
a *Grace Notes* course

The Epistle to the ROMANS

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 2

Romans 2:1-19

Grace Notes

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Chapter 2

INTRODUCTION

In his book of illustrations of Bible Truth, H.A. Ironside pointed out the folly of judging others. He related an incident in the life of a man called Bishop Potter. "He was sailing for Europe on one of the great transatlantic ocean liners. When he went on board, he found that another passenger was to share the cabin with him. After going to see the accommodations, he came up to the purser's desk and inquired if he could leave his gold watch and other valuables in the ship's safe. He explained that ordinarily he never availed himself of that privilege, but he had been to his cabin and had met the man who was to occupy the other berth. Judging from his appearance, he was afraid that he might not be a very trustworthy person. The purser accepted the responsibility for the valuables and remarked, It's all right, Bishop, I'll be very glad to take care of them for you. The other man has been up here and left his for the same reason!

Paul now shifts the focus from the pagan man and his rejection of God to the moral man and his self-righteous judgment of others.

In both cases we are dealing with a problem of faith.

Remember Romans 1:17 which sets the theme for this entire book: "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, But the righteous man shall live by faith."

The pagan man rejects the object of faith which is God. The moral man rejects the function of faith which is to put faith or trust in God.

Romans 2:1

Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Paul uses the inferential particle DIO to connect the sinner of the previous context with the man who judges another.

THEREFORE: You are without excuse.

The scene set for us is one in which Paul has been critical of the one who is an overt sinner. While he has said the things of chapter one a group stands off to the side agreeing with Paul, nodding their heads, condemning those whom he is criticizing.

But then Paul turns to them and announces condemnation upon their act of judgment.

They are the ones who are without excuse...

He uses a vocative for the singular use of MAN. A bit rare in the Greek New Testament, but it is used to grab the attention of the ones who think Paul is on their side.

He wants to rouse them from their self-assuredness, to shock them into seeing that their sin of judgment is just as bad as the overt sin of the pagan man.

This condemnation upon the moral man allows us to understand some of the mental attitude and verbal sins he mentioned in the list of Romans 1:28-31. The ones who judge others who do the overt sins are practicing sins also...they are full of malice, they are gossips, arrogant, boastful, unloving, and without mercy.

They judge others, thinking they are doing God's work; but God needs no help from morality.

Morality is beneficial to society; but morality without spirituality leads to legalism, and legalism leads to the judging others.

Paul tells the moralist that by judging others he condemns himself because he too practices sin:

PRINCIPLES ON MORALITY AND IMMORALITY:

1. Neither morality or immorality directly affect God.
2. Morality and immorality do effect the human race, although I wonder if some people are affected by anything.

Job 35:4-8, ELIHU'S DISCOURSE

"I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

"Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.

"If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?"

"If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?"

"Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man."

3. God will punish immorality and apply divine discipline when immorality is found among his people. This is the entire doctrine of chastisement (divine discipline).
4. God will also punish morality when it is hypocrisy.
5. Morality is related to the human race and does directly affect the human race, and it is always a part of God's plan for you. Eph. 2:10.
6. However, morality without a relationship and walk with Christ will lead to self-righteousness, arrogance, and moral degeneracy.
7. Therefore, the emphasis in God's plan is on our relationship with Him and a dependence upon Him which comes from a personal love for God. This is the first result of the link up of Spirit and Truth.
8. Personal love from God, which comes from knowing and using His Word, comes first; the result of this is that we will have impersonal love for all mankind, loving others as Christ has loved us.

ILLUSTRATION: The rich young ruler who came to Jesus was operating in moral arrogance. He claimed to have done everything for salvation. Jesus tested his virtue. He was moral but for him the test came down to whether or not he would do as Jesus instructed him, give his money to the poor. He would not. He had no virtue.

9. A personal relationship and walk with the Lord protects morality from becoming self-righteousness, arrogance, and moral degeneracy.
10. Morality comes from volitional decision while virtue comes from the F/HS and the application of Bible truth that has been applied in the soul.

THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MORALITY:

1. Morality is for the entire human race including Christians
2. Morality is essential for orderly function in society and includes Divine Institutions as well as Divine establishment principles relating to authority.
3. In Romans 8:2 the Apostle Paul calls the believer to live according to a rule higher than morality:
4. "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
5. James 2:8 directly relates this higher law to the Scriptures and sees the results in our attitude towards others, both believers and unbelievers:
"If indeed ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures, thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."
6. A Christian living according to this higher law of the Spirit of Life, the Royal Law of the Royal family of God will encompass morality yet without making morality a standard for living the Christian Way of Life and without making it a standard for others.
7. When the believer ignores the Royal law of the Spirit of Life and makes morality the standard, he falls into moral degeneracy and moral arrogance.
8. When the believer ignores the Royal law of the Scriptures and also rationalizes morality, he falls into immoral degeneracy...as with the believers of I Corinthians 5.

Romans 2:2

And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

This verse refers directly to the one who practices overt sins, but it also implicates those who judge them.

"we know" - This is evident truth that can be determined by the very character of God. A lot of

doctrine is not needed to understand that God alone is the righteous judge.

The word JUDGMENT, which occurs nine times in this chapter, is the key to the context:

This section begins in verse 1 with man in the seat of judgment and end in verse 16 with God on the throne of judgment.

In verse 1 man is condemned by his own judgment; in verses 2-16 he is condemned by God's judgment.

This JUDGMENT of God is evident by who He is, is according to a divine standard that is set forth in this section. The English fails us because it fails to consistently translate the preposition KATA. But finding it in the Greek text allows us to see the four standards of God's judgment and man's morality is not one of them:

- Verse 2, Judgment is according to truth.
- Verse 5, Judgment will be in accordance with your heart. God looks beyond the actions to the heart of man.
- Verse 6, Judgment will be according to your deeds. Since God alone knows the heart of man He alone can correctly judge the deeds of man.
- Verse 16, This judgment will be according to Paul's Gospel. This brings Paul as the inspired messenger of God into the picture. He brings to them and to us God's words.

While the thrust of this verse goes towards the overt sinner the one who judges him is also restricted by this verse.

"And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things."

If we understand this, we will leave judgment in the hands of God and not interfere with what is His divine prerogative.

Part of the faith by which we live is faith in God as the sovereign judge. Judging people is part of His divine work, that is His job. Do we put our trust in Him to judge or do we lack the faith that He will judge correctly.

Every time we are judgmental, we are not trusting in God.

SO THE PROBLEM FACED by the moral man who judges is a problem of faith.

This problem of faith is a result of personal delusion.

Romans 2:3

And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

The fact that Paul presents this as a possibility indicates that the answer is YES, they do suppose this. Paul is reading the thoughts of the moral man who judges.

The word "suppose" is LOGIZOMAI and means "to compute, to consider, to calculate, to deliberate". The judgmental man has come to a carefully thought out conclusion.

AND PAUL TEARS THIS CONCLUSION away by tearing away the deceptive security and smugness of the one who judges.

Now the moral man may judge the one who is untrustworthy, a cheat, the one who steals, the one who murders. But at the same time he gossips, he maligns, he is arrogant. He condemns the one who is involved in deceit while at the same time being unloving and without mercy.

He is critical of the one who lacks understanding while at the same time he is insolent and arrogant with the understanding he has.

PRINCIPLE: The most moral man in all of Rome cannot escape the judgment of God...all are under sin.

Romans 2:4

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

This shows the contrast between the one who judges and condemns and the one true Judge, God Himself.

How does God lead man to Himself? Not by Judgment, but through kindness, patience, and forbearance. God judges those who refuse Him.

Our Lord's earthly ministry was designed to draw men to God and He did not do so by judgment. And He had every right to judge!

John 12:47, And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

Kindness, forbearance, and patience show our God as being rich in His divine restraint towards mankind.

1. **Kindness:** This word in the Greek refers to sensitivity and understanding. God knows us and is sensitive to what we are. He knows we are not perfect. He knows we are sinners and has made a provision in Christ for that.
2. **Forbearance:** This word looks at God's tolerance of mankind even when man displays contempt and ignorance of Him.
3. **Patience:** Even though mankind is deserving of judgment, God restrains His judgment, giving man opportunity after opportunity to turn by faith alone to Him.

Paul then takes the first word in the list KINDNESS, uses it again to indicate the entire list and tell us that it is these characteristics and actions of God that will lead us to repentance.

REPENTANCE is the Greek word METANOIA. In its simplest form it means to change one's mind.

