***God's Justice and His Grace  
RO148-01***

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Today, we turn to Romans 11:22-24. Our subject is "The God of Kindness and Severity."

**Divine Viewpoint vs. Human Viewpoint**

All of us view every event in our lives, and every event in the world about us, from the perspective of human viewpoint or divine viewpoint. We view these events in our lives, and in the world, from the frame of reference of human reason and what people think, or we view them from the perspective of the Word of God, looking upon all of these events. For this reason, the same event can be evaluated with diametrically opposite conclusions. One is looking at things in the right way; and, the other is looking at the thing in the wrong way.

A spiritually mature Christian has an enormous advantage over other people in our society in being able to see things in a true perspective, because he has God's point of view as he looks on the things in his life, and the things about him. The good things and the bad things which come into our lives can only be dealt with properly from a divine viewpoint frame of reference. When suddenly, we come into a period of material prosperity, we have entered a period of a great deal of danger. How we view it is going to determine whether that prosperity will be a blessing, or prove to be a curse to us. That will be determined by our divine viewpoint or a human viewpoint approach to it, to be able to put the details of life into proper perspective.

If suddenly you come to a position of great things, how you view it; how important you think it is; and, what you make of it will be determined by your viewpoint – human or divine. When you should find yourself in a position of power over other people's lives, how you react in that position will be determined by your viewpoint. When you've achieved something (you have reached an objective), whatever it is, how you view that achievement in perspective of eternity will be determined by your human or divine viewpoint. When you find yourself stuck with a disease (when the doctor comes up to you and tells you that you have a terminal disease), that requires having a divine viewpoint quality already stored in your mind, ready to go. If you view it from a human viewpoint, it will come out totally different.

If you find yourself suddenly in the position of poverty, and you're under financial pressures, how you view that will be determined by the viewpoint from which you look at it, which will give you the perspective, not only of the immediate close view of this life, but will give you the perspective of the long view. When your children disappoint you, and they turn out to be something frightfully different than what you hoped that they would be, then again, your divine viewpoint or your human viewpoint perspective is going to give you a proper evaluation on dealing with that.

When death itself enters your experience, only God's point of view can give you a proper handling of that situation. When you find yourself having stepped across the line from proper relationships and conduct so that you end up in disgrace in the eyes of other people, how you will deal with that will be determined by how much human viewpoint or divine viewpoint controls your outlook. When you find yourself in the position of being a failure, dealing with that will be determined by your viewpoint. When you find yourself frustrated by some shortcomings, your viewpoint will determine what your response will be.

So, I think that as you think about this, you will realize that a lack of God's point of view on life gives one a very false picture about life, and worse, about ourselves. For this reason, we find, in Romans 12:3, that God has this to say: "For I say that through the grace given unto me, to everyone that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." There is always that innate arrogance that is able to slip into our lives, especially when we have accomplished something, and especially when we have gotten ahead in life, and we forget who has been the source of our achievements. And we lose our perspective, and we begin to think of ourselves as being something really super, when indeed we are not.

Christians have a great deal of problem with this in dealing with one another. I've had to talk to somebody recently again who is in a little funky mood, because some other Christian has come down and been critical of their character, and what they're doing in life, and so on. Well, the person is really not all that bad, but the individual is just in one of these groups that sits around together, and they believe that they can find progress in the Christian life by a great deal of introspection – looking into themselves. This is a variation of Eastern mysticism – looking into yourself, because that's where all the answers are. So, we have this constant trading on ourselves, and seeing how terrible are the conditions in our lives, and how we can correct these things. And when you begin doing that, you're taking your eyes off the Lord, and you've them on yourself. And I've noticed that the first thing those people do is drift off from instruction in the Word of God, and they get into these sharings (examining one another).

