



A Tough Day

Focus We are saved and go to heaven by grace alone, but how we live on earth matters.

Open What is your favorite thing about back-to-school season?

Read The Bible says there is a Judgment Day coming and all people, believers and unbelievers, will be judged about two things: our belief and our behavior. Our belief determines *where* we spend eternity; our behavior determines *how* we spend eternity. We are saved by grace alone and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). But the Scriptures also say that God will judge and reward each person “according to their works” (Revelation 20:13, 22:12, Matthew 16:27).

There are two judgment seats in heaven: all believers stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and all unbelievers stand before The Great White Throne. Our belief on earth has *already determined* which seat we stand before in heaven. When we stand before Jesus (by grace), we will be rewarded for what we have done on earth (our works). In 2 Corinthians 5:15, Paul explains that believers’ works may be temporal (earthly) or eternal. Only that with eternal value will be rewarded in heaven.

Unbelievers, those who refused Jesus on earth, will stand before the Great White Throne, described in Revelation 20:11-13. All unbelievers will go to hell, but they too will be punished more or less severely depending on their works on earth (Matthew 11:21-24, Romans 2:5).

Our belief determines where we spend eternity; our behavior determines how we spend eternity. Believers will be rewarded, and unbelievers will be punished.

It is completely up to you which judgment you attend.

Talk

1. Read the following scriptures. In the past, did you find these scriptures confusing? How does differentiating between belief and behavior change your understanding?

Ecclesiastes 12:14

1 Peter 1:17

Revelation 20:13, 22:12

Matthew 16:27

Ephesians 2:8-9

2. Why will God judge the works of believers?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, where Paul explains that believers may be building with temporal or lasting materials. What makes a work temporal or eternal? Give some examples of each.
4. Jesus said that believers can do an eternal work in such a way that they lose their heavenly reward. According to Matthew 6:1-4, why would we lose our reward for a good work?
5. Philippians 2:12-13 says, *“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him”* (NLT). How does this verse encourage you concerning your works on earth?

Live

1. Matthew 6:4 says that the Father *“will Himself reward you openly”* for your works. What do you imagine that experience will be like? How does this affect your desire to please Him through your behavior on earth?
2. If you do not believe in Jesus and give your life to Him on earth, you will stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment. If you are not sure that when you die you will go to heaven, ask someone in your group to help you pray the following prayer: *“Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I ask you to forgive me for all of my sin. I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me today.”*

Pray

Thank God that He made a way for you to go to heaven by grace. Thank Him that when we believe He works within us, giving us the desire to obey Him. Ask Him to help you choose good works on earth that are of eternal significance.