The changing of our minds is essential at salvation as well as in the Christ Centered Life.

In all the many ways it is used it always refers to that which precedes faith.

Acts 3:19, Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Hebrews 6:1, Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

II Corinthians 7:10, For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to

salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Repentance is the changing of our minds regarding our condition, our actions, our sins, our needs.

Once the mind has changed it is ready to direct faith toward the divine provision and solution.

Therefore, repentance is the mental attitude that is expressed in confession. Repentance may be preceded by Godly sorrow but that sorrow ends at confession. Godly sorrow, repentance, confession all are designed to lead us to faith in the only solution for our sins which is the work of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

Romans 2:5

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

Now that we have seen the character and actions of God towards us as sinners what about the character and actions of the moral man who judges others? In contrast to the Kindness, Forbearance, and patience of God we have three characteristic of the moral judge:

1. **Stubbornness:** Whereas the character of God melts and moves the heart to repentance, here we have stubbornness which is only found here indicating that which is unwilling to be changed.

The result of others' sins are judged, then the one judging establishes for himself a false sense of security thinking he is okay.

If we as believers become stubborn, and in Ephesians 4:18 we are told that we can, we will never allow ourselves to be changed, transformed, into the image of God. God wants to mold us but if we harden ourselves against Him, there is no molding.

2. **Unrepentant Heart:** A direct contrast to the desire and goal that God has for us. Having become stubborn we are unwilling to change, unwilling to even consider that we are wrong, in sin, in error and need to have a change on mind.

Romans 12:2, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3. Storing up wrath for yourself: The word STORE UP is the Greek word THASAURIZO, from which comes the English word THESAURUS or a STORE HOUSE.

The one who is stubborn and unrepentant continues to judge others, living a lifestyle of anger towards others, bitter, vindictive, judgmental.

They continue to store up condemnation to themselves. They build up an inventory of hate. This one will never grow better but only grow worse.

These characteristics result in the anger of the one who judges and then...

"In the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God",

The day of wrath: while at times this refers to the Tribulation, it is also used of any time God moves judge man.

He is forbearing and patient, opportunity is given for repentance, but eventually, and be sure of this, God's wrath will come.

TOO OFTEN MAN DRAWS A FALSE conclusion from the silence of God. But God is patient, he allows man to keep on filling up the storehouse of his own guilt.

II Peter 3:9, The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Man's judgments lack the one thing that most characterize God's judgment, and that is righteousness. God perfect righteousness enables Him to be perfectly fair in all His judgments.

REVIEW TO THIS POINT:

- This principle of moral judgment is not applied to courts, legal systems, parents, coaches, teachers, employers. A person in

authority has an obligation to judge within that system.

- When we morally judge others, we condemn ourselves because we are overlooking the fact that we sin also.
- When we judge others we are taking that which is the prerogative of God to ourselves. He alone is the righteous judge.
- Even God does not judge man until the proper time. He draws mankind to Himself not by judgment but by kindness (verse 4).

Yet in arrogance we judge others even when God does not and we store up anger in ourselves (verse 5).

The problem we face when we judge is a problem of faith. We do not believe that God is in control. We do not believe that he will judge, or that he will judge the way we determine. Hence, we lack faith in Him.

Romans 2:6

[It is God] Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Here Paul quotes Psalms 62:12 in order to set up the next few verses:

Paul is not talking about salvation in this passage. He is not showing us how men are saved, because man is not saved by his deeds. He is showing us why man is lost, why he is condemned, and that his evil deeds are an evidence of this condemnation.

John 3:19, And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

Now lets take this out to the final expression of God's wrath on man which is the Great White Throne Judgment:

Revelation 20:11-15

This passage refers to a time after the Millennial reign of Christ.

Note verse 10: Satan is forever cast into the Lake of Fire

There are two judgments mentioned in heaven:

- The Judgment Seat of Christ: For believers only

Mentioned in Rom 14:10, II Cor 5:10, and described in I Cor 3:12-15

Place of Reward based on what we did with what Christ provided.

- The Great White Throne of Judgment: For unbelievers:

A demonstration of the Justice and Righteousness of God having provided salvation for the human race

The Lord Jesus who was judged for sins now judges those who rejected salvation in Him

John 5:22-27 tells us that the Father committed all judgment to the Son.

