



Is Being Religious Enough?

Romans 2:17-29



Paul's diagnostic of the human condition.

1} Immoral Humanity - 1:18-32

Being human is not enough. Because basic humanity is not right with God. Pleading ignorance is not enough; we are without excuse.

2} Moral Humanity - 2:1-16

Being moral is not enough to get right with God. We are condemned by our own standards as well as God's.

3} Religious Humanity - 2:17-29

The Religious Person's Response



“I’m not immoral and I’m not just moral, I’m religious too. I was raised in this religion. I go to a place of worship. I support religious activities. I uphold ethical standards. I believe in God’s or a deity’s existence”.



NOTE:

When we read “law” in **Ro 2:17-22**, we can understand it not just as Torah (Jewish Law) but any religious system and/or scriptures.

The Religious Person's Identity

Romans 2:17-20

- Bear Name Jew (or other religion)
- Rely upon Law (i.e. religious system)
- Boast in God
- Know His will
- Approve The things that are essential
- Instructed The Law (or other religious system)
- Are confident Guide, light, corrector, teacher
- Having Knowledge & truth

There is nothing wrong with
these per se
but when these become
hypocritical and full of
pride rather than humble,
that's when your identity
is mere religion
and not true faith.

Five Piercing Questions: Exposing Hypocrisy

Romans 2:21-23



Chiastic structure of Romans 2:21-23

A} Do you teachers listen to your own
teaching? **v21a**

B} Steal? **v21b**

B} Adultery? **v22a**

B} Defilement (idolatry)? **v22b**

A} Do you boast in the Law but break
the Law and thus dishonor God?
v23



The Religious Person's Practices / Rituals

Romans 2:25-29

Paul's spiritual math. Shocking!!

v25 - **circ** *minus* Law keeping
= **uncircumcised**

v26 - **uncirc** *plus* Law keeping
= **circumcised**

Statement of the principle of spiritual circumcision

Romans 2

v28 For he is not a Jew
who is one outwardly,
nor is circumcision that
which is outward in the flesh.

v29 But he is a Jew
who is one inwardly;
and circumcision is that
which is of the heart,
by the Spirit, not by the letter;
and his praise is not from men,
but from God.

Summary: Challenges Paul is Making to the Religious

1} Focus on God not heritage, identity, or rituals/practice

“by the Spirit, not by the letter” (v29)

2} The Heart is the Issue

Paul is reflecting *JC's teaching* Mt 12:34; 15:8, 18-20; 22:37-38.

And also the *OT*: e.g. Jr 4:4; 4:14, 18; 5:24; 7:24; 9:26; 31:33; Ez 11:19; 20:16

3} The more revelation you have the more culpable you are.

2Ch 6:32-33 Is 56:6-8 Mt 21:13

Matthew 15:8

‘THIS PEOPLE
HONORS ME
WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART
IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.’

Final verdict upon the
religious =>

GUILTY

SURRENDER