**Worms**

So, I told this person, who should have known better, "Please remember that the bottom line of the Christian life in experience is one worm speaking to another worm. And when one worm wants to discuss with you about the dirt he sees flowing through you." And when you look at a worm, especially in the sunlight, you can see all that dirt going through it. It is fascinating. I always like to look at worms. Sometimes I squash them to see if that's really inside. And that dirt is going through. I reminded this person that: "What you should remember is that you take a look at who's being a little arrogant with you, and to least remind yourself that you can see his daughter going through him.

So, the Bible says, "Who do you think you are to put yourself on a pedestal of such arrogance toward other people?" Who do you think you are? Well, you think you're that because of your wrong viewpoint. It is very important that you maintain a divine viewpoint frame of reference, and that the Word of God is your guidance – not the thinking of people. Human viewpoint in religious matters is devastating. It is the kiss of death.

In 1 Corinthians 10:12, we therefore have this summary statement: "Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall." And that is the principle. When you begin to think very highly of yourself, you're going to be brought down. You may be a fine participating Christians who appreciates the Word of God, and who has some perspective. And when you start getting very arrogant about yourself, pretty soon, we're not going to see in this congregation anymore. You're just going to be exasperated.

Well, in Romans 11, the apostle Paul has been warning the gentiles not to be arrogant toward the Jews whom they have replaced in the tree of God's blessing. He is reminding the gentiles that they're as much worms as are the Jews, and that the dirt is flowing through them as much as it’s flowing through the Jews. So, the issue is not who is better and who is superior. But the issue is what the grace of God has chosen to be with each. The Jews were removed from the tree of blessing because of their lack of divine viewpoint perspective toward the Lord Jesus Christ and toward the Word of God. The gentiles, who chose to operate on human viewpoint, will also be removed from blessing in that tree. God will judge any Jew or any gentile who does not function on the divine viewpoint principles of the Word of God, the Bible.

For this reason, Romans 2: 11 says, "For there is no respect of persons with God." God treats everybody equally. The same God who, in holy wrath, breaks the Jews off from the tree of blessing, also, in grace, inserts the gentiles. And faith is the victory that makes the difference. Don't miss that. The same God, Who, in His indignation and anger, reaches up there and starts tearing off those branches of the unbelieving Jews. And He is snapping them out of the tree of blessing, and throwing them down. It is that God who is doing that with one hand, who, with the other hand, is picking up by grace and inserting the believing gentile into the place of blessing.

One of the worst human viewpoint misconceptions is about the nature of God Himself. Men arrogantly think that they can determine, by their reasoning capacity, what God thinks about any particular matter, and how God would act in any particular situation. That was the mistake, you remember, that we have learned that Thomas Aquinas made in the Middle Ages, when he did not think that the fall affected the reasoning capacity of man. Therefore, he thought that men, by their reasoning capacities, could learn spiritual things and arrive to spiritual conclusions. Consequently, when the church accepted that principle, it went downhill all the way into paganism, because, by reasoning, you cannot come to the mind of God. You can only come to that mind by getting it out of the Bible. Human viewpoint does not believe that God will exercise His wrath against the unrepentant sinner, even though the Bible says that God will do that.

**God Compared to Man**

So, by human reasoning, there is no forward progress toward spiritual reality. The prophet Isaiah stated that principle in this way, in Isaiah 55:8-9, when he said, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" By human reason, you can't even come close to what God thinks.

**God is Holy**

God is holy. So, He exercises both blessing and cursing, according to our works. God is holy; God is just; and, He is fair. And He exercises both blessing and cursing according to what we do. Galatians 6:3-5 put it this way: "For if a man thinks himself to do something when he is nothing, he deceives himself, But let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. I can assure you that, if the Bible says anything at all, it says that we are going to face God, as Christians, for what we have done, and we're going to account for our own doing, not for somebody else's.

