

Written On Your Heart

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis begins his defense of the faith by observing that God has written a universal sense of justice on our hearts. In an argument, both sides will frequently appeal to a common standard of behavior. This standard is hardwired into us by our Creator. This innate sense of justice explains why crime and legal thrillers are so popular in novels, movies and TV shows. John Grisham alone has sold over 275 million novels.

Four Universal Standards Have Been Written On Our Hearts:

1. _____ (Knowledge) – We Are Judged By What We _____ (Know).
 - a. *“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.” Romans 2:1-2.*
 - b. *“To whom much is given, much will be required.” Luke 12:48.* Nature reveals God’s eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:20) to everyone, leaving us without excuse. If we have access to biblical knowledge, we are even more responsible if we *“do the same things” (Romans 2:3).*
 - c. When we minimize, justify, and rationalize sin, we are in danger of developing a hard heart and provoking God’s wrath (Romans 2:4-5).

2. _____ (Actions) – We Are Judged By What We _____ (Do).
 - a. *“God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.” Romans 2:6-8.*
 - b. In Matthew 21:28-32, Jesus told a parable about a father who sent two sons to work in the fields. One said he wouldn’t go, but did. The other promised to go, but didn’t. Jesus taught that actions count more than mere words.
 - c. In I Samuel 15, King Saul is instructed to destroy the Amalekites and their animals, but he disobeys and keeps the best animals *“to sacrifice to the Lord” (vs. 15).* Samuel rebukes him saying, *“To obey is better than sacrifice...rebellion is like the sin of divination.” (vs. 22-23).*
 - d. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23.* Although we are judged by works, we can be saved by faith in Christ. True salvation will produce good works (Romans 2:10; James 2:17) and cancel our bad works (Isaiah 1:18).

3. _____ (Conscience) – You Will Be Judged By What You _____ (Think).
 - a. *“For God does not show favoritism. All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the*

law...The requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, not defending them.” Romans 2:11-15.

- b. You make a choice regarding what you think about (Philippians 4:8). You can choose to seek God (John 7:17; Acts 17:27; Jeremiah 29:13). You can choose to obey your conscience rather than sear it (Romans 2:15; I Timothy 4:2). *“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7.*

4. _____(Motives) – You Will Be Judged By What You _____(Cherish).

- a. *“This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.” Romans 2:16.* Only God can accurately discern your motives, without any favoritism.
- b. Outwardly, King David and Judas Iscariot appear to have failed God in a major way. But God was able to discern that David had a broken and contrite heart, in spite of committing adultery and murder while Judas was remorseful but not repentant. Only God can see with 100% clarity!

In ancient Russia, a nomadic tribe was blessed with a strong, wise, and just chief. When a rash of thefts occurred, he vowed to punish the offender with ten lashes, an amount that was upped to forty as time passed. To the horror of everyone, the culprit turned out to be the chief’s mother. Would he follow thru on a penalty that would likely kill her?

True to his word, the chief sentenced his mother. But true to his love for her, before the whip fell, he surrounded her frail body with his own, taking upon himself the penalty prescribed for her. In an infinitely greater way, this is what Christ did for us! We are guilty and without excuse, but Christ offers to absorb that penalty for us. Will you place your trust in Him?

Discussion Questions

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1. Why do you think C.S. Lewis defended Christianity by first pointing out that every human being has a universal sense of justice that is written on their hearts? Have you ever observed this as you watched two people argue? Why do you think this is difficult for the evolutionist to explain? Do you like crime stories? What are your favorite novels, movies, or TV shows that feature cops and criminals?
2. Read Romans 2:1-16. What evidence is there that Romans 2 is being written to Jews and others who have a greater level of Scriptural knowledge than the pagans in Romans 1:21-32? What is taught in Luke 12:48? Do you believe people who have greater knowledge should be held to a higher standard than those who don't? What is taught in Romans 2:1-5 about those who commit so-called smaller sins? Have you ever tried to minimize or rationalize or justify your sin? How? What is the danger in saying to yourself or others, "No big deal" to an obvious sin?
3. Read verses 6-10. How are we judged by our actions? Did you have parents who held you accountable for your disobedience? How were you punished or corrected? What was Jesus's point in Matthew 21:28-32? How did Samuel respond to King Saul's sin in I Samuel 15:22-23? What is taught in Romans 3:23? Does it seem fair to you that we are judged by our works, but saved by faith? How would you explain this to another person? Do you believe that true faith will produce godly works (see James 2:17)? Do you believe faith in Christ will cancel out your ungodly works (Isaiah 1:18)?
4. Read verses 11-15. What does Philippians 4:8, John 7:17, Acts 17:27-28, and Jeremiah 29:13 teach about our thought life? What does Romans 2:15 and I Timothy 4:2 teach about the conscience? How would you define the conscience? How does your conscience speak to you?
5. Read verse 16. Why is it hard for us to discern someone else's motives? Why do you think God knew about King David and his sin and Judas and his sin that was hidden from the people around them? What did you think of the story of the chief who was punished in place of his mother? How is Jesus like this for us? Have you placed your faith in Christ?