



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Luke 18:9-14

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10** "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' **13** "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' **14** "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Romans 2:1-11

1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. **2** Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. **3** So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? **4** Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? **5** But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. **6** God "will repay each person according to what they have done." **7** To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. **8** But for those

who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. **9** There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; **10** but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. **11** For God does not show favoritism.

Romans 3:9-23

9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. **10** As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; **11** there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. **12** All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." **13** "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." **14** "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." **15** "Their feet are swift to shed blood; **16** ruin and misery mark their ways, **17** and the way of peace they do not know." **18** "There is no fear of God before their eyes." **19** Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. **20** Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. **21** But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **22** This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Thoughts to Ponder - Making Room for The Self-Righteous

Read the short essay from Caleb Faires - <https://hereadstruth.com/2019/05/09/making-room-for-the-self-righteous/>

I like to think of myself as forgiving, gracious, and humble. This illusion is easy to keep up if I don't look too closely at my heart. Somewhere in there, I've been keeping a little list of names, offenses, and follies about the people I would rather avoid, shouldn't trust, or frown upon. How could he act that way? How could she say those words and strut about with that attitude? However, when I stop to reconsider, pray, and open my Bible, I find that once again I've got a log in my eye. My own eyes don't see clearly. My own heart doesn't judge rightly. I am reminded of an anecdote about G.K Chesterton. According to the story, The Times of London posed this question to various reputable authors: "What's wrong with the world?" Chesterton's answer was brief: "I am."

Such a confession is fitting for all of us. Though I may be inclined to judge others more harshly, I am guilty too. If the apostle Paul can call himself the chief of sinners ([1 Timothy 1:15](#)), then what should be my confession? How often have I arrogantly received God's blessings as if they were merited by my own hard work, creativity, ingenuity, or integrity? How often have I fallen into sin and didn't even notice? I bear the name of Christ, but in what ways do I live like the world? Christ's words are a thunderous rebuke: "You will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use" ([Matthew 7:2](#)). Paul echoes this, saying, "Do you really think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment?" ([Romans 2:3](#)).

What can we say to this? No one is righteous, none of us ([Romans 3:10](#)). In the face of God's righteousness, I have no answer in myself. I lay my hand on my mouth ([Job 40:4](#)). The moment we start counting our righteousness, we are attempting to gain merit by means of the law. But this law rightly condemns us, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" ([Romans 3:23](#)). For this reason, the highest mark of the Christian walk is not personal righteousness, but repentance. Therefore, my heart should be open not only for the prodigal, but also for his self-righteous elder brother.

We have all been blessed with the riches of God's kindness, forbearance, and patience. But God gives grace so that we may see our own blindness, that we may walk in His merits, and show mercy even as we have received mercy. God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance ([Romans 2:4](#)). God has had mercy on my Pharisee heart, and has granted to me the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ. If I understand this rightly, my heart will be truly humbled, not hypocritical. The result will be a gratitude that bears the fruit of Christ-likeness, and an openness to loving the self-righteous, even as Christ has loved me.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does Scripture urge us to make room for the self-righteous?
2. How does God's kindness and grace change self-righteous hearts?

Close in Prayer:

Pray, thanking God that created you in His image, giving you worth, value, and dignity. Ask God to teach you to make room for people other than yourself.