

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, April 29, 2012

Passage: Romans 3:1-8

Memory Passage: Romans 8:16-17

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:1-8 & Rom. 8.** Remember that in Romans Paul often uses the literary/teaching device known as diatribe, and one of the characteristics of diatribe is the posing of questions from an imaginary objector that gives the speaker/author the ability to anticipate & answer objections to his/her argument. With this in mind, examine 3:1-8 and write down the questions Paul poses from his imaginary objector. Look carefully not just at the question marks in your Bible, but also at the content of the questions (e.g. in v. 3 are both questions from the objector, or does the 2<sup>nd</sup> one reflect part of Paul's answer?).

(b) Consider the context of 3:1-8: How does this section connect with what precedes? With what follows? How does it fit into Paul's argument from 1:18-3:20? To whom is he directly speaking, Jews or Gentiles?

(c) If you were only able to read through 3:1, what would be your answer to Paul's question in v. 1 considering what he just said in 2:17-29? Are you surprised by Paul's words in v. 2? Why or why not?

(d) In what way does the question in v. 1 apply to you, one who is neither a Jew nor received the sign of circumcision in a religious way? Why should you continue to read and apply this passage to yourself and other New Covenant believers?

(e) *Family: Read Rom. 2:17-29* and as you read, pause and ask questions about what you learned during your previous study. Try to assess what your family both remembers and understands from previous study. Help them fill in any blanks in what they remember and clear up any misunderstandings. **Read Rom. 3:1** and have them write down their own answer to the question Paul poses. Have everyone read and explain his or her answer. Then **Read Rom 3:2a** and discuss their response to Paul's immediate answer. Explain that in these verses Paul will answer objections he thinks will be made to his teaching.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:1-8 & Rom. 9.** Why would someone who has been listening to Paul make this objection found in 3:1? What is the first Jewish advantage Paul lists? Given his language, were you expecting more than one advantage to be mentioned? Why do you think he stops at listing only one? As you read Rom. 9, what other advantages did you find?

(b) To what does the phrase "the oracles of God" refer? Why would Paul think this to be advantageous for the Jews, and what advantage does their being entrusted with the Scriptures bring (see Deut. 4:5-8 & Ps. 19:7-11 for some help)?

(c) What advantages do you, a New Covenant believer, have because you have the Scriptures (cf. Deut. 4:5-8 & Ps. 19:7-11)? In addition to the advantages, what responsibilities come with being acquainted with the Scriptures? Do you have the same, more, or less advantages/responsibilities than the Jews had? What about in comparison to non-believers?

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 3:1-2.* Explain that the "oracles of God" refer to the OT Scriptures and ask, "What advantages does having the Scripture bring to the Jews in Paul's day and to us today?" After a discussion, have your family turn to **Ps. 19:7-11** and discuss all of the ways the Scriptures are an advantage to us. Write each one on your whiteboard and both explain and illustrate how each one is true. Also remind them that obedience to God's word is the way these advantages are obtained.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 3:1-8 & Rom. 10.** Why would Paul expect the question(s) in v. 3 to be asked? In what way were the Jews unfaithful? In what ways did God express His faithfulness to the Jews, and why would the Jews' unfaithfulness ever suggest to some that God was unfaithful (see Deut. 7:9-12 for help)?

(b) Why does Paul begin his answer in v. 4 by contrasting God's character with man's character? He then quotes Ps. 51:4 as proof that Israel's unfaithfulness does not call into question God's faithfulness. How does this verse make his case?

(c) **Meditate on Deut. 7:9-12.** How does this help you understand Paul's reasoning in Rom. 3:1-4? Is the idea that God is being faithful to His covenant with His people when He judges them for their disobedience a new thought to you? If so, how does it strike you? Does it bring forth joy or anger? Clarity or confusion? Wonder or disbelief? If it is not a new thought, how has this truth affected your walk as a believer? Whether a new thought or not, in what ways does this affect your understanding of God's character, and what difference should this make in your daily life?

(d) *Family:* Ask, "When the Bible says that God is faithful, what does that mean?" After discussion, turn to and **Read Deut. 7:9-12** and help your family understand that when Paul writes of God's faithfulness he is referring to His covenant faithfulness, which includes both blessing for obedience and judgment for disobedience. Paul asks the question in Rom. 3:3 because he understands that some Jews might wrongly think that God cannot judge unfaithful Jews for their sin without breaking His covenant with them. But God (as seen in passages like Deut. 7:9-12) is in fact being faithful to His covenant when He judges those who are disobedient to His word.

**DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Rom. 3:1-8 & Rom. 11.** After Paul states the second objection that he anticipates, he says parenthetically, “I speak in a human way.” What does he mean by this? How does this help us understand the objection?
- (b) To what unrighteousness does Paul refer in v. 5? How does this unrighteousness of men show the righteousness of God? How does this fact (“our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God”) cause Paul’s objector to wrongly state that, “God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us?” What are they confusing/misunderstanding about God’s righteousness?
- (c) How does Paul answer this objection in v. 6? Explain why this question refutes the objection.
- (d) Scripture is clear that God will judge His world according to His righteousness (see Ps. 96:13, 98:9, Is. 51:5, Acts 17:30-31, 2 Tim. 4:8, 1 Pet. 2:23). How would you explain what this means to a new believer? To someone who doubted God’s right to judge? In what ways should this knowledge fuel your evangelism?
- (e) *Family:* **Read Rom. 3:5-6.** Explain that Paul raises this objection to his teaching in v. 5: “Since you, Paul, are teaching us that we are so unrighteous that we cannot obey God without Him giving us a circumcised heart, then God must be unjust in judging us if we disobey!” Paul responds that God is absolutely not unrighteous! If He were, how could He judge the Gentiles (something that every Jew would have expected God to do because they were not included in God’s covenant with the Jews). Then **Read Ps. 96:13, 98:9 & Acts 17:30-31** and explain how God’s righteousness is tied to His character, so that even in His judging sin He remains righteous, and quality of His judging is indeed righteous.

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Rom. 3:1-8 & Rom. 9-11.** I have you reading all of chapters 9-11, which you have read chapter-by-chapter during the last 3 days, so you can see again the way that Romans 3:1-8 foreshadows what Paul will teach in much more detail in 9-11.
- (b) Is Paul in v. 7 restating the objection of v. 5 or is he stating a new objection? On what basis do you answer? Is the switch to 1<sup>st</sup> person singular significant in your interpretation or not?
- (c) What is the charge that some are making against Paul’s theology (v. 8)? What are they misinterpreting about Paul’s teaching to come to this false conclusion? What is Paul’s response?
- (d) Write down everything that you have learned (or relearned) about God’s character from these verses. Now write down 4 applications that will aid in your sanctification during the coming week (Make sure they are different from the applications you have written down already this week).
- (e) *Family:* Lead your family through (d) above. Help them to be specific in ways that they can respond to the attributes of God about which you have taught this week.

**DATE: April 29, 2012****PASSAGE: Romans 3:1-8*****The Righteousness of God***

In Romans 3:1-8 Paul anticipate &amp; answers 4 objections to his theology.