



PASS/FAIL

Don't you just love those tests that are labeled PASS/FAIL? The written driver's test is a good example. What happened to grading on the curve, best three out of four or even doing "extra credit" projects to make up the difference?

With the curve or 'best-of' system we have a chance of getting by. There is a chance for a gray area. But with pass/fail, one small or insignificant mistake can make the difference; there is no gray area or room for negotiation.

Did you ever think about how our Holy God judges by the PASS/FAIL method? The requirements are strict, many and non-negotiable. God's Word tells us in Proverbs 4:4: "he taught me and said, 'Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.'"

OPENING: Read or sing the first two (2) verses of Hymn # 141 (TLH), "Enslaved by Sin and Bound in Chains."

PRAYER: (Ps. 7:8) "Let the Lord judge the peoples. Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O Most High." (Ps. 139:23-24) "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me, and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Amen

STUDY: How many of us pray those verses with candor and sincerity? PASS/FAIL! Read Exodus 15:26. Who is speaking and what is the message? Is this a pass/fail situation? Why or why not?

In Deuteronomy 6:4-6 we hear a different message. Is this message only for the Jews? Why or why not? Does this sound like a PASS/FAIL situation? Discuss.

It is so easy for us to rationalize our "white lies," our "little transgressions," and go on our way. But that is not what we glean from the Bible. Read Proverbs 20:9 and discuss if this is something we as Christians can do on our own. Why or why not? PASS/FAIL?

Proverbs 24:9 tells us that even the thought of foolishness is sin, and what happens to scoffers? About how many times a day do you have a foolish thought or scoff at something?

Read Ecclesiastes 5:6 and answer the question posed there.

We have seen that God's requirement for our test is strict law and its result is PASS/FAIL. "*Keep my commandments and live.*" The law is there to convict us of our wrong doing. Discuss this statement: If there were no law, how would we know we are failing God? How do you answer that question?

God in His supreme love for us has given us the “extra credit” to pass His requirement. We don’t have to perform any task, present a report, or write an essay to get this extra credit. We can’t even negotiate or “make a deal.” Matthew 9:6a gives us a hint of what that extra credit is. How do we get to know that? Read 1 John 1:9. Is this God’s extra credit for us? How?

Consider Galatians 2:16: “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” Explain the result of works and faith in Christ Jesus.

If not keeping the law is sinning and God forgives the sins of the repentant, do we need to fear our test? Why or why not?

CLOSING: Read or sing verses 2-3 from Hymn # 141 (TLH), “Enslaved by Sin and Bound in Chains”.

PRAYER: Dear Lord we thank you for our pastors, teachers, missionaries, Sunday School teachers, parents, and friends who show us and teach us not to fear our final test before You. We thank you for the truth of Romans 10:17, because through Your Word, You have brought us to faith. We no longer look upon final PASS/FAIL judgment as a negative, but as a firm positive because of the forgiveness of sins and justification by grace You give us through faith. We rejoice in the hope of eternal life with You! We pray this in the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

All Bible verses are taken from the NIV

PASS /FAIL --*Written by* Marianne Dolson
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