***The Judgment Seat of Christ
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We are studying Romans 14:1-12 as we continue with the topic of "The Spirit of Toleration." This is segment number seven.

We have learned that some Christians are spiritually mature, while others remain immature. We learn that from the statements of Scripture. We learn that from our own experience. In Romans 14, the apostle Paul refers to these two types of Christians as strong and weak believers. These two types of Christians have very distinct differences in their lifestyles which can be a source of conflict between them as believers. The strong Christian exercises his freedom in Christ on non-moral issues, which very often the weak Christian considers to be sinful and inappropriate conduct. The weak Christians burden their own conscience with unscriptural scruples to the irritation and to the disgust of the strong Christian. Because this situation is always potentially there within the local congregation, the apostle Paul reminds us that it is not our prerogative to pass judgment on the lifestyle of other Christians relative to non-biblical matters. The Christian's Lord, Paul says, is Jesus Christ, and not other Christians. So, only the Lord Jesus Christ has the right to judge how each Christian lives relative to doctrine and to the will of God.

Every believer, therefore, should make sure that he is satisfied with how he is living his life before God, because what Paul is leading to here in this chapter is to alert us to the fact that we will all give an account for how we used the years of our lives that were allotted to us. And having said that, I have run the risk of putting you to sleep, because you sense that we are on a subject that you have heard about before, and that, therefore, you have some background, and perhaps you might be tempted to think that you are already well-versed in this subject, and you don't need to think about it very much. That would be a very grave mistake.

The apostle Peter reminds us that we have to remind ourselves, and review the basic important doctrines of the faith, so that they will be sharp and clear in our memories. Nothing needs to be sharper or clearer in the understanding of a Christian than the accountability that he has for the life that he leads on earth. No greater tragedy can face any of you than to go through the years of your life from one end to the other (and maybe many years), and be hung up in some serious sin that never gets resolved, and that you never get out of. And consequently, you lose your life's potential. You never earn a single reward. You enter heaven as a pauper. And while you will stand there then and watch other believers who didn't have much on this earth, and who were very unnoticed, and who were very much out of the picture, suddenly, they are glowing as kings and royalty with great prerogatives in heaven, while you, who perhaps had a great deal; were in peoples' eyes; and, made an impact, are living on some poverty row in heaven.

This is the thing that smart Christians will take seriously, because it is a major biblical doctrine. Everything the apostle Paul has said in Romans 14 has been focused to the climax of verse 10 through 12 that we will look at now. Every believer should make sure that the life he is living at this moment is one that he is comfortable with before God, because one day, he will answer for what he did with every minute; every hour; every week; and, every year. The Lord Jesus Christ died in payment for the sins of the world. He rose from the dead, Paul indicates, in order to become the Lord of each believer's life. In life or in death, the Christian belongs to Jesus Christ. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is in charge of each Christian's life, and as our Master, He has the prerogative to decide the issues of life and death for us.

**Live and Let Live**

The principle that is set forth by the Holy Spirit in this chapter, through the apostle Paul, can be summarized as "live and let live;" thus leaving judgment with Jesus Christ.

So, we come to Romans 14:10. The apostle Paul says, "But why do you judge your brother?" The word "but" introduces a contrast to what he has just said in verse 9 about the lordship of Jesus Christ. And he presents a question: "Why?" And he directs this question to the weaker brother? "Why do you?" And in the Greek Bible, the word "you" is actually listed separately. And the Greek does this when it wants to emphasize. In this point, at this place, the point of the emphasis is even greater because this is the word that stands at the beginning of the sentence. The Greek sentence begins with the word "You." The reason for that, referring here to spiritually immature Christians, is that Paul is stressing the presumption of weak Christians to be passing judgment on the lifestyle of strong Christians, thereby presuming to take upon themselves the role of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may translate this, therefore, in this way: "But you, why?" And so on. In other words: "Who do you think you are anyway? You're a weak, immature Christian, and yet you're parading around here with all your opinions, and your legalisms, and passing judgment upon Christians who have grown in maturity and understand the grace way of life, and lean back and enjoy what God has provided as members of the royal family of God, and you're passing judgment on how they're living." And that is what he's condemning: "Who do you think you are – you? Why do you judge?"

