

God's Standard

One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself. Romans 14:5-7

Many issues of personal preference are not mentioned in the Bible, and people have varied opinions about them. Some of these issues are movies, dancing, makeup, dress style, card playing, sports on Sunday, the Sabbath, certain kinds of music, and even which vehicles to drive. Some of the concerns are regional; some are universal. Nearly all are cultural issues.

All issues on personal preferences and opinions can be stumbling blocks for us. God doesn't proceed with our spiritual growth in cookie-cutter fashion. Everyone grows spiritually at different rates and in different ways. If we are judging others according to our preferences, we have a long way to grow spiritually ourselves. The standards we live by shouldn't be based on our preferences, but on the absolute standards in the Scriptures.

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"Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord can make him stand" (verse 4). Once we meet God's standards, we can differ in many ways.

Q:

I've tried to live a good life and do what I think God must want me to do. But I wonder sometimes if I've done enough, because I know I've probably done wrong things without even realizing it. What exactly does God expect of me?

A:

The answer to your question may shock you: God expects nothing less than perfection. God is perfect and pure, and sin of any kind is an offense to Him.

In other words, even one sin — just one — would be enough to keep you and me out of heaven. This is hard for us to understand; after all, we tolerate imperfect people all the time, and we think God ought to do the same. But God's standard is different from ours, and His standard is perfection. The Bible says, "For whoever keeps the whole law (of God) and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10).

Does this mean we have no hope of ever getting into heaven? Yes, it does, as long as we are depending on ourselves and our goodness. The reason is that no matter how good we are, we still fall short of God's perfect standard.

But listen: God has opened up another way — a way for us to be forgiven of all our sins and clothed in perfect righteousness. That way is Jesus Christ. He was without sin, but on the cross, all our sins were transferred to Him, and He died in our place. Now by faith in Him, we can be forgiven and

cleansed of our sins and made ready for heaven. Don't trust in your goodness any longer, but by faith put your trust in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.