



## Decade of Availability Profession & Performance

Have you ever professed to be more than you were? Have you ever instructed others when you were the one needing instruction? Have you ever had an over inflated sense of your own importance? If you can say yes to any of these questions—this passage is for you.

**Introduction:** Paul’s criticism of the Jews was different from that of the Gentiles. The Gentiles suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. The Jews suppressed the truth in a form of righteousness—but it was not the righteousness of God.

### 1. Profession Without Performance *vv. 17-24*

**a. Wrong rest:** *v. 17* Resting their hope on the law was the Jews root problem. Unlike Paul who ‘boasted’ in God (*1 Cor 1:30-31*) the Jew’s boasting is selfish and exclusive.

**b. Right truth:** *vv. 18-20* The Jews knew the truth and knew they were a ‘light to the Gentiles’ (*Isa 42:6-7*). They saw themselves as ‘guides,’ ‘instructors,’ and ‘teachers.’

**c. Wrong life:** *vv. 21-22* How we live does matter! Paul charges the Jews (and us by extension) of doing the opposite of what we **teach, preach** and **say**. The three areas of inconsistency were in **stealing, adultery** and **idol worship**. All three are violations of the Ten Commandments.

**d. The result of not living what we believe:** *vv. 23-24* All of our ‘positive’ claims about God and His Word to others is negated when we don’t ‘live it’ — God is ‘dishonored.’ Often it causes others to make fun of believers and God—even mocking (blaspheme) the Name of God. (*Isa 52:5*)

### 2. Religion Without Reality *vv. 25-29*

**Background to circumcision:** The Jews considered themselves ‘safe’ from wrath because of the protective shield of the law and circumcision as physical evidence that they were the children of Abraham. (*See Gen 17:1-14*)

Paul’s purpose in this paragraph is to do with circumcision what he had already done with the law—show that it is no basis for special treatment on Judgment Day.

**a. Powerless signs and symbols:** *vv. 25-27* Notice the four ‘**if**’ clauses in this passage. All of this is to show that ‘circumcision’ (an outward sign of obedience) does NOT guarantee that there has been an inward (heart) act of obedience.

**b. The power of Grace:** *vv. 28-29* True Jewishness is identified NOT by circumcision but by the inward state of the heart. Physical Jewishness, marked by physical circumcision, is NOT the measure of salvation; spiritual circumcision is. The person who is truly accepted by God is right with him—not by the flesh, but the Spirit. The things that make him/ua special to God are not on the outside, such as physical birth as a Jew, physical circumcision, and mere outward obedience to the law’s commands. Rather, they are on the inside, where God alone can see them.

**Our confidence: Phil. 3:3**

**“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh...”**

## Romans 2:17-29 (NKJV)

**17** Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, **18** and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,

**19** and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

**20** an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.

**21** You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

**22** You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

**23** You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

**24** For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.

**25** For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

**26** Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

**27** And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

**28** For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

**29** but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.