

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

Personal Life:

1. In the weekend message, Paul's shocking diagnosis of the Gentiles sets the self-righteous Jewish believers up for a shocking reality: *In God's sight, they were equally condemned under sin apart from God's grace.*

Have you ever experienced a time when you felt someone was falsely or inaccurately judging you out of self-righteousness? How does it feel to be on the receiving end of that?

Ponderings:

2. There is no question that Paul treats the issue of homosexuality as sin in God's eyes. Yet, the issue is set side by side with a long list of other sins such as envy, deceit, gossip, slander, arrogance, disobedience to parents, sexual immorality, etc.

Why, in your opinion, do some folks seem to place this kind of sexual sin above others on their humanly-devised hierarchy of sins?

3. Paul's major point in chapters 1-3 is to demonstrate that *all* human beings are born into the world *equally condemned* under sin and in desperate need of a Savior.

If we know this theologically, why is it so easy for us to harbor condemning attitudes toward others? Where do such attitudes come from?

4. If you are a believer in Christ, you have experienced first-hand the amazing grace of God in rescuing you from the penalty and power of sin. In what way(s) is your life an ongoing testimony to others of the freedom Christ has given you? Try to be as specific as possible...
5. In Romans 1:18-20, Paul indicates that creation itself is enough to hold humanity accountable to God. What does it mean that God's "invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made?"
6. When Paul gets done railing on the so-called "Gentile sins" and then surprises the self-righteous Jews with Romans 2:1, what might have been the defensive reactions that a self-righteous person respond with?

Promptings:

7. The problem of self-righteousness seems often as common among today's Christians as it was in the early church among the Jewish converts. How do you think God is asking you personally to respond to this week's text from Romans? Are you willing to obey that prompting?