**Judgment**

The word "judge" is the Greek word "krino." This word means to evaluate something. Here it refers to passing judgment on the right or wrong of another Christian's lifestyle in non-moral issues. Now let's get it clear. If some Christian is living in adultery; if some Christian is a thief; or, if some Christian is foul-mouthed; then we condemn him, and we criticize him, and we tell him that he's wrong, and we can properly judge that that is out of line. Anything in the moral code that the New Testament enunciates as the standard by which Christians are to live is very clear. There are many things that Christians are supposed to do, and many things that Christians are not supposed to do. When the Bible has spoken, then we can judge. And that's why the Bible, at times, tells us indeed to judge. But when the Bible has not spoken on something, then it is an irrelevancy. Then it is up to you to do whatever you feel comfortable with between you and God.

**Brother**

Here we are referring to passing judgment on the right or wrong in non-moral, non-doctrinal issues. And here is the Christian. He's the weak, immature Christian. He's constantly having this attitude of criticism. He's personally doing it. He thinks he knows the score. This word "krino" is used up in verse 3 of the action of the weak Christian toward the strong Christian. So, that's why we say that this first question in verse 10 is directed to the weak Christian. And the person he's attacking is described by the apostle Paul as an "adelphos," which is the word for "brother." This is a term of endearment, obviously. It is referring to a fellow believer who in the family of God. This is not just your neighbor. This is not just your fellow worker. This is not just your friend in some respects. This is somebody that is a family person. Therefore, being a member of the family, our relationship to this person must be governed by the quality of "agape" love, not by criticism.

It is a serious matter to treat members of the family of God in a sinful way. And these weak, immature Christians are doing exactly that. And the apostle Paul directs this question, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to them: "Who do you think you are? You haven't even grown up spiritually. You're still wet behind the ears, and you're passing judgment against Christians who are living in the freedoms of the grace of God."

On the other hand, there's a second question in verse ten. He says, "Or why?" And again, he pops in that word "you," because he is now pointing the finger at the strong Christian. And he says, "Where do you have the presumption now to be passing judgment on the conduct of the weak believer?" Or: "You, indeed, why do you set at nought? Who are you anyway to be setting at nought?" The words "set at nought" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "exoutheneo." “Exoutheneo" means "to regard with contempt," or "to look down your nose at somebody." And here the strong, mature Christian sees this weak Christian who won't get out because it is the Sabbath Lord's day. So, he won't come out to help empty the Motor Mart of all that equipment, because he knows he's not supposed to work on the Sabbath day. Some of you who have not held that position up to now probably find it very attractive in view of the appeal we have made. And you look upon that Christian with those scruples, and you say, "What a jerk!" And you look down your nose at him, and you hold him in contempt.

**Legalistic Christians**

It is very hard to be patient with people who are legalistic Christians. And by that, I mean Christians who think they're going to gain God's favor by these legalistic things they do and don't do. I do not mean by legalism that people are trying to do what God says they should do, or doing what God says is right to do. That's not legalism. You don't do that to try to gain God's favor. But when you're trying to do something that you think will get you points with God, then that's legalism.

So, he says here, "Who are you indeed to be regarding with contempt (judging someone) in this way?" And you know, that's one of the easiest ways to judge somebody. It's just to hold them in contempt, and to look down upon them. This is the same word which is used back up in verse 3 of the strong Christian's attitude toward the weak Christian.

So, we can conclude something about the second question: "Why do you set at nought your brother? Why do you look at him with contempt?" We conclude that this is directed to the strong Christian. And again, he is doing this toward a brother. Paul repeats the word "brother" in order to stress this family relationship.