**Everyone will Bear his own Burden**

The Old Testament was very emphatic about the principle – that when a father did something evil that deserved death, that he was to receive that just punishment, but his sons were not to be included. And the Law of Moses says, "You will not punish a son for the sins of his father, but everyone will bear his own burden." So, because your relatives, a century ago, did something that was evil, for which they maybe should have deserved punishment, that doesn't mean that you, their descendants, are to receive that judgment. We are all going to receive the consequences of our own doing with God. He is absolutely fair.

**The Consistency of God**

So, Paul now warns the gentile believers, here in Romans 11, to have a humble attitude about the fact that they have found themselves chosen for salvation blessings in place of the Jews, who had the proper right to that blessing in the olive tree of God. In Romans 11:22, we have indicated the consistency of God. We have a twofold dealing of God. Verse 22 begins with the word "Behold." The idea of that word is "consider;" "pay attention;" or, "Here is something important:" "Behold, therefore." "Therefore" indicates an inference. As the result of what he has said in verse 19-20, about branches being broken off for unbelief, and other branches being put in because of faith, and nobody has any ground for being high-minded, and to take that, if the God Who did not spare the Jewish branches, may be expected that, by His own fairness and justice, He will not spare unbelieving gentile branches either.

**The Goodness of God**

So, Paul says, "Therefore, in view of all that, here is a twofold action of God that I call your attention to. The first is called the goodness of God." The Greek word looks like this. It's the Greek word "chrestotes." "Chrestotes" refers to God's kindness, which is expressed in deeds of tenderness and compassion. It connotes the goodness of God in action. It is things that God does because of His goodness. It is kind things and generous things in numerous ways which He brings upon us. It's the lovingkindness of God which activates His grace toward believers. The gentiles, who had no special promises from God, have been showered with His kind blessings, including salvation. Now, that is the kindness (the "chrestotes") of God.

Ephesians 2:7 says that: "In the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." God has taken gentiles, who have no claim upon salvation, and mad them trophies of His grace that He could put out in his trophy case in heaven for all of us to look at, and be awed for all eternity – what God could do by taking a worm, and transforming him into the aristocracy of a prince in the family of God. This is the goodness of God.

**The Severity of God**

However, along with this same God, Who, on one hand, is goodness, Paul says, "I want you to remember that there's also the severity of God. This is the word "apotomia." This is the same God, but this is the opposite side. This word means "the sternness" of God. So, we have the kindness of God; and, the sternness of God. This word actually means, "Cutting off." It is made up of two words. "Apo" is a preposition which means "off." And "tomia" from the verb which means "to cut." So, literally, it means "to cut off."

In the ancient papyri, where people used the language that we have in the New Testament, these business notations, and other kinds of writings, on parts of ancient manuscripts that we find, give us a clue as to how the Bible uses the language of the New Testament. This particular word we find in the various papyri, and it means "to exact the full penalty of a law." This is the word that they used when they indicated that you're going to get what you deserve. The fact that it means "a cutting off" indicates that it's a termination stage. It's going to be executed, and that's the end of the line.

So, it refers to the strict execution of the justice of God against unbelief in His word. The unbelief of Israel toward Jesus Christ moved the justice of God to cut them off from the special place in God's blessings.

So, here you have both kindness and sternness as part of God's character. While the sternness was being exercised toward unbelieving Jews, the kindness was being exercised toward believing gentiles. The Jews were being cut out of the tree of blessing by the sternness of God, and the gentiles were being inserted by the kindness of God. There is a false view of God such that He has the quality of kindness, but He does not have the quality of sternness – that God is nice, and He'll bless you, but God will never send you into the lake of fire, because that wouldn't be very nice. And the Bible knows no such God. That is a totally false view.

The treatment now of the Jews and gentiles, then, is such that there is here indicated a comparison between them relative to the kindness and the sternness of God. On the one hand, God does this to the gentiles; but, on the other hand, he does this to the Jews. So, Paul says, in verse 22, "Behold (pay attention), therefore, as a result of what I have said in verses 19-21, we may draw this conclusion. The kindness and the severity of God on them who fell, referring to the Jews who fell from the rather olive tree of blessing, when they refused to receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior – that's the point in time when that happened. On them fell the severity of God." Today, God's wrath is being directed against the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ. The Jews today have been left out of God's place of blessing. They've been left to their own human viewpoint devices. They are not under His special care.

