

**QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION
& SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
FOR JANUARY 22 THRU 28, 2023**

—Here are some quotations that are intended to provoke some initial discussion about what’s being presented in this study.

—“Perfection demands perfection; that is why salvation must be by grace, and why works are not sufficient.” —**Donald Grey Barnhouse**

—Our **ABILITY** to **APPRECIATE** God’s **GRACE** is directly connected to our **AWARENESS** of God’s **WRATH!**

—The Gospel accurately **REVEALS** that God’s **JUSTICE** is absolutely **PERFECT!**

—“Our real problem is not our sins. If our sins were the problem, we might muster the will-power to pull out of this nose dive. But the good news of the gospel begins with some really bad news. Our sins only provoke a bigger problem: the wrath of God. Our real problem is not our sins but God. He is angry, He isn’t going away, and there is nothing we can do about it. If God is against us, who can be for us? But here is the good news. God has made God our salvation. He did it at the cross. God has provided a way of escape from God: in God. We run from His wrath by running toward His grace in Christ. And if God is for us, who can be against us?” —**selected quote**

—**Romans 5:8** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

—**Matthew 7:1–5** **1** “Do not judge so that you will not be judged. **2** For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive. **3** Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye, but fail to see the beam of wood in your own? **4** Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye,’ while there is a beam in your own? **5** You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

—“The Gospel reveals to us that we are fundamentally flawed by our sin nature. It also gives us genuine hope and encouragement in the reality that God and God alone can fix this problem!” —**GAD**

—It’s always beneficial to carefully read and observe the details of what we’re studying. Also please give some attention to what leads into Romans 2 in 1:28–32.

—**Romans 1:28–32** **28** And just as they did not see fit to *acknowledge* God any longer, God gave them over to a **depraved mind**, to do those things which are not proper, **29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, **30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; **32** and **although they know the instructions of God**, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also **give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

—**Romans 2:1–16** **1** Therefore **you have no excuse**, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. **2** And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. **3** **But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?** **4** **Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?** **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, **6** who will render to each person according to his deeds: **7** to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; **8** **but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.** **9** There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **11** **For there is no partiality with God.** **12** 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; **13** for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. **14** 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, **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,** **16** **on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.**

—After carefully observing this passage, what are some personal thoughts that come to your mind about how we grapple with the idea of grace? Does grace motivate us to live for God’s glory? —**OR**— Does it provoke us to take God’s kindness, mercy, & love for granted?

—In the transition from Romans 1 into Romans 2, Paul warns us about allowing the culture to persuade us in a subtle way to condone or approve of evil & sinful behavior (1:32) and then suggests that at times we might be tempted to pass judgment on those who “practice” the sins listed in 1:28–31. We might think (or even say to others), Yes, I’m sinful, but I’m not as bad as they are!” What tempts us to judge others? Why do we point fingers at sins that we see others practice?

—Also look closely at 2:8 where it says that some people are selfishly ambitious. That word describes a person who has no loyalty to anyone except oneself. Literally it means a person who will serve whomever will provide the most personal benefit or value, but won’t make a commitment. “What have you done for me lately?” would be this person’s motto. How has that attitude infiltrated our society? Has it impacted the ministry of the Church? What thoughts do you have about this? This could be an interesting discussion.

—Finally in this section of our study, our society/culture has been conditioned into thinking that equality and equity need to be enforced by laws and legal regulations. Is it possible to change our world with rules and regulations? How does the Gospel fit into this discussion?

—Here are some questions related to the sermon notes that might promote or provoke discussion:

—1} Here are the applications listed in the conclusion to the notes.

The GOSPEL is:

1) a MEASURE showing how far sin separates us from God.

- How does the Gospel indicate the gap between us and God?
- Does this gap change from person to person?
- Why is it helpful to recognize Jesus as the bridge that covers this?

2) a MOTIVATION for everyone to TRUST in Christ.

- For some people, the Gospel is a stumbling block because it tells us we are all sinners. How can we remove that stumbling block?

3) a MESSAGE about God’s GRACE AND God’s WRATH

- Why is it necessary to understand that both God’s grace and His wrath are part of the message about being forgiven and freed from sin’s penalty and power?

4) the MEANS of salvation from the penalty, power, & problem of sin!

- John 14:6 clearly explains that Jesus is the ONLY way, the **truth**, & the **life** that bridges our separation (because of sin) from God the Father. How does this message become twisted and tainted by our culture and by other religions?

- 2} How open and honest should we be in sharing/confessing our own sins? Where should we draw lines of privacy?
- 3} When would/could judging others sometimes become necessary or appropriate? When is it wrong? How can we determine the difference? Noting what Matthew 7:1–5 says what guidelines should we apply in the area of judging one another? Some would suggest that judgment begins within the family of God (1 Peter 4:17). A possible explanation of what Jesus said in Matthew 7 would be that we should never try to take God’s place in condemning people, but we should recognize our role in holding one another accountable and encouraging each other to remain faithful to God’s will. Your personal thoughts?
- 4} Some hesitate to confront another Christian who is in sin because they don’t want to be judgmental. Is this right? What biblical principles apply?
- 5} Should Christians watch movies or television shows that contain profanity, violence, & sex scenes? Where do we draw the line? What biblical criteria should we apply?
- 6} How would you answer a Christian, doubting his salvation, who asks, “How much good do I need to do to prove that my faith is genuine?”