



## Week 20: Romans 1-8

### Study Guide for the week of May 11-17

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Rom 3:21-23.

It is difficult for many of us to admit we were wrong or that we made a mistake. Yet, we know that without being honest about our actions, without confessing our mistakes, we will continue to feel burdened by our sins. Paul is reminding us of our true condition before God when he writes that we all have sinned (3:23) and we all need a Savior to deal with the problem of sin.

This week, spend time each day being honest with God about your sin. Use the following prayer to guide you to in a time of confession and cleansing each day, naming those specific things thoughts, words, and deeds you have done and left undone:

*Most merciful God, I confess that I am in bondage to sin and cannot free myself. I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what I have done and by what I have left undone. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved my neighbor as myself. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Forgive me, renew me, and lead me, so that I may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.*

End your time of confession and prayer with thanksgiving, knowing God has promised to forgive you all your sins and cleanse you from all the ways that draw you from him.

#### Discussion starters

1. Can judgment be good today? Reread Rom 1:18. Wrath is not only God's response to evil, but also his active intervention on behalf of humans who are victims of injustice or brutality. How is God's judgment viewed by people who are lowly, powerless, or exploited? By people who are mighty, powerful, or oppressors? In which group do you find yourself?
2. Reread Rom 2:1-4. Paul writes that the human tendency for self-justification is universal. What strategies do people use to avoid truth? How successful are the strategies? What is the best strategy for reconciling strained relationships?
3. In Romans, Paul uses the word "faith" to emphasize that faith is not only a belief, but a way of life. Do you know people who display their faith this way? How is faith becoming a way of life for you? Look the word "faith" up in a dictionary and discuss the various ways the word can be used.
4. Paul argues that a life of faith has consequences (Rom 4:20-5:5). What is one of the major consequences of a life of faith (5:1)? What does the peace of God look like? How does this peace impact our experience of loneliness or alienation? Our relationships with others? Our relationship with God?
5. Paul speaks both positively and negatively about boasting. Read Jer 9:23-24. What should we boast about? Can religious boasting become a problem? If so, how?

6. In Romans, Paul argues that salvation is not only for the individual, but for the whole creation (8:18-23). How does this understanding impact our relationship with people we don't know? With the whole of God's creation? Where do we draw strength to confront the challenges inherent in our individual lives and in the world (8:35-39)?

**Bible verse to memorize: Romans 1:16-17**