Some Christians live in full freedom of God's grace upon them, while others are very legalistic. In either case, the Christian is still your brother, and therefore he must be treated in love as a member of your family. However, "You, who do you think you are, weak Christian, that you should judge your brother or you?" Or, "You, who do you think you are strong Christian, that you should hold with contempt your weak Christian brother? For. . ." And he introduces an explanation with this Greek word "gar." It's a conjunction, and it introduces an explanation for this non-judging lifestyle:

**Christians**

"For all. . ." And this is important. He uses this Greek word "pas," which means all the stress that every Christian, living and dead, is going to face something. What's he going to face? He is going to stand before the Judgment Seat of God. The word "stand" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "paristemi." "Paristemi" means that "you're going to be called in to present yourself." What Paul is introducing is the great doctrine that, sometime after the rapture of the church, what is going to happen in heaven during the seven years of tribulation on earth, is the roll-call of all believers who have ever lived during the church age. We are talking about Christians. We are talking about members who are the royalty of all the saints of all the ages – those who belong to the body of Christ. We are not talking about Jewish believers. We're talking about Christians.

**Stand**

They will be called, probably alphabetically. So, whatever your name is, you'll know how early on you will be called upon to stand before God for your judgment. Those of you down at the end of the alphabet can breathe a sigh of relief, but you're going to get the same treatment that the ones earlier on got. So, you're going to stand there. This is in the Greek language stated in the future tense because it hasn't happened. It's coming. It's on the horizon. It is in the middle voice, which tells us that you personally are going to be affected. When the Greek wants to say that something is going to happen, and you are going to have a big reaction personally to what takes place, it puts it in that middle voice. Here's a statement of fact.

**The Judgment Seat of God**

What are you going to stand before? He calls it "the Judgment Seat." The Greek word looks like this: It is the word "bema." The Greek word "bema" referred to a raised platform. It was actually used where the Roman magistrate (or ruler – the king) would sit upon this raised platform that you came up on by a series of steps. He would sit there and pass out decrees and judgments on those who stood below him before that platform.

In Matthew 27:19, you have this word used as "Judgment Seat." In John 19:13, you have it used as "Judgment Seat." In Acts 12:21, it's translated as "throne." In Acts 18:12 you have it translated as "Judgment Seat." All of these passages are situations in which a magistrate or a ruler is passing judgment upon his subjects – those over whom he has authority.

So, this is a place where a judge hears a case, and then he passes judgment. The King James translation refers to this as "the Judgment Seat of Christ." Actually, the Greek Bible does not have the word "Christ" in it. It has the word "theos." It is to be properly translated as the Judgment Seat of God. And it is *the* God in the Greek, indicating God the Father. However, the term "Judgment Seat of Christ" is also correct because this same "bema" is called that in 2 Corinthians 5:7, where we read, "For we (referring to Christians) must all (no one escapes it) appear before (stand again before) the Judgment Seat of Christ." And there the Greek does use the word "Kristos." It is properly called the Judgment Seat of Christ: "That everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad."

We find from the Word of God that God the Father has placed all judgment into the hands of God, the Son. This is indicated to us, for example, in John 5:22, where, we read, "For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment until the Son."

Verse 27: "And has given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of Man."

In Acts 10:42, this is again stressed: "And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead," referring here to Jesus Christ.

Now since the Lord Jesus Christ is deity, and is, in fact, indicated here to be the agent of God the Father in judgment, it is quite proper to call it "the Judgment Seat of God," as well as "the Judgment Seat of Christ." When we speak of it as "the Judgment Seat of Christ. We are stressing that Jesus Christ is the agent of that judgment. He is making the decisions. When we call it the Judgment Seat of God, we are stressing the fact that it is ultimately God the Father to whom we are accountable, and He is the one before Whom this judgment is being executed. This is a judgment by Jesus Christ of the lifestyle and the service on earth of each Christian. And the purpose of this judgment of our lifestyles is to determine what special rewards in heaven we deserve after the rapture, and who of you merits the medal of honor crowns for special Christian service and living.

