

Romans 2:1-2

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When we judge and condemn others for sins that we are also committing, God sees that and will judge us accordingly.

Therefore here means Paul is basing this statement on the preceding argument. Paul also changes his audience. Up to this point Paul has been speaking directly to the Gentile believers in Rome whose "faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8) and now he addresses *everyone of you who passes judgment* (v 1), expecting the Roman believers to participate as onlookers. He says these people *have no excuse*. We will discover beginning in 2:17 that Paul is addressing specifically some Jewish authorities who are slandering Paul's message to the Roman believers. However, although Paul has these authorities specifically in mind, this passage applies to anyone (*everyone of you*) who is a hypocritical judge of others.

What is the *therefore* connecting back to? The central points Paul made in the preceding passage are as follows:

- Just-living or righteousness comes by living humbly before God, believing He is God and doing what He says (Romans 1:16–17) while prideful or self-centered living brings destruction.
- God pours out His wrath on unjust or unrighteous living by removing His protection and turning us over to our own passions, eventually allowing our moral compass to be replaced with a self-centric, self-justifying base for living (Romans 1:18–32).
- Every person inherently knows what is just or right and what is unjust, but we often choose to suppress it (Romans 1:18–23, 32).
- When we replace God's moral base with one of our own choosing, we will fall into a set of highly destructive behaviors that will remove us from harmonious living with God and other believers (Romans 1:26–32).

For in that which we judge another for things we ourselves practice we actually are *condemning* ourselves (v 1). Paul will soon make the point of how broadly this must be applied, for he says that we are all sinners (Romans 3:9–18). Since God is the just Judge of all, when we judge others on His behalf we are actually sitting in God's proper place. This pride stands in stark contrast to the just living of faith (Romans 1:16–17).

You who judge practice the same things in 2:1 refers to the practice of judging others for things that we do ourselves. When we do this, we ignore the truth as it pertains to ourselves while using that same truth to judge others. This is a very human trait; we can observe young children consistently applying excellent values such as sharing and fairness to others while completely ignoring the application to themselves. This is often described as the "lightning rod" experience; we hate others for faults we have in ourselves. Psychologists call this "projection." However, as Paul made clear in chapter 1, his *Therefore* refers to the fact that we all know what is right because God makes it clear to us all. The problem is not that we do not know the truth, but that we suppress the truth (Romans 1:18).

Here In 2:2, Paul states that God judges us when we judge others without applying that truth to ourselves. This is like a parent stepping in when a child says, "Give me that, you have to share," and responding, "Now Johnny, Suzy had it first. You need to wait your turn." If we will not apply truth to ourselves as we apply it to others, then God will apply it to us. *And we know the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things* (v 2). If we judge others without also judging ourselves, then God will judge us.

Said another way, when we sit in God's judgment seat and pass judgment on others, there is a price to pay: God will judge us.

Matt 7:1-2 is also instructive here, where Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that the standard we use to judge others is the same standard God will use to judge us. This is an application of the "Mercy Principle" from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. The Mercy Principle holds that one who gives mercy will receive mercy (Matthew 5:7), the one who forgives will be forgiven (Matthew 6:12, 14) and the one who first recognizes and deals with faults in themselves will accurately see and can correct faults in others (Matthew 7:2-5).

Biblical Text

1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.