

Read: 1 Corinthians 4:1-7

You Know the Judge!

1 Corinthians 4:3,4

I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The accused man knew he was guilty of the crime for which he was being charged. There was no hiding it. It would not be difficult for the opposing lawyer to present the necessary evidence to prove it. As he sat in the courtroom looking around, waiting for his trial to begin, the man wondered what the jurors would think of him once he was found guilty. He wondered what his family and friends would think of him after they found out. He was guilty, no question about it—his only hope was that the judge would be merciful when he determined the punishment he would have to serve.

The judge entered the courtroom, and immediately the man's hopes swelled—he knew the judge! The judge just happened to be a close family friend. While the man still expected the judge to be fair, he was encouraged that his guilty verdict might not carry as strict a punishment since he was a friend of the judge.

We know the wrongs that we've done. It can be hard for us to forget them, even if they were things we did a long time ago. We, like the man on trial, wonder what other people think about us when they find out the things we've done. We may even find ourselves worried about how a holy God feels about us when it comes to certain sins we've committed.

But, like the man on trial, we know the judge—and he is our Friend! We know he is our Friend because he already gave his Son, Jesus, to suffer our punishment in our place. Even though he was never guilty himself, Jesus allowed himself to be called guilty in our place and serve our sentence.

For that reason, we don't ever have to worry about the judge's verdict—he called Jesus guilty in our place so that he could call us innocent. Since we have been forgiven through Jesus, we know where we stand with God because we know the judge. He is our Friend!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What word would you use to describe a courtroom judge?
- What word would you use to describe God as a judge?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Can you remember something wrong you did in the past that still troubles you today?
- If Jesus died on the cross to pay for every single sin, what does that mean about your sin?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Have you ever been more concerned about how others might judge you when you've messed up than about what God thinks of it?
- How does knowing the judge—and his verdict—make you more comfortable confessing your sins rather than trying to hide or excuse them?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, we know the wrongs that we have done. But we also know your Son! Since we have faith in him, we don't need to fear the judge. He is our Friend! Amen.