

# NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —

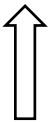
Lesson Five

Romans 2:12-3:20

*But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.  
Romans 2:29*

## Day 1

**Pray: 2 Timothy 3:16-17**



*Father, use your word in my life to teach, rebuke, correct and train me in your way that I may be equipped for every good work you put before me.*

**Read:** Romans 2:12-3:20. Read it again in another translation such as NLT.

### **Observe:**

- Write key words and themes, repeated words, or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

## Day 2- Romans 2:12-16

In chapter one Paul addressed non-religious people who unashamedly live in rebellion to God. Here in chapter two, he speaks to the religious—those who think their salvation lies in knowing God’s commands. We are still in the bad news portion of Romans and in case you did not see yourself in the godless rebel, Paul presents us with the religious hypocrite.

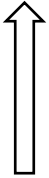
**Law-** “refers to the law God gave to Moses for God’s Old Testament people, Israel, to obey”<sup>1</sup> which included the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law.

1. What two kinds of people is Paul comparing in verse 12?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why are people without the law (Gentiles are non-Jewish people) still held accountable according to verse 15?
  - a. How are people who know the law judged according to verse 12?

Scholar’s Note: “In Scripture, the conscience is a God-given capacity for moral discernment, best seen as an aspect of the mind or heart... The fall scarred every faculty, so the conscience, like the mind and body, is imperfect. Still, it is a moral compass that enables everyone to assess possible actions. The conscience also accuses us when we do evil.”<sup>2</sup>

**Justified-** It is a legal term used for an act whereby God changes our status—our legal standing. It means to be absolved from any charge of guilt and to be declared righteous. The opposite of justification is condemnation.

3. According to verse 13, what is the only (but impossible) path to be righteous before God?



Thank you Jesus that you kept the law perfectly inside and out and you gave me your perfect record so that I could be right with God—something I could never do on my own!

4. What truths do you learn about judgment day from verse 16?

### **Day 3- Romans 2:17-24**

Paul now anticipates how a Jewish person might protest Paul's assertion in verses 12-16 that Jews and Gentiles are basically in the same boat. In the Old Testament, Jews were set apart by the law and by circumcision, so Paul addresses these distinctions. First, the law.

1. From verses 17-18 list the benefits or privileges that the Jew (or religious person) puts their confidence in.



In what way do you ever *rely* or put your confidence in obeying God's commands instead of on Jesus?



There is a good way to boast in God, but here Paul is talking about bragging or feeling smug about a relationship with God. How has this attitude ever been yours?

2. What roles do the Jews have because they know the law, according to verses 19-20?

a. Why do they have these roles?

3. What is Paul's point in verses 21-22?



God had indeed called his people to be a guide for the blind and a light for the nations that reflected him. (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6). Jesus has called us to do the same (Mat. 5:14-15). The problem comes when we don't practice what we preach.

◆ Where do you see this at play in your own life?

4. Write out verse 23 in the NLT translation.

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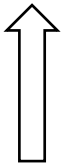
a. What is the terrible result of this hypocrisy according to verse 24?

### For Discussion

Verse 24 tells us the terrible result of hypocrisy is that the name of God is blasphemed. Blasphemy is injurious or degrading speech. To blaspheme God is to degrade and minimize him. It is the opposite of glorifying God. Why does claiming to know God yet living outside of his ways, blaspheme his name?

## Picture and Ponder

"As you read your Bible day by day, do you apply the truth to yourself? What is your motive when you read the Bible? Is it just to have a knowledge of it so that you can show others how much you know, and argue with them, or are you applying the truth to yourself? ... As you read ... say to yourself, 'This is me! What is it saying about me?' Allow the Scripture to search you, otherwise it can be very dangerous. There is a sense in which the more you know of [the Bible], the more dangerous it is to you, if you do not apply it to yourself."<sup>3</sup>



*Oh Father, help me to see myself as I really am. Forgive me for sometimes believing one thing yet doing another and dishonoring you. May your word pierce my heart and bring conviction and healing.*

## **Day 4- Romans 2:25-29**

Now Paul addresses circumcision.

