

Judging and being judged

Many critical Christians are like that Persian youth who was very meticulous about his religious duties. He would rise up in the middle of the night to watch, pray, and read the Koran. One night as he was engaged in these exercises his father, a man of practical virtue, awoke while his son was reading. "Behold," the religious youth said to his father, "thy other children are lost in irreligious slumber, while I alone wake to praise God." "Son of my soul," the wise father answered, "it is better to sleep than to awake to notice the faults of thy brothers!" If the knowledge of the sins of others arouses in us the spirit of censoriousness and criticism, confession has not accomplished its intended and hoped-for purpose.

Romans 2: 1 – 16

Paul had just been writing about the wrath of God being revealed against the godlessness and wickedness of men. He ends in chapter 1 verse 32 by saying: "Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

1) Disrespect for the riches of God (vs. 1 – 4)

- Matthew 7: 1 – 2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
- When we judge other we are really judging ourselves
 - (v. 1 "The Message") Every time you criticize someone, you condemn yourself. It takes one to know one. Judgmental criticism of others is a well-known way of escaping detection in your own crimes and misdemeanours
- What we are really saying is: "You don't deserve to be forgiven – I do"
 - Matthew 6: 15 "But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."
 - When you judge others you are like the servant who the king forgave and then went out and refused to forgive his fellow servant.
 - When you judge others you show disrespect for the riches of God's kindness, tolerance and patience towards yourselves and bring ourselves under His judgment.
 - We wanted God's riches for ourselves but have not allowed them to become part of our character to show the same kindness, tolerance and patience towards others.
 - "You who pass judgment do the same things (v. 1)
- Paul is referring to those who know God's righteous decree but don't do what is right or approve of those who don't do what is right – hypocrites
- Besides bringing ourselves under God's judgment when we judge other we are in fact also judging ourselves.
 - Many people have weakness in themselves that they don't like and when they see others with those same weakness they judge them
 - What they are doing is really judging themselves but are expressing their judgment of themselves towards others.
 - It is diverting the attention away from our issues to refocus on someone else
 - Some years ago there was a prominent preacher who always preached against fornication and adultery until he was caught with a prostitute.

Note: Preaching against sin isn't being judgmental but if the preacher is doing what he is preaching against he is being hypocritical and diverting attention away from himself.

2) God's righteous judgment (vs. 5 – 11)

- The very root issue that will bring about God's wrath is a stubbornness and unrepentant heart
 - This is manifest in rebellion towards God
 - Rebellion can be manifest actively or passively:
 - Actively: Always doing what isn't right.
 - A child is told by his parents that he must not smoke and goes and finds a cigarette and smokes. This is active rebellion
 - Passive: Avoids doing what he should do
 - A child is told to wash the dishes and doesn't do it.
- The problem when we judge people is that we judge on outer appearances and would tend to judge an actively rebellious person before we judge a passively rebellious person.
 - It seems more wrong when someone actively does something wrong than when someone merely avoid doing what is right
 - Our judgements are not based on truth and are often biased
- God's righteous judgment is based on absolute knowledge of what we have done.
 - He is omniscient – All knowing – and nothing is hidden from him
- We might say that we have believed in Jesus and had our sins forgiven but the actions of our lives might show that we haven't actually believed and are still living in our sin.
 - True faith brings about a change of life that "persist in doing good".
 - Lip service faith still allow people to be self seeking, reject the truth and follow evil.
- 2 Corinthians 5: 10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."
 - When we stand before God he will either pronounce us innocent according to our faith in Christ or guilty according to our rejection of Christ

3) Doing right in God's sight (vs. 12 – 16)

- We will all be judged in accordance to the light that we have received.
- Those who sin apart from the law will perish apart from the law
 - God will not judge people who had not had the law of Moses or even the Gospel according to it as this would not be a righteous judgment.
 - Romans 1: 20 :For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."
- All who sin under the law will be judge by the law
 - We who have the Gospel and know what is right need to live in obedience to the truth that we have received.
 - If we know plainly what is right in God's sight yet do not obey it is rebellion.
 - We will then not merely be judged according to the wrong that w have done but according to the rebellion towards God.
- Nothing will be hidden from God as everyone's secrets will be laid bare before God
- Therefore let us be careful to obey the truth that we have received and leave all judgment to God