"Accountable to God"

One day, when your life is over, you must give an account to God for how you’ve lived. Hello, I’m Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, “In SEARCH of the Lord’s Way.” And today, we’re going to explore our accountability to God. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord’s Way! We’re here to search the Scripture for the Lord’s Way. Hebrews 4 verses 12 and 13 says, “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.” The Lord gave us His Word not only to tell us of His grace and providence but also to teach us what He expects us to be. The Scriptures are living and active; they look deep into our hearts and souls to reveal what kind of people we really are. We can’t hide from God, and one day we’ll give an account for how we’ve lived. Thanks for studying with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

In Matthew 25 verses 14 to 30, the Lord Jesus tells the story of how a master dealt with three of his servants. He gave five talents or money to one, two talents to the second, and one talent to the third. The first two servants doubled their money and received the praise and blessing of the Lord, while the third servant hid his money in the ground. You see, he was afraid of his master and thought it would please his master just to give him back what he had received. But the master rebuked him for being a wicked, lazy slave. And because he did nothing, he was thrown out and punished. In the same way each of us is accountable to our Lord for how we’ve served. Are you a faithful servant of the Lord?

Now it might be that you want to study more about our accountability, and so we offer this study free. If you’d like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083. Or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free number, telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now if you live outside the United States, we also offer all of our materials free online, and you can get them at our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we’ll read from Romans 2 verses 6 to 11, and we’ll consider our accountability before God.

Our reading today comes from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans chapter 2, verses 6 to 11. Here it speaks about God, and how that He “who will render to each person according to his deeds. To those who by perseverance and doing good, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” That’s an important reading from the book of Romans. Let’s pray together. Father we’re grateful that you love each of us. And Father we’re thankful that through the Gospel we have an opportunity to be saved. Help us heavenly Father to love you and serve you. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Scripture undeniably teaches that we are accountable to God. Hebrews 9 verse 27 says, “it’s appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” The Lord Jesus said in John 12 verse 48, that “he who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 simply says, “For 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.” We will indeed give an account for ourselves to God.

So we ask the question, by what will we be judged? First, we’ll be judged by the things that we say, and speak. The Lord said in Matthew 12 verses 36 to 37, “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Our words matter to God. We’ll give account for lies, gossip, speaking evil of others, using God’s name in vain, and for dirty jokes. Ephesians 5 and verse 4 says, “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.” We should use our voices to bless others. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” Don’t be fooled. You will give an account for your words.

Second, we’ll be judged by how we think. The Lord said in Matthew 5 verses 21 to 22, “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court.” Again, the Lord said in Matthew 5:27 to 28, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Evil thoughts lead to evil deeds, and what is in your heart matters to God. God said in Jeremiah 17 verse 10, “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.” God knows what is in your heart and He will judge you for your ways.

Third, we’ll be judged by how we act. Proverbs 15 and verse 3 says, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.” Romans 2 verses 6 to 1, as we read a moment ago, said that God will render to each person according to his deeds: now to people who by perseverance in doing good, they seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give them eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious, they only think about themselves, and they don’t obey the truth, but they obey unrighteousness, to them He gives wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation, that’s trouble and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but there will be glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. God is not partial, there is no partiality with God.

Many people think they can live as they please and escape judgment; but what we do affects other people. And how we act matters to God. Galatians 6 verses 7 to 8 says, “Do not be deceived, (oh, people will often lie to themselves, that what they do does not matter). Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Now, if you were to take stock of how you act, would you be living to please yourself or living to please God?

Fourth, we’ll be judged by our secrets. In Romans 2 and verse 16, Paul speaks of “the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.” Now, we may be able to hide our actions from other people, but we cannot hide them from God. God always knows. 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 5 says, “Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but you wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.” The Lord Jesus said in Mark 4 and verse 22, “For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.”
Well fifth, we’ll be judged for failing to do what is right. James 4 and verse 17 says, “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and doesn’t do it, to him it is sin.” If we fail to believe, we’ll be lost. The Lord said in John 3 and verse 18, that “whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” If we fail to repent, we can be lost. Again, the Lord said in Luke 13 verse 3, “I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” The Lord also said in John 3 and verse 5, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Now this is a reference to baptism. Finally, we must remain devoted and faithful to the Lord. Jesus said in Matthew 10 and verse 22, “But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” The Lord expects us to be fully committed to Him for a lifetime!

Sixth, we will be judged if we leave God’s teaching for man’s teaching. Paul warned in Colossians 2 and verse 8, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” Paul knew people would not always want the truth, but would rather hear a convenient falsehood. And so he said in 2 Timothy 4 verses 3 to 4, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and will wander off into myths.”