### Digging Deeper

Read the following verses in Genesis. Why did the Jews revere circumcision?

*Genesis 17:9-11 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.*

**Scholar's Note:** "...circumcision became *the* sign of loyalty to God and covenant. Eventually, 'Jewish rabbis said that no circumcised man would go to hell ("Gehenna") and that circumcision would save the nation."<sup>4</sup>

1. What is connected to circumcision according to verses 25?

- a. How could an uncircumcised man be regarded as circumcised according to Paul in verse 26?

### Digging Deeper

The Jewish people believed that because they were God's chosen people, and because they had the law and the sign of the covenant that they were right with God. Paul is laying out the case that these outward embellishments do not make them righteous and if they were to rely on circumcision they would have to obey the law perfectly in thought and deed which no one is able to do.

Read the verse below. What does circumcision (the sign of the covenant) require?

*Galatians 5:3 I (Paul) testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.*

2. The Jewish people were God's chosen people. God had chosen them to pour out his love on and display to the world through them, his plan of redemption. How does Paul redefine what it means to be a Jew and what it means to be circumcised in verses 28 and 29?

### For Discussion

How would you describe what it means that circumcision is a matter of the heart?

3. To help us understand how we can apply what these verses are saying to us, paraphrase verses 28 and 29, substituting the word *Christian* in place of Jew, and *baptism, church attendance or reciting a prayer* in place of circumcision. (These things are bad only when we put our trust in them for salvation or use them as charms or guarantees while we pursue life apart from God.)

4. What in verse 29 reveals that being right with God is not something we can achieve on our own?



Verse 29 says that a genuine Christian—someone whose heart has been changed by the Spirit of God—cares about the praise of God rather than the praise of people.

◆ In what areas of your life do you seek the praise of people rather than God?

◆ Talk to God about this and make it a consistent prayer that you would desire and live for God's praise rather than the praise of people.

5. What do you learn about God from this passage?

## **Day 5- Romans 3:1-20**

Now that Paul has shown that Jews (religious people) are no better off than Gentiles (godless people) in that they (we) will all be judged for not keeping God's law perfectly, he proceeds in the first half of chapter three to clear up some misunderstandings that might arise from the truths he has laid out.

1. Answer these objections in your own words with what you know about God and his character. (If you can, find scriptures to support your answers.)
  - a. Because so many people don't believe the gospel, does that mean God's promises aren't true? (v.4)
  - b. If my sin causes God's righteousness to be seen, is it fair that he judge me for my sin? (v.6)

- c. If my sin causes God's righteousness to be clearly seen then shouldn't I sin more? (v.8)

### For Discussion

What misunderstandings or objections have you heard to the gospel? Discuss with your group how to answer these objections.

### Picture and Ponder

*Let God be true though every one were a liar* in verse 4 is a maxim to live by: Doubt yourself, doubt others, but never doubt God.

2. What does Paul reiterate in verse 9?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In verses 10-18, how is the pervasiveness of sin shown in the quotes Paul uses from Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Isaiah?
  - a. What does this teach you about human nature and what we need?



Verse 19 teaches that the law speaks so *that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world held accountable to God*. The law is a mirror meant to show us how far we are from God's image. The true reflection of ourselves that the law gives should render us silent—no more excuses, objections, or defense.



- ◆ Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you see yourself as you really are. Make this a regular prayer and as God shows you your sin, turn to him in repentance and for healing.
  
- ◆ In Philippians we see that *every knee will bow in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*. On judgment day the silent and condemned world will bow their knees and confess the name of Jesus, but it will be too late. God gave the law to show us our great need for a Savior. If you haven't already, will you bow your knee today and confess that Jesus is Lord?

4. Write out verse 20 in the NLT.

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Highlight the purpose of the law according to verse 20.

### *One Thing:*

What is one thing from this week's study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 21). Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Doriani, Daniel M.. Romans (pp. 109-110). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Romans Chapters 2:1 - 3:20, pages 147-149 as quoted in Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 58). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

<sup>4</sup> Cranfield, Romans 1:172 as quoted in Doriani, Daniel M.. Romans (p. 126). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

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