

Bible Reading

Romans 14:10-12

II Corinthians 5:10

I Corinthians 3:11-15

Revelation 20:11-15

Ephesians 2:13-18

John 1:12

Mark 16:15

Philippians 2:15-16

Review Questions

According to Romans 14:10-12, to whom are we accountable for our actions and choices?

Read II Corinthians 5:10 and I Corinthians 3:11-15. What will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

Read Revelation 20:11-15. What will take place at the Great White Throne Judgment?

In Ephesians 2:13-18, we are taught that access to God has been made possible through whom?

According to Philippians 2:15-16, how do believers shine as lights in this dark world?

Lesson 9

Liberty of Conscience

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Romans 14:12

Notes

The history of the founding of our nation reveals that much of the liberty we enjoy today came about due to the direct influence of Bible-believing people who held a firm conviction that freedom is God’s gift to every man. Specifically, Baptists of the eighteenth century had an incredible impact upon our Founding Fathers. One distinctive belief of Baptist people throughout the centuries is that God has given a liberty of conscience to every man. This is often referred to as “individual soul liberty.”

Every person will answer to God for his own choices.

God has created every man with a liberty in his soul to seek God as his own conscience dictates. Man should not be coerced or compelled to conform to a particular religious body or to certain religious rites but is free to make his own choices. Romans 14:12 states, “...Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Scripture teaches there is individual soul liberty and that every person will answer to God for his own choices. This powerful truth from God’s Word has undoubtedly served as a mighty pillar in the foundation of our country.

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Our Accountability to God

Because God gave us this gift of choice, we will give account to Him for the choices we make. We will answer to God for what we have done with Him and with the truth of His Word.

Our accountability is directly to God Himself.

Notice Romans 14:10-12. The Lord admonishes us not to see ourselves as the judge over our brother. Christ alone is the Judge. What we must be concerned about is the fact that we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10).

According to I Corinthians 3:11-15, every believer will appear before Christ to receive reward or suffer loss of reward.

Every unbeliever will stand before the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). Those who make the choice to reject Christ will face the awful consequences of the choice they made. Our accountability to the Lord should cause us to consider our standing with Him.

Our Access to God

In Ephesians 2:13-18, we learn that we have access to the Father through Christ alone. This access to God is not achieved through a church or religious organization. It is not achieved by going to a priest or a preacher. Access to the Father is granted to those who exercise their individual soul liberty and personally place their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Bible teaches that every believer is a priest unto God (Revelation 1:6; I Peter 2:9) and has the privilege to go directly to God through Christ by the Holy Spirit.

2 What an incredible freedom! If you know Christ as your

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personal Saviour, avail yourself of this freedom to go directly to God. The Scriptures exhort us to come boldly to His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). If you do not know Christ, realize that you have been given liberty by God to believe upon the Lord Jesus and receive Him (John 1:12). When you receive Christ, you, too, will have access to the Father through Him.

Our Advancement of the Gospel

In Mark 16:15, Christ commanded, “...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” We are to advance with the gospel message into all the world. But how shall we fulfill this mission?

Some people have erroneously thought that this mission should be fulfilled by force. They have attempted to take over governments, to legislate religious mandates, and even gone so far as to persecute those who would not “conform” to Christianity. While this type of coercion and force is characteristic of other religions, it is not consistent with biblical Christianity.

A biblical understanding of soul liberty leads us to conclude that our only tool to advance the gospel is not the tool of force but the tool of our influence. We are to shine as lights in a dark world. According to Philippians 2:15-16, we cast our influence when others see our changed lives and when we hold forth the truth of God’s Word.

The way to advance the gospel is to live out the new life that we have in Christ, and to proclaim His powerful Word!

We cannot spread our faith in Christ by “force.”

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