



Romans

Right With God

It's The Law

Lesson Eighteen

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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It's The Law

Judaism said that a person could get into right relationship with God by keeping the law perfectly. But we know if that is the only way, no one will ever be in right relationship with God. Paul is about to say, in Romans chapter three verse twenty-three, “*All* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Let's be sure that we understand what the Law is. Law with a capital “L” refers to the rules for living that God gave to the Hebrew people through Moses. These are found, in brief, in the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17.* However, to know about all the rules, or “God's Law,” one must understand the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

So, when Paul speaks of the “Law” in Romans, that is what he is talking about. (Read Romans 3:19, 20)

Verse nineteen tells us the purpose of the law. Simply stated, the law makes us aware of sin. When we read the law, we know what we should not do. It is not a positive message. It says, “Don't do this.” When you want to know what you should not do, consult the law. And Paul wants everyone to just acknowledge this truth “that every mouth may be silenced.” Maybe we could say it, “Don't even try to argue this point.” He also says, “that all the world may be accountable to God.” We are accountable to the God who gave the law. We will, without exception, come before Him to answer for our behaviors. Paul said that the whole world would be accountable to God.

Think about it, a company sets certain rules or lists expectations for its employees. In most jobs, you are to arrive at a certain time and work a certain number of hours. You have a workspace assigned to you. You are assigned to a supervisor, who may also have a supervisor. You work according to a job description. There are dress codes, calendar commitments, vacation and sick leave rules. You are responsible to the company and accountable to supervision for following the rules. How much more will we be accountable to God?

Looking at the last part of verse 3:20, we can see clearly Paul's intent. He says, in the last phrase, “through the law comes the knowledge of sin.” We learn of the reality of our sinfulness when we know the law. It shines a light on our misbehavior.

There's a guy driving an eighteen wheeler down I-20. He looks up and sees a sign that says, “No Trucks in Left Lane.” He's been rolling along for miles in the left lane, only to find out

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now that he is breaking the law. Now, the law doesn't help him to obey the law. He must do that himself. We can be made aware of the sin in our life by the law: You shall not kill, you shall not steal, honor your parents, do not worship idols, etc. Jesus summed up the Law in two statements. Love God and love your neighbor. However, just knowing the law, and even obeying the law, is not what God requires for perfect relationship with Him.

Sin is not just breaking a law. It is disobedience of the One whose holiness shines brightly from and to all eternity. Sin breaks our relationship with the Most Holy God. We must cry out with the Psalmist, "Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned." Psalm 51:4

You see, the fellow in the truck knew the law. He was willing to obey the law. However, it was not in his power to accomplish that, because he was blocked in with a lot of traffic in all the other lanes. He needed someone to make a way for him to be where he wanted to be. Someone needed to make room for him to move over to the right. As we shall discuss next week, the same is true for all humans. We need someone outside ourselves to make our relationship with God what it must be.

Scripture Memory: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin." Romans 3:20

*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 give students a better understanding of the Law and its place in our lives.

1. Verse 19 begins with "Now we know." We have said before that Paul uses that expression when he wants his readers to consider an obvious truth. He is saying that which he expects them to know and to know that he knows. He uses it in 2:2, 7:14 and 8:22, 28. He has just provided a long list of Old Testament scriptures that make his point. 3:10-18. Verses 19 and 20 continue the thought. With this list of sins, Paul insists that the law has revealed sins in all Jews.
2. In discussing accountability, we could talk about the laws of society. We are accountable to the nation, state, county and city for behaviors required by laws of these political institutions. Traffic laws are a part of that.
3. Paul has recited ample Scripture to convince any Jew that his argument is valid. The Jew had great reverence for Old Testament Scripture. There should have been no argument with Paul's position, since he drew directly from Scripture to support his teaching. Also Gentiles would have no excuse, they trusted in wisdom, and Paul presented a rational argument related to the sins he had listed earlier. Neither the Jew nor the Gentile had excuse. The humble Jew or Gentile, according to Paul, should be challenged by their own guilt and awakened to a sense of coming judgment.
4. Think about it, only those who know the seriousness, the awfulness, of sin can understand the seriousness of judgment. And, only those who understand lawlessness in the light of God's holiness can fully understand the joy of the new life offered by Grace.

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Student Worksheet

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=Law with a capital "L" refers to the rules for living that _____ gave to the Hebrew people through Moses. These are found, in brief, in the _____ Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17

=Simply stated, the law makes us aware of _____. When we read the law, we know what we should _____ do.

=We are accountable to the God who gave the _____. We will, without exception, come before Him to _____ for our behaviors.

=Jesus summed up the Law in _____ statements. Love God and love your _____.

=Sin breaks our relationship with the Most Holy _____. We must cry out with the Psalmist, "Against _____, and Thee only have I _____." Psalm 51:4

=All humans need _____ outside ourselves to make our relationship with _____ what it must be.

Scripture Memory: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather through the law we become conscious of sin." Romans 3:20

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.