

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, May 19, 2013

Passage: Romans 7:13-25

Memory Passage: Romans 6:20-21

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Romans 5-8.** Spend today reviewing what you have learned in Romans 5-7, and previewing Romans 8. The goal for today is to understand Paul's flow of thought so we can better interpret 7:13-25 in its context. As you read, describe the main point of each of these sections using a short phrase or sentence: 5:1-11, 5:12-21, 6:1-14, 6:15-23, 7:1-12, 7:13-25, 8:1-11, 8:12-17, 8:18-30 & 8:21-39.

(b) *Family:* Use (a) above to prepare a review of Romans 5:1-7:12 for your family. Have them turn to a few specific main verses in each section to read aloud as you summarize the teaching and give a summary phrase for each of the sections.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 7:13-25.** Notice that v. 13 begins with a question that Paul answers in the same way he has 3 other times in chapters 6 & 7. In the other 3 instances, Paul asks the question, answers it with an emphatic, "by no means!" and then explains why he answers as he does. Does this 4th time follow the same pattern? Why or why not, (be sure to answer from the context)?

(b) In v. 13, to what does, "what is good" refer? What purposes does the law accomplish according to this verse?

(c) Verse 14 begins with, "for." What does that tell you about the connection between v. 14 and v. 15? What does Paul mean when he says, "the law is spiritual?" When Paul says that he is "of the flesh, sold under sin," what is he saying about himself?

(d) What is it about Paul's own actions that he does not understand (v. 15)? Why does Paul do what he doesn't want to do & not do what he wants to do (see v. 18b)?

(e) *Family: Read Romans 7:13-25.* After you read it aloud, ask your family to silently re-read it and write down all the ways that Paul describes himself in these verses. Then discuss each phrase and write it on your white board. Then ask, "Given what we have learned about sin and the believer in Romans 6 & 7, does Paul sound like he is describing a saved person or a lost person?" Then go through each characteristic you wrote on the white board and point out verses that help make the case. (e.g. "I am of the flesh" & 7:5; "Sold under sin" & 6:17-18; "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" & 6:17; "I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out" & 6:10-14, etc. Explain that Paul is writing as a believer who is looking back to the time he was an obedient Jew but not yet converted. Save your list for tomorrow's lesson.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 7:13-25.** Write down all of the phrases Paul uses to describe himself in these verses. For each word, phrase, or idea on your list that Paul has already written about in chapters 6 & 7, write down the verses in which he mentions them and what he says about them (see the partial list in the Family question from Day 2 to get you started).

(b) Given the way in which Paul describes himself, would you say he is speaking about himself as a regenerate person or an unregenerate person (Paul is a saved person when he is *writing*, but I am asking about which time in his life is he *describing*)? Whether Paul is describing himself prior to his conversion or after becoming a believer is a hotly debated topic with scholars and godly believers on both sides of the question. I take the approach that he is speaking of himself as an obedient but unconverted Jew, and I will defend this position on Sunday, but you must come to your own opinion about the answer. There are several good arguments in defense of both positions, and ultimately your decision will come down to what evidence you find *most* persuasive.

(c) Be assured that even though it seems that Paul is describing his pre-converted life in 7:13-25, the life of a believer is still a struggle with sin in this life (we will cover this more on Day 5). Have you ever felt like Paul as he describes himself in 7:15, 18-21, feeling helpless and without power with regard to your sin? How did/do you overcome this dilemma? What tools have you been given to overcome the lack of ability of which Paul speaks? Write down at least one example that will encourage your Sunday school class when you share it with them!

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 7:13-25.* Return to the list you made last night of the characteristics of how Paul described himself. For every characteristic, discuss what this looked like for Paul as an unconverted Jew. For instance, when Paul says, "for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate," this would make sense for a Jew who knew that obeying the law was the key to blessing, to desire to obey the law but struggle when they fell short of one of the commandments. Obedience was all they knew to pursue. When Paul says, "I delight in the law of God, in my inner being," we know that non-believers do not truly seek after God (Rom. 3:10), but Paul, as a Jew, and especially a Pharisee, would have passionately completely tried to seek after God. This way of thinking of the text will help your family see Paul completely trapped and enslaved to the power of sin before he was freed from the law of sin & death at his conversion.

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

(a) **Read Rom. 7:13-25.** How does Paul “agree with the law, that it is good” when he does what he does not want to do (v. 16)? When Paul says in v. 17 that “it is no longer I” who does evil, but “sin that dwells in me,” what does he mean? Is he saying that he is no longer responsible for his actions? Why or why not?

(b) What does Paul mean when he says that “nothing good dwells in me?” When Paul uses the term “flesh” in v. 18, is he using it in the same way as he did in v. 14? What evidence do you have for your conclusion?

(c) Paul uses the word “law” 5 times vs. 21-23. For each use, state whether he is referring to the Mosaic law or something else, and how you know.

(d) Is there a difference between Paul’s “inner being” (v. 22) and his “mind” (vs. 23 & 25)? How do you know?

(e) A couple of observations that I encourage you to make: Do you notice that there is no mention of the Holy Spirit in chapter 7 (except for the use of the term “spiritual” in v. 14), but some 20 references in chapter 8? What might that signify? Also, can you see how Paul is describing in 7:14-25 in greater detail the process of sin “seizing the opportunity” to use the law to reveal and multiply sin to those who are under sin’s captivity?

(f) *Family:* **Read Gal. 5:15-17.** Teach these verses to your family, and then discuss them. Help them to see that even though in Romans 7 Paul is speaking of the time in his life before he was a believer, the Scriptures *do* teach that believers will struggle with sin. They do not, however, teach that believers are captive to sin, under its power, unable to do what is right, etc. (all taught in Rom. 7:14-25), but that believers are equipped to crucify their flesh through the power of the Holy Spirit because they have been set free from both the requirement of the law and the penalty & power of sin. Use examples from your own life that demonstrate the reality of walking by the Spirit rather than gratifying the desires of the flesh.

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

(a) **Read 1 Cor. 9:27, Gal. 5:16-18, Phil. 3:12-16, & Col. 3:1-10.** Although I don’t believe that Paul is speaking about the struggle of a believer in Romans 7:13-25, the Bible most definitely teaches that believers do struggle with the sin in this life. The verses you just read are a few that indicate this struggle.

(b) As you read each of these passages, answer/apply the following: 1 Cor. 9:27—What assumption can we make about Paul’s life with regard to whether or not he struggles (and expects you to struggle) with sin? What would his life look like if he did not discipline himself (i.e. *not* under control)

(c) Gal. 5:16-18—What is the antidote to gratifying the desires of the flesh? What exactly does it mean to “walk by the Spirit?” What are the desires of the flesh? What are the desires of the Spirit?

(d) Phil. 3:12-16—What does Paul “do” (active verbs) in this section (and by implication, what you should do as well)? Upon what basis does he do these things? Col. 3:1-10—How does the act of “setting your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” compare with Gal. 5:16-18? What is the significance of verb tenses in vs. 9-10?

(e) Now spend time looking at each passage and applying it to one specific area of your life. Think of the sin that most overcomes you, over which you feel you have the least control or power, and apply the primary principle of each passage to that sin. Be concrete and very specific with how you will apply each truth so you have a “road map” to battle that sin the next time the temptation arises in you. If dealing with all 4 passages is too overwhelming, then choose one or two of them to apply.

(f) *Family:* Choose either 1 Cor. 9:27, Phil. 3:12-15, or Col. 3:1-10 to teach to your family and help them apply it.

DATE: May 19, 2013

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Sold Under Sin