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GRACE
CHANGES EVERYTHING



WEEK 4 | The Hippo and the Elephant

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the thorough examination of my sinfulness and my need of Jesus. Correct me of any unworothy attitudes and perceptions I may have, and I pray that I may not develop the same self-righteous, unfaithful, hypocritical, religious attitude that Paul described in the book of Romans, but may I live my life in word and deed to your honour and glory. This I ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

If you could change one thing about your daily routine, what would it be?

NOTES

WORD

¹⁷ But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God ¹⁸ and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; ¹⁹ and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— ²¹ you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. ²⁴ For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

²⁵ For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

[ROMANS 2:17-29](#)

William Newell highlights from this passage with regards to the judgment of God that it is according to reality, not religious profession. The reality in this case is that the Jews who have had the advantage of access to the Tanakh (the Hebrew Old Testament) and access to God himself in worship, have unfortunately been hypocritical by teaching a form of Christianity that exalts practices over grace, all whilst not adhering to the teachings themselves.

Paul summarises this chapter by highlighting that being a Jew and being circumcised is a matter of the heart and of the Spirit, not by the letter. This welcomes the Gentile worshiper by the Spirit of God to worship him, and also centres our worship of God on his gospel of grace once again.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale of 1-10, how do you rate your ability to act, talk, and behave the same, no matter where you are and who you are around?
2. Have you ever met a person who, when you saw them for the first time, you thought would be a certain way, but upon getting to know them, they were different? Please share who they were and how were they different to your first impression.
3. If the circumcision of the heart is the cutting away of extraneous fleshly desires, then how might God cut away at those desires in our lives? Have you allowed God to cut away at those fleshly desires in your life?
4. The main theme of Romans Chapter 2 seems to be the hypocrisy of the Jewish believers, who seem to be breaking the very law that they were meant to be teaching others (see vs. 21). How can we be a light to others who need to know the truth, without compromising our faith in Christ?
5. Do you sometimes fall into hypocrisy (teaching or saying one thing, but doing another)? What might be an example, and how might you hope to see God change you?
6. If you do not yet have a relationship with the God who saves us, and sets us free from trying to pointlessly work our way into righteousness, would you like to follow him and enter into a saving relationship with him through Jesus? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer with them:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.