

STUDY NOTES

A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “The Equality and Totality of Sin” on 3/12/17 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 3:1-31 (*read throughout study*)

ADVANTAGE VS OPPORTUNITY (VSS 1-2)

The Jewish nation was guardian of all that God had revealed through prophets. Out of all the nations on earth, God had chosen the Jews to be the custodians of his redemptive plan for the human race. Many Jews looked down on others because they had the revelation, and the others didn't. But that revelation came to bless them so they could bless others. This is what their attitude should have been: “Let me show you who God is and how great He is.” Not: “let me judge you for what you don't know.”

- *How have you seen Christians use their advantage of knowing Christ to look down on people who do not know Christ?*
- *How can you give yourself away in the positions that God has placed you in?*
- *What keeps you from giving yourself away?*

ALL UNDER SIN (VSS 3-8)

They Jewish people had an advantage, but they were not better off. They were under sin just as much as the Gentiles (everyone else). We are all under sin, so that leads us

to think: “I need to do things so God will be pleased with me and it will go better for me.”

- *How is it natural for you to try to do good works in order to see your life go better for you?*
- *Where do you currently see yourself deep down as better than other people (maybe where you live, what you have, your status at work, or even how much you don't have, or where you don't live)?*

REALLY, NO ONE IS GOOD? (VSS 9-18)

Most of us see people doing good things even though they don't know God. So how could what Paul is saying be true? Sin is less about your behavior and more about why you do what you do. Your good works get more in the way of your salvation than your openly bad ones, because by doing good you have expectations that you'll be rewarded in kind.

- *Why is it hard to believe that ALL people are sinful?*
- *How have you caught yourself selfishly thinking about the good you do?*

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD (VSS 19-28)

You can't save yourself. Rule following isn't a tool to get you God's love! Shut up! Just stop! Stop justifying yourself. Stop defending yourself. We have to believe that we all fall short and the only way that we are justified is by Christ.

**You want to do good but from the position of being loved, not to be loved.
If God calls you beloved, then shut up and be loved.**

- *How is it easier to admit that we fall short rather than continually trying to defend ourselves?*
- *How do you feel knowing that God calls you “beloved”? Do you believe that?*
- *How can we encourage each other to know that calls you “beloved”?*
- *Pray for each other to see how God calls each of us beloved.*