

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, May 13, 2012

Passage: Romans 3:19-20

Memory Passage: Romans 8:9-17 (Review)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 1:18-3:20 & Rom. 1.** How does 3:19-20 fit into the larger context of Rom. 3? Into the larger context of Rom. 1:18-3:20? What role do they have in Paul's argument that started in 1:18?

(b) Summarize Rom. 3:19-20 in your own words. Try to understand and communicate Paul's flow of thought, especially in light of the adverbs "now" & "so (that)," the conjunctions "and" & "since," and the preposition "for/because."

(c) What is Paul's main point or idea in vs. 19-20? Has he made this point previously in 1:18-3:18? If so, in what ways is his point different than (More nuanced? More concise?) what he has already stated, and in what ways is it the same? Is he making reference to any OT passages in his words, and if so, is there any significance to his reference?

(d) *Family:* Use this lesson to review 1:18-3:18 by dividing this passage into sections (e.g. 1:18-23, 24-32, 2:1-11, 12-16, 17-29, 3:1-8, and 9-18). Read each section aloud or summarize it, and then ask you family questions about the main points of each section. Another way to accomplish this is to have each family member take one section, re-read it silently, and then have him/her explain the main point of the section to the rest of the family, as you explain the rest of the sections. You may also ask if there are any questions about each section. Don't worry about covering every word in every verse, but make sure you are noticing the main points that Paul is making in each section and how they flow together to make his point.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:19-20 & Rom. 2.** How does Paul use the word, "now" that begins in v. 19 (the word "now" can be used in several ways, e.g. to show reference to time, to show the result of something, to draw emphasis to something, to show irony, to emphasize a request or command, just to name a few ☺)?

(b) Paul says, "whatever the law says." To what law is he referring in v. 19a (Mosaic Law? All the OT? 10 Commandments?) and what does the law "say?" What does it mean to be, "under the law" and who are those that are in this state? Why does the law only speak to those who are under it, especially in light of verses such as 2:12-15?

(c) Are you under the law? Why or why not? **Revisit Ps. 19:7-11:** As one who is not under the law, do these promises have any meaning for you? How should a New Covenant believer apply them? Write down at least 3 ways that you will apply these wonderful promises during the coming week realizing that you are under grace, not law (Rom. 6:14).

(d) *Family:* Ask your family what they remember about being "under sin" from last week's lesson (remember the rope and blanket?). Help them remember that being under sin means being in bondage to its power and under its penalty. Now **Read Rom. 3:19b** and ask them to consider what it means to be "under the law" (bound to obey it perfectly for salvation and under the penalty of death if they did not). Let them know that in v. 19 the law refers to the entire OT (notice that the immediate quotes are from Psalms and Isaiah), and that Paul is saying that the Jews are the ones who are under the law. Then explain that if Jews, who were privileged to be entrusted with the law (among other things; see 9:4-5), could not keep the law and were guilty of disobeying it, then it is easy to see how non-Jews, who were not entrusted with the law, were guilty as well ("every mouth" & "the whole world"). Then explain that believers are no longer under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:19-20.** What does the "so that" (v. 19) tell us about what follows? How can Paul move so quickly from the law speaking to *Jews* ("those who are under the law") to the result that *all people* ("every mouth") will be silenced?

(b) Why is no one capable of speech (cf. 1:20)? What is the relationship between every mouth being stopped and "the whole world" being "held accountable to God?" What has happened to make their accountability to God so evident?

(c) How do the truths found in v. 19 affect your evangelism? If they don't affect it, how *should* they? What is encouraging about v. 19? What is fearful about v. 19? What about v. 19 makes you grateful?

(d) *Family:* **Read Rom. 3:19.** Explain that "every mouth stopped" and "accountable" are legal terms that would be used in a courtroom, and they refer to the state of a person who has used every possible defense to acquit themselves of charges brought against them but they are still guilty. They are speechless (they have nothing else to say) and guilty (accountable). Take your family back through Romans 1:18-3:20 and make a list of all the defenses Paul has dismantled to show that every person without Christ is worthy of receiving God's righteous wrath.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:19-20 & Rom. 4.** How does chapter 4 shed light on, or further explain, the truths found in 3:20?