On the other hand, he says, "But toward you (the believing gentiles), goodness (the goodness of God – the blessing of grace salvation) – God's kindness provided the gentiles with the very capacity to trust in Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and Ephesians 2:8-9 tell us that God gives the unbelieving gentile the faith that he needs to be able to believe. So, first comes the grace of God. The grace of God gives the faith. And then we have the capacity to believe. So, the gentiles are now God's main channel of blessing and witnessing, although this will change in the millennium, where it will go back to the Jews.

Then he makes a very interesting statement. While all of us gentiles breathe a sigh of relief, and we're very happy to hear that we're in such a good situation with God, he said, "On them who fell (the Jews) – they got God's sternness. But on you (the believing gentiles), you have received God's kindness." Then he says, "You've got God's kindness, if you stay in it." What? "If you continue in His kindness." The "if" is the Greek word "ean." "Ean" is the way in which the Greek Bible gives us the signal that we're getting a third-class conditions. A third-place condition is the "if" that indicates that maybe you will; and, maybe you won't. There's an uncertainty. If you do, certain things will happen. If you don't, certain other things will happen.

So, Paul says, "Yes, you gentiles are in the kindness of God, if (maybe you will; and, maybe you won't) stay in that kindness – if you will continue in it. The word "continue" is the Greek word "epimeno." ""Epimeno" means "to remain" in something. Here, it is present tense – constantly abiding in. It is active voice – the gentile believer's personal status. Then it's the subjunctive mood, which in the Greek, tells us that this is a potential. That's why we've got a third-class. When you use this word "ean" as the "if," and you attach it here to a subjunctive, the Bible immediately tells us that is third-class: maybe yes; and, maybe no. It says maybe you will stay in the kindness of God; and, maybe you won't/ If a Christian remains in the sphere of God' kindness, then he will remain in the tree of blessings. Blessings from God are only for those who are in a position to receive them.

**Remaining in the Kindness of God**

Now, how are you going to make sure that you stay in the receiving line of God's blessing? How are you going to make sure that you stay on the receiving end of your prayer life; of all of your human relationships; of all of your handling of your prosperity or your poverty; or, everything else in life? How are you going to stay on that side of the goodness (the kindness) of God? The way the gentile remains in the kindness of God is by maintaining his inner circle of temple fellowship. You walk in confession of known sins with God the Father. That is the first step, as per 1 John 1:9 – the confession of known sins.

Secondly, you do this by not turning away from feeding on the doctrines of the Word of God. In Colossians 1:22-23, we have this statement: "In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreproveable in His sight." Wow! "In the body of his flesh through, Jesus Christ, died physically, for the objective of presenting you holy; that is, that you will be absolutely without any accusation possible before God, unblamable and unreproveable in His site. Paul just piles up one word after another to make it clear that when God finishes with us in salvation, and we end up in heaven, we are going to be as perfect as Jesus Christ.

Then he said, in verse 23, "If you continue in the faith." And there he means the doctrines of Scripture – the body of divine truth: "Grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature that is under heaven, of which I, Paul, am made a minister."

Matthew 4:4 says, "Man for not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." So, first of all, how am I going to stay in the kindness of God, so that it keeps flowing to me, and so I don't clog the thing off? I keep my sins confess. Secondly, I become, and I remain, a student of the Word of God. I don't walk in here in church on Sunday without a Bible. I walk in here with a Bible, and I open it up, and I proceed to be a student of the Word of God, because I know that they're going to talk about the Bible, and give me some instruction, and I know that it's going to go over my head, unless I can look at the text, and I can tie it to what I see in the Word of God. And I'll start building a reservoir and a bit of information. I don't forget about the Word of God after I walk out of this place. I don't go through a whole week and never take the Bible up into my hands, and sit down and read it. You get enormous instruction in just a little bit of reading the Bible, and thinking it through, particularly those of you that have a frame of reference.

