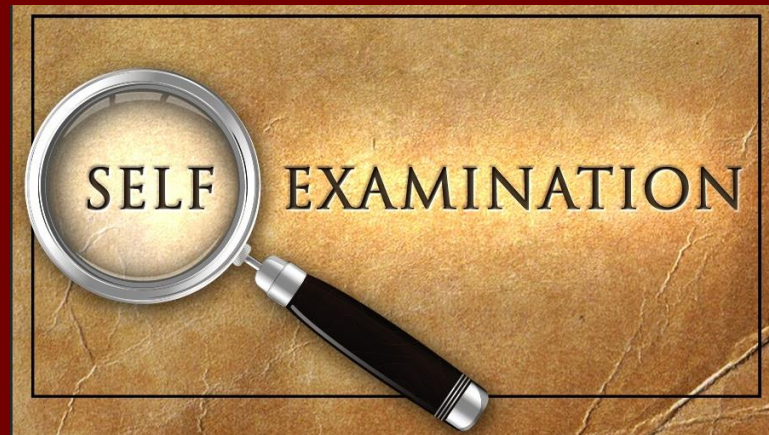


Bible Study



Overcoming Self-Justification



Seven Churches of Revelation

- **One Thing All 7 Churches Have in Common:
Need to Overcome**
- **“...I know your deeds...”**



Seven Churches of Revelation

- **One Thing All 7 Churches Have in Common: Need to Overcome**
- **Some of the churches received more criticism than others, but they all received admonishments.**



Seven Churches of Revelation

■ Ephesus

- Left Your First Love

■ Smyrna

- Remove The Cause Or Yourself From Your Trouble

■ Pergamos

- Hold The Teachings of Balaam
- Eat Things Sacrificed To Idols
- Commit Acts of Immorality

■ Thyatira

- Tolerate The Teachings of Jezebel
- Eat Things Sacrificed To Idols
- Commit Acts of Immorality

Seven Churches of Revelation

■ Sardis

- Wake Up / Remember What Was Received / Repent

■ Philadelphia

- Hold Fast

■ Laodicea

- Neither Hot Nor Cold
- Self-Centered / Self-Absorbed
 - “I am rich and have need of nothing”
 - “Wretched”
 - “Miserable”
 - “Poor”
 - “Blind”
 - “Naked”

Will Jesus Christ Find Living Faith?

■ John 15:1-11

- With Living Faith, our belief galvanizes into a conviction that will produce righteous works.

■ II Corinthians 13:5-6

- Test ourselves to prove that Christ lives in us.
- We will not fail the test if we draw close to Him and truly work to make the changes we need to make as individuals to take on the very nature and life of God.



“The Self”: Deterrent to Overcoming

■ What is Self-Justification?

- To justify is “to show or prove to be just, right, or reasonable. . . . to defend or uphold as warranted or well-grounded. . . . to declare innocent or guiltless; absolve; acquit.”
- If we seek to defend ourselves against false accusations, this may be proper and right, since we need to have a good reputation before others.
- On the other hand, too often when someone is guilty of an offense, they seek to “justify” themselves, so that personal guilt is lessened and others will think well of him or her.



“The Self”: Deterrent to Overcoming

- **Harmful Affects of Self-Justification**
 - Ruined relationships
 - Turn good people bad
 - Can begin with self-deception
 - Creates close-mindedness / Inflated egos
- **“The less you believe you’re affected by self-justification, the worse you suffer from it.”**



Parable of The Pharisee and Tax Collector

■ Luke 18:9-14

- Essentially, this parable appears to be about attitudes of the heart. Having the right attitude is one of those things that you cannot afford to neglect as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- The Pharisee compared himself against a variety of violators of the commandments: Extortioners, unjust, adulterers, tax-collectors. The specific reference to the tax-collector standing near him shows a judgmental attitude because he instantly made an evaluation of the man on the basis of his vocation.



Parable of The Pharisee and Tax Collector

■ Luke 16:15

- *"You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."*

■ Luke 18:9-14

- The tax-collector is the one 'justified' in the sight of God. Jesus said, *This man went down to his house justified rather than the other (v. 14)...* The tax-collector went down from the temple in a state of acceptance because he had the kind of attitude that God responds to and honors in the one who approaches Him.



Self-Justification: Product of Pride

- **Proverbs 20:6** "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"
- **Proverbs 16:2** "All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives (spirits)."
- **Proverbs 21:2** "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts."