(b) The “for” that begins v. 20 should probably be translated “because” (NASB). What does this conjunction tell us about the connection between vs. 20 & 19? What is the reason given in v. 20 for everyone being accountable to God with no excuse?

(c) To what “law” is Paul referring here (Mosaic Law? 10 Commandments? All the OT?)? What are, “the works of the law?” Are they the same or different than the work of the law mentioned in 2:15? Why will no human being (lit. “flesh”) be justified by the works of the law (look at the context!)? What does it mean for one to be, “justified?”

(d) Explain why v. 20 does not contradict 2:13.

(e) *Family: Read Rom. 3:19-20.* Ask, “What does it mean to be ‘justified?’” and wait for answers. If they don’t know, or give partial answers, help them along by asking questions to give them a more concise definition. Then explain the concept of a person being justified by telling a story in which someone commits a heinous crime (as bad as you can think of without disturbing your younger kids), is brought to trial, found guilty, and sentenced to death or life in prison. Then the judge, without warning and with no regard for the guilty one (i.e. exacting no promise of good behavior, no citing of his/her innocence in spite of the evidence, no reference to his/her character), declares the person innocent and wipes the charges from the books. The person is set free, having paid no penalty for their sin and having no record of it kept. As far as the judge was concerned, the person is legally not guilty of their crime even though they did it, and there was nothing this person could have done, no works, that could have produced this standing in the judge’s court. This is what Christ did for us, and even more: He paid the penalty that we should have paid (death) and He suffered God’s wrath, a wrath which we deserved because we would have been found guilty, without Christ, at God’s court. We would have had no defense, our mouths would have been stopped, and we would have been held accountable to God’s righteous judgment. But we are now justified (declared legally righteous), because of Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf resulting in His righteousness becoming our righteousness. Hallelujah!

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:19-20 & Rom. 5.** What does Paul mean by the phrase, “knowledge of sin” in v. 20 (Intellectual awareness? Experiential knowledge? Something else?)? How does this knowledge of sin come “through the law?” How does the conjunction, “since” inform the relationship between v. 20b & 20a?

(b) Even though you may not clearly state, “I am justified by my works,” in what “works of the law” do you practically live as though you are trusting in them for your justification? In what ways does this kind of living violate the character of God? In what ways does it diminish your witness of the power of the gospel? Write down at least three ways that you will live in the reality that you trust in the finished work of Christ for your justification rather than these works of the law.

(c) In what ways do these 2 verses help us in developing a Christ-centered worldview? In what ways do they help us understand & critique other worldviews? How do they help us answer questions like, “What is wrong with the world?” and “What is the solution to the problems in the world?” and “How do we best help our fellow man?” As you answer these questions, think of how other philosophies & ideologies such as secularism, Marxism, communism, atheism, liberalism, socialism, conservatism, post-modernism, materialism, intellectualism, etc might answer these questions contrasted with a Christ-centered worldview.

(d) *Family:* Find a container in your home into which your kids never have need to look, and never even think about (e.g. a spice canister, a decorative box on a shelf, a safe full of important papers, a file cabinet, a storage box in the basement/garage). During the lesson, draw their attention to this container, put it in the middle of the table, and tell them that they are forbidden to ever look into this container. Under no circumstance should they ever be found investigating its contents. Even put a sign on it that says, “DO NOT OPEN!!!” Then **Read Rom. 3:19-20** and begin reminding them what you have learned this week. During this time your kids might be found gazing at the container, or their thought wandering toward what is in the container, etc., so after a few minutes of teaching ask: “Why are you staring at the container?” or “What are you guys thinking about?” Then use this as an illustration of how knowledge of sin comes through the law (i.e. until they were forbidden to open the container they never even thought of opening it; if they gave in to their temptation they would have full, experiential knowledge of the sin of breaking the law; etc.).

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Every Mouth Stopped!