That's why, again, I direct you to 2 Corinthians 5:10. We have stressed that the Judgment Seat of Christ is going to be evaluating what you did in your body; that is, it's going to be evaluating what you did with your physical presence here on this earth. It is going to be evaluated as to whether the things you did in your physical presence here on this earth were divine good or not divine good; or, whether it was divine good or human good, and thus, whether it was good or whether it was bad.

The Judgment Seat of Christ, of course, does not deal with the salvation issue. That has to be settled, and is settled, before a person's death. But since we Christians are not each other's lords, we are not to assume the right of judging each other concerning how we lived in non-essential matters. Jesus Christ is the Lord, and He is the Judge. And what you do with your life as a Christian, you may count on it, that it will be very clear. There'll be no mistake on the records when you stand before Him.

**You Stand at the Bema by Yourself**

Now this is going to happen. We're talking about what is in the future. The Greek uses the future tense. It is history that is before us. And at this point in time, you can't stand there with your husband or wife. At this point in time, you can't be there with your mother and dad. At this point in time, you can't cozy up with your friends. When they call your name, you're going to stand there by yourself. And we've got all those seven long years of the tribulation to crank out this evaluation, and to pass down the judgment. And it will be done very efficiently, and very accurately, and with total justice.

It does not deal with whether you're going to heaven or hell. It does deal with what kind of a heaven you will be able to enjoy, depending upon how that place in heaven has been expanded, and developed, and glorified by the rewards that you are to receive.

I cannot tell you what the rewards are, because the Bible does not spell them out. But it makes it very clear that there will be a great difference between one Christian and another in heaven based upon the rewards they have received, though they all will enjoy the presence of Christ, and though they all will enjoy eternity in heaven.

The apostle Paul was very sensitive about this matter. He's talking here actually in this verse about something that concerned him all of his life. And as we read through the epistles that he wrote, it becomes very clear that this was an issue that Paul took very seriously. Therefore, we must observe an obvious fact. Here was one of the greatest men of God that ever lived. Here was a supreme prince of the men of God. And here was a man that, all through his life, kept coming back to the concern which he refers to here in verse ten – this concern of what God is going to think about what he did with his presence on this earth, and what he did with the years of his life.

It is obviously very ridiculous and foolish that most of us don't give too much thought to this. Most of us do not very often sit down and say, "Boy, what did I do with my time this week? How much has been invested in things that are really going to count for eternity? How much was balled up and tied up in temporal things? I got what I was after, but what is the impact upon the things of God? Tomorrow; next week; or, next year I'll be gone. What will have been left behind? What will I have taken with me into eternity because of an invested life in times and talents and treasures?"

**Eternal Security**

The apostle Paul was very much concerned about this in his own Christian life. He, of course, was a man who had no question about whether he was going to heaven or not. His salvation was not a concern to him. In Romans 8:1, you remember, we read this verse that reverberates in the minds of the legalist religionists. They can hardly believe this, where Paul says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" – period, over and out. What kind of a statement is that? That is a statement of eternal security. There is no possible condemnation for any Christian relative to determining his eternal destiny toward heaven or hell. He cannot be destined to hell. He is destined now and forever to heaven. Romans 8:1 is a very clear declaration of truth.

In John 5:24, this same assurance of salvation is reiterated: "Verily, verily," Jesus says, "I'm say unto you. He would hears My Word and believes on him that sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." It is because Paul believed that statement of the Lord that he could say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day." And there was no hesitancy by the apostle Paul in knowing that, no matter what kind of a crumb-bum he could become; no matter how he could miss the Lord's will in his life, as he did when he took that legalistic vow in Jerusalem, and then got himself in jail for four years, so that he was incapacitated and out of operation; and, no matter how far he may step out of the will of God, he'll never step out of the salvation of God.

