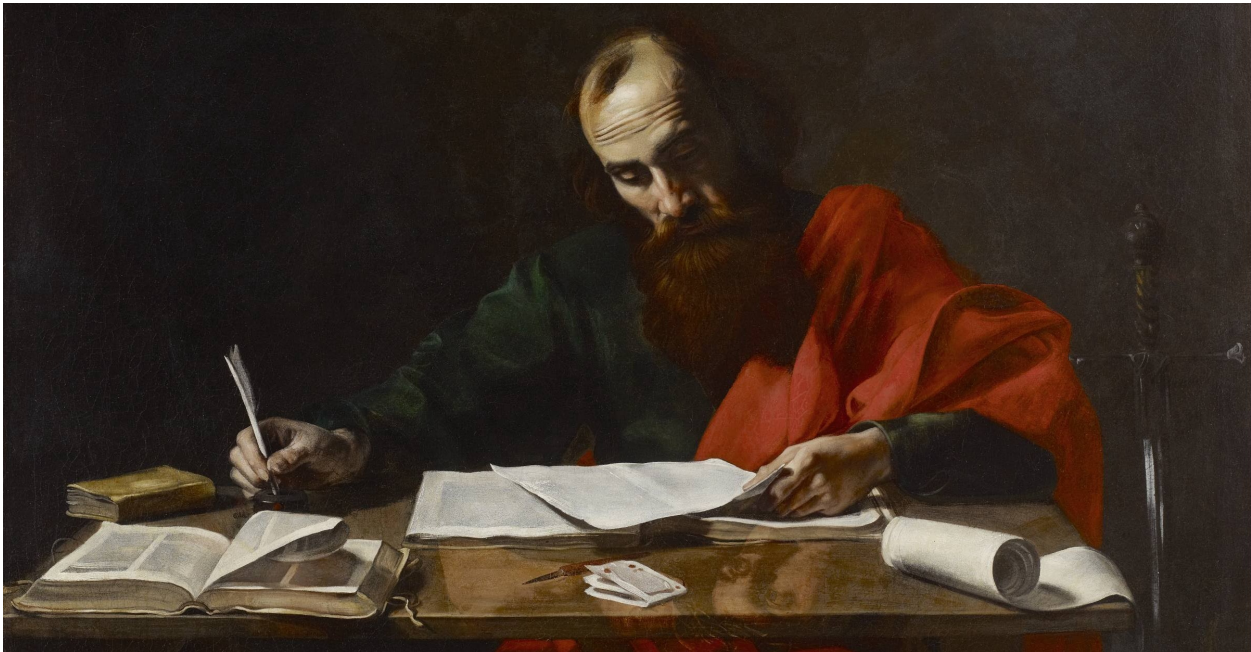




The Present Judgments



The Self-Judgment of the Believer

An interesting and important passage to this study is found in **Acts 24:15-16**, because in this passage the Apostle Paul implicitly made reference to **two judgments which are closely related**.

The text reads:

Acts 24:15-16 NIV:

15 and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.



The resurrection of the just mentioned in verse 15 will be followed by the Judgment Seat of Christ or the *Bema*, the place and time when believers will be examined for rewards or their loss (see discussion below).

Knowing and having the hope of the resurrection and all that this means to the Christian, the Apostle spoke of his commitment to maintain a clear conscience, one cleared by confession and the forsaking of all known sin (**1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13**).

1 John 1:9 NIV:

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 28:13 NIV:

13

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.



He wanted to walk blamelessly, to keep short accounts with God, and to stay in close communion with the Lord lest he should become disqualified for rewards at the **Bema** (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-15 with 9:24-27).

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 NIV:

10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.

15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV:

The Need for Self-Discipline

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

27 No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Though believers are saved and justified by faith in Christ as the crucified Saviour, the Scriptures assume that Christians will battle with sin and will not always be victorious.

So it is necessary for believers to judge their own sins in the light of Scripture.

2

This is a serious matter with consequences both for time and eternity since the failure to do so leads not only to the loss of rewards, but the judgment of God's discipline of His believing children as a loving Father and as the Vine Dresser who must prune the vine for production (**Heb. 12:4-11; John 15:1-7**).

Hebrews 12:4-11 NIV:

God Disciplines His Children

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

“My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

6
because the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”[a]

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?

8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!

10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

John 15:1-7 NIV:

The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful.

3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

A very interesting, enlightening, and important passage to this subject is **1 Corinthians 11:27-32** for in this passage we have a reference to both the self-judgment of the believer and the discipline judgment of God on believers.

