

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, March 4, 2012

Passage: Romans 2:1-5

Memory Passage: Romans 8:1-6 (Review)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom 1:18-2:29.** As you know, keeping a verse in context is one of the first rules of hermeneutics (the art and science of Biblical interpretation). There are many opinions concerning what the connection is between Romans 1 & 2, so spend some time meditating on Rom. 1:18-2:29 and answer this question: What is the “therefore” that begins 2:1 there for?

(b) Answer this (also highly debated) question: About whom is Paul speaking in 2:1-5? Upon what evidence do you base your answer? (Note that all of the 2nd person pronouns in these verses are singular.)

(c) For what reason does Paul’s hearer “have no excuse” (“for . . .”) and why is this so (“because . . .”)? How did they pass judgment on others, and how does this passing of judgment result in their own condemnation?

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 2:1-5.* Ask, “What does the word ‘judge’ mean?” After hearing their definitions (of which there are several: A person who decides a case, the act of evaluating, the act of condemning, etc.), lead them to the definition that includes the act of evaluating but also the act of condemning and help them understand 2:1. Point out that Paul is using a rhetorical device (i.e. a type of persuasive speech) called “diatribe” in which he speaks to an imaginary adversary or objector. All of the 2nd person pronouns (“you”) are singular, as if Paul is singling out one person to speak to in these verses. This person represents those who are moralists (those who think their morality elevates them above others, even to the point of being righteous because of it), both Jew & Gentile. Paul says that when they judge others they are also pronouncing judgment on themselves because they are guilty of the same things (probably referring mostly to the sins listed in 1:28-31). Ask them, “Have you ever judged others in areas of which you yourself were guilty?” Help them along by giving examples from your own life, & help them to see that only God can rightly condemn others for their sin.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:1-5 & Rom. 11.** What is the difference between the judgment of the moralist in v. 1 and the judgment of God that “rightly falls” (the Greek is literally, “according to truth”) on “such things?” To what does “such things” refer?

(b) **Read Matt. 7:1-5 & Rom. 14:10-12.** Considering these passages, answer the following questions: (1) Is it ever ok to judge someone else? (2) If so, when is it ok and what does it look like? (3) Why is God’s judgment different than ours?

(c) In what ways do you pronounce judgment on other people (please consider your speech, thoughts, and actions)? What damage has this judging caused, both to you and to others (please consider how your judgmental attitudes have affected your ability to love the person you judged, as well as how other people have been influenced toward the one on whom you have passed judgment)? What actions should you take in response to your judging of others and its effects?

(d) *Family:* Prior to your study make up a list of 5 or 6 true/false questions about things that are obviously either true or false (e.g. “Grass is always pink” or “Spaghetti is a type of fruit” or “There are always 60 seconds in one minute” etc.). Also make a list of 5-6 situations about which one could make a moral judgment (e.g. “Jessica has 14 body piercings” or “Jack likes to kick cats” or “Julie only watches G rated movies” or “Jimmy goes to church every Sunday” etc.). Then read the list of T/F statements, asking your family to tell you whether each statement is true or false. Then read the behavior statements and give this instruction: “For each situation, decide whether the person is good or bad.” **Then read Matt. 7:1-5** and teach your family the difference between judging as “evaluating” and judging as “condemning,” and how we must judge rightly concerning sin but also that the correct approach is to judge ourselves first (“take the log from our eye”) and then to help ourselves & others apply the gospel to mortify our sin.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:1-5 & Rom. 12.** FYI: The term, “O man” could be a reference to Paul’s imaginary objector in his use of diatribe (see 1d above) or courtroom language that refers to the defendant on trial (or both). How is the “O man” described in v. 3? What is the result of his/her hypocrisy? What have you learned so far in Romans that would help you give an account for why this person could not escape God’s judgment?

(b) Imagine yourself sitting in the pew of the Roman church when this letter was read for the first time. Whether you were Jew or Gentile, what would you be thinking as the reader finished 1:32? Would you be shaking your head in agreement with Paul that all those who committed these sins were worthy of God’s wrath? Would you have fallen into the trap of making a judgment on those who were guilty of such sin that condemned them? How would you have felt as the reader moved to 2:1? Then as he moved to 2:2? Then to 2:3, and on to 2:4, and 2:5? Can you feel the shock! Can you feel the trap into which Paul lulled you because of your judgmental heart? Are you now mad or humbled? Are you shouting back at the reader & Paul or are you asking God to forgive you for your judgmental attitude? Are you claiming your own innocence or Christ’s blood?

(c) *Family*: Tonight is Scripture memory night! Work on memorizing/reviewing Rom. 8:1-6. You can place each word on an individual card and have everyone place them in order (like we did a few weeks ago), or place each verse on an individual card and draw one at a time and ask everyone to say the verse that follows (i.e. if you draw v. 3 then everyone recites v. 4), or play a “fill in the blank” game in which you write each verse with a few blanks and have your family fill them in, and then proceed with more blanks the next time, until finally they are writing/saying the entire passage from memory. Be creative!

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:1-5 and Rom. 13.** In what way does the guilty one “presume on” (lit. “show contempt for”) God’s kindness? His forbearance? His patience? Why does Paul refer to these 3 characteristics as God’s “riches?” To what is God’s kindness intended to lead us? Explain how this is so.

(b) Write down all the verses that come to your mind that inform you about God’s kindness, forbearance, & patience. Why are these characteristics of God important to you? Be ready to share some of these with your class to encourage each other with the truth of God’s character.

(c) In what ways have you experienced the riches of God’s character with regard to your sin? What judgments has He withheld according to His riches? How should this affect the way you view the sin of other people, even those who are given over to the sins in Rom. 1:24-31? How should this affect the way you live with other people in our body?

(d) *Family*: Prior to your study read Ex. 33:12-34:7 and be ready to summarize all but the last two verses. During your session, summarize the story up to 34:6, and then **Read Ex. 34:6-7**, explaining to your family the character of God (both His mercy/grace & righteousness/holiness). Then **Read Rom. 2:4** and explain that even though God’s righteousness & holiness cause Him to send forth His wrath upon sin, His mercy, grace, kindness, & patience are also exercised so that He allows time for people to repent of their sins. Preach the gospel to your children explaining how God’s “forbearance” (see also 3:25-26 for how this forbearance led to His Son, Jesus) allows for them to repent and believe on Christ for forgiveness.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:1-5 & Rom. 14.** What does the adversative, “but” tell you about the relationship between vs. 4 & 5? How does Paul know that his objector’s heart is “hard and impenitent?” What is the result of having such a heart?

(b) When will this stored-up wrath be fully unleashed? Does this contradict Paul’s statement in 1:18 that says that God’s wrath is currently being revealed? Why/why not?

(c) If you are a believer, then you know that you will never suffer God’s wrath because Christ has already suffered it on your behalf. What must your response be now that you know that there are people who, by their every action, are storing up wrath that, though being delayed because of God’s kindness, will be unleashed on the final Day of Judgment? To what does knowing these truths drive you? How will you change your priorities today to match these convictions?

(d) *Family*: Lead your family through (a-c) above emphasizing both your family’s need for repentance and your family’s need to be active in evangelizing the lost. Be specific about ways in which your family can be more engaged with evangelism.

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Hypocrites: Storing up Wrath