

Romans 2:1-5—A Warning To The Self-Righteous Against Comparing Themselves To Others

Memory Verse:

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Revision

The book of Romans is a carefully laid out argument where Paul establishes the total depravity of man, and how he is therefore completely unable to save himself. But then Paul shows in great detail what God did for us that we could not do for ourselves; through Christ's death on the cross, we can become, by faith, **the righteousness of God**, meaning that we become as perfect, pure, and holy as God Himself—we receive Jesus' righteousness and perfect life—this is the gospel of Grace.

Previously we studied Romans 1:18-32 and saw the three phase progression of evil or wickedness that God allows as a judgement for sin. This describes the both the society and individual who choose to follow the pathway of open sexual vice that leads to a depraved mind:

1. First, God allows people to suppress the truth in unrighteousness and exchange the truth for a lie. As a result they dishonour marriage by lusting after one another (meaning that they have sex outside of marriage, whether it be living together for 20 years or one night stands—it's all the same in God's eyes).
2. Second, God gives them up to vile passions, meaning that He allows marriage to be redefined to include same sex marriage. Homosexuality becomes accepted.
3. Third, God gives them over to a debased or disapproved mind. This means that the things which a godly person being would find cruel, nonsense, evil, and warped, these debased mind people approve of and support because they have become so twisted, foolish and darkened in their thinking. A good example today is those who support Hamas; they are pro-rape, pro-torture, pro-genocide, pro-kidnapping, pro-cooking babies alive in an oven, pro burning people alive, pro the killing of hostages, pro-cruelty, pro-lies, pro-murder, and pro-death—yet they are fully convinced in their own minds that they are supporting a righteous cause—they call evil good and good evil.

Remember, just because God allows us to have what our sinful nature craves, it doesn't mean that it's good for us. The truth is that when we reject God, God's punishment of us is often that we suffer the natural consequences of our own sin. *Sin is destructive and left unchecked will destroy us, ruining both our own lives and the lives of those around us.*

Outline:

1. God's judgement of the moralist or religious hypocrite (vs 1-3)
2. It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance (v 4)
3. Despising God's goodness and mercy results in storing up wrath (v 5)

Introduction to Romans chapter 2

In Romans chapter 1, Paul made the case that those who were living an outwardly morally depraved life were under the judgement of God. Of course, there are many self-righteous people (moralists or hypocrites), who would heartily agree with Paul's condemnation of those worldly people. Why? Because they don't outwardly participate in those sexual sins or other vices listed in 1:28-32.

These self-righteous people who live relatively good lives are now the people that Paul speaks to in Romans chapter 2. Before we read Romans chapter 2, let's first see how Jesus described these people who are outwardly righteous, even religious, but inwardly their hearts are cold towards God. This will give us a better understanding of this self-righteous type of person that Paul is now condemning.

Matthew 23:1-28 NLT (selected verses)—*Jesus talking about the religious leaders*

¹ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ... ⁵ "Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra long tassels. ...

¹³ "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either.

¹⁵ "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you cross land and sea to make one convert, and then you turn that person into twice the child of hell you yourselves are! ...

²³ "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. ²⁴ Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel [both are unclean animals according to the law]!

²⁵ "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too.

²⁷ "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. ²⁸ *Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness. (this describes the self-righteous person that Paul now speaks to in Romans 2)*

Romans 2:1-5 NKJV

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. ³ And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

1. God's judgement of the moralist or religious hypocrite

Romans 2:1-3 NKJV

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. ³ And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

v 1 **Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself:** Judge is the Greek word *krino*, which means to judge to condemnation or to declare guilty and pass sentence on someone. This is going beyond examining something and simply discerning or identifying that it is wrong or right. Jesus commands us to identify sin—we are to be fruit inspectors, see Matthew 7:15-19 and 12:33. However, we are not to *krino* or pass sentence upon someone. This is us putting ourselves as the judge and sentencing the other person to some punishment. We might think or say something like: “because of what you did”; “you deserve to be...”, or “you don’t deserve this...”, or you don’t deserve to...”, or “you don’t belong here anymore”. This judging to condemnation by humans is wrong for two reasons:

Firstly, God is the only Judge and only He can judge in truth because only He knows our motive.

