in judgement on it. There is only one law giver and judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy, but you, who are you to judge your neighbor?"* When did you become the self appointed judge of life? They serve the Lord, not you. When you judge other Christians, you're speaking against them, slandering them. He's saying, it's wrong to judge people when it causes you to slander another Christian.

It's wrong to judge when it causes you to speak evil against, or slander, another believer. Slander means to ruin their reputation.

This is a fine line we have to face here. There are times in scripture we are called to be discerning and there are at least four times we are called to judge, not with this kind of condemning attitude, but with an evaluative attitude. There is a fine line. We are to hate sin but love the sinner. We are to hate wrong but love the people that are involved in it. Ephesians 4:29. **This is talking about the whole concept of speaking positively about other Christians.** *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is helpful for building each other up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen."* He gives some qualifiers here on the way we're supposed to speak to other Christians. You speak in ways that build them up and not you. Speak in ways according to their needs, not your needs. Speak to edify, to encourage, to strengthen. We should speak positively to other people -- do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths.

7. 1 Cor. 4:5 *"Therefore judge nothing."* **Nothing -- how is that possible?** Look at the context. What is Paul talking about? *"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time. Wait until the Lord comes and He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts."* Circle "motives". Paul says it's wrong when we question people's motives. In v. 3 Paul says, *"I care very little if I'm judged by you or by any human court. Indeed, I don't even judge myself. My conscious is clear but that doesn't make me innocent. It's the Lord who judges me."*

Paul was continually being questioned about his motives. If you do anything in life you're going to have your motives questioned. There were people in the different churches, even churches that Paul had started that questioned his motives: ego, money, power struggle, empire builder. **He was continually having his motives questioned. Paul said I don't care if you judge me or not because I'm not accountable to you. I'm only accountable to God.** Then he says, Don't judge people's motives.

We don't have any right to question or try to figure out other people's motives. We can't even figure out our own. Most of the time we don't even know why we do what we do, much less know why other people do what they do.

Many times our motives are so vague and hazy and mixed that we don't even know ourselves why we're doing what we're doing.

Only God knows the ultimate motives of our heart. Paul's saying, If you can't even figure out your own motives don't waste your time trying to judge other people's motives.

These are the seven ways we're not to judge.

Romans 2, Paul says in the first five verses, Don't judge. It is a sin and it's just as wrong as the sins mentioned before. Verse 1, *"You therefore have no excuse"*.

II. ONLY GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE OTHERS

Then he goes on and uses this as an opportunity to talk about who does have the right to judge. He says there is only one person who has the right to judge us. That is God. v. 6-16 he tells us when God will judge people, how God will judge people, and what we will be judged for.

When will God judge people?

v. 16 *"This will take place on the day [referring to the day of judgement] when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ as my gospel declares."* In v. 5 it says, you're storing up wrath for the day **of God's wrath -- the ultimate day of accounting.** The day when all of us are going to give an account of ourselves before God at the throne.

That date has been set, it's already on God's calendar. It will not be moved, postponed. It's an awesome thought to think that one day I will stand before God and give an account for every word that I've ever said, every thought that I've ever had, every action that I've ever taken. One

day I will stand before God and I will be accountable to Him. The Bible teaches that nobody will be able to say, "God, it wasn't fair." Why? v. 6 God's been patient and kind and understanding. All of this time He's been patient for so long. So when will God judge people? On that day -- that day of judgement.

How will God judge people?

God judges people two ways. First, v. 2 *"Now we know that God's judgement against those who do such things is on truth."*

That is one of the reasons why God can judge and we can't. God knows it all.

1. God will judge people truthfully. That means He knows it all, it's based on fact, not hearsay. He's seen every moment of my life from the cradle to the grave. He knows everything about me. He knows every thought I've had. He knows it all and because of that He judges based on truth.

Hebrews 4:12-13. A corollary verse. What is the truth God uses to judge us with? That truth is the Bible, the word of God. *"The word of God is living and active, sharper than any double edged sword. It penetrates, even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* God's word is true so that it can judge our thoughts and our attitudes. *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account."* Nothing is hidden. Everything that ever happens, God sees. He sees truthfully.

Our judgement is superficial. God's judgement is complete.

Our knowledge is half, partial. God's knowledge is complete. We are subjective. God is objective. God has a right to judge us because He knows the truth.