In Berean Christian Academy, we begin our morning by meeting at 8 o'clock every morning. All the faculty meets together for reading a portion of Scripture. And we talk about it a little bit. The leader gives some guidance on it. And when you sit with people who have a frame of reference of Scripture, there's always something interesting that comes out, and there's always something that develops a line of thought, such that pretty soon the bell rings, and we have to secure, when we could have gone on. You can do the same thing. You sit down with the Word of God. You listen to the tapes.

One of our mothers, this morning, said that they were playing one of our Berean tapes, and her little three-year-old or four-year-old (something like that) said, "That's Dr. Danish's voice." And she said, "Yes." And he said, "I like him. He's very nice." And she said, "Why do you say that?" And he said, "Because he spanks me when I don't do right." And I thought that was so sweet of him. And I'm going to keep it up, to keep my good standing with him.

However, there was something more than just a little bit of humor here. This kid is listening to his parents because he also knew what (whose voice) they were listening to. They were listening to something that was instruction in the Word of God. So, they planted a very deep seed. It's important to listen to somebody teaching you the Word of God. That's an enormous concept to have given that child. And he has it. He's not even aware of it himself that he has it, but he has it. And it's going to bear its fruit. There's a dignity toward the Word of God.

So, confess the sin and live in the Word. And the third thing is dealing with God through prayer so that, through prayer, He can answer us with green and red lights, as to His perfect wisdom in each matter that we bring to Him. That's what prayer is all about – to get the red light or the green light, and to get the will of God in each case, so that He can communicate to us: "This is the path I want you to go. You're on target. Keep following it;" or, "No, here's a red light. That's the wrong turn. I want you to back off and take a different course." And then, through the Word of God, and through your living in that Word, and through the leading of the Spirit of God, He gives you the direction where the light turns green, and says, "This is the direction to go."

Well, the Jews self-righteously failed to confess their sins. They perverted the doctrine of Scriptures into traditions of their own. They prayed to show off in front of other people, like the Pharisee and the publican. The Bible says that the Pharisee prayed with himself. God wasn't in there, listening or caring at all what he said. And prayer turned for these people into praying *with* themselves because their objectives were those that God could not consider and could not honor. So, therefore, they were praying amiss.

**God's Justice**

So, to continue in God's kindness means to live in the sphere of such things in which God's kindness can operate: temporal fellowship – spirituality through confessed sins, and not in carnality. We are related to God in His fairness. We call it His justice. Let's put that into perspective.

**Creation**

As you all know, because you are smart (Carl Sagan does not know it because he's not smart), the whole human race began with two human beings that God created: Adam and Eve. It began, actually, with Adam. God made a perfect human being. He formed him out of the very dust of the ground. Then, when God was finished, He leaned down, and he breathed into those nostrils that He had shaped on that creature that he had formed out of the dust of the ground. He breathed into him a living soul – a relationship totally different to God than with the animals had. The animals had life, but this was a living soul – a person who reflected the very life of God. So, Adam seemed into being. When he came, he was absolutely perfect. He was sinless. He was super in every way. In time, God formed a woman out of his rob. And immediately, there was established in the human race, an order of authority: headship; and, subordination. God could have created both of these people at the same time, but He did not do that, so that there would be no doubt as to who was in charge within the male/female relationship, and who was to be subordinate in that relationship. After they fell into sin, that relationship and that subordination became even more important in order to keep themselves from destroying themselves in the devil's world.

Well, Adan and Eve, furthermore, as perfect people, were placed in a perfect environment in Eden. They enjoyed a life of luxury. They didn't have to work. They went out every night. They slept late in the morning. They did as they pleased. But they were also engaged in happy work. They had very meaningful work. While there were no thorns and thistles, and everything grew in a very lush way, nevertheless, it needed to be guided in its growth. It needed grooming. They dominated all of the rest of creation round about bottom. They were in charge of all the animals. It was a really happy time in the human race.

