

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Your Convictions About the Judgment of the Believer

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 | Hebrews 9:27 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 3:5-6
1 Corinthians 3:14-15 | 1 John 1:9 | Revelation 20:11-13

► SUMMARY

To whom are you accountable?

Naturally, we think of our relationships—husbands and wives are accountable to each other and children to parents or guardians. However, some people act as if they answer to no one. But that is a dangerous direction to take because accountability is a safeguard to keep us on the right path. Ultimately, we are all accountable to the Lord God and His Word and will one day stand before Him to be judged.

► SERMON POINTS

The Bible describes two different and separate judgments. We will all be a part of one or the other. No one is exempt.

■ **The judgment of believers in 2 Corinthians 5:6-10.** “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (v. 10).

■ **The judgment of unbelievers in Revelation 20:11-13.** This is the Great White Throne Judgment where unbelievers whose names are not written in the book of life are judged according to their deeds. The result is eternal separation from God.

The Judgment of Believers

What can we expect at the judgment seat of Christ?

■ **Only those who have trusted Christ as their Savior will be present at this judgment.** Our meeting with Christ

is a predestined event set by God Himself. From the day of our salvation, we have been accountable to Him for every word and deed, and God’s desire is to reward us for how we have lived. We will be evaluated for what we have done with the gifts, abilities, talent, skills, relationships, vocations, and finances He’s given us.

- **Jesus will be the Judge.** Because He is our Savior and has forgiven all our sins, this is not a judgment to decide whether we can enter heaven. We will already be in heaven when we stand before Him. The purpose is to reward us for what we have done. Throughout our lives the Holy Spirit has convicted us when we have sinned, enabled us to obey, equipped us to serve, and shown us areas that need correction, all the while reminding us that we will one day give an account of our lives to Christ.
- **How is the Lord going to judge us?** It will be according to our works. First Corinthians 3:14-15 says, “If any man’s work which he has built on it [the foundation of Christ] remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” Although we may approach life casually sometimes, nothing in our lives is casual to God. Our entrance into heaven cost Him the death of His only begotten Son, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us to do whatever He has required of us. When it is time for us to stand before Christ, He will evaluate what we have done and determine whether it’s worthless or worthy of His reward. However, be assured that although we may lose our reward, our presence in heaven will remain secure.

There are three criteria by which Christ will judge us.

- **How much spiritual light we have had.** When we are first saved, we know very little and will be judged accordingly. But after spending a lifetime in the Word of God, we will then be held responsible for the truth we now know.
- **The opportunities God has given us.** There will be no comparisons between people at the judgment because every person is uniquely created and gifted by God. Each one of us will give an account for what we've done with the opportunities He has given us. In whatever we do and however we're gifted, our ambition should be to live in a wise and godly manner that brings God glory and honor.
- **How we have responded to the light of truth and the opportunities He's given us.** What have we done with what God entrusted to us? How have we spent our time? Christ will evaluate both our motives and our works.

We are either going to be rewarded or lose reward in this judgment.

Knowing what's at stake eternally should motivate us to live a life that's obedient and pleasing to God because we will be rewarded according to the way we have lived. His judgment will be righteous and just, but we need not fear condemnation because Christ saved us from the penalty of sin. Nor will there be any comparisons between us, but each person will be responsible for what God has uniquely given him or her. Therefore, we must give serious thought to our future judgment and choose each day to live for God's glory so we will not suffer regret when we stand before Him.

How do we prepare for the judgment?

- **First of all, we must receive the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior.** Otherwise we will find ourselves at the Great White Throne Judgment suffering eternal loss rather than at the judgment seat of Christ receiving eternal rewards.

- **Second, we should review our lifestyle.** We ought to consider the following questions: What am I living for? How do I spend my time? How do I employ my spiritual gifts? How do I give my resources? In what ways do I serve the Lord? In what ways do I honor Him? How often do I think about the Lord and thank Him during the day? Is my life pleasing to God? Are my relationships pleasing to Him? Then we should ask the Lord if there is anything He'd like us to change.
- **Third, we need to re-evaluate our priorities.** Where is the Lord in the busyness of daily life? Do I make time for Him? What role does He play in my decision-making process? Do I seek His perspective on issues? Considering how good God has been to us, we don't want to squander the time or resources He's given us.
- **Fourth, we should renew our daily commitment to live a godly life and serve Him with our whole heart.** Mornings are a good time to focus on the fact that we are responsible to live for God throughout the coming day. As a reminder, begin the day with Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

► RESPONSE

- What is your first reaction when you consider the future judgment? How does it motivate you to live differently today? In what areas of your life would you like to make some changes?
- How are you using what God entrusted to you (abilities, opportunities, finances, relationships, etc.) in a way that will enable you to stand before Him with a life worthy of reward?

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