2. How else will God judge us? v. 11 *"For God does not show partiality"* or favoritism. God judges truthfully **and impartially**. You can count on a fair trial before God because He's impartial. It seems today that men's judgement is not impartial. We are partial. We're harsh on some people, we're soft on others. A lot of times in our courts today it seems if you're rich and famous you can get off pretty easy. But if you're poor and know nobody they'll throw the book at you. God says, "I'm impartial but man is partial." We like to label people, categorize them and put them in groups. God says we're all alike in His eyes. That's why God is the only person who has the right to judge. Because He is completely true and impartial.

Three Principles of God's Judgement -- What will we be judged for?

When you were in school and took tests, wasn't it helpful when the teacher told you in advance what was going to be on the test? God does not say "There's going to be a final exam at the end of your life, but you won't know what's going to be on it." In Romans 2 God tells us the three things that we're going to be held accountable for at the end of our lives. We can know right now so we can start preparing for the final exam.

1. We're going to be judged according to our conduct -- the way we act, the way we lived, our deeds. v. 6-10 *"God will give to each person according to what he has done."*

God's going to judge you according to what you have done, not according to what you intended to do. **The road to hell is paved with good intentions.** This verse is a quote from the Old Testament. Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12 which talks about the mercy of God and God judges us according to our deeds. *"There is a personal accountability."*

God is not going to judge you according to what other people have done.

God is not going to judge you for what your husband/wife/parents/kids have done. You are only accountable for yourself.

Personal accountability.

God will judge you for what you have done. On the other hand, He also says, you can't blame anybody. You don't accept the blame from anybody else and you don't blame anybody else. You can't say, "If only... it was because of..." It's personal accountability.

v. 7 *"To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory and honor and immortality He will give eternal life. But for those who are self seeking and reject the truth and follow evil there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil first for the Jew and then for the Gentile [This is not a matter of priority but the fact that the Gospel was given first to the Jew and then to the Gentile] but glory, honor and peace for every one who does good first for the Jew and then for the Gentile."*

God will judge us according to our conduct.

This passage could be misunderstood. When you read it, it sounds like you can earn your way to heaven.

You do good -- you make it to heaven. You do bad -- you go to hell. Yet the Bible does not teach that at all. Paul is not saying that you can be saved by self effort, good works. Some people think if they can do enough good works, they've got it made or if my good works are a little taller than my bad works I'll make it to heaven. Most of us think we're good enough to get to heaven but bad enough to be fun.

He says God will judge you on your works. But what are the works he's talking about? Going to church? taking communion? keeping the ten commandments? tithing? What are the good works that he says get you to heaven? This very question was asked of Jesus in John 6:25.

Some Jewish leaders (if anyone was trying to work their way to heaven it was the Pharisees) found him on the other side of the lake and asked him "*^Rabbi, when did You get here?*" Jesus answered, *'I tell you the truth. You were looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.'* *Do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you. For on Him, God the Father, has placed the seal of approval.'* Then they asked Him, *'What must we do to do the works God requires?'* Jesus answered, *'The work of God is this: **to believe in the one He has sent.**'"*

That's the works that get you to heaven -- believe in the one He has sent. Who is the one he has sent? Jesus Christ. **You don't get to go to heaven by being good, perfect, or trying to be good because being good enough to get to God you'd have to be as good as God.** And nobody is perfect.

Trusting Christ as your only basis of salvation is the work of God.

Romans 1:9 The guaranteed result of sin, *"There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil."* Are some of you living examples of that verse? We all are. The trouble and the stress. Pressure comes from being out of the will of God. The trouble and distress of life comes from sin.

Results of living for God. *"But glory, honor and peace for everyone that does good."*

How is God going to judge us? First, by our conduct and then...

2. God is going to judge us according to our consciences. V. 12- 15. *"All 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."*

If you're a Jew (which means under the law) then you'll be judged because you knew the law. If you're a Gentile and you didn't know anything about the Ten Commandments you'll still be judged apart from the law. It doesn't make any difference. v. 13 *"For it is not those who hear the law are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. Indeed, when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by their very nature the things required by the law, even those they are a law to themselves since they show the requirements of the law that are written on their hearts, their consciences [circle this] also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing them, now even defending them."*

Paul is saying that the Jews had God's law in a code. But everybody else has God's law on their consciences. Each of us will be responsible for acting on what we knew.

How did we respond to what we already knew?

Just because somebody knows more than we do doesn't excuse us. Just because the Jews had God's revelation did not excuse the rest of the world.