You can’t draw close to God unless you’re willing to listen to and follow Him. And you can’t expect to be saved if you follow false doctrines. 2 John 9 says, that “everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.” Preaching a false doctrine leads people to believe a lie and have false hope. Now that’s cruel to the people that believe it, and it is a wicked deed according to that passage.

Sometimes people loudly reply to things like this, “Well, Jesus never judged anybody.” Well it’s true that Jesus certainly loved sinners. And He said in Matthew 7 and verse 1, “Do not judge so that you will not be judged.” But Jesus was in this passage condemning the unfair judging of the Pharisees. The Lord Jesus also said in John 7 and verse 24, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” Now we all make judgments everyday about many things. And we expect people to obey the laws and we criticize those that don’t. We don’t like being deceived or being cheated. Society judges everything except morality and religion. But we excuse immorality and we excuse heresy, because we think God won’t judge them. My friend, we couldn’t be more wrong.

Now Jesus was full of grace, but He preached repentance. He didn’t stone the woman caught in adultery, in John chapter 8, but He told her to “go and sin no more.” The Bible teaches forgiveness, but never without calling people to repent. 2 Peter 3 verse 9 says, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” Now repentance implies that we cease the wrong and do what’s right.

Jesus didn’t come to this earth to leave us where He found us. He came to give us an abundant life and to show us a better life. Repentance is God’s way of saying to us that we can and must change to a life of love, of good works, of blessing others. Romans chapter 5 verses 6 to 8 says, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Jesus didn’t come to excuse our sin, or to tell us that sin doesn’t matter. He wanted something better for us! He bore the sin penalty that we should have borne. Isaiah 53 verses 5 and 6 says, “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the
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chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Jesus didn’t excuse our sins; He knew sin would destroy us. And so He went to the cross to forgive our sins, so that we could live righteous lives. You see, He wanted us to rise above that old sinful life.

Now, when sin is your enemy, you have to take a stand against it. When you do, you’re actually showing love toward those who are in sin. Because Jesus loved sinners, He spoke against their sin and offered them forgiveness. Jesus spoke against anger, lying, sexual immorality, greed, false doctrines, and laziness. Jesus condemned disbelief, hypocrisy, slander, and betrayal. The Lord loved us enough to die for us, but He spoke against these things, because He cared for our souls. The Lord Jesus stood so strongly against sin that He said in Matthew 5 verses 29 to 30, that “if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” Now if you love the Lord and you love people, you’ll warn your friends not to live in sin. You will speak about the harmful nature of sin. You’ll not only refuse to participate in sin, you’ll expose sin for what it is—an enemy of God. And your enemy too.

God hates sin, because He loves you. He sent His Son to die for you, to atone for your sins, so you could be washed from sin and live with Him eternally. Ah, we owe God so much. It would be tragic to treat God as if He didn’t matter! When we excuse sin, we say to God that we don’t care if sin offends Him. We need to wake up and to see how we are destroying and condemning ourselves by thinking sin is somehow obsolete and that God won’t judge us for it.

In Isaiah chapter 1 verses 18 to 20 the Lord says, “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. And if you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Don’t suppose that God will overlook you at the end of time. My friend, get right with God.

Let’s pray together. Oh Father, we pray that you will help all of us to take you seriously, and your word to be true. That we’ll leave our sins behind, and that we’ll live lives that honor and glorify You. Father, we’re thankful for the blood of Jesus that cleanses our sin. Help us to be obedient to your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

God isn’t blind or deaf; He sees everything we think and do. Acts 17 verses 30 to 31 says, that “the times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” God will indeed hold us accountable for what we do. Hebrews 10 verses 26 to 27 says, “For if we go on sinning deliberately (willfully) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” My friend, “it’s a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10 and verse 31).

We are answerable to God. We’ll face God one day either with the help of Christ or without it. Romans 6 and verse 23 says, “that the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If we refuse the grace of Christ, we’ll have to suffer the wages of sin ourselves. If we come humbly, lovingly, and obediently to the Lord, His blood will wash us, make us holy, and justify us. Now if you are not a Christian, become one. Believe with your heart, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you’re baptized,
the Lord will forgive your sin, cause you to be born again, and make you God’s child. Galatians 3 verses 26 to 27 says, “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” To be saved, you must be in Christ. And by faith we are baptized into Christ. I urge you to get right today.

We hope that today’s study about sin and living in a way that pleases God has stirred you to think about your soul. Think about what God says. Now, if you live in the United States, you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633.

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We do ask that you get involved with a church of Christ. They love you and would be glad if you came and worshipped with them. Well, we’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So we ask that you keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.