Now, how were they related to God? You all know the various qualities of God. How would you say they were related to God? What was all this flowing from, in God, toward them? It was flowing from the love of God. The love of God taking this man and this woman, and His love was flowing to them, in huge abundance – just pouring out. All of the things they received was because God loved them. Now, why is it that God had no problem in just channeling blessings upon blessings upon them, to such an enormous degree? It was simply because there was nothing to clog the love of God toward them. God was absolutely holy and perfect, and the objects toward which His love was flowing had to be equally absolutely holy and perfect. So, these people here were perfect, and there was nothing standing in the way of God's love dealing with them. God's love is absolute perfection. It can only be directed toward that which is compatible with His perfection and His Holiness.

So, the Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. The Father loves the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit loves the Father and Son. They love each other. And they can do it freely because they're all perfect. There's nothing to hinder their holy perfect love. Since Adam and Eve were perfect, God was free to love them. God's perfect love then showered these blessings on this perfect couple in this perfect environment. All of it was provided out of His love for their physical needs. Out of His love came the daily instruction in doctrine, each evening when Jesus Christ met with them in the garden. Out of this love of God came the provisions for all that their souls needed in their relationships with one another.

**Justice**

However, there were two qualities that were not functioning here in the Garden of Eden. There was no justice operating, because justice is the fairness of God. Justice is the retribution of God. Justice is executing judgment. There was nothing to judge. There was no problem. So, the justice of God was not a point of contact with Adam and Eve.

**Grace**

There was, however, another thing that was not here in their experience, and that is grace. There was no grace operating in the Garden of Eden. That was not a point of contact, because the grace of God has to have an undeserving object to go to. Grace is when you have a need, and you don't deserve to be helped. Then grace comes in. So, justice and grace were not in operation. Only the love of God enveloped these two people. What a perfect situation!

So, while God's standard of absolute righteousness is not violated, there is no contact with the justice of God, and there is no contact with the grace of God. The goodness of God, in Romans 11:20, the kindness of God, is in fact the love of God being expressed in grace. When Paul refers to the kindness of God, that's God's love being expressed, and it's the result of grace. When he speaks about the severity of God, that is the justice of God. The sternness of God is His justice in action.

Now, Eden was a wonderful place because Adam and Eve had the point of contact with God of His love alone. There was no grace and no justice to worry about. They were both sinless, so there was no violation of God's character of absolute righteousness, which required any action by divine justice. They were both perfect in their ways, so they did not need God's grace to meet them because they were undeserving.

**A Vegetarian Diet**

The point of testing, however, was to make the difference. God established this garden, and this beautiful garden had everything in it. He put one tree in the garden. Then over here He put another tree. Both of these were right in the center of the garden. One was the tree of life. The other was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This whole garden was full of all kinds of trees. The original diet of mankind was vegetarian. You were to eat seeds. You were to eat fruit. You were to eat leafy green things. They were not to eat animals. And this is interesting because this kind of a diet, while it was expanded after the flood into the diet of meat to a limited degree, nevertheless, the diet that is described for man in the Garden of Eden is the diet that gives maximum good health to this very day.

**Fatty Foods**

In some outer reaches (I think that it's in Tibet), there is the Hunza people. And they walk around not knowing what cancer means. You talk about heart attacks. They don't know what heart attacks are. You talk about diabetes, and they don't know what that is. You talk about all of these debilitating diseases, and they don't know anything about. And they live, on average, to be 120 years old, in great virility and great strength. Do you know what they eat? No fats. They live on a Garden of Eden basic diet. That's the significant thing. They're not eating cheese and not eating dairy products? They're not eating all these cholesterol developing things. They're just not eating anything that has to do with fat, which is one of the other reasons the Bible condemns the eating of pig meat. It's a dangerous, fatty substance. Now, these people are beneficiaries of responding and living the way that God made people move live.

