

(Simple advice: If you're new to these notes, here's my advice: **Do not be overwhelmed by these notes as another "home school" assignment, or even that you need to "do" all or any of this outline!** This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

***CROWD BREAKER: What do you remember most about your father?***

***The previous week, we talked about judgmentalism? Did you judge less? Do you have a testimony from this week? —The scribe***

Note: Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. ***PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. Remember the purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories on Sunday that will serve for a long time.*** REMEMBER TO BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! ***Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. It's a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.***

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***Remember the purpose is to minister to one another.***

Mark says, "All of us have done something this week that we know we shouldn't have." ***Is that true? Take a vote: Is it something we did, something we said or something we thought?***

***If it's true for you, did you try to justify it? Why is gossip not discernment? Mark says, "We're all sinners." Is this comforting? Who has the best excuse?***

**Romans 3:1** What, then, is the advantage of being a Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? **2** Much in every way. First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. **Paul is writing to the Gentiles. What advantage does the Jew have? Why? What if the Jew does not avail himself of the "very words of God" but relies on someone else's explanation of those words? What advantage is it if you have a "good pastor", but you do not open to know the "very words?"**

**3** What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? **4** Certainly not! Let God be true and every man a liar. As it is written:

"So that You may be proved right when You speak  
and victorious when You judge."

**5** But if our unrighteousness highlights the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict His wrath on us? I am speaking in human terms. **6** Certainly not! In that case, how could God judge the world? **7** However, if my falsehood accentuates God's truthfulness, to the increase of His glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner? **8** Why not say, as some slanderously claim that we say, "Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved! **If the Jew does not believe, how much of God's promise is nullified for him? For the rest of us? (Remember this for later...) In Matthew 15:6, Jesus tells the Pharisees they have "...nullified the Word of God in favor of their traditions." Does "believing traditions" save you? Look up 2 Timothy 2:13** **12** if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; **13** if we are unbelieving, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. **14** Remind the believers of these things, charging them before God to avoid quarreling over words, which succeeds only in leading the listeners to ruin.... **What changes with God if we stop believing Him and believe traditions instead? What changes for us?**

**What should we do, then? What happens if we put aside traditions and discover what He actually says?**

**Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith (believing) it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must first believe that He is...and that HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM." How does this apply here?**

### **There Is No One Righteous**

*(Psalm 14:1-7; Psalm 53:1-6; Isaiah 59:1-17)*

**9** What then? Are we any better? Not at all. For we have already made the charge that Jews and Greeks alike are all under sin. **10** As it is written:

"There is no one righteous,  
not even one.

**11** There is no one who understands,  
no one who seeks God.

- 12**All have turned away,  
they have together become worthless;  
there is no one who does good,  
not even one.”
- 13**“Their throats are open graves;  
their tongues practice deceit.”  
“The venom of vipers is on their lips.”
- 14**“Their mouths are full  
of cursing and bitterness.”
- 15**“Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
**16**ruin and misery lie in their wake,  
**17**and the way of peace they have not known.”
- 18**“There is no fear of God  
before their eyes.”

**19**Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. **20**Therefore no one will be justified in His sight by works of the law. For the law merely brings awareness of sin. **What does Paul say is the purpose of the Law? If we are aware of sin, does that make us stop sinning?**

### **Righteousness through Faith in Christ** *(Philippians 3:1–11)*

**21**But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, as attested by the Law and the Prophets. **22**And this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no distinction, **23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.** **Why are these two verses so often memorized and quoted? Who is excluded? Which verse is the measure of the good news of the New Testament? Verse 23. “...all have sinned”? Or verse 23, “...being justified freely by His grace”? Explain Mark’s claim, “Our righteousness is found in Jesus Christ.” How does that work?**

**25**God presented Him as the atoning sacrifice through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance He had passed over the sins committed beforehand. **26**He did this to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and to justify the one who has faith in Jesus. **How is He just? What of His Law has He ignored? How does He become the “Justifier” by His blood? If blood were not involved, is there any hope? Since the blood was shed on our behalf, and Jesus then rose from the dead...what hope is there for the sinner?**

**27**Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of works? No, but on that of faith. **28**For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

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29Is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

31Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Certainly not! Instead, we uphold the law. **How does that work? If the Law still stands, and we continue to sin...what hope do we have? What hope do we have if we truly repent?**

**How does one truly repent?**

Mark says, "Don't focus on living right. Focus on a right relationship with Jesus." **How does this help?**

Mark says, "If you focus on the Law, the Law will never make you live right." **Why not?**

"If you focus on your relationship with Jesus, you begin to focus on getting closer to him. That relationship ultimately supplies what you need to turn away from your sin." **When Jesus restores relationships, what hope is there?**

Look up the parable of the Prodigal Son. Luke 15:11-32 The Prodigal remembered the relationship he once had with the father, before binging on Netflix. **What does his return promise us?** Look at the father's response to the "good boy" son who followed all the rules of the house: "31'Son, you are always with me,' the father said, 'and **all that is mine is yours.** 32But it was fitting to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" **How does this make you feel? What exactly did the good son have in his favor? Had he earned this by his behavior? How much did he use? How much of the Father's wealth was available to him? How much was withheld from him? Why didn't he understand this? When you know the Father's goodness, how do things change?** Mark says, "Trying to live right, without a relationship is wrong. Trying to live for yourself, without a relationship is wrong." **What do we live for then? How do I get into a right relationship with Jesus Christ? Look up Hebrews 4:15.** **15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin.** 16Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.... **Why does it matter that our own High Priest was tempted in every way like as we...and was without sin? How does that open the way for us? What robes, rings and calves have been prepared for those who return to the Father?**

**Follow the truth wherever it leads you. What is the next step? Take time to share. Talk about your biggest takeaway.**

**Take time to pray for one another. Be blessed. —the scribe**