Self-Justification: Product of Pride

- **Ecclesiastes 5:6** “Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, “My vow was a mistake.” Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?”
- **Ecclesiastes 7:16** “Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise; Why should you destroy yourself?”
- **Ecclesiastes 8:11** “When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people’s hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong.”



Satan: Self-Justification to Self-Deception

- **Ezekiel 28:14-18** "You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God;...You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you...your heart was haughty...you corrupted your wisdom...I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you..."
- **Isaiah 14:12-15** "How you have fallen from heaven...you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne about the stars of God. And I will sit on the mount of assembly...I will make myself like the Most High..."
- **Revelation 12:9** "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."

Biblical Examples: Self-Justification

■ Adam and Eve

- **Genesis 3:12-13** “The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me some of the fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

■ King Saul

- **I Samuel 13:11-12** “But Samuel said, “What have you done?” And Saul said, “Since I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come at the appointed time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash, I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the Lord.’ So I worked up the courage and offered the burnt offering.”

We Cannot Overcome Sin That We Cannot Identify

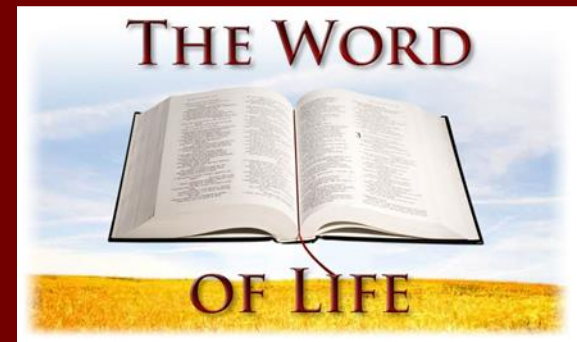
- **Can a member of God's church be deceived about their true standing with God?**
 - **James 1:21-27** "Therefore, ridding yourselves of all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted...But prove yourselves doers of the word and not just hearers who deceive themselves...he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror...he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was..."



Self-Justification: A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing

■ How Do We Detect and Overcome This Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (Self-Justification Reasoning)?

- Self-justification can deceive the very elect or the devout church member.
- Deceiving ourselves about our own spirituality and running from the truth we see in God's Word are serious impediments to overcoming.
- Remember the point of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican: "He told the parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt." (Luke 18:9).
- Removing our self-imposed blinders is the first step toward overcoming self-justification



We Cannot Make Ourselves Justified

■ Self-Justification is Futile

- **Psalm 130:3-4** “If You, Lord, were to keep account of guilty deeds, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, So that You may be revered.”
- **Psalm 143:1-2** “Hear my prayer, Lord, Listen to my pleadings! Answer me in Your faithfulness, in Your righteousness! And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for no person living is righteous in Your sight.”
- **Proverbs 20:9** – “Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?”
- **Job 9:2-4** – “How should man be just with God? If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?”
- **Isaiah 64:6** – “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our wrongdoings, like the wind, take us away.”

With Self-Justification, We Do It To Our Own Hurt

■ If We Justify Our Sin, What Have We Gained?

- We can justify ourselves to the point we really think we are clean in spite of our sins (Proverbs 18:17).
- We can use "all humanity" as our excuse, admitting we are sinners "just like everyone else," but not wanting to admit specific sins or to overcoming them (Romans 1:20-22).
- God knows all men have sinned and fall short of His glory, but He is interested in our repentance (change), overcoming and growth, not our excuses.
- God will forgive, but we must have a repentant heart.



With Self-Justification, We Do It To Our Own Hurt

- **If We Justify Our Sin, What Have We Gained?**
 - **The penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If we insist on justifying ourselves, we will die for our sins.**
 - **All our self-justification will gain us nothing.**
 - **Only the shed blood and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, who suffered mightily for us, will justify us (I Peter 2:21-25 / Isaiah 53:7-12).**
 - **Otherwise, we cannot inherit eternal life.**



God Desires “Truth in the Innermost Being”

■ Are We Anxious To Remove Our Guilt?

- God desires “truth in the innermost being” (Psalm 6:23).
- As we examine ourselves at all times (not just the Passover Season), it is with open confession of our wrong and genuine repentance, that ongoing restitution is achieved with our Father, through Jesus Christ (our intercessor).
- It’s time we renounce any self-justification, within us, and openly confess our sins to God.
 - I John 1:9
 - James 5:16



Group Discussion

