



Romans

Right With God

God's Truth

Lesson Sixteen

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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God's Truth

Paul, in his writing, sometimes seems to hear an unseen questioner. He answers questions that don't seem to be asked by anyone specific. (Read Romans 3:1-8.)

Since Paul puts the Jew on pretty much the same level as the Gentile, in chapter two, the unseen questioner (in verse one) asks what is the advantage of being a Jew? Or, what of the fact that, in the Old Testament, there seems to be a difference between the Gentile and Jew. As a matter of fact, Paul would have been very proud of the difference between Jews and Gentiles in his life as a Pharisee.

Paul will deal with this question much more fully in chapters nine through eleven, but from what Paul says here, we must discuss it briefly. The unseen questioner said that according to Paul there is no advantage to being a Jew. Paul responded that there is much advantage "in every way." He said that first of all, the Jews were entrusted with the "oracles of God" also translated the "very words of God." The Jews had received the Old Testament Scriptures from God and wrote them down.*

There is another question in verse three: "Can the unfaithfulness of some Jews cancel out the faithfulness of God?" Paul responded with his characteristic, "God forbid!" Also translated, "May it never be!" or "Not at all!" The Scriptures do not in any way depend on humans for their value as God's Word. The fact that they didn't have faith does not in any way mean that God cannot be trusted. Even if every human was a liar, God's truth would be true. Psalm 51:4, says about God, "You are justified when You speak, and blameless when You judge."

In verse five, the questioner is back. He asks, if God's goodness, compared with our pitiful human goodness, is so much greater, shouldn't God be happy with our sin? If our sin makes God look better, why doesn't God reward us for sinning?

Here we have one of the most serious questions about Paul's beliefs. Evidently, he had been accused of providing an excuse for continuing in sin. He had been saying things that some could see as giving people an excuse for sinning. Paul was teaching that grace was all that was required for salvation. The full responsibility of salvation rested on God's grace as demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He was certainly teaching all of that, so his accusers felt free to challenge him.

So in verse six. Paul speaks with passion again. "God forbid!" he shouts. He goes on to say that if this were the case, God couldn't judge the world. The questioner was playing mind

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games. We can't afford to fool around with the truth, certainly not God's truth. Paul says that sin is evil in itself. Sin serves a purpose. If the sin is left alone, it is simply something bad. But, sin can also, with God's help, teach us to see the pain and destruction caused by sin.

Think about it: People have been robbed while getting money from an ATM located in a dark, lonely place. We have learned from this sin of theft that using isolated ATMs at certain times of the day is dangerous. One could say that the act of the robber was helpful in that it taught us how to avoid danger. However, it does not make the sin of robbery good or right in any way.

It is impossible to think of doing bad things so that good may come. Paul loudly denies ever having said that it was right, or a good thing to do. As a matter of fact, he calls those who accuse him of doing that slanderers. According to him, they are already judged, condemned. They use a method of argument that may seem right, but is actually flawed. It is dishonest.

So what does this all have to do with you and me in 2011? Well, at least two things. We have learned from Paul that we must respect God's truth. That is very easily seen in the Bible. Second, we should see that even though some bad things teach us lessons, we should always see bad things as sin and sin is against God's will for us.

Scripture Memory: "As it is written, There is no one righteous, not even one." Romans 3:10

*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 show students that sin is always bad and that God's truth will overcome sin.

1. Please see this lesson as an opportunity to teach a most valuable truth. Sin is sin. The twisted logic of the unseen questioner is the same kind of logic that people use all the time to justify their sins. Nowhere does the Bible teach degrees of sin. There are no small sins mentioned anywhere in Scripture.
2. The Jews possessed the "living oracles...the Old Testament Scriptures." See Hebrews 5:12; I Peter 4:11
3. Though this lesson refers to the Jews and their value to God, it should be used to teach modern Christians how blessed we are to be chosen by God to be His children. Just as the Jews were given the Old Testament, Christians have been given the New Testament which shows us the final chapter in God's commitment to reveal Himself to humans and introduces the world to Jesus, who was and is God. He said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." John 14:9; See also, John 14:11
4. A teacher can make a lot of the unseen questioner. Students could be assigned to read the questions Paul poses through the questioner. These are: Romans 3:1; 3:3; 3:5a; 3:7. Or, record the questions before class time and play them when appropriate.
5. Paul is teaching a great truth here. Humans can't make God better. Christians get the idea that because we are chosen, we should make God look better. Wrong! God is, and God's Word is, Truth. God doesn't need us to make Him look good. Actually, we need Him to make us look good. The people to whom Paul spoke were turning God's truth into a weak argument. Some Christians today try to do the same thing. They could sin more so that God's goodness looked even more good. Well, that is just silly. But, sometimes our arguments are just as silly. We "reinterpret Scripture" to make God's judgment of sin less threatening.

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Student Worksheet

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=The Jews were entrusted with the “oracles of God” also translated the “very words of ____.”

The Jews had received the Old Testament Scriptures from ____ and _____ them down.

=Even if every human is a liar, God's _____ would be true. Psalm 51:4, says about God,

“You are justified when You _____, and blameless when You _____.”

=Paul was teaching that _____ was all that was required for salvation. The full responsibility of salvation rested on God's _____ as demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of _____.

=So what does this all have to do with you and me in 2011? We have learned from Paul that we must respect God's _____. That is very easily seen in the _____. Second, we should see that even though some bad things teach us _____, we should always see bad things as _____ and sin is against God's _____ for us.

Scripture Memory: “As it is written, There is no one righteous, not even one.” Romans

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.