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 NIV:

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

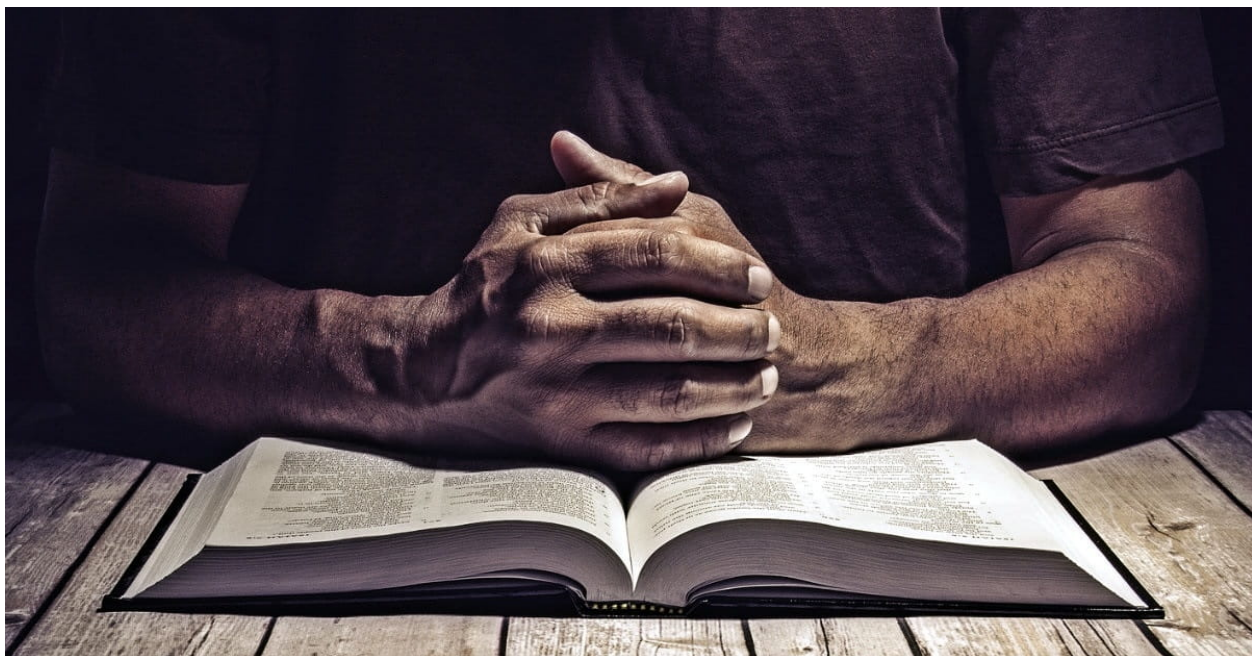
28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world



Some of the Christians at Corinth were being externally religious.

They were assembling themselves with other believers and partaking of the Lord's supper, but they were out of fellowship with the Lord and were controlled by the sinful nature, the flesh, rather than by the Holy Spirit.



This is why earlier the Apostle called them “fleshly” (the Greek *sarkikos*, “adapted to, controlled by the flesh”) (3:3).

1 Corinthians 3:3 NIV:

3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

Unfortunately, this condition had continued because some of these believers had failed to examine their hearts and judge their sin by honest confession followed by a commitment to deal with it in the power of the Spirit **(11:28, 31)**.

1 Corinthians 11:28 NIV:

28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

1 Corinthians 11:31 NIV:

31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

As a result, a number of things occurred: (1) they were making a mockery of the significance and meaning of the Lord's supper **(11:27);**

1 Corinthians 11:27 NIV:

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

(2) they were experiencing personal discipline by the Lord which existed in three conditions, evidently progressively so **(11:30, 32);** and though not mentioned here, **(3)** they were producing wood, hay, and stubble—they were losing rewards **(1 Cor. 3:14-15)**.

1 Corinthians 11:30 NIV:

30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 11:32 NIV:

32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 NIV:

14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.

15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

As to the immediate consequences, some were weak (feeble, a loss of energy), some were sick (probably chronic disease), and some were asleep (physical death, sin unto death) (11:30).



But these were not the only consequences of failing to judge sin in their lives.

There were also divisions and factions and the focus on personalities rather than the Savior.

They were showing favoritism and hurting other believers rather than showing love and concern as it should be among believers in Christ.

In other words, when we fail to honestly judge sin in our lives it spills over in one area after another.

As the loving Father that He is, God must break out the board of discipline in His loving commitment to bring us back to Himself.



So Christians need to examine their hearts and actions for sin according to the Scripture and then judge the sin they find as sin and confess it to the Lord.

Our tendency is to rationalize and excuse our sins, but God says we are to judge them as sin to God.

Confession of sin restores us to fellowship and to the Spirit's control.

With the Spirit back in control and the believer in fellowship - (in the state of abiding in the Vine) he or she can then produce fruit for which they will receive rewards at the Bema.



How do we obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins? :

How do we get right with God, regardless of our individual sins?



Just say this Prayer and all of your sins will be forgotten, and you will have Eternal life, with Christ Jesus, in Heaven:

Lord Jesus, I repent of all my sins, and I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior.

Friends, if you prayed that prayer, I believe that you are born again, and you have ever lasting life, get in a good bible teaching church, and may you keep growing, in the Lord, and may HE use you to help save many souls for His Kingdom !

In, Jesus Mighty Name!

Rev. Jesus Del Rio, Ed