The dead who stand. This is not physical death but spiritual death. They are the ones who since their first death have been in Torments.

There are two sets of Books mentioned:

- The Book of Life: Begins with every name of everyone born. When a person dies the first death (physical death) without Christ, their name is removed. Revelation 3:5 speaks of Christ removing names from the book of life
- Books of works: When a person is removed from one book his works are recorded in these volumes.

An exact record not of sins, those were paid for at the Cross, but of works, deed, good works and deeds, a record of Human Good.

The judgment is out of the book of life. If the name is not there the books of works are open. Their good works are totaled up, a tally is made.

But their works, good deeds, cannot save them because they are found to fall far short of the finished work of Christ.

Then the Second Death:

Revelation 20:14-15, And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Romans 2:7

To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.

Paul distinguishes between two kinds of people. Those who do good and those who do evil. These distinctives separate the believer from the unbeliever not by way of works but by way of obedience. The believer is seen as one who has obeyed God and the unbeliever one who has not.

The believer of verse 7 is a seeker. One who sought and found the truth and ideally continues in the same work.

To preserve in doing good looks at the tenacity of the believer.

PERSEVERANCE or ENDURANCE is a mechanic in the Christian life. It is the daily result of faith that allows us to press on to the goal of the glory of God. It means that we keep ourselves focused on what God has for us in time as well as in eternity.

And it is in that atmosphere that we have the production of GOOD WORKS.

The word GOOD is AGATHOS, which immediately separates it from KALOS, the relative good that man can do. This word looks at GOOD that is of intrinsic value, incomparable, Divine good.

We must look at GOOD WORKS not according to our own standards but according to God's:

John 6:28-29, Some of the 5000 feed by Jesus who followed Him to Capernaum: They said therefore to Him, What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.

I Thessalonians 1:3, We are constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.

The believers WORK towards God is a work of FAITH, and the believers WORK towards man is a work of LOVE.

There is not merit in either one, both are non-meritorious. We have faith IN God and we can Love one another only because Christ first loved us and we love others as he loved us.

So then, what distinguishes the believer in his work: His faith towards God and His love towards other believers.

Romans 2:8-10

But to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

[There will be] tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that does good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

In contrast to the believer who seeks the things of God and is obedient in faith here the unbeliever seeks things of self and does not obey the truth.

The words SELFISHLY AMBITIOUS contrast directly with the SEEKING of the things of God in the prior verse.

Their obedience to unrighteousness, wrath (anger) and indignation.

Unrighteousness refers to the unrighteous acts against others, the judging of others.

Wrath or anger is what they build up in their bitterness

Indignation is the passion that overcomes them as they pursue to fulfill their own agenda and ambitions.

The description is of a life that is totally lived for self. Once man begins to judge others this is the end result. Very soon no one will be good enough for them.

WHAT AWAITS THE LIFE LIVED FOR SELF?

Tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

The fact that Paul mentions Jews and Greeks shows us that there is no birthright to the Jew. They have tribulation and distress waiting for them just like the Greek.

Consider what a blow this was to the Jew who considered himself so much better than the Gentile.

Romans 2:11

There is no partiality with God.

The word PARTIALITY is a compound from to receive and to face. It was a legal term used when a convicted man faced the court for judgment and justice is blind.

Romans 2:12-14

For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,

Paul recognizes that even Gentiles, without the OT Law, establish moral principles that parallel the Law and by these they are condemned.

This is expanded in the next verses:

Romans 2:15

In that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

This paralleling of the OT Law does not look at the laws of worship or sacrifice but at the moral code.

Man's conscience is seen as a debating forum in which there is guilt and exoneration, accusing and defending according to some moral standard which may touch upon the OT Law in some or many respects.

Romans 2:16

On the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

The phrase "on the day", reaches back to end of verse 13. The justice and righteousness of God

will determine the deeds of man. Were they works of faith? Or were they works of evil?

So this looks ahead to the Great White Throne of God.

Romans 2:17-20

INTRODUCTION:

John Wesley speaking of religion in his day said: Sour godliness is the devil's religion. It does not owe its inception to truly spiritual people. I suspect that sour godliness oriented among unhappy, semi-religious people who had just enough religion to make them miserable, but not enough to make them good.