**The Tress in the Garden of Eden**

Well, along came the point of contact. The tree of life was positive volition for Adam and Eve. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was negative for evolution. The tree of life they could eat of. It enhanced their physical life, and extended their physical well-being. And when they ate of that tree, they were saying, "I'm positive toward God, and I'm obedient to him." If they were to eat of the other tree, it represented Satan's kingdom, and it represented a totally different attitude. It represented a negative attitude toward God's laws.

So, all the relationships were perfect, in this perfect surroundings. They were thoroughly enjoying all of it. The only contact was the love of God. Well, as you know, Satan came in. Eve forgot her basic Bible doctrine course that the Lord has taught her. So, she became sloppy in her outlook (her viewpoint). And flattery appealed to her. The woman who is versed in the Word of God, and who is operating on divine viewpoint principles, is never a sucker for some jerk's flattery. She knows how to put that in perspective, and how to understand it, and not get hurt by it. So, along comes Satan, and he gave her the flattery. And you know what happened: she ate. And Adam came back home, and he was horrified at what he discovered. He realized that if he didn't eat of that fruit that she was extending to him, she'd be on his own. I don't know what God would have done if Adam had said, "No, I'm not going to go with you, Eve. That's a wrong thing that you have done. And I will not partake with you."

**God's Love**

However, the Bible says that he deliberately decided to go with it. The Bible says, "Yes, Eve was tricked." She was really deceived, but nobody tricked Adam. He did it by choice. The result was the same for both of them. Once they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there was now a barrier erected between them and the flow of the love of God. All of this was immediately shut down. They no longer had the love of God as their point of contact. Their point of contact with God now became His justice. His justice immediately hit them. His justice demanded satisfaction for violating absolute righteousness. And the penalty for that was immediate spiritual death, and also their physical death. Their desperate need was now for the grace of God to come in, and to salvage them from this terrible condition into which they have fallen, and over which they had no control, and no capacity to remove themselves from. Since God's love can only be directed toward His own perfection, which Adam and Eve once shared – and now they imperfect. They were now excluded from God's love. God's love does not go to anything but His own perfection. You must learn that. God's love does not go to anything but His own absolute perfection.

**The Angelic Conflict**

By eating of this forbidden tree, Adam and Eve sided with Satan in the angelic conflict, and they were now facing divine justice. They had failed to apply doctrine. They were now condemned to the lake of fire. You and I are all related to God today at the point of His justice, which he faithfully executes. We are not related to God at the point of His love. We, who are in Christ, through our faith in the Savior, have unclogged the line of love, so that His love does flow to us. But our point of contact with Him is always His justice. The love of God brings blessings to us as per the permission of the justice of God. The love of God cannot flow to anyone who the justice of God will not authorize God's character to release His blessings to. We are all related to God at the point of justice – not of love. We are all condemned in sin, so that all need God's grace to be saved from the lake of fire. God's justice is satisfied by His own provision of Christ on the cross, so that our salvation may be secure.

This was one of the kind things that God did for Adam and Eve, and for those of us born from them. He immediately declared that they were under sin, which meant that they were now absolutely incapable of doing anything to help themselves. Well, that made it possible for God to come in, to execute His justice upon His own Son, so that He could now deal with us in grace, in giving us a salvation that could not be contaminated and reversed. So, we are no longer in the position that Adam and Eve were in – where, today, everything is great, but tomorrow we can foul it all up.

**We are now under God's Justice**

We have a different relationship to God now that we are related to Him directly in terms of His justice as the basis of the grace that He has exercised toward us. What the love of God could not secure for Adam and Eve, His justice has. The justice of God operates, both, however, in blessing and in cursing.

