

The Final Evaluation

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Picture a scene in a courtroom. Now take that scene into the future, into the Supreme Court of heaven at the Bema Seat of Christ. According to Romans 14:12, we are there alone; no one else is standing with us—an awesome thought to consider. We are there to give an account of every moment of every day we ever lived on the face of the earth. Our opportunities will be brought up. Our decisions. We will be there to receive the eternal evaluation of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). The question will be this: Were you spiritual, or were you carnal?

In God's eyes, there is more to carnality than immorality alone (Romans 2:1-6). Sometimes, people who are outwardly moral are filled with self-righteousness, insecurity, fear, criticism, comparing themselves with others—all differing degrees of carnality. Being depressed, living in unbelief, internalizing stress because of circum-

stances, people's reactions, and daily pressures: all of these are carnal traits.

This booklet will help to prepare us for the day when, all alone, each born-again believer will stand before God, in the Supreme Court of heaven. There, God will open the Book which will evaluate our lives—the precious Word of God. He will reward each believer for every act done by faith, in obedience to His Word.

Chapter One

PREPARATIONS OF THE HEART

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Imagine being alone with God—the God of creation, of redemption, of reconciliation. There will be millions and millions of people in heaven, yet each one must appear before Him alone. There will be no marriages, so you can’t look to your spouse. Your best friend can’t be there to help you out. You will be there alone.

According to John 12:47-48, the procedure is simple. God will open up the Bible. You will not be able to offer any excuses. Talking will do no good. You will not express why you did what you did, why you did or did not get victory. There will be no communication on your part. You are in the presence of who God is: His om-

niscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, through the integrity of His essence. Every time you obeyed God by faith, it was recorded in a book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16).

One of the first things He will address is your Christian walk. Were your actions motivated by God's love? Were you faithful to His commandments? You won't answer that; He will tell you. Faithfulness will be the main issue. If you were godly, your reward will be gold, silver, and precious stones. If you lived a self-righteous life judging people, that will all be revealed, because we have no right to judge anyone (Matthew 7:1-5). When problems come up that must be dealt with, God has established a process through the table of organization (Matthew 18:15-17). It begins with going to the person alone in a spirit of meekness. This is designed to win him back and cover him if he is willing to repent.

A Finished Work Evaluation

"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47). This verse reveals the Finished Work. There is no judgment now. We receive discipline, but no

judgment—that is, for now.

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

What will judge us? The Word. Man must live by every single word of God (Matthew 4:4). Mary said, “Be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). To the blind men who wanted to see, Jesus said, “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29). When Jesus prayed for His disciples, He said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Before that, He told them, “...the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

That is why when we stand before God and He opens the Book, we will not be able to speak in self-defense. At the Bema Seat, there is not one indication that there will be a dialogue. We will give an account of what has already happened. Of course, our sins have been placed under the Blood and forgiven, and they will not be brought up. Yet, the heart attitude will be addressed. Were our actions motivated by love?

The Character of Love

As we stand before Him, the Lord will bring up the two great commandments, Did you love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind? Did you love your neighbor as yourself? (Matthew 22:37-40). That will be the tough one. Then, He will let you know how you did.

He will ask whether you loved your enemies as He did (Luke 6:27, 35). He loved them by dying for them. He didn't talk against them. Did you live in reactions toward people at your workplace? Did you talk too much for years about people who hurt you? For all of those years, by just reiterating old wounds, you lost rewards. It doesn't mean we must have fellowship with our enemies. Yet, according to 1 John 3:14 and 16, by loving and laying down our lives for the brethren, we perceive the love of God, and we know that we have passed from death to life.

The first thing that we will be judged for is the character of God's love manifested through our lives. We will stand before Him at the Bema Seat all alone, and we will come away either happy or ashamed. The Bible doesn't say how long the shame will last, but it will not last for-

ever, because heaven is heaven.

So, love is the first thing.

Be Willing to Be the Victim

“Love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12, 13:34). This shows you are truly saved (1 John 3:14). Yet, how many of us understand that to love someone with God’s love may mean to lay down your life for them (1 John 3:16)—to be willing to be the victim? How do you respond to being the victim? Do you run away from the idea? Are you afraid of it? Is it fair? Where did this principle come from?

Romans 5:8 says, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

“All we like sheep have gone astray.; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

The servant is not above his master (Matthew 10:24-25). If the world despised Christ, they will also despise His representatives on the earth. In your marriage and in your dealings with others, including the unsaved and the unmerciful, you will be evaluated for your willingness to be the victim. Were you a loving victim,

regardless of the unfair attacks against your character at times? In your marriage, were you able to love unconditionally. The Word implies that we did not deserve God's love, so we should love others freely as well.