1 Corinthians 4:5 NLT

So don’t make judgments [Greek *krino*: judge to condemnation] about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For He will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

This is what Paul is describing in verses 2 and 3 “**But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth [the facts of the case which also takes into account motive] against those who practice such things.** ³ **And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?**”

Here’s a story from Jon Courson that helps us to understand that, “Because only God sees what’s going on internally, only He can judge righteously.

A woman ran through the airport. On her way to the gate, she grabbed a magazine and a little package of cookies. Boarding the plane, she sat in an aisle seat, one seat away from a man in the window seat. A few minutes later, hungry from her race to catch her flight, she opened her bag of cookies and took one. To her astonishment, the man in the window seat also reached into the bag, which was sitting in the middle seat, and grabbed a cookie. Utterly amazed at his audacity, she stared at him, reached for a second cookie, and ate it. He looked at her and took another cookie as well. That left only one cookie, which the man took and broke in half, before giving half to her. The lady was dumbfounded. The behaviour of her seat-mate left her puzzled, angry, and hungry throughout the entire flight. But her greatest surprise came when she opened her purse upon landing—and found her bag of cookies inside.

That’s the way it always is! We’re so sure we’re right—when in reality we don’t have all of the facts. In the Day of Judgment, we will be shocked at how wrong we were and how little we knew when the handbags are opened and all things will be judged truthfully.”

Secondly, judging and condemning (krino) others is wrong because when we have this condemning and bitter attitude towards someone it only shows that we are just as guilty as they are.

The person committing a particular sin will be overly sensitive and critical when they see that same sin in others. For example, if I have a problem with swearing, I will be quick to criticise others who let a word slip here and there.

“As we judge another person, we point to a standard outside of ourself—and that standard condemns everyone, not only the obvious sinner.” (David Guzik)

“Since you know the justice of God, as evidenced by the fact that you are judging others, you are without an excuse, because in the very act of judging you have condemned yourself.” (Murray)

So how can we tell the difference between condemning someone and identifying sin? Jon Courson helps us out here.

“Now, while we are not to make judgments in condemnation, we are to judge for identification. Jesus said, “By their fruits you’ll know them” (see Matthew 7:16), and “Beware of wolves in sheep’s clothing” (see Matthew 7:15). For example, if a guy came to take my daughter out and he arrived in a pickup truck with beer cans rolling around in the back, a cigarette dangling from his mouth, and a *Playboy* magazine rolled up in his back pocket, I would be justified to judge for identification and to keep her home. Although there’s a fine line between condemnation and identification, we inherently know the difference between identifying something that is wrong and self-righteously condemning someone with hostility.”

Answering the objection: “But I’m not like those other sinners, I don’t do the things that they do”

v 1 for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things: How can this be? How can the married man who condemns the homosexual be practicing the same thing? The answer is that the married man has also lusted after others. There would have been at least one time in his life when he took a second look at the pretty girl walking past. Another example, a self-righteous person harshly criticises and condemns someone who is fornicating (living with their girlfriend), but they themselves may be watching pornography in secret. How the sin of lust is expressed is different, but it’s still the same sin. *Our sin always looks worse on others than on ourselves.* Can you notice the same hypocritical and condemning attitude in the Pharisee described in Jesus’ parable in Luke 18:9-14?

Luke 18:9-14 AMP

He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves and were confident that they were righteous [that they were upright and in right standing with God] and scorned and made nothing of all the rest of men [looked down on them with contempt]:

¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple [enclosure] to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

¹¹ The Pharisee took his stand ostentatiously [*showing off*] and began to pray thus before and with himself: God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men— extortioners (robbers), swindlers [unrighteous in heart and life], adulterers—or even like this tax collector here [comparing himself to others].

¹² *I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I gain [boasting about his good deeds].*

¹³ But the tax collector, [merely] standing at a distance, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying, O God, be favourable (be gracious, be merciful) to me, the especially wicked sinner that I am!

¹⁴ I tell you, [the tax collector] went down to his home justified (forgiven and made upright and in right standing with God), rather than the other man; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

The self-righteous person gets off on (feels good or gets excited about) two things:

1. First they love to compare themselves to others; “well, at least I’m not like those so and so’s who do such and such”—“*I thank You that I am not like the rest of men... like this tax collector here*” (Luke 18:11).

