



Romans

Right With God

Blind Guides

Lesson Fifteen

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

Romans

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Page 2 of 4

Blind Guides

Paul has some pretty strong words for his fellow Jews in the last half of the second chapter of Romans. He tells them that many of them are not truly Jews. Your lesson writer believes that he is speaking specifically to the leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees (Sad-U-sees) and Scribes. (Read Romans 2:17-29)

This is a long Scripture, but let's see if it can't be telescoped down a bit. Paul tells the Jews that they are putting their faith in the Law and bragging about their relationship with God. He says that they, because of their knowledge of the Law, consider themselves to be "guides for the blind." Remember that Jesus Himself called the Jewish leaders (teachers of the Law) blind guides. (Matthew 23:16) He says that they consider themselves a light in the darkness and qualified to correct the foolish...the dumb...and the childish. He says that they consider themselves to be teachers to all people.

He then lists several things that they were teaching against: stealing, sexual sins, and worshipping idols. But, he turns the tables on them and asks if they are not committing the same sins that they are condemning. He goes on to say that they are bragging about the Law and when they do, but behave in sinful ways, they bring shame on God.

Verse twenty-four is a terrible condemnation of the Jewish leaders. Paul says that their behavior is encouraging the Gentiles to disrespect God. Their behavior is having the opposite effect to what they intended. Along with cursing them, the Gentiles were cursing their God.

Paul goes on to say that their circumcision, the sign of God's covenant with Israel, was meaningful only if they respected and obeyed the Law as God intended it. He says that those who are not of Jewish origin, but obey the Law as God intended it, have a right to judge the Jews as lawbreakers.

And he fully clarifies his position on the Law in verse 29. No person is a true Jew, or one of God's chosen, unless it is in their heart. He says God doesn't look on the outside at the things we say and do, God looks inside and sees our true belief.

Someone has suggested that we should think of this passage the way Paul might write it now. Instead of condemning the Jews, he might be condemning Christians. He might accuse some of us of being blind guides. We think that we have the truth and are very proud of it. We want everyone to behave in certain ways. We are proud to be participants in a Christian fellowship (a church) and look on those who aren't as not as good as we are. He might say

Romans

Right With God

Lesson Fifteen

Page 3 of 4

something like, “So you say that you are Christian, you glory in God, as revealed in Jesus, you are a student of the Gospel, and you are confident that you are a qualified guide for the blind.” So, then, Paul says, “Do you teach others and not live what you teach? Do you preach against stealing, but it doesn’t bother you to take too much money for your preaching? Are you truly dishonoring God with your behavior? If so, you are encouraging others to dishonor God and you bring shame to Him.” Those who are not believers will see your behavior and have no respect for God.”

You see, even those who aren’t participants in a Christian fellowship (a church) could be doing more of what a Christian should do. They aren’t depending on participation in a Christian fellowship to save them, and/or to make them better teachers. They believe, as Paul was encouraging the Jews to believe, that faith is the way of God, and faith in God places us in the best position to share the Gospel and minister to others.

Is participation in a Christian fellowship good? Oh yes! All Christians should! The Jews were depending on their relationship to Abraham and the Law to qualify them as guides to the blind. Just so, church membership and/or participation in a Christian fellowship doesn’t make us a qualified teacher. Faith in God and living out that faith is what qualifies us.

Scripture Memory: “You, therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself...” **Romans 2:1**

*Underlined statements in this Teacher’s Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher’s Guide.

For the Teacher:

Lesson Goal: *To encourage students to live and teach by faith in God.*

1. Since the Scripture reading is long today, you may want to break it up. One way to do it would be to print out the verses and assign them to various members of your class. There are not many hard to pronounce words in this lesson. As always, try not to embarrass class members by asking them to do that which makes them uncomfortable.
2. Matthew 23:16, actually the entire twenty-third chapter, is Jesus’ condemnation of the teachers of the Law (Scribes) and the Pharisees. It is sometimes known as the “Seven Woes.” Jesus addresses here the same crowd that Paul is condemning in Romans chapter two. It is most interesting that Jesus spoke to some of the same things Paul dealt with in today’s lesson. Jesus was much more direct and fierce. He not only called them “blind guides,” but He also called them, hypocrites, whitewashed tombs, and snakes. He could not bear their hypocrisy.
3. We should be clear that Paul was not talking about the humble, dedicated, faithful Jews who did obey the Law to the best of their ability and followed the teaching of their teachers, in spite of how the teachers behaved.
4. One can get into a lot of trouble “updating” Scripture as we have done in this lesson. Applying condemnation meant for a specific group of people to another can be misunderstood and definitely carried too far. We should deal with this very carefully and not try to extend the comparison beyond what is pretty clearly meant here.
5. We should also be very careful not to compare Paul’s condemnation of arrogant teachers, then or now, with God’s final judgment at which time we will not be judged according to our works, but according to our commitment, in faith, to Him.

Romans

Right With God

Lesson Fifteen

Page 4 of 4

Student Worksheet

Blind Guides

=Verse twenty-four is a terrible condemnation of the _____ leaders. Paul says that their behavior is encouraging the Gentiles to disrespect _____. Along with cursing them, the Gentiles were cursing their _____.

=No person is a true Jew unless the Law is in their _____. God doesn't look on the outside at the things we say and do, God looks _____ and sees our true belief.

=Paul asks, are you truly dishonoring _____ with your behavior? If so, you are encouraging others to dishonor _____ and you bring _____ to Him."

=Faith is the way of God, and faith in _____ places us in the best position to _____ the Gospel and minister to _____.

=Is participation in a Christian fellowship good? Oh _____! But Faith in God and living out that _____ is what qualifies us to be good Christian workers.

Scripture Memory: "You, therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself..." Romans 2:1

A Roman Road to Salvation:

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Everyone is a sinner and needs salvation.

Romans 6:23a "For the wages of sin is death." The law of God is unchangeable. If someone sins the penalty must be paid, the payment is death.

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us." God loves us so much, according to John 3:16, that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Romans 6:23b "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The penalty for sin is spiritual death, but God, through the death of Jesus on the cross, took the penalty for the sins of all people, and now everyone can have eternal life. See also, II Corinthians 5:21

Romans 10:9, 10 "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." To personally receive the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, you trust God to be what He says He is. Believing that "God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead" is to accept all that the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus. Then you speak (confess) the words, "Jesus is Lord," as a statement of faith. Believing "with your heart" means that you believe with your mind and with everything that you are.

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." You have the promise of God Himself that if you do what Romans 10:9, 10 says, you will become God's child and have eternal life.

Romans 12:1, 2 "I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will." Becoming a Christian is a life-long act of faith and worship.