

INTRODUCTION - ROMANS 2:17 - 3:8

How would you feel if someone sought to validate their faith by trying to invalidate you and your way of life? This is Paul's concern in this section of the letter. He is clear that the Greek-infused, Roman culture of the day is not conducive to the believers' new life in Christ. But, Paul is concerned about the way Jewish believers sought to validate their faith by comparing themselves to Gentile believers.

We approach this section of Romans by addressing the negative issues associated with how Jewish believers viewed themselves and compared their faith against the faith of Gentile believers. As we do so, we will allow the text to help us determine how to appropriately display the kind of faith that pleases God.

Keep up: complete N.T. Wright, *Romans: 18 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, p 20-23.

Faith that pleases God requires righteous activity.

Romans 2:17-24 → Condemnation of the Happy Hypocrite

Hypocrisy is not acceptable for believers, yet there is a tendency toward just that. Still, God requires better. Our aim should be alignment with what God requires. This is possible as we:

- Do the _____ thing because God requires it, not out of a sense of superiority.
- Trust the _____ _____ to help us do what is _____.
- Dedicate ourselves to the _____ of God's name.

Romans 2:25-29 → Circumcision and Ideal Identification

Circumcision was an integral symbol of Jewish identification, and indeed, was required by God. Still, Christian identity is marked by spiritual transformation, not physical symbolism.

Circumcision according to the Law

1. A _____ state.
2. An _____ symbol.
3. Profitable for _____ who keep the law.

Circumcision according to the Spirit

1. A _____ state.
2. An _____ sign.
3. Possible for all who _____.

Romans 3:1-8 → Confirmation of the Just Judge

God's name is on the line. As believers represent God in the world, but engage in sin, unsaved persons question not just salvation, but the God who supplies the grace of salvation. Judgment of sin is but one way that God is confirmed as the just Judge.

- God's original intention remains as it was. The people of God were/are _____ to keep God's word (or, law).
- God's consistent rule is unaffected by our sin. God does not need to bend the rules to enjoy the favor of humanity.