

## **Romans 14:9-19 NIV**

### **"Finding what pleases God most"**

"Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you treat him with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written: 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.'

"<sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. <sup>13</sup> Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in another's way. <sup>14</sup> I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. <sup>15</sup> If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil.

**"<sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, <sup>18</sup> because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. <sup>19</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."**

**God expects us to help others prepare for His Judgment.**

**But he wants us to act compassionately and humbly, not with self-righteousness and airs of superiority.**

**The subject of judging confuses Christians.**

**Is it right to judge people?**

**Or do people have a right to live their lives as they choose?**

**Is it always out of order to speak to someone about the conduct of his or her life?**

**Or should Christians encourage people to repent?**

**These questions befuddle most church folks.**



**Those who emphasize social equity dominate many churches today.**

**They permit no judgment, no criticism of morality except regarding social issues.**

**Individual Christians don't know when to speak and when not to speak.**

**Many seem not to know what God's Word says about right and wrong.**

**They have no idea how to advise other people about goodness and morality.**

**Church folks gather to worship, pray, and visit. But churches have become little more than social clubs and in some cases political forums.**

**Imagine a football team that gives up on winning.**

**Players suit up and go onto the field, but they hardly know what to do when they get there.**

**No one can remember how long it's been since the team won a game.**

**Few people want to identify with the team because they've forgotten their purpose.**

**The team long ago lost its sense of mission.**

**Still, the players keep suiting up and going out to the playing field.**

**What has caused this lack of purpose?**

**Here's a major reason.**

**Hollywood, the press, and social media more strongly influence believers than Jesus does.**

**Think of a quarterback who wants to win.**

**Yet he's taking signals not from his coach but from the opponents' bench.**



**He doesn't follow the signs his coach gives him.**

**If you accept God's Word as your true coach, today's text is vital.**

**What does our Creator, the only qualified life-coach, tell us in our text?**

**"Why do you judge your brothers and sisters? Or why do you look down on them? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."**

**1. Human pride causes us to look down on other people.**

**Norma reminds me that snootiness runs in my genes.**

**Frankly I've always considered myself humble.**

**I suspect that author Robert Burton may have had guys like me in mind when he wrote of certain people:**

**"They are proud in their humility; proud that they are not proud."**<sup>1</sup>

**Author Paul Fuhrman wrote:**

**"It used to be said of Frederick the Great that properly speaking he was not fond of music, but of the flute, but not indeed, fond of the flute, but of his flute. Most friends of truth love the same way; that is, just as Frederick loved not music, but his music, so too, many people love not truth, but their truth."**<sup>2</sup>

**In regard to Blair snootiness:** One of my few non-Mickey Mouse ties is made of Blair Plaid.

In the British Isles, there's even a Blair Castle.

**How's that for having history in your veins?**

**Norma looked up the Blair Castle on the Internet and noticed that it isn't currently occupied by Blairs. How long has it been since Blairs occupied Blair Castle?**

The answer: No Blairs ever lived in Blair Castle. "Blar" is a Gaelic word for "flat place between two hills." Blair Castle was so named because it was situated in a place like that—a flat place between two hills. So much for Blair pride.

**Human pride is baseless.**

Religious pride is insidious.

**The following came from a church bulletin:**



"I was very young when it happened, but I can still remember the hushed and hurt conversation of my parents that night after church.

We had lived in the small town several years. Dad had worked hard at his preaching and the revival meeting in progress provided evidence that his work was paying off. Crowds filled the recently enlarged church building. Enthusiasm was running high.

About the middle of the week—Thursday, I think it was—we had full house. In the crowd were friends and neighbors from all over the little town. Our own next-door neighbor had come with us, and there were many other visitors.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621

<sup>2</sup> Paul Fuhrman, *Extreme Christianity: Life and thought of Alex Vinet*, p.57

The kind old Catholic priest from the big old limestone church downtown had walked the ten blocks out to our building that summer evening. He was sitting on the front row!

Then it happened. **My folks were almost in shock as they talked about it later that night. They could hardly believe how rudely and crudely the visiting evangelist had 'behaved.** He began his sermon with ridicule and progressed to rawhiding all who dared to differ with him. Calling names and shouting angrily, he raged against all denominations. He pointed a haughty finger not three inches from the priest's nose and screamed at the old gentleman, **"You are going to hell!"**

I'm sure that some people would have praised the preacher and called him **"faithful"** and **"sound"** because of his **"hard preaching."** They evaluate a preacher as they would a soldier: by the number of people he leaves bleeding. How strange that we would use hateful words to tell men and women that God loves them! <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Gene Shelburne Broadway Church of Christ Bulletin, Lubbock, TX, 6-29-75

A newspaper poll of its readers revealed that only four percent of them believed that they deserved to go to hell. Twenty percent, however, knew other people whom they thought deserved to go.

### **Jesus condemned religious pride.**

2. **But that doesn't mean that we should make no judgments about behavior.**

**The world says we have no right to judge.**

**"He's got a right to do what he wants."**

**"She should live in the way that she chooses."**

**Most media people say: "Do not judge!"**

They regularly judge, however, those who don't accept their concepts of social equity.



**I'm not suggesting that we publicly denounce and protest the behavior of others.**

Yet God's people need biblical concepts of right and wrong.

**In the case of Christian brothers and sisters, we use God's Word principles to approach them.** <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 18:15-20

We do that by going to them at first privately aware of this Scriptural caution:

**“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.”<sup>5</sup>**

**In the case of non-Christians, we plead with them to give their lives to God.**

**Human pride makes us look down on others. We need biblical concepts of right and wrong.**

**3. All of us will stand before God’s judgment.**

**As someone wrote,**

**“This is not a side of the Gospel with which we like to deal nowadays. We want a Jesus ‘meek and mild.’ We want a Jesus who looks over our faults, who is blind to our shortcomings, who deliberately ignores our orneriness.”**

**A prominent commentator said that Paul talked about the wrath of God in his letters, but Jesus never mentioned God’s wrath in the Gospels: “God doesn’t get angry. He’s a God of love.”**

**That Jesus never spoke of God’s wrath is false.**

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<sup>5</sup> Galatians 6:1 NIV

The commentator saying Jesus didn’t evidently never read Matthew or any of the Gospels.

**In numerous parables, Jesus stated that we must stand before God in the Judgment and that we’ll face his wrath if we disobey him.**



**Jesus warned of hell’s fire in the Sermon on the Mount.**

**One noted scholar wrote:**

The concept of judgment cannot be taken out of the NT Gospel. It cannot even be removed from the center to the periphery. Proclamation of the love of God always presupposes that all men are moving towards God's judgment and are hopelessly exposed to it. For this reason mysticism and the Enlightenment, which either set aside or restrict the thought of divine judgment, are directly opposed to the NT Gospel.<sup>6</sup>

**In other words, take God’s wrath out of the gospel and you corrupt God’s Word. We can’t be indifferent to the sins of other people.**

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<sup>6</sup> Buchsell, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

**They and we must stand before God to give an accounting of everything we've done.**

**No one is exempt.**

There's no room for pride or airs of superiority.  
Every Hollywood actor and every preacher,  
priest, and rabbi will be there.  
Every attorney and every business leader and  
all politicians will be there.  
But they won't be there as commentators.

**Beside all who have lived on this planet, they'll be on their knees before the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**All will give an accounting.**

**Every heart will be laid bare.**

**"You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."**

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**There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?**

**James 4:12 NASB**