And that's what Paul was trying to point out to the gentiles when he was saying to them, "Yes, you are in the tree of blessing. And that is a wonderful thing, provided that you stay in it." What is he saying to them? Provided that you stay related to the justice of God in the right way. Id God's justice cannot be satisfied because you have not confessed your sins; because you have not lived in the Word; and, because you have not dealt with God in prayer, then your blessings are not going to go flowing to you. You're not just under God's love, so, that He's going to take, willy-nilly, or whatever. You're under His justice now. And He deals with you justice so that your salvation is secure, but your temporal blessings (that prosperity) is also governed by that justice, not by His love. Do not think of yourself as being back in the Garden of Eden, where all you have to do is take it in from God. No, you don't. You have a basis now for receiving His blessing, but it is His justice. And if you violate that, the last part of the verse says that otherwise: You also shall be cut off." If you do not satisfy the justice of God as a Christian, not for your salvation, but for your temporal relationship in fellowship with the Father, then you'll be out of blessing as well. This is the basis of Paul's warning here in Romans 11:22.

With the justice of God satisfied, the love of God flows freely to bless what in you? Well, your dedication. Wrong! The love of God flows freely to bless your praise of Him. Wrong! The love of God flows freely because you sacrifice your talents, and your treasures, and your time for His glory. Wrong! Do you know why God blesses you? Because there is something in you now that He really loves, that His love can flow to. He has placed His absolute righteousness in you. You have become His perfection. And the only thing that God loves in this universe is His own perfection. And if God's perfection is not there in you, He does not have love directed toward you. He has love toward the human race in terms of mercy to meet its needs. But the love that bring blessings and prosperity in every way is the love that flows from compatibility with His justice. The flow of love blessing to the redeemed is governed by maintaining a proper relationship to the justice of God. What the absolute righteousness of God demands of man, the justice of God executes. That's how it works.

**Grace**

Once Adam and Eve were condemned by the justice of God, they then qualified for all the marbles of grace. Under the status of perfection, grace was impossible. Under the imperfections, grace became operative. The thing that carried man from his perfection to the glories of grace, was the justice of God. God, as our judge, declares us under sin, so that we're totally undeserving; totally helpless; and, totally doomed. Nobody can appeal to you to do something, because you can't do anything. Condemnation preceded our justification by grace. We, as Christians, are to maintain our position and the flow of God's love through faith; through the Word of God' and, through Holy Spirit-led prayer. Then we're prepared to enter heaven, and to enjoy the rewards that we have stored there.

We summarize today with two verses from Jude 20-21, where Jude said, "But you, beloved (born-again Christians), building up yourselves (moving to spiritual maturity), on your most holy faith" – on what? On your Bible doctrine – growing to maturity on your intake and functioning upon the doctrines of Scripture, and praying in the Holy Spirit. You are going to maturity on what? By your prayer life in the Holy Spirit to get the red and green signals that you need in everyday life. Keep yourselves in the love of God. Isn't that interesting? Keep yourself in the love of God. How does Jude say to do that? By building yourselves up in the doctrines of Scripture, and staying in prayer. And, of course, you can neither learn the doctrines of Scripture and live on them; nor, can you pray effectively, if you have not confessed known sins. Then, he says that: "You will keep yourself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" – looking for that ultimate expression of mercy when He comes to give us that eternal life.

It is a wonderful thing to contact God at the point of His justice. That might seem frightening at first, but when you think about it, you realize how secure it makes everything. His justice is already satisfied? He has been propitiated through the death of His Son. Now He can take care of your salvation. That was the hard part. Now, if you will do your part through living in temporary fellowship, His love will be free to flow through you because His justice is being satisfied. And His grace has given you the basis for that to happen. How foolish it is for us to live under all these human-viewpoint, disoriented ways and misconceptions, and to walk around as the sons and daughters of the royal King of Heaven, and to not understand how rich we are, just because we don't know how to open the spigot of God's love blessings, which must come upon the satisfaction of His justice.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)