So, that was not what concerned him. But he did have great concern that his lifestyle and service to God might not earn him the rewards in heaven that he could potentially have. He was concerned about wasting his life. He had a good time; getting a lot of things; enjoying the glamor of the world; and, doing all the exciting things of buying and selling, and marrying, and raising a family, and traveling, but then getting to heaven and having nothing.

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul expresses this concern when he says, "But I keep under my body." Here we are back on earth. This is what you do every moment of the day with your physical capacities: "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The Greek word here for "castaway" means "disapproved" – that after I have gone around teaching people the great doctrines of the church; the great truths of the freedom of grace; and, the great things that God has for the believer, the royal family of God, that I should live, and that I should serve in such a way as to be disapproved, and come into heaven, and discover not much in the way of rewards.

Now, Paul could say that. And notice that he didn't say that he was not walking around doing the Lord's work, or that he was not teaching people the truth. He is saying, "While I'm in the process of doing what I consider God's work. I am teaching true truth. I am teaching Bible doctrine. I am taking the lives of other people, and they're prospering. They're taking hold of it. They're believing the Word of God. And they're going up in their lives, and their lives are moving up into spiritual maturity, and God is showering blessings upon them. And then I get to heaven, and I've enriched all these people, and I find myself disapproved and pauperized." If he could say that, that sends a chill through me, and makes me think that this is a subject that merits our more personal and careful attention. Our problem is that all of us think that we're going to go on forever, and we're going to live forever. All of us think that we still have next year, and the year after that, to get on with the things that count for eternity, as soon as we get these other things out of the way that we need to take care of now. All of us think that our good intentions are going to count with God, and they are not. The thing that will count with Jesus Christ is what comes up on the heavenly computers as the facts of performance. And the divine good will be there, and the human good will be there. And then the judgment will be made.

Paul was concerned that the deeds he had done in the body would be the product of his old sin nature. If so, then it was all a waste. Paul himself told the Philippian Christians that all of his life was centered upon reaching the prize at the end of the run – the prize of eternal rewards. In Philippians 3:13-14, he says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. (I don't think that I have arrived.) But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind:" all of my mistakes; all of my fumbles; all of my weaknesses; all of my stupidities; and, all of my preoccupation with myself instead of with Christ – confess and forget: "And reaching forth unto those things which are before:" all the great things for which God is standing in heaven, tapping His foot, just waiting for me to come around, so that He can keep handing me these eternal rewards: "I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" – the prize of salvation, and the prize of salvation made more glamorous by the prize of rewards for Christian service done by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So, the apostle Paul did not want to be knocked out of the race. He did not want to find that, for some reason, God jerks him out by his hair roots so that he cannot continue in the race for rewards. He says this in 2 Timothy 4:7. Paul is at the end of his life, and this is the last book he wrote, and he knew he was going to die, so he makes one final letter here to his associate Timothy, of whom he was very fond, and of whom he considered his son in the faith. Paul says, "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." The apostle Paul wanted to be able to have finished the course. The apostle Paul did not want to find himself knocked out of operation by divine discipline as he sometimes was, because when you're in discipline, that's lost time in storing rewards in heaven. He did not want to find himself prematurely taken into heaven to experience a sin unto death, because that means that all the potential years of being able to store treasures in heaven will have been lost. He wanted to be able to stay on the grace to the very end.

Many Christians, of course, do lose the potential of their lives by wasting them on merely temporal things; by living in sin; by remaining out of temporal fellowship in reversionism; by producing old sin nature human good works, and considering it Christian service; and, by, in fact, finding real Christian service an irritant.

I have had many decades of observing Christians who served the Lord for a while, and then they found it a downright irritant (a nuisance – an interruption). And you might ask them, "What is the interruption?" They would say, "Well, it messes up my work schedule. It messes up my social life. It messes up the things I want to get done at the house. It just takes up so much time. It just is a drain on me." And they think that they have done the right thing by exchanging an opportunity of genuine Christian service to serve themselves in some way.

