



Leader's Guide

LESSON 6

Dr. Jerry Nelson

In response to the sermon on October 14th

Romans 3:27-4:25

Faith - The Response to Grace

Key Points: It is clear in this passage that there is a relationship between faith and obedience to the law. We are justified by faith, obedience is a response. If we begin with obedience to the law, without acknowledging the importance of faith preceding our obedience, self-reliance and pride can get in the way. In this passage we will discover:

- God's design for justification by faith
- Our "boasting" in our obedience
- The relationship of faith and the law
- God's plan for our righteousness
- God's grace

This passage may spark lively discussion in your group in terms of faith and works. Obedience to the law without grace can result in spiritual pride, resulting in self-righteousness and a judgmental spirit. Faith without obedience disregards the law. We know that we cannot please God apart from obedience. As we stand on the truths from this text, it will be especially important to expose these extremes, to surface error in either direction and to challenge the group to live according to God's Word.

Personal Reflection:

- Do you understand the relationship between faith and the law?
- Where are you more apt to struggle: obedience without faith, or faith without obedience? Why?

- This text exposes spiritual pride. We will be praying for you; for wisdom, insight, gentleness and grace as you teach, and that the Spirit will move significantly within your group this week. May you be aware of His presence, be attentive to His leading, be comfortable in the process, and slow the process if you are needing to attend to someone in the group.

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes it difficult for many of us to believe that we can gain God's forgiveness by faith in Christ alone?
2. In what areas are you still attempting to earn God's favor? How can you submit those areas to God's control? (Vs. 3:27)
3. What norms in our contemporary, prosperous society can influence the way believers think about earning the grace of God? How can these temptations lead to subtle forms of spiritual "boasting?"
4. What customs and religious habits can give people a false sense of righteousness?
6. How is the message of grace impacting your life? What does it matter to you – practically and/or emotionally – whether a right relationship with God is a *gift* to be received or a *prize* to be earned? (Vs. 4:4-5)
7. Take faith out of the equation and the promise is worthless. All you have left is law, which brings about wrath. (Vs. 4:14). What relational difficulties transpire when people live believing that their righteousness comes from observing the law, engaging their relationships with that premise? What do they communicate about God?
8. Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. If we are justified (made righteous) because we have received God's righteousness apart from obedience, what then, is the place of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and obedience in our lives?