It was easy to condemn the pagan man of chapter one. By his attitude of rejection and his actions of sin he clearly condemns himself. The moral man of chapter two was a bit more difficult to condemn since he appears to be so good. Yet Paul built a case against him under three points:

1. All men possess the light of creation, 1:20
2. All men have the light of conscience, 2:15
3. Men who reject this light condemn themselves, 2:12

In this case that Paul builds against the moral man he also touched upon the Jew. The one having the Law. And now he turns to the Jew and begins to build God's case against them.

This is the third group who has been nodding their heads in agreement to this point, but now it is their turn.

Romans 2:17,18

But if you bear the name Jew, and rely upon the Law, and boast in God, and know His will,

And approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

While all men have the light of creation and conscience, some, the Jews, have the light of God's written word.

That they have a possession from God led the Jew into a false sense of confidence, thinking that all that had been said to this point had no bearing on him because, after all, he was a Jew.

Paul gives the religious Jew six distinctive:

1. He bears the name Jew: This is a reference to nationality and citizenship in a nation that belongs to God. Ones who bore this title were proud of it.
2. Rely upon the Law: They had the OT Law and relied upon it, or more accurately its Talmudic interpretations, for their social and civil statutes.
3. They boast in God: The word boast actually means to flaunt or brag about God. The Jews knew God had a relationship to them and they flaunted this in the face of the Gentiles.
4. They know His will: Interesting, Paul uses a simple form for KNOW. He does not grant them the recognition that they follow divine will, just know it.
5. They approve things that are essential: This is the testing or proving of moral and ethical behavior. Much of the time of the Jewish Rabbis and scholars was spent considering moral and ethical issues.
6. They were instructed out of the Law: Jews went to Synagogue school and learned the Scriptures and were taught the doctrines of the Word.

This is an impressive list!

Can you imagine the Jews who listened to Paul read off this list of possessions? They would smile and nod their heads and say "Oh, that is us, yes we are truly blessed...we are special".

But we have to go back to verse 13 to see the light in which this list is given...

Rom 2:13, For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

AND THAT WILL BE PAUL'S POINT. All the possessions are nothing without putting them into practice.

Romans 2:19,20

And are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.

The Confidence of the Religious Jew

The verb CONFIDENT is a perfect tense that describes a present condition that began at a past point in time. This is an attitude that is fixed, entrenched in the minds of the Jews.

Then Paul lists four roles of the Jews

1. A Guide to the Blind: In the OT it was the Gentile that was often seen as being blind. The Jews had the opportunity to be a guide to them.

But to be a guide to the blind you must be able to see:

Matthew 15:14 Jesus said of the Pharisees: "They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit".

2. A Light to those in Darkness: Again, a reference to the Gentiles who were seen as those who dwelled in darkness. The Jews had the privilege of being a light to them.

This is in contrast to the blind who have no capacity to see. Here it is the darkness around them that prevented sight. The Jews considered themselves to be the light of the world.

3. A Corrector of the Foolish: Not a judge but one who corrects. The word was used of the trainer-slave, one who came along side and taught, encouraged, corrected, and was an example.

The word FOOLISH is AFRON and means to be without reason. Hence it takes one who has reason to correct the one who is without reason.

4. A Teacher of the Immature: DIDASKALOS, one who teaches with a purpose, with a goal in mind. And that would be to bring from immaturity to maturity.

The word IMMATURE is NEIPIOS which means one who is unable to speak, the Gentiles were viewed by the Jews as having nothing of value to say or contribute.

And all this can be done by what is possessed: Having the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.

The Law of Moses did four things:

1. It kept a lid on the disobedience of the nation of Israel
2. It demonstrated the sinfulness of man
3. It displayed the righteousness of God
4. And it pointed the way to Jesus, the Messiah who would come.

Israel had the Law and they could have used it, but instead they abused it.

This job description is very good and is the privileged of the believer, Jews or Christians. But it can also describe the mission of the reformer who applies these practices to others and not to himself.

And that is the problem that Paul brings up in the next few verses, the inconsistency of the religious Jew.

Romans 2:21-24

"You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal?"

"You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?"

"You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?"

"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written (Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:20)."

PAUL TOLD THEN WHAT THEY HAD, told them the potential of what they could do in practice, what they should be based upon their position and then hits them with what they really are.

v 17-20 A nodding of the head

v 21-24 Facing up to what they really are

BUT NOTICE SOMETHING: Paul, who has just talked about judging, does not judge them. He does not say You are thieves, you are adulterers, you are blasphemers. Instead, he sets up situations and then asks them questions.