Of course, if you are being physically abused, you must bring that to the attention of people who can help you. But if you were just being selfish and stubborn, withholding affection and defrauding, you will suffer loss of all rewards in your marriage. It will be a sad day for you when that is revealed by the Book.

How we respond to the Word now will prepare us for our appointment in eternity, in the courtroom of heaven. Therefore, let your words on earth be few and let them be edifying.

Chapter Two

MEASURED BY THE WORDS GOD HAS SPOKEN

Jesus will open up Ephesians 5:25, and say to the husband, “Did you love your wife as Christ loved the Church?” Imagine the look on some people’s faces when that verse is brought up. We will be judged by God’s Word that has been spoken.

He will reveal to us whether or not we were conformed to His image by grace (Romans 8:29) while we heard the Word preached. He will reveal whether we believed that every word of God was inspired, and then, whether we lived by every word of God (2 Timothy 3:16).

He will show us whether or not we received the Word with meekness (James 1:21). If not, did we get right quickly? He will have it all written down. He won’t mention sin, but He will mention our faith response to the Word preached, because it is a fair evaluation.

Children Will Be Accountable

Parents need to teach their children about the gravity of the Bema Seat evaluation. I would never let one child ever say to his mother or anyone else, "Shut up!" I would deal with their attitude instantly, because if they say that today, a year from now, they will say something worse.

Many teenagers are not taught to be Spirit-filled with the Word. They are good children, but they have never been trained in a loving way to be Spirit-filled. I am talking about the importance of being trained to be filled with the Word and the Spirit.

So many parents battle their teenagers' flesh and demand their obedience, and get them to try to become something in the flesh, but they can't do it. In a sense, some parents train them to lie by training their flesh to do better. The Bible says that the flesh profits nothing; it is the spirit that gives life by the Word (John 6:63). But proper training starts with parents or caring people who live real Christian lives with compassion, love, and fun around that Book, making it practical for their teens.

Our Response to the Great Commission

While we are being evaluated by every word of God, He will not mention the sin issue because our sins have already been forgiven, forgotten, and washed away. Yet, He will bring up what we did in obedience to the Word.

Five times, the Holy Spirit recorded the commandment to go into all the world with the Gospel. Therefore, at the Bema Seat evaluation for the believer, the Lord can look us right in the eye and say, "I gave you the Great Commission just before I left. It was recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-48, John 20:20-22, and Acts 1:8. Here are the words; you can see them for yourself. Now I will show you what you did with My commandment."

He continues, "I am evaluating you according to the words I spoke. And by the way, I have recorded all the times your pastor brought up each verse—whether you were there or not. So now, either your record of evangelism was terrible and you will be ashamed, or you were a hero of obedience."

That is why for forty-seven years I have gone soul winning on purpose every week, unless I am away. Why would I do that for forty-

seven years? Wouldn't that wear anybody out? I don't look at it as "work." I look at it as fulfilling a mandate from the One who made me. I go because of the Holy Spirit's love for the lost.

As a pastor, I feel bad for Christians who hear the messages but never evangelize. I am not here to condemn them. But their next evaluation in eternity will reveal their obedience. Did they obey every Word of God? Did they obey the Great Commandment to love with God's love? Did they obey the Great Commission to evangelize?

Can you imagine what it will be like for those who don't go soul winning regularly, at least once a month? Excuses will not be accepted. Our vocation, which is what we have been called to, is Christ. Our occupation, though important, is how we make money to support our needs. When we are faithful to the call of God and have the proper perspective, we will be able to do what is necessary on our jobs.

You may excuse yourself by saying, "Well, I went out when I could," counting the few times you went.

That is not going to make it with God. Our example is in Acts 2: The New Testament Church went soul winning daily.

Kicking against the Pricks?

There is no need to get upset about this message. It is simply a picture of what will happen when we face God as believers. There is not a single thing you can do to stop it from happening. We will all be evaluated at the Bema Seat according to how we responded to God's Word. Every theologian agrees that the Great Commandment is to love, and the Great Commission is to witness on purpose.

We witness because we plan to go out soul winning—for instance, from house to house (Luke 6, Luke 10, Acts 20:20). The Twelve, the Seventy, and the apostle Paul all evangelized from house to house.

Some people are saying, "Well, I witness by being a thoughtful neighbor."

Yes, but did you go from house to house? Did you go on purpose with the Gospel? We have to make sure that we have godly priorities included in our daily schedule so that we can go out and evangelize the lost. How will they hear if we don't tell them?

Jesus Christ will reveal your thought life through the Word of God.

Chapter Three

NOTHING IS HIDDEN

When He was born, His name was Jesus. When He started His public ministry, His title was Christ. Then, when He ascended, He became Lord.

He must be the Lord of my life (Romans 10:9-10), and I must submit to His authority. As the Bible says, "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus."

