

## **Do you fear God's judgment? Do you seek God's approval?**

In Luke 16:15 Jesus said to the Pharisees: *"Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."* The reason the "lawyer" of Luke 10:25 (a scribe, and probably a Pharisee) asked Jesus the question, *"And who is my neighbor?"* is that he desired to *"justify himself"* (v. 29). We should be strongly concerned and ever concerned about being pleasing to God and right with God, but little concerned about appearing justified in the sight of men or about proving to men that we are right. If I can know that I am right with God, what should I care if some man or any man thinks that I am wrong?

Because we are human, we make mistakes, and some of those mistakes constitute sins -- transgressions of divine law (I John 3:4), or failure to do the good that divine law would have us do (James 4:17). We should be far more concerned about our mistakes that are matters of sin than we are about all of our mistakes. Men may not be, but God is. And God alone is aware of and concerned about every sin; God alone can justify us from any sin; and God is both able and willing to do just that. Let us say with Paul: *"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord"* (1 Cor.4:3-4).

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