As we learned previously, we must compare ourselves *only to God*, and when we do, we will, like Isaiah and Peter, fall on our face and say, “I am undone (cut off or destroyed) for I am a man of unclean lips (I have a sinful heart)”, and, “depart from me for I am a sinful man.” The person who compares himself to others is a long way from understanding their own depravity (the utter sinfulness of their sinful nature) and God’s holiness.

2. Second they love to boast about the good deeds that they do (live to impress others, a people pleaser); “*I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I gain.*” We might say; “I help my wife”, “I provide for my family”, “I sacrifice for my kids”, “I study the Bible for 10 hours a week”, “I do all my husbands washing”, “I help out at the school or club etc”.

There’s nothing wrong in the doing any of these things; it’s the motive that they were done in that’s the real issue. If the motive isn’t love (sacrificially doing them for the benefit of the other person), then it’s pride (for my own benefit, so I can have boasting rights—so I can show off how much better I am than you). The self-righteous person might be doing all the right things, but with a cold and unloving heart. Their relationships will be fake and cold, just going through the motions.

Application and warning for the believer to not become self-righteous and bitter

The believer can easily fall into this trap of comparing themselves to others and living to impress others. This self-righteous, proud, or legalistic person is difficult to live with, not because of what they do or don’t do, but rather their attitude. Attitude is everything, and the attitude which is subtly thinking, “Look at me, I’m better than you”, is pure selfishness, completely self-centred, and therefore satanic in origin. The self-righteous or proud person sees others as contemptible (useless and worth nothing), and therefore makes those around them feel like they are useless and worth nothing. This is what the Bible calls a root of bitterness, and this is why our attitude matters.

For the believer the cause of this comparing and boasting attitude is a refusal to confess and repent of sin—*we refuse to submit to God’s discipline.* God convicts me of what is wrong, but my pride stops me from admitting to others and to God that my attitude, speech or actions are wrong. It is from this point that I cease to be in true fellowship or friendship with God and others, and am just “going through the motions” with regards to my Christian walk and service to others. My emptiness and guilt cause me to seek to justify myself by making myself look good—thus I begin to do good deeds so I can favourably compare myself to others and boast about my good works. I want to look humble, caring, giving, patient and kind; but in reality I am anything but.

Hebrews 12:9-15 NLT

Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

¹⁰ For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

¹² So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. ¹³ Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

¹⁴ Work at [pursue, chase after] living in peace [harmony, freedom from worry] with everyone, and work at [pursue, chase after] living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. [notice the connection between living in peace and living a holy life]

¹⁵ **Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness [harshness, bitter resentment, envy, animosity] grows up to trouble you [cause suffering and affliction], corrupting [defiling, staining] many.**

Again, it is the believer who fails to confess and repent of their sin that will fall into satan's trap and become bitter. I must realise that if I am just going through the motions with my family and/or friends, I am also just going through the motions with God as well—my sin of pride has separated me from God, and there can be no true fellowship or friendship. Although I can act cheerful and appear to have it all together on the outside, on the inside I will experience increasing emptiness, a deep inner loneliness, and increasing dissatisfaction with my present circumstances. I will start to look to other things to distract me from my empty and unsatisfying life.

The only solution or cure for the self-righteous believer is to humble themselves by confessing their sin (agree that they were wrong) to other believers and to God, and then repent of that sin (do the opposite). Only then will their heart become soft.

James 5:16, 19-20 NKJV

¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

¹⁹ Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Believers are commanded to do three things: confess our sins to one another, pray for each other, and do our best to turn the wandering saint back to God. Notice that the prayer is only effective (Greek: *energeo* meaning "caused to function" or "be in action") if it is prayed by a righteous man (someone who is walking with God). We can't be perfect, but we can keep short accounts with God and keep ourselves from habitual sin, and therefore remain in fellowship with God. The greatest demonstration of our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who are wandering, is us taking the time to regularly pray for them.

2. It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance

Romans 2:4 NKJV

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

v 4 **The riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering:** God demonstrates His great kindness towards us by holding back the judgement I deserve for my past sins (**goodness**), the sins that I am presently committing (**forbearance**), and for the future sins that I will commit (**longsuffering**). Why? So that I will have more time to repent.

