

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, March 18, 2012

Passage: Romans 2:12-16

Memory Passage: Romans 8:9-10

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom 2.** Our verses for this week are 2:12-16, and it is also the day to read chapter 2 in our rotation of reading chapters of Paul's letter. How does Paul use 2:12-16 to continue his train of thought in this chapter? How do these verses connect with what has preceded? With what follows? For what purpose does Paul begin vs. 12, 13, & 14 with the word "for?"
- (b) How many times does Paul use the word "law" in these 5 verses? To what is he referring? Does every instance of the word "law" in these verses refer to the same thing? If not, which reference(s) is different and what is different about it (them)?
- (c) To whom is Paul speaking in these verses (believer or non-believer? Jew or Gentile?)? About whom is Paul speaking?
- (d) *Family:* Ask your family, "What should happen to a member of our family who gets caught stealing?" (They should be punished!) Then ask, "Why should they be punished?" Remind them that punishment is deserved because stealing is wrong (because it violates both the character of God and the 8th commandment). Then ask, "What should happen to a member of our family who gets caught dumping boiling water on a puppy?" (What!!!) "Why should they be punished? Is there a command in Scripture forbidding dumping boiling water on puppies? Have I ever forbidden you to do this?" Lead them to understand that it is wrong because we instinctively know such behavior is wrong, and we deserve punishment, even if no one has ever forbidden us to do it. **Now Read Romans 2:12** and explain that the "law" here refers to the 10 commandments & the Mosaic Law. Ask, "Why is someone who does not have the law still condemned to perish if they sin?" Remind them of Romans 1:18-20 and that every person stands without excuse before God. Both the Jews without Christ, who had received the law, and the Gentiles without Christ, who may not have heard the law, are guilty because they are sinners deserving of judgment.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 2:12-16 & Rom. 3.** Paul seems to be answering a question he thinks might be asked at this point in his teaching, a question such as, "How can you say that God shows no partiality when He judges, Paul?! He gave the Jews a head start by giving them the law and circumcision, did He not?" 2:12-16 begins the discussion on the law and its merits. Who will be judged in v. 12 and why will they be judged? What does the law have to do with their judgment according to v. 12?
- (b) Are the Jews more accountable to God and for judgment because they have the law than those to whom the law was not given? If so, are there other Scriptures that teach this same idea (i.e. we are accountable for the light we have, not for the light we do not have)? (See Luke 12:35-48 [esp. 47-48] & Matt. 11:20-24, for examples.) How does this principle apply to the church in the 21st century? How does it apply to you and the people to whom you witness?
- (c) Is Paul conveying a difference between the outcome of those without the law (they perish without the law) and those with the law (they are judged by the law), or is he saying the same thing in a different (parallel) way? Remember the context!
- (d) *Family: Read Rom. 2:12-13* Ask, "Think about what we learned about good works last week and tell me who it is that will be the 'doers of the law'?" Use this time to review that it is the one who is saved that accomplishes works pleasing to God (i.e. good fruit). Remind them of the parable of the sower/soils and Eph. 2:8-9 & Gal. 2:20. Then teach them that the one who is the doer of the word here in Rom. 2:13 is the one who has been saved and is producing fruit and therefore giving evidence that he/she is truly justified (declared legally righteous before God).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 2:12-16 & Rom. 4.** According to v. 13, who will be justified? Is Paul contradicting himself here, saying that justification comes from doing the law (cf. 3:20)? If not, then what is he saying in v. 13? Is there a difference between being "righteous before God" and being "justified?" What does it mean to say that a person is justified? Is Paul saying one can be justified apart from Christ if one keeps the law perfectly?
- (b) According to Paul, what does the law require that Gentiles do? What does he mean when he says that their doing is "by nature?" How are these people who are without the law a "law unto themselves?" To what law does he refer?
- (c) What is the "work of the law" that is written on their hearts? Notice that the Scripture does not say "the law" but "the work of the law." Is there a difference? If they are "without the law," then how do they know what work to accomplish?
- (d) *Family:* Ask, "Suppose I told you all to go and clean your rooms, and everyone obeyed except one person. Then I rewarded everyone, including the person who disobeyed, with \$5.00 for being obedient. How would you feel?" Emphasize that just as there should be no reward for the one who "heard" but did not "do" the law commanding them to clean their room, Paul states that it is only the one who is a "doer" of the law, not the one who only "hears" who will be justified. Then **Read and Teach James 1:22-25** and reconfirm this truth from what we learned in our study of James.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Rom. 2:12-16, 9:1-2, 13:5, 1 Cor. 8:7-12, 10:25-31, 1 Tim. 4:1-2, & Titus 1:15.** How does the lost Gentile's "conscience bear witness" against him? Explain his "conflicting thoughts" & how they "accuse or even excuse them?"

(b) Since a Gentile's conscience will bear witness against them, how are we to view our own conscience? How do we know when our conscience is speaking to us? How do we know if our conscience is weak, and what should we do about it if it is? How should we respond to believers with weak consciences?

(c) How does the knowledge that consciences can be seared affect our witness of the gospel? How does it affect our approach to professing believers who are caught up in sin? How does it affect our evaluation of our own assessment of what is right & wrong? How does it affect the way we raise our children?

(d) *Family:* Spend tonight working on your memory of Romans 8:9-10, and reviewing 8:1-9. Use any of the games and activities you have used from previous lessons that your family enjoys. Try to recite all 10 verses in unison as a family!

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Rom. 2:12-16, 1 Chron. 28:9, Ps. 139:1-5, Eccl. 12:14, Jer. 17:10, Matt. 6:4, 6, & 18.** How is judgment "according to" the gospel and "by Christ Jesus?"

(b) What do you learn about God's omniscience from the verses you read? How is God's ability to judge the "secrets of men" a comfort to you? A concern to you? What does this aspect of God's character say to you about your tendency to judge the motives of other people based on your perception of their actions?

(c) What relevance is this understanding of God's character (to know the secrets of our hearts) to you when you suffer at the hands of others? What relevance is it to you as you persevere in prayer and fellowship with God? How would you use this wonderful truth to counsel your children concerning enduring persecution for the sake of the gospel, or someone who is struggling with the wickedness of men?

(d) Write a psalm of praise to God for this wonderful attribute of His character, the same attribute that caused David to write, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it" (Ps. 139:6).

(e) *Family:* Tell your family a story in which your family and 3 other families are asked to clean a family's home whose son was in the hospital, a job that will take all day. Your family arrives early, at 8:00 AM, and begins to work. Another family shows up and begins work at 11:00 AM, another at 2:00 PM, and the final family at 5:00 PM. At 6:00, the owner of the home comes home and gives every family \$50.00 for cleaning their home. Ask, "How do you feel knowing that the family who only worked an hour got the same gift as you when you worked 10 hours?" After the discussion, **Read Rom. 2:12-16** and recap what you have learned this week. State that the ones who God will justify on the Day of Judgment will be the ones who He saved unto good works during their life, and that it is God who is the impartial judge. Then **Read Matt. 20:1-16** and teach your children about the sovereignty of God in the area of salvation.

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Impartial Judgment & the Law