



# 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

“...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

A photograph showing two hands reaching upwards towards a bright light source. The hands are dark silhouettes against a background of blurred, warm-toned lights in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The word "SURRENDER" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters at the top center of the image.