

We will be judged by God as individuals and not as congregations

We need to see the local congregation as a blessing that God has provided for our spiritual benefit. Perhaps even more important, we need to take an active part in the work that God intends the local church to do. Both the benefits and the responsibilities of local church membership require that we find a congregation that is faithful to the Lord. Being a part of a spiritually sound church is extremely important. But just because we have found a sound congregation to be identified with, that doesn't automatically mean we'll be saved. ***We will be judged by God as individuals and not as congregations.***

In **Jn. 15:1-8**, Jesus taught that His body is made up of individual persons. The illustration He used was that of a vine with its branches. He said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (**vv.1,2**). In this passage, the branches are individuals, not congregations. Whether we remain in Christ or are removed from the vine depends on our individual relationship to Him. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned" (**vv.4-6**). It is our own personal faithfulness or unfaithfulness that determines whether we remain connected to the vine or not.

The fact that judgment is on an individual basis doesn't mean that congregational involvement is not important. Clearly it is. In fact, one of the things upon which we will be judged as individuals is whether we have taken seriously the collective ("together") aspect of Christianity. Neither the individual nor the collective part of our service to God can be neglected without serious consequences. But in the end, we will not be saved just because we have had our name on the membership roster of a sound church. In judgment, what will matter is whether we ourselves — personally and individually — have been sound in the faith.

Monday: 3 John 9,10

Key Idea: Sometimes congregations exclude those who should be included in their fellowship.

Questions for Family Growth: What was being done by Diotrephes? What does it mean that he was putting them "out of the church"? In **Ac. 9:26-28**, after Paul had become a Christian and returned to Jerusalem, how was he received by the church? What did Barnabas do?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 24:26.**

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Key Idea: Sometimes congregations include those who should be excluded from their fellowship.

Questions for Family Growth: In this passage, what mistake was being made by the church in Corinth? Were they being too tolerant of sin within the congregation? What did Paul say they should do? What instructions did he give in [2 Thess. 3:6,14,15](#)?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 24:27](#).

Wednesday: Revelation 2:12-17

Key Idea: Faithful congregations may have some members who are unfaithful to the Lord.

Questions for Family Growth: Did the Lord express approval of the church in Pergamum as a whole? In [vv.14,15](#), what “few things” did He not approve of? In [v.16](#), what did the Lord say He would do if they did not repent?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 24:28,29](#).

Thursday: Revelation 3:1-6

Key Idea: Unfaithful congregations may have some members who are faithful to the Lord.

Questions for Family Growth: What was the Lord’s description of the overall spiritual condition of the church in Sardis? But what did the Lord say in [vv.4,5](#)? What decisions do you think must be made by a faithful Christian who finds himself in an unfaithful congregation?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 24:30-34](#).

Friday: 2 Corinthians 5:10

Key Idea: Each person will be judged on the basis of what he himself has done.

Questions for Family Growth: According to this text, who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ? Upon what basis will each one be judged? Does membership in a faithful congregation guarantee that a person will be saved?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:1,2](#).

Gary Henry — WordPoints.com