2 Peter 3:9-10 AMP

The Lord does not delay and is not tardy or slow about what He promises, according to some people's conception of slowness, but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance.

v 4 **Riches:** David guzik explains why Paul describes God's patience towards us as **riches**.

"It is no surprise that Paul describes these three aspects of God's kindness to us as **riches**. The riches of God's mercy may be measured by four considerations:

- His *greatness*—to wrong a great man is a great wrong and God is greatest of all—yet He shows mercy
- His *omniscience*—if someone knew *all* our sin, would they show mercy? Yet God shows mercy
- His *power*—sometimes wrongs are not settled because they are out of our power, yet God is able to settle every wrong against Him—yet He is rich in mercy
- The *object* of His mercy: mere man—would we show mercy to an ant? Yet God is rich in mercy"

v 4 **Or do you despise:** The Greek word translated **despise** means: to look down upon, treat with contempt, scorn, care nothing for, disregard, and disdain.

v 4 **Not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance:** God demonstrates incredible grace to the underserving sinner, giving them chance after chance to repent of their sin and turn to Him, escaping an eternity in Hell. This causes the repentant sinner to feel and express gratitude, humility, and repentance as they begin to understand God's amazing love for and patience with them.

But the unrepentant sinner **despises** God when they think or believe:

- God is too weak to judge me for my sin, He would have stopped me by now if He were able to (God is not all powerful).
- God doesn't care that I'm continuing in my sin, otherwise He would have done something about it (God is apathetic).
- God must approve of my sin since He hasn't struck me dead yet (God is amoral or immoral).
- God doesn't exist, evil is prospering throughout the entire world.
- God doesn't know that I'm sinning, therefore I'm getting away with it (God is not all knowing)
- God is too busy to judge my sin, He's elsewhere (God is not everywhere at once)

Yet despite people shaking their fists in God's face, mocking and blaspheming Him, God still restrains His wrath against their sin, giving them yet more time to repent. *Praise God for His mercy!*

"It seems to me that every morning when a man wakes up still impenitent [no shame or regret], and finds himself out of hell, the sunlight seems to say, 'I shine on you yet another day, so that in this day [you may] repent.' When your bed receives you at night I think it seems to say, 'I will give you another night's rest, that you may live to turn from your sins and trust in Jesus.' Every mouthful of bread that comes to the table says, 'I have to support your body that still you may have [time] for repentance.' Every time you open the Bible the pages say, 'We speak with you that you may repent.' Every time you hear a sermon, if it be such a sermon as God would have us preach, it pleads with you to turn unto the Lord and live." (Spurgeon)

v 4 **Leads you to repentance:** **Leads**—Think of a shepherd going before the sheep; the sheep hear his voice and choose to follow him. This is the opposite of *driving* the sheep, where the sheep are forced to do something against their will. God will never force us to repent. He will never force us to love Him.

This has an important application. We can't force, coerce, or *drive* people to repent and believe the gospel; it will only lead to resentment. Equally true is the fact that we can't force or drive the new or backslidden Christian to repent or change. It's dangerous, but tempting, to *continue* to say things like, "as a Christian you need to be doing this, you should be more like that, you should be reading your Bible more, you should be praying more, you should be going to church more, you should be a better husband, wife, son, daughter, employee etc."

Like with the story of the prodigal son, there are times when we must be like the wise father who gave his son the time and space to learn his lesson and come to his senses. God has been and continues to be so patient with us, therefore we need to learn to be patient with each other regarding habits and attitudes that are hangovers from our old life (sins requiring church discipline like sexual immorality and drunkenness etc must still be dealt with according to Matthew 18).

There is a fine line between exhorting and encouraging each other daily so that we are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (see Hebrews 3:13), and legalistically insisting that someone change to be or act a certain way. We need to remember to pray for each other and love each other with an unconditional love—this **kindness leads** the other person to **repentance**.

v 4 **To repentance:** To repent means to stop, turn around, and go back the other way. It's doing a u-turn. It's not just stopping a certain behaviour or attitude, but rather replacing it with the opposite. Paul describes what true repentance looks like in his letter to the Ephesian church.

