

Questions for Growth Group Discussion and Personal Reflection

Romans 2:17-29

Note: Your *New Living Translation Parallel Study Bible Romans Sampler* also includes group questions that you may choose to use instead of, or as a companion with, these questions. The questions supplied below are intended to more closely align with Covenant's sermon text and emphasis. Group facilitators are free to adapt these in any way and are encouraged to select questions and a closing for their group before the members arrive.

1. Have you, or someone you know, ever been exempted from some requirement or activity? How did that make you feel?
2. In the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus introduced a recognized Old Testament Law with the phrase, "You have heard it said." He then followed it up with "but I say to you." Looking at his words on murder (Mt 5:21-22) or adultery (Mt 5:27-28), what point is Jesus making about keeping God's law? Read Matthew 5:48. If this is the standard, who, then, can keep it?
3. Using the stories of the Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-22) and Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23-24, what circumstances might lead someone to conclude that, when it came to following God's law, they were doing okay?
4. Even though we are saved by grace and not by works (Eph 2:8-9) the way we fulfill God's law still has a role in our lives. What role does God's law play for those who have placed their faith in Christ? What may lead some people to believe that, when it comes to living out God's law, they are already doing enough?
5. Define or describe God's Word Written and God's Word Incarnate. Now, respond to only one of the two questions below.
 - a. As gifts given to you from God, what place of importance do God's Written Word (Bible) and God's Incarnate Word (Jesus and His Spirit) have in your life?
 - b. What about the above question ("a") makes you feel uncomfortable, upset or guilty? What do you think is the source of that guilt?
6. What is necessary for belief to move from the head (knowledge) to the heart (application as part of a natural lifestyle)? How can your group, family, or friends help this happen in your life?

Our cultural expressions acknowledge the importance of the heart in our lives. When we speak openly we "speak from the heart." When we want to truly understand what is going on we say that we "get to the heart of the matter." The heart is the place of deepest knowing. It is that innermost place where passions are formed, habits are cultivated and decisions are made.

When the heart is cluttered it is distracted from what is more important. When the heart is resistant or hardened it can keep us closed to God and distant from other people. An uncluttered heart is a work of a lifetime. It does not come overnight and it cannot be achieved on our own. We need the Holy Spirit and we need the input from others.

Take ten minutes of quiet and ask the Lord to search your heart. Is it open to God? Is it cluttered by many things? Write down the things you observe about your heart and its relationship with God.

Read Romans 3:20-23 and close in prayer as the Spirit leads.

“Scripture is a wonderful gift from God to His people. But it is not meant to be an ornament, or worse yet, a source of pride. It is meant to be used: to be read, studied, understood, and obeyed. In its commandments it lays out a picture of the life we were meant to live; when we obey Scripture we honor God. We can’t appease him, we can’t fully satisfy his requirements, but we can seek to honor, please, and reflect him by living our lives according to his word.”

David Henderson

For Next Week:

Read Romans 3:1-20

Memorize Romans 2:29c