

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: Does a Loving God Judge? February 27/28, 2021

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

Following God in a culture that doesn't is easier said than done. The book of Romans is full of foundational gospel truth that will teach us how our faith can influence the world around us, instead of letting others tell us what to believe – especially in the places where Christianity and culture collide.

Use our Weekly Reflection Guide, in community or through personal study, to live out what we're learning on the weekends. It's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you. Choose the questions that are meaningful to you, then be REAL with self, God or others as you reflect, respond and pray.

1. Reflect/Respond: Reflect on the way you see God. Do you see Him as He is – both a loving and judging God? What has shaped that perspective? How does how you see God impact your ability to be REAL with Him?

Dig Deeper Read Luke 18:1-6 – the Parable of the Persistent Widow. What does this tell you about God's ability and willingness to provide justice, as well as His heart behind it. Consider too, how we should be living in response.

A loving God judges because...

2. Love demands justice: When it comes to love and justice, we simply can't match God's wisdom, ability or heart. Not only do we need God to judge evil, but we need to wait on Him, trusting His purpose, plan and timing as He works out His righteous judgement.

"For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight." Romans 2:13 NLT

"So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God." Hosea 12:6 ESV

- Truth doesn't change just because we disagree with it. Is there anywhere in your life where you're living out your ideas of love or justice, rather than obeying God's truth?
- What would it look like for you to wait on God? What would that "waiting" involve on your part – faith, patience, sacrifice, discipline, trust, etc. Are you willing to obey God in this way?

3. Love holds people accountable: Accountability leads to responsibility. Responsibility leads to meaning. Meaning brings purpose, which leads to happiness. God both loves AND judges us, not because He wants to restrict our personal freedom, but because He wants to fill our lives with meaning, purpose and blessing.

"Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise, but as wise making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." Ephesians 5:15-17 NIV

God will hold us accountable according to:

- 1) our understanding – what we do with what we know
- 2) our ability – not comparing, but using the gifts & talents we're given
- 3) our opportunity – what we do with what we're given
- 4) our obedience – being a doer, not just a hearer

- In which of these areas has accountability helped you to be more responsible? How has that brought you meaning or happiness?
- In which of these areas are you challenged to grow more accountable? What is a first step you could take to pursue that accountability?
- Everyone will give a personal account to God for how they lived (Romans 14:12). Is there anyone in your life who could benefit from hearing how accountability to God has given your life meaning? Pray about starting that conversation.

Cultivate Community Growth best happens in the context of community as people we trust hold us accountable and encourage us. Share one way you want to grow with someone in your life and ask them to support you – by checking in, praying for you or walking alongside you in a specific way.