

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 10, 2012

Passage: Romans 3:25b-26

Memory Passage: Romans 3:25b-26

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Zeph. 3:1-5, Deut. 32:3-4, Ps. 119:137-138 & Rom. 14.** According to Zephaniah 3:1-2, why will Jerusalem be judged on the Day of Judgment? What 4 groups of men are listed in vs. 3-4 and why is their behavior considered worthy of judgment? In each case, how is their behavior different from what it should be considering the offices they hold?

(b) How is God revealed in v. 5 to be different from these human authorities? What do you learn about what God does and who God is? Is there a correlation between His character and His actions in this verse, and if so, what is the correlation?

(c) What do you learn about the character of God in the Deuteronomy & Psalms passages? What do you learn about His acts and His law? How do these passages connect God's character with His actions?

(d) Why is God's character important for us to understand when we consider His justice? What comfort do you take from knowing about God's character as you consider His work in your life and in the world? What struggles do you have with understanding God as a God of justice? When you think of God as a God of justice, does it cause you to praise Him or to question Him? Does it cause you joy or sadness? Adoration or anger?

(e) *Family:* Prior to your lesson, look up the words just, justice, righteous, & upright in a dictionary. Write a simple yet concise and clear definition for each word on a small sheet of paper, one definition per sheet (do not write the word you are defining, only the definition). Fold each paper and place it in a bowl or cup. As you start your lesson, write each word, without the definition, on your white board. Ask each person in your family to choose a piece of paper from the bowl, read the definition to themselves, and try to determine which word on the white board matches their definition. Then have each person read their definition and have your family discuss which word it matches and write the correct definition next to each word. **Then Read Deut. 32:3-4, Ps. 119:137-138, and Zeph. 3:5** and help your family understand the just character of God, referring to your definitions of each word as needed.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Gen. 18:22-25, Ps. 9:7-8, 96:10-13, & Rom. 15.** It is clear from yesterday's study that God's character is just, but can we prove from Scripture that all of His actions are just because they flow from and validate His just, righteous character? Several lines of evidence can be pursued: (1) He rewards believers because Christ's work is applied to them (2 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 6:10). (2) He fulfills His promises (Ex. 34:6-7, 1 John 1:9). (3) He is a righteous & impartial judge. It is the latter of these that we will study. The Hebrew words for "righteous" and "judgment" occur in the same verse over 50 times in the OT.

(b) For what is Abraham asking in Gen. 18:22-25? What does Abraham say about God's character? How does his request relate to the character of God he proclaims (i.e. Upon what basis does he ask)?

(c) According to Ps. 9:7-8 & 96:10-13, for what has God's throne (rule) been established? Of what benefit is this to the world? What characteristics of God are present when He judges and executes judgment?

(d) Why is perfect righteousness needed for God to judge righteously? Is it possible for Him to judge in a way that is inconsistent with His character? Why or why not? What would happen if God were an unrighteous judge? What comfort does the promise of righteous judgment from God bring to your life? What, according to the Psalms you read, should it bring to the entire world? In what ways does this truth affect your witnessing? In what ways does it affect your discipleship efforts?

(e) *Family:* Begin a discussion about judging by asking questions such as, "What does a judge do?" "Would you like to be a judge?" "Do you think it would be easy to be a judge?" "What do judges require before they can make judgments?" "What is required of a judge before he/she can judge?" You might want to write down some of the qualifications on your white board so you can refer back to them and/or add to them. **Then Read Ps. 9:7-8 & 96:10-13** and find out how God functions as a judge and how His just character is the basis upon which He judges righteously. Also help them understand why knowing this is a comfort for God's people, both in the realm of God judging evil during our everyday lives and on Judgment Day.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:5-7, Rom. 2:6-11, 1 Pet. 1:13-19, & Rom. 16.** In addition to God judging righteously, what else do you learn about the character of God's justice from today's verses? Why is this impartiality required of a righteous judge?