We are amazed, and we feel that it is incredible, that the Jews acted the way they did with all the blessings God offered to them, and they went off and worshiped those idols. We think it's incredible that Adam and Eve, who had such a splendid situation in the Garden of Eden, would have been dumb enough to blow it with sin. But we do the same thing. How often do we blow an opportunity of storing treasures in heaven in order to gain treasures on earth? And if you're doing that, the time has come to change course.

This is what the Scriptures mean when it says, "What shall it profit a man if he indeed shall gain the whole world and lose his life?" That's what the Greek word says: "Lose his life" – the potential of a life invested in the service and glory of God. And then God makes it very clear that He will not so much as forget a cup of cold water given to a child in need that He will not reward you for.

Many Christians lose the potential of their lives by wasting them. For each Christian, we must remember then, that every thought we have; every word we utter; and, every deed we do has a relationship to our eternal rewards. That is the problem. We don't understand. We don't choose to remember that every thought; every word; and, every deed has a relationship to what we are going to get some day in heaven.

Notice Matthew 12:36-37. Jesus says, "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." That's pretty sobering.

Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." If you go ahead and sow to the flesh, of the flesh you will reap corruption." You go sow to the things of the Holy Spirit, and of the Spirit you shall reap life everlasting, and you shall reap an enriched life everlasting.

For that reason, verse 9 says, "Let us not be weary in well-doing. For in due season, we shall reap if we faint not." What do you think he's talking about there? He is talking about the fact that you will, in time, be recognized for what you have done by the living God, and you will be rewarded for that.

Ephesians 6:8 says that every thought; every word; and, every deed affects your eternal returns: "Knowing that whatever good thing any man does (any Christian person does), the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." That's pretty clear.

Colossians 3:23-25: "Whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not into men. Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance. For you serve the Lord Christ. But He that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done, and there is no respect of persons." You *will* receive a proper return for what you do, good or bad, in your body here on this earth: "For you serve the Lord Christ."

How many times does it occur to me that I'm looking at Christians who think they are serving the devil; or, who think they are serving some human elements? And so we struggle to get them to be on duty for the Christian service ministries to which they are committed, and in which they are engaged, and to be quality people in what they're doing. And you wonder what must go on in their minds when they're slovenly indifferent, and seeking to evade, instead of investing themselves in a maximum way – standing around, and letting others do it. That's the dumbest thing you can do.

Oh, yes, some of us have to carry double burdens. Some of us carry a lot extra things. And some of you are smart enough that you never complain, because you know that when somebody has doped off, and what they will not do has fallen to your lot to do, and you execute with good grace, and good attitude, God in heaven chalks up another amount of reward for you. So, who's the loser? The jerk who would not come through in Christian service, who saw the way out; or, you, upon whom it fell, who had to carry multiple duties? You should rejoice as Paul did to bear the extra burden.

We have one more in Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Ministry to the saints of God; ministry to those club kids; ministry to those academy students; ministry to those in your Sunday school class; ministry to those training union children; or, ministry to the people of God, wherever they are, whatever they need – God is aware of it. And for that, you receive great reward. What better thing to do with your life? You are not going to be here forever.

Our sin guilt has been covered by Jesus Christ. Salvation is secure. But rewards are always determined by the future judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And at that point, while we will never suffer loss of salvation, we can suffer loss of rewards.

1 Corinthians 3:15 puts it very clearly when it says, "If any man's work (Christian man's work – Christian person's work) shall be burned (that is by the judgment of God Who evaluates it as human good trash), he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire." The very judgment of God that burns up his human good works and throws it out as trash – that very judgment of God, which is always just and fair, has also judged him relative to his sin guilt. And God says, "That's been covered by Jesus Christ, so you come into heaven." And indeed, some people get into heaven only by the very skin of their teeth. And when they come in, they breathe a sigh of relief. They've made it. But that's all they have. The enrichment of eternity will never be theirs.

