

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. Brown, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Donna Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Nolan, Mrs. Owens, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: Mr. and Mrs. Nick Law.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Standing Before the Judgment Seat of Christ

By Derek Long

Many factors may influence why people do what is right and fail to do what is evil. Societal pressure can lead some people to do the right thing or avoid doing something wrong. We can see where people were influenced to do the wrong thing due to societal pressure at times (John 12:42-43) and yet people can be influenced to do the right things at times due to societal pressures as well. A person may not steal things from another person due to societal pressures, etc. (Romans 13:3-5). Family expectations can lead people to do the right thing or avoid doing something wrong. Family expectations can lead people at times to do what is wrong (1 Peter 1:18) but can also contribute to people doing what is right (2 Timothy 1:5). Other sources of "peer pressure" in different forms might at times keep us from doing something wrong or motivate us to do something which is right (Hebrews 10:24-25). While these things might help motivate us to do what is right and abstain from things which are wrong, I want to suggest the Bible teaches these should not be our primary motivation for doing what is right or avoiding what is wrong.

In 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 Paul says, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God" (NKJV). Paul had people at times who were wanting to

judge him. Paul's chief concern though was not with what other people may say or think about him. If we become too concerned about what others think about us, we can become slaves of men instead of servants of God (Proverbs 29:25; Galatians 1:10). Paul might consider himself right but recognizes his own judgment of himself may not always be accurate (Proverbs 14:12; 16:2, 25). Paul's chief concern is what will God say about his actions. Our primary reason for doing what is right or avoiding what is evil is because we are seeking to please God and one day must give an account to Him.

The Bible plainly teaches one day we are all going to have to answer to God for the things we have done in this life. Romans 14:12 says, "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (NKJV). 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 says, "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (NKJV). The Christian aims to please God because he knows a time is coming when he will stand and be judged by Christ. Revelation 20:11-15 describe the judgment scene where all men are standing before God and are judged on the basis of their works. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 describes for us the purpose of man's existence. Verse 13 says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (NKJV). Why does a person need to fear God and keep His commandments? Why is fearing God and keeping His commandments the most important thing we can accomplish in our life? Verse 14 answers by saying, "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (NKJV).

I have had someone tell me in the past about times they did not want to attend services but went anyway because they did not want to have to explain to me why they did not go (Hebrews 10:25). I recently had someone tell me they want to win the lottery but they will not buy a lottery ticket because if they won they would have to explain to me where all the money came from. I want to have a positive influence upon people around me (Matthew 5:13-16) but the reason a person should attend services or not gamble is not because they are afraid of answering to me. Instead, the reason a person should attend services or not gamble is because they will have to answer to

God for why they did or did not do such things. Another thought I had about this recently is if a person won't buy a lottery ticket because they don't want to have to give an answer to me about their potential winnings, they may not be engaging in the outward action but their heart is not where it ought to be. Gambling is wrong in part because it is based in covetousness (Hebrews 13:5). The person who wants to win the lottery but will not buy the ticket because they don't want others to find out if they won still has covetousness in their heart and will be lost due to that covetousness unless they repent. A final thought which has occurred to me on this topic recently is I need to make sure I do the things I do and avoid the sins I avoid due to a desire to please God and with a recognition one day I will stand before God in judgment myself. Hopefully these thoughts will cause us to think about the judgment to come (Acts 24:25) and live righteously because we know one day we will all face the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).