(b) According to 2 Chronicles 19:5-7, what does God's righteous justice have to do with human judges? How is it possible for human judges to act righteously when they judge? Why must human judges consider & be careful what they do?

(c) Write a summary of Romans 2:6-11, emphasizing why God's impartiality is crucial to the truths that are taught.

(d) Is the impartial judging mentioned in 1 Pet. 1:17 referring to the final judgment, to this present life, or both? Give reasons for your answer. How is our conduct in this life affected by God's righteous justice? Can you see these connections in your own life? Does God's righteous justice play a role in your personal holiness? If so, how, and if not, why not?

(e) *Family*: Ask your family to recap last night's discussion (God is righteous therefore His acts are always just). Then say, "Tonight we will examine another characteristic of God's justice." **Then Read Deut. 10:17** and help your family understand what "impartial" means. Also, discuss how taking a bribe will make a judge unrighteous and cast a shadow of doubt over every decision he/she makes. **Then Read 2 Chron. 19:5-7** and show how God being impartial when He judges must affect human judges when they judge. If you have time, **Read 1 Pet. 1:13-19** and discuss how God's impartial justice enables believers to live holy lives, pleasing to God, because through Christ He has ransomed us from the power & bondage of sin.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ps. 5:4-6, Hab. 1:13a, 2 Thess. 1:5-12 & Rom. 1.** We have established that God's character is just and that His actions as a righteous & impartial judge that flow from and validate His character are just. Today we will seek to know if His punishment of sin is just. What do you learn about God's relationship and response toward evil from Ps. 5:4-6 & Hab. 1:13a?

(b) In 2 Thess. 1:5, to what does the word "this" that begins this verse refer (This question should remind you to always look at the context of a passage as you study!)? How does the Thessalonians' suffering evidence God's righteous judgment?

(c) For what reasons does Jesus inflict God's righteous vengeance on some people? On the Day of Judgment, what will be the response of those who believed Paul's testimony about Christ? For what purpose does Paul write this passage (encouragement, comfort, warning, praise, etc.)? Write down 3 direct applications from this passage that you will implement in the coming week. Be specific, and think deeply (meditate) on the idea that God is just when he judges & punishes sin.

(d) *Family*: **Read 1 Thess. 1:1-12.** Now teach this passage to your family, asking questions along the way to evaluate their understanding. In your application, remember to emphasize that even though evil men are persecuting the Thessalonians and they are suffering at their hand, God is not unconcerned! The fact that they are not immediately judged for their sin is both a show of God's mercy and evidence of God's righteous judgment that is certain to come. Even though we might suffer persecution for our faith (a showing of God's mercy toward those in sin), there will come a Day when God, driven by His righteous character, will act justly as He fully and completely judges sin. Understanding that God is the Judge & Avenger will help us to endure suffering well, for the sake of His name and His glory!

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:21-26, Act 17:30-31 & Rom. 2.** We have proven that God's character is just, that His actions flow from and validate His righteous character, and that He is indeed just with regard to the specific action of punishing sin. Today we will culminate our study of the justice of God by examining the question answered in the passage at hand: Is God just when He punishes His Son for the sin of those who have faith in Jesus. As you can see I am out of room (surprise!) so I will leave you with a few guiding questions, both for individuals and for families:

(b) To what does the word "this" that begins 25b refer? What are the "former sins" that God passed over, and why could God be open to the charge of being unjust because of this action? Explain the term "divine forbearance." How does Christ being put forward as a propitiation show God's righteousness? To what time does "at the present time" refer? Explain how God becomes "the just and the justifier" of those who believe in Jesus, and how these actions flow from and validate His righteous character. Finally, write the content of 3:21-26 in your own words. Write a couple of your responses to this passage (a psalm of praise, a prayer of thanksgiving, a new song, a poem, sentences describing new truths you have learned, a new journal entry describing your response to these verses, etc.) and 3 applications that you will seek to apply in the coming week.

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Our Righteous God Who Justifies (Part III)

In Romans 3:21-26 Paul reveals two realities about the righteousness of God as he explains how believers are justified by faith in Jesus.