The ultimate issue in your life is not, How much do you know? but, What did you do with what you knew?

v. 13, he says *"God is not going to judge us for hearing the law but according to our responsiveness for it is not those who hear the law that are righteous, but it's those who obey it."* **A lot of people go to church and they think they've got it made just because they're going to church.** They go to church, set, listen, they're interested, but they keep their faith on a discussion level. They never apply it. They never think of actually putting it to practice on Monday morning. It's kind of an intellectual stimulation or an emotional lift. It's a great feeling to go to church.

Paul says there is a misconception. You think, "God, I went to church each week and listened intently. I even took notes." Paul says that it's not the fact that you heard the word but the fact that you obeyed it that makes the difference. **Knowledge only increases your responsibility.**

The more I know, the more I'm accountable for. But even if I don't know anything I'm accountable because my conscious tells me what's right and wrong. We need to respond to it.

James 1. James is saying the same thing Paul is. v. 22 *"Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word and doesn't do what it says is like the man who looks at his face in the mirror. After looking at himself he goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently in the law that gives freedom and continues to do this not forgetting what he has heard but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does."*

It's not just enough to look in the Bible, but you're not to forget it.

That's why I try to give outlines so you won't forget it, so you will take notes. You forget 95% in 72 hours if you don't make any notes. James 4:17 *"Anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."* T

he problem isn't that we need to know more. I already know more than I'm putting into practice. I already know a whole lot more about the Bible than I'm able to assimilate into my life. Our problem is becoming living Bibles where our lives translate the Scripture. Someone asked me one time, "What's the best translation of the Bible?"

The best translation is when you translate it into your life. You become a Bible. We're either Bibles or we're liables!

Romans 2. We're judged for three things. First, our conduct. Second, our conscious. Then ...

3. We're going to be judged for our character. v. 16 *"This will take place when God will judge men's secrets [circle that] through Jesus Christ as my gospel declares."*

When he talks about the word "secrets" he's literally talking about people's motives. We are not to judge peoples motives but God can because God sees inside of us. He knows what we're really like. Just like in the previous verse -- if you don't know the law, it's written on your conscious. It doesn't matter what your religious background is, if you don't have a Bible you've got a conscious. In verse 16 it says God can look at your motives, He sees the inside of you. That's what your character is: Why you do what you do.

It's interesting that people say, reputation is what you are to other people, character is what you are in the dark.

Reputation is what people say about you, character is what God says about you. It says, "God will judge men's secrets".

1 Cor. 4:5 *"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts."*

There are a lot of unbelievers who look like Christians on the outside. They're moral, upright, don't drink, smoke, curse, chew, run with girls that do... they are moral! They salute the flag, serve in boy scouts. They are moral people.

A lot of unbelievers look like Christians, outwardly. And there are a lot of Christians who look like unbelievers, outwardly.

Paul is saying in this chapter, You thought you got away in chapter one because you weren't involved in gross sin. The moral person has just as many things to be worried about as the immoral person.

Paul is simply trying to show our need for God, our need for salvation, our need for grace. He's doing a good job of it. He's showing us that we've all blown it. On judgement day nobody is going to be able to say, "My conduct was sinless. My conscious is perfectly clear. My character is spotless."

That's depressing to think the final exam is coming up and I'm not going to pass. I'm going to flat out fail!

Do you remember sometimes in school you had a teacher that, if you did a certain thing, you could skip the final? Maybe if you did a certain paper you could skip the final?

Good news! There is a way to skip this final, a way you can bypass all of this judgement. You won't even have to go through it. Revelation 20. We have an advance picture of what it's going to be like on that day of judgement. God says there's going to be a certain group of people who get to bypass the judgement. Passed on approval. Verse 12, *"And I saw the dead, great and small. I saw them standing before the throne and the books were open. [notice the plural -- books] Another book was open which was the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books and the sea gave up the dead that was in it and death and Hades gave up the dead [people came back to life for the judgement] and each persons was judged according to what he had done. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life he was throne into the lake of fire."*

That's how the judgement day is going to be. That's the final exam.

How do you get past the final exam?

You make sure your name is in that Book of Life.

John 3:16 *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

The fact is Jesus wants to save us from the judgement. He wants to be your savior not your judge. He didn't come into the world to condemn it but to save it.

But if you don't accept Jesus Christ as your savior He will some day be your judge. I urge you to settle this issue today.