



Leader's Guide

For September 23, 2007

LESSON 3

Dr. Jerry Nelson

Romans 2:1-3:8

Key Points

The focus of this passage is predominantly on the Jews. In the previous chapter, the Apostle Paul addressed the Gentiles, describing the digression of sin and the need for God's judgment. Paul now turns his attention to the Jews who, by the nature of their heritage, felt secure in their standing, regardless of their sin. In this passage we find:

- Entitlement
- Works in relationship to judgment
- Presumptions due to heritage
- The Law
- Circumcision
- God's righteousness

Personal Reflection

This passage is packed with so many theological truths and points of application. Due to the numerous issues addressed here, you may want to think through and pray about what is most important to pursue in light of your group dynamics. Feel free to chose specific questions from this lesson that will challenge transformational change. It will be easy to keep this lesson on an academic level without some intentionality. As you pray and meditate, consider the following:

- How does this passage challenge you personally?
- What statements affirm your faith and commitment to God?
- How will God be honored through your discussion?

Discussion Questions

1. Why was it important that the Apostle Paul address the issue of judgment regarding the Jews?
2. Entitlement means that we will presume upon God and demand that he give us what we think he should. We think God “owes” us, because of our own righteousness and regardless of our sin. How did the Jews convey this kind of attitude? What does it mean to show contempt for the riches of God’s kindness tolerance and patience?¹
3. Romans 2:6-11 seems to be a contradiction of salvation by grace. How are the Apostle Paul’s statements in this passage compatible with what we know to be true about salvation apart from works?²
4. Those who have an eternal perspective spend their lives doing good. Those with a temporal perspective spend their lives on their own interests. What impact do these two worldviews have on us? On those around us? On God’s reputation?
5. The simple definition for “law” is “the sum total of God’s requirements for holy living.”³ “No person ever actually meets the standard of obeying the law required for right standing with God.”⁴ How did the Jews err in their understanding of the law? (*relied on the law as a means of deliverance, became self-righteous, said one thing and lived another, dishonored the name of God.*) How did it impact their relationship with other people? How are we prone to do the same thing?
6. To the Jew, circumcision, in conjunction with the law, was a means of securing eternal life. These were outwards signs, but were never meant to be a means of salvation. “To be a ‘real Jew’ is an inward matter. It is marked by the ‘circumcision of the heart,’ which comes...in the context of the Spirit.”⁵ How does the Spirit circumcise the heart? What are the effects on our relationship with God? With others?

7. God is always righteous. We are sinful. What life circumstances tempt us to believe that God has failed? What can we do to believe God for who He is? (Romans 3:5-8)

8. As you close in prayer, encourage your group to pray something that is relevant to the lesson. Be comfortable in the silence as you take time for the Spirit of God to move.

1 *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 79, 80

2 *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 80

3 *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 87

4 *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 85

5 *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 96

