

# STUDY NOTES

## A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “Judgment and Mercy of God” on 2/19/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

## PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

## SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 2:1-11

## CLARITY FOR UNITY

This group of people in Rome, who received this letter from the apostle Paul, is trying to live out the Gospel of Jesus. The Jewish believers were returning from exile from the city and wanted the non-Jewish believers (Gentiles) to live according to Jewish customs. However, the good news meant that everyone (Jew and Gentile alike) could believe in Jesus because he fulfilled the Jewish law perfectly. This meant that these two different parties had to learn to unite together around the Good News of Jesus.

- *Talk about a time when you felt like an outsider. What was your experience with how people treated you?*
- *We all know the right answer to this question, but that doesn't mean we always live with the right answer. What sort of people or person would you deep down view as beyond God's mercy?*

## SUCH PEOPLE

Romans 2 starts out with a rather emphatic statement. Paul writes, “You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse!” The Jewish believers were judging the Gentiles—condemning them as beyond God's mercy. So what did the Gentiles actions look like? Read Romans 1:28-32.

- *When you hear the description of “such people” read aloud, how do you feel about your own life?*

Whether you find yourself as the hypocrite or the sinful outsider, the reality is that we must evaluate our own sin. Paul is communicating that **when we judge, we are essentially covering ourselves with Grace repellent.**

- *When we judge others without looking at our own sin, what are we actually communicating?*

## DISCERNMENT VS CONDEMNATION

- *Read Matthew 7:1-5. At the end of this passage, what does the friend with the log in his eye do for the friend with the speck in his eye?*

“Not judging” someone is different than not discerning “wrong” from “good”. What “not judging” does mean is that we must not pronounce “you are condemned by God.” Without this nuanced difference between discernment and condemnation, we run the risk of (1) becoming silent on moral judgment or (2) missing the powerful warning about assuming we are God.

- *How has your view of judgment led you to become silent on morality?*
- *How has your view of judgment led you to act as if you are God?*

## JUDGMENT IS A STRANGE WORK

It seems that we all actually welcome God's judgement of sin (just typically not our own sin). We want to see sin cast out of the world because we see the effects of it around us. That means, in our own life, we must let God in to cast out our sin, heal us, forgive us, and make us whole. This requires rigorous self-examination because we are not beyond God allowing our sin to judge us.

- *How have you seen your sin stack on itself with the effects of it feeling as if it was judgment?*

## MERCY LEADING TO REPENTANCE

Jesus took God's judgment against us by being punished for our sin. Through that punishment he gained victory over death—resurrection. By believing in Jesus, we share in the resurrection. God's judgment on Jesus leads to new life for us rather than death.

- *How does God's judgment on himself—mercy for us—led you to repentance?*
- *How does this repentance lead to unity with your brothers and sisters?*
- *Pray with each other for repentance in our own lives and unity with one another.*