

LifeGroup Discussion Question
1 Corinthians 3:10-15 Revelation 20:11-15
August 16, 2020

Overview

A word that carries a lot negative connotation is judgment. It is a heavy word which more often than not stirs up bad emotions. The word can naturally put people on the defensive. No one likes the idea of being judged. We would rather be the one judging. Matthew 7:1 states: "Judge not, that you be not judged." This is a verse in the Bible known by believers and non-believers alike. It is commonly misquoted when someone feels they are being judged and often used as a way to excuse their behavior. God is the ultimate judge and will one day pronounce judgment on believers and nonbelievers. Although some of us would like to have this authority; the judgement seat of God is way too big for any of us to sit on. In Romans 2 it states we do not have the ability to judge correctly because we practice the very same acts we are judging others for.

What does it mean for God to judge? Revelation 20:11-15 describes the scene before the God's judgment seat. There will be two books opened. The first one will be the Book of Life which determines your eternal destination. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, then your name is written in the Book of Life. The other book is a record of all your actions and thoughts in life. This judgment is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. It is important to remember the record in this second book is not a matter of salvation. Your eternal destination is determined by the Book of Life, but we will still be held accountable for everything we have done or should have done while on earth.

I have often heard the judgment of all our actions illustrated as going to the movies. What if God placed invisible cameras on us which recorded everything we did and thought in our life span? Then on the Day of Judgment we all sat in front of a big screen and got to watch everyone's lives. Most of us would not want our thoughts and actions recorded for a week let alone for a lifetime. We would be horrified if others around us saw what we did in secret and knew our thoughts. Romans 2:16 states that "God judges the secrets of men." God is all knowing. We may have secrets from others, but we do not have secrets from God.

I grew up in a small church of 120. Every Sunday we sang two hymns, had the sermon and then sang another two hymns. I called it the hymnal sandwich. Each week there would be a time of greeting one another in service. One greeting you never heard was, "Hey Sinner! How was your week?" Most people who go to church consider themselves to be generally good people and being conscientious or accountable of our daily actions is not something we think about. Believing you

are generally good before God is a misunderstanding of His Holiness. Christians understand the need to be saved from their sins, but sometimes we equally need to be saved from our religion. To make ourselves feel good we compare our behaviors to the people around us instead of envisioning ourselves before an infinitely Holy God. The issue with this is that one day all of us will stand before God and He will hold us accountable for all the bad and reward us for all the good deeds we have done.

At this moment it is not our religious activities that will save us. Church attendance will not save you. Volunteering will not save you. This is a scary point about the modern church. Some believers think that if they just maintain good church attendance and avoid their own list of major sins like murder, adultery, and idolatry then they are good. They have already accepted Jesus and have their tickets punched for heaven. What difference does it make how they live? We can see in both 1 Corinthians 3 and Revelation 20 that God will hold us accountable for all our wrong doing and reward us for our faithfulness. This level of judgment goes beyond just making a decision to believe in Jesus, but requires Him to impact every aspect of your life. To truly live in such a way where He is in control of all your thoughts and actions.

As I was writing this lesson I had to stop and go to a plumbing specialty shop in town. Since this isn't a place I normally go I decided to let my iphone guide me. For whatever reason, Siri decided to take me on a tour of Wichita instead of going the most direct route. Here I am driving down a direction I know is not right while listening to Siri tell me to continue. By the time I had to stop at the 6 or 7th needless stoplight I began feeling a very disproportionate level of anger rising up inside of me. I had visions of throwing my iphone out the window or trading it in for an Android (which I know would only make things worse). My thoughts were not good. I picked up the plumbing parts I needed and started heading home without Siri's assistance. As I drove home I began to think about how I need to finish writing this lesson on how God will judge our thoughts and actions. My angry thoughts did not affect my salvation, but God will hold me accountable. We all need to know our daily actions and thoughts matter. They matter to those around us and they matter to God. If we are to be a light to a dark world then we need to live and act like it.

Bible Study

1. What feelings do you have when you think about being judged for your thoughts and actions?
2. If we were to watch your life on a big screen, what parts would you want to skip?

3. Rules can correct behavior, but grace can change the heart. In what ways does God's grace affect the way you live and think?
4. Why is it wrong to think of yourself as a generally good person before God? How does this way of thinking distort your perception of God's holiness?