Before we examine these questions, let us consider our relationship to what Paul has stated in verses 17 to 20:

1. As Christians, we also have a tremendous position in Christ.
2. We have a name in which is found the very name of our Saviour, Christians. That title is only found three times in the Bible yet what a title it is.
3. We can boast, properly, in God as our Father.
4. We can, from the Scriptures, know the will of God
5. From the doctrine we have we can proclaim that which is essential and that which is not
6. We have a local church where we can be instructed out of the Word
7. But what do we do with our position? What do we do with what we possess?
8. Are we guides to the blind? Lights to the world that is in darkness? Do we train and encourage the foolish? are we teachers of doctrine to the immature?
9. Too often, in Paul's day and in our day, we have so much by way of possession and so little by way of practice.
10. Christians today are quick to reform others but very slow to allow God to reform them. Hence, we fall under the same indictment that Paul is getting ready to level at the Jews of his day.

Romans 2:21

You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You that preach a man should not steal, do you steal?

You who preach...

This is the first of a number of questions Paul asks of the religious Jews.

He will use this Socratic method of questioning through out this section. More questions will follow in Romans 3:1-8.

The question of v 21 is introductory: You teach others, do you not also teach yourself? Do you learn from what you are teaching to others?

Two words are used here:

Teach or Teaching: This is DIDASKW and it looks at that which is given verbally. This type of teaching is in two parts. First, there is the preparation of the teaching; and secondly, the teaching is intended to seek a result or a change of mind on the part of the hearers.

The Jews who were teaching the Word were able to cause a change in the ones hearing them, but they did not apply anything themselves. There was no change effected in them.

Jesus spoke of this situation in Matthew 23:1-2, "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them."

It is possible to communicate truth, have it become effective in others lives, while not having it effect the life of the one communicating.

This certainly is not the ideal situation, but it can be the real situation. God's word can even be effective to others when it is spoken by a jack-ass as it was with Baalam.

The second word used with a specific question is the word PREACH.

This is KURUSSW and refers to public proclamation. It was used in classical Greek for the work of the official whose job it was to announce government policy and proclamations especially any proclamation of war.

In the NT it is used almost exclusively for information related to salvation or deliverance of the believer.

It is seen as being much more specific than TEACHING and here is used for the communication of truth regarding stealing or thievery.

In both cases the issue is that the one who communicates must learn from what he communicates. The communicator is also a student of the Word.

As a pastor whose duty it is to study and teach, I learn when I study; but I also learn when I teach. I am under the same obligation as you to learn,

think, and apply the Word that is taught from this pulpit.

Paul asks another question:

"You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal?"

The potential hypocrisy of this situation was also stated by Jesus regarding the religious leaders of his day:

Matthew 23:14, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.

Notice that there is a problem of sin and a coverup in this passage.

They are devouring widow's homes. This was a gimmick they used. They would say a recently deceased husband pledged his home and property to the synagogue or temple prior to his death. And they would move the widow out, forcing her to live with relatives.

Then they would cover this up with long prayers for the widow's well being.

This is PRETENSE...and this is one of the four ways man covers up dysfunctional behavior:

1. Self Protection: Prevents you from depending upon the Lord and the Holy Spirit
2. Pretense: Consciously living a lie or unconsciously failing to recognize what you really are.
3. Denial: Not facing sin, weakness, error
4. Demanding: Thinking that others owe you something, having unrealistic expectations of others and then demanding that they meet those expectations. When they do not, fall into self pity.

The hypocritical situation mentioned by both Jesus and Paul is dysfunctional. All hypocrisy is dysfunctional. This was being covered up by the religious Jews through pretense. Acting religious on the outside.

Matthew 23:27-28, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of

dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

Romans 2:22

You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege?

Adultery and sexual sins were not new to the religious Jews. As far back as the exodus the Jews has a propensity towards sexual lasciviousness.

In I Samuel 2-5 the sons of the High priest, Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were involved in the molestation of the women who came to the Tabernacle.

Adultery was not some new vice then, nor is it today. Even in our age we see many Christian leaders fall because of adultery.