**Confession**

When a Christian does get off track from the will and the Word of God, he must return by repentance: a change of mind; a change of attitude; and, a change of direction. And he expresses that change by the confession of sin to God the Father. That principle is laid out for us in 1 John 1:9, which says, "If we confess our sins, he (God the Father) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," which includes the sins we have forgotten or are not aware of it. This "if" is a third-class condition: maybe you will; and, maybe you won't. But if you do confess (and the word means "acknowledge" – admit it, and name the sin) to God the Father (and you should have had quite a few probably popping into your mind as you have listened to this exposition of this text today, such that you need to mark them down and say, "Yep, that's what I've been doing. I play the fool, and I'm through with it, and I'm admitting it, and I want to change the direction, and make a correction. That's what "confession means"). Then God removes the barrier between you and Himself; full fellowship is restored; and, you're in the inner circle of temporal fellowship. You're in high gear in God's work; in God's service; in God's favor; and, in storing treasures in heaven.

We may add to this Philippians 3:13-14, that we have read before, about the apostle Paul not thinking he has arrived, but pressing on in spite of his failures to the calling of eternal rewards in Christ Jesus.

**Our Sins, as Christians, will not be Judged**

Our sins, as Christians, will not be paraded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. That is true. The sin question is settled, and there is not going to be a television screen up there – a monitor on which you will be able to see all the juicy portions and morsels of your sin life. That, thank God, is in the past. And as He says, "It's buried in the deepest sea." But what is going to be evident to all of us is when our service and life are reviewed, we are going to see what's burned up, and we're going to see what's burned up in the lives of other people. We will therefore observe the evident loss that that Christian has suffered between what God had for him and what God is able to give him, and how far up the have is (the potential), and how sadly down is what he really receives. That's the issue. His sins themselves are no longer the issue.

So, there will be a difference in heaven between Christians – between those who have lived spiritual lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and those who were carnal under the influence of the old sin nature; between those who spent years in God's service, and indeed between those who were not saved until near the end of their lives, and had very little time for service; and, between those who were occupied with Christ, and those who are occupied with themselves. There will be a great difference between those who were consistent in the intake of doctrine and the stability of their souls, and the serving of their Lord; and, those who are erratic, being hearers of the words but most of the time not doers – coming, and not doing.

**Judging other Christians**

The improper judging of other Christians against which Paul warns us here in Romans 14:10 is bad, because it triggers the loss of your temporal fellowship. It triggers the loss of the feeling of the Holy Spirit. So, you are out of temporal fellowship when you decide to pass judgment on how other Christians live. Then you are not in a position to be receiving treasures. You are not in a position to be producing divine good works. So, it's really dumb to get yourself out of fellowship by being critical of other Christians.

The apostle Paul warns against assuming the role of Jesus Christ in criticizing Christians on non-essentials in their lifestyle. The Lord Jesus Christ actually laid the groundwork for this in Matthew 7:1-5, when He says, "Judge not, that you be not judged." And He is not referring here to judging on things that the Bible has spoken about. And those we are told to judge. But in these matters that are motives of heart, and of personal preference lifestyle, you are not to make critical judgments: "For with what judgments you judge, you shall be judged. And with what measure you measure, it shall be measured unto you. What do you behold the mote that that is your brother's eye, but consider not the beam that is in your own eye? For how will you say to your brother: "Let me pull the mote out of your eye, and behold the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! Cast out the beam of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to cast the mote out of your brother's eye." The Lord Jesus was not One to mince words.

It is very easy for church members to sin against each other by judging on the issues of things that are not their concern – arrogating to themselves what belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. On earth, indeed, a guilty person may stand before a judge in a court of law and be declared innocent when he is guilty. But when you stand before Jesus Christ, He's going to have the straight scoop. There'll be no deception. There'll be no miscarriage of justice. Christians are not really capable of passing judgment on each other with perfect justice. It is very hard for most of us even to judge ourselves perfectly honestly.

Therefore, our point today, in Romans 14:10, is that Christians are to avoid judging each other's conduct in the Twilight Zone areas. It is unfruitful; unproductive; and, eternally costly. Don't do it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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