My mental attitude and the condition of my heart will be revealed. Even my thought processes—which God could see when nobody else could—will be revealed by the Word.

Then, He will evaluate my confession. What was my confession in my home? Did I curse? Was I an angry person sometimes? Or did I confess and manifest Christ according to my faith, even when things were not going well? All of my confessions must be dealt with, not as sin but according to the evaluation of the Bible,

through categorical doctrine.

Fruit Is Revealed

Next, He will examine other fruits of the Holy Spirit revealed in my life. Did I have joy? Peace? Did I experience longsuffering through the Holy Spirit? Was I, practically speaking, a gentle person, using rebound when I failed? Did I live in divine goodness? Was I faithful—faithful to love, faithful in outreach, faithful in thinking?

My faithfulness will be revealed according to the Word. Did I submit to and obey the Word that was preached through my pastor-teacher, or, was my walk with the Word conditional and seasonal? Did I faithfully attend services and fellowship around the Word much more as I grew older in Christ (Hebrews 10:25)? In Acts 2:38-48, the believers gathered daily. Paul spoke twice a day to the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:29-32).

Did I reveal meekness, which is God-consciousness? Did I show temperance—divine control of my emotions? I will be judged for my love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance, because these are the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Honoring Delegated Authority

A husband will be judged for how he honored his Head, Jesus Christ and how he let Christ's love flow out to his wife. A woman will be judged for how she was a helpmate to her husband—a subject that is so misunderstood. Recently we taught that according to Proverbs 31, having an excellent helpmate was how a man became the chief elder above the other men in the land. It was her ability as a helpmate, her virtuous life, that did it. She helped him become what he could be, and he praised her for it. The children rose up and called their mother blessed.

Through humility and meekness, a man recognizes divine authority because of maturity. He doesn't compete with those whom God has placed in positions of authority.

At the Bema Seat of Christ, we will be rewarded for all good things we communicated with the pastor-teacher (Galatians 6:6). I receive many beautiful comments, calls, and letters from people who appreciate me and the messages I speak. That communication is precious because it comes from hearts that know what this verse means.

To “communicate” means to enter into fel-

lowship as a partner or an associate. It means more than having an emotional response because you were stimulated by a certain theme. The question will be, “Did you get down in the trenches and share Christ’s burden for people? Did you share his vision to go into all the world and support that vision in any way you could—with prayer, with finances, or by going?”

The honor code will be an important topic because in heaven there is perfect honor. And with the sixty-eight things Jesus gave you when you were saved.* You have already been honored to the highest possible extent, in terms of your position. Imagine what that means! You can never add to it. There is not a thing you can ever do to be honored any more than you are right now. You can be blessed and gain rewards, but you will never be honored more.

Rebound to Always Abound

When I understand that I will be evaluated by every single word of God, then it seems important that I should take in as much of it as I can. Moreover, the Word I take in ought to dwell richly in me (Colossians 3:16). I ought to be set apart by the Word. I ought to sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace

in my heart to the Lord all the time.

Do you realize that you are around God all the time? You may not feel it, but there is never a time that God and you are not together. Does that cause fear? It ought to stir up a godly fear, which is reverence for the Lord—enough to cause you to rebound every time you think something is wrong in your walk with God.

Thank God for recovery, and thank God that when we recover, and rebound, and do not condemn ourselves, we can go on with God, having fellowship with Him all the time. We can have a ball with God and never be affected by people or circumstances, except to draw nearer to Him in prayer.

All we can do is the best we can, and then give the rest to God. So do your best, and cast your burden on God. That is all you can do. Amen? Amen!

**For a complete list, read What Happened When You Received Christ?, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1999.*

CONCLUSION

You and I will be all alone in the Supreme Court of heaven. With billions of the redeemed outside the courtroom, each one of us will go before Him alone, and God Almighty is going to open up the Bible.

So many will have their excuses for not obeying God. For those who had a problem with moodiness, God will show in the Book why they were moody. He won't ask. He already knows. Then He will show them the message their pastor preached that could have set them free.

"Well God, I missed that message. I went to the beach all summer. I'm sorry."

"Oh, I wasn't going to bring that up. I am just going to bring up what you missed while you were at the beach, because you are being evaluated by the Bible."

God doesn't mind your going to the beach if you like it, but you need to plan on purpose to receive the Word. Don't take lightly your place

in the Body. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, but do it much more as you see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:25). That “day” points to the end of time as we know it, when we will face the final evaluation at the Bema Seat of Christ.

Dear Father, we are so thankful that you are preparing us so well for the Bema Seat. Help us to recognize that every detail of life can be a blessing when our focus is on Your purpose. Please help us to live in the joy of our redemption. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.