Ephesians 4:22-32 NLT

Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ **Instead**, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

²⁵ So stop telling lies. **[Instead]** Let us tell our neighbours the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And "don't sin by letting anger control you." **[Instead]** Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. **Instead**, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don't use foul or abusive language. [**Instead**] Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. ³² **Instead**, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

"In the New Testament, repentance is not simply negative. It means turning to a new life in Christ, a life of active service to God. It should not be confused with remorse, which is a deep sorrow for sin [because of how it negatively affects us] but lacks the positive note in repentance." (Morris)

Application: Three ways the believer can despise the goodness and patience of God

1. A believer despises the goodness of God when they mock or refuse to participate when other believers enthusiastically worship and serve God as they are motivated by God's goodness towards them—I'm not willing to get out my comfort zone or go the extra mile. We might think or say, "Well, they seem to be taking it a little too far, a bit extreme don't you think—what will people think?"

A good example is in 2 Samuel 6:16-23 when David was so thankful to God that he was able to bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem that he was very energetic in his dancing, "leaping and whirling *before the Lord*" (v 16). There were two possible responses for the people back then; either join David in his enthusiastic dance, joining in the giving of thanks to God for His goodness towards them, or, refuse to participate, thinking he's crazy, effectively despising God's goodness towards them. Many people joined David in his fervency and love for God, but one person in particular chose not to join in and instead despised him—David's wife Michal (mi-kal). As a consequence, she became barren or unfruitful, never having any children with David (v 23). Why did she become unfruitful or barren? Because she refused to join others in being thankful for God's goodness towards them.

2. A believer despises the goodness of God when they become jealous of how God is blessing others, especially those who are not walking with God. Again, there are two choices. We can either recognise God's goodness in His dealings with sinful man and be thankful for it as we remember all the times that God has been good and patient towards us, or, we can forget all the times when God has been patient toward us and get angry when He shows mercy to others.
3. A believer despises the goodness of God when they deliberately continue on in sin—"I know that God is merciful, that He will forgive me, so it doesn't matter if I keep on sinning"—this is effectively abusing God's grace and goodness towards them. We can do this with the people who love us as well—it is very hurtful.

This presuming on or taking for granted the grace of God. However there are consequences. Jon Courson tells a story to illustrate this principle of presuming on or taking for granted God's grace and goodness towards us.

“The story is told that in the late 1880s, a bank teller stole a silver dollar every day and hid it in his attic. Knowing how to juggle the books and cover his tracks, this went on for days, weeks, months, years—until one day, after eighteen years, he was lying in his bed and judgment came. The rotting attic finally gave way, causing the coins to fall through the ceiling, crush the embezzler in his own bed, and bury him in his iniquity.

The same thing is happening right now with some of us. We think we’re cleverly hiding our little secret. Nobody sees it. Nobody knows about it because we have figured out a way to juggle the books. But at a certain point, we’ll place our last silver dollar in the attic—and everything will come down on our heads. The goodness of God makes possible indulgence in the hearts of foolish men, but brings about repentance in the hearts of wise men. If you have been despising the riches of His goodness, be wise and repent. Change direction and, by His grace, walk with God today.”

3. Despising God’s goodness and mercy results in storing up wrath

Romans 2:5 NKJV

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

v 5 **Treasuring up wrath:** Like we store or treasure up money each week into a savings account to withdraw and use for some purpose in the future, so the self-righteous person stores or treasures up God’s wrath or judgement upon themselves when they continue to judge others and also persist in the same sins. It’s like blowing up a balloon more and more. It gets bigger and bigger until it eventually pops. The unrepentant sinner will find that God’s mercy has limits, and when they stand before God at the Great white throne judgement (see Revelation 20:11-15), and experience His wrath for eternity in the Lake of Fire—exactly what God was continually offering to save them from during their entire life.

For the believer, we have our judgement at the Bema seat, when we stand before Jesus in heaven after the Rapture. This is the judgement of rewards.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 NKJV

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.
¹⁰ 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.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NLT

Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. ¹³ But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. ¹⁴ If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

May we as believers not presume or take for granted the grace of God and lose our eternal reward.