In Jesus day He taught where this all began:

Matthew 15:19, For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

The next indictment (verse 22b) is one of idolatry:

"You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?"

The word ABHOR means to turn away from something because of its stench.

There was a well know practice in Israel that when a pagan temple or alter was torn down it was plundered, the best of items were kept by the religious leaders. Some of these even found their way to the Temple.

And yet we find through out the OT law the prohibition for any Jew to keep that which was an idol or used in idolatry.

Remember that one of Solomon's great problems was allowing his wives to bring their idols into Israel. There was to be a total and complete separation form idolatry and paganism on the part of the Jews.

The Jews would publicly abhor idols, yet hang onto them if they were of value.

Nothing new: In I Samuel 10:11-17 Michal, Saul's daughter and David's first wife had a pagan idol in her home.

Romans 2:23,24

You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written.

Paul refers to the scriptures in Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:20.

The word BOAST is the same word we had in verse 17 where the religious Jew was said to boast in God. It means to flaunt, to brag about one's position or what one has.

Here they flaunt the Law. It came to be not God's Law but their Law, interpreted in the Talmud, superior to the Laws of others. It was flaunted in the face of the Gentile.

And then they were observed breaking this Law.

The result would be that the Gentiles seeing their actions would dishonor God because of them.

So the name of God (his character) is blasphemed by the Gentiles because of them:

Now the Jew who is hearing this will say at this point that Paul is right, they have been hypocrites. But at least they have circumcision and no uncircumcised Jew is lost.

Romans 2:25

For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Remember, he is speaking to Jews. Circumcision in the OT economy was of value but only if it was a sign of obedience to the Law.

CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision in the Age of Israel and for the descendants of Abraham was practiced as a sign of religious identification.

Circumcision today is practiced as a matter of health and carries not religious significance.

In ancient Israel circumcision meant several things:

1. The parents were being obedient to the commands of God in that they were circumcising their male babies. Parents

obedience, child had no say nor felling in the matter.

2. Circumcision began with Abraham who was the single great great grandfather of a nation. This was a nation formed by God, Israel.

Thus, circumcision was a symbol of that special nation

3. Circumcision served as a twofold reminder to the men of Israel, the men who were to be the spiritual and political leaders of Israel, God's nation.

A reminder in cohabitation: For a Jewish man to take a Gentile wife was fine, but the wife was to convert and any children were to be raised as Jews, not Gentiles. Circumcision was a reminder of this.

A daily reminder that the Jewish man was part of a special nation. Every time he went to the tree he looked down and was reminded that he was different. During those moments of contemplation against the wall he would think about the fact that he was different.

4. By the time of the giving of the Mosaic Law, circumcision also had a symbolic spiritual significance of the cutting away of the flesh or the sin nature.

Deuteronomy 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked (arrogant).

NOTE: Actual physical circumcision was for Israel and when Paul used the term in the N.T. epistles it was either in reference to Israel or it was strictly symbolic of our determination to shut down the flesh, the O.S.N.

Colossians 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

Therefore, Paul rejects actual physical circumcision as having any part in the Christ Centered Life.

Romans 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

I Corinthians 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Galatians 5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Circumcision was of value to the Jews of the Old Testament, but they were trying to make this physical sign more important than obedience.

But as any ritual, it was mechanical and when the mechanism becomes more important than faith which leads to obedience, there is a problem.

Romans 2:26,27

If therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

And will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

We can see in this verse that Paul is talking about something a lot more important than the physical act.

Paul looks at the moral aspects of the Law, not the ceremonial aspects of the Law which would have included circumcision.

PRINCIPLE: Lack of circumcision could not condemn the Gentile any more than the presence of circumcision could save the Jew.

Romans 2:28,29

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

A TRUE JEW, in the spiritual definition, is one who is so internally as well as externally.

This is not a new concept. Any Jew should have been able to figure this out by going back to the patriarchs. There he would see that Jacob was a believer and the nation of Israel can through him.

His brother Esau was not a believer and although they and the same parents, they were twins, the line of Israel did not come through Esau.

Notice in the verses the contrasts Paul uses:

1. Outwardly vs. Inwardly
2. Flesh vs. Heart
3. Spirit vs. Letter of the Law
4. Men vs. God

Here Paul tells them that true circumcision is of the heart not of the flesh.

Colossians 2:11, In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;