

# WEEK 7 | ROMANS 3:21-31

## ROMANS | THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S POWER

### OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES.

The following passages may be helpful to you as you consider this text.

- Ephesians 2:1-10 – Another wonderful, Gospel-saturated passage.
- Isaiah 52:13-53:12 – An Old Testament prophecy of Jesus' sacrifice and its significance.

### THEMES.

The overarching theme of Romans is the gospel—salvation through Jesus Christ. That is important to remember and keep in front of your group, because the letter is a theological masterpiece. But as with any work of art, each brush stroke's true beauty is best seen when the piece as a whole is realized. To that end, we will deal with many sub-themes, but remember that each one weaves together to give the “fullest, plainest and grandest statement of the gospel in the New Testament.”<sup>1</sup>

1. All men and women are born with a sin nature, actively oppose God, and need salvation. (Rom. 3:21-23; Ps. 51:5; John 3:1-15; Rom. 5:12-14; Eph. 2:1-3)
2. Righteousness is not attained by human action or works of the law; justification is God's free gift of grace received by faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:24-26; Gen. 15:1-6; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 5:17-19; Eph. 2:4-9; Phil 3:8-11; Titus 3:4-7)

### QUESTIONS.

Feel free use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week's Scriptures.

1. Did the Holy Spirit use last week's passage or sermon to convict, challenge, or encourage you in any way? Did he use it to confirm or answer a prayer in any way? If you're willing, share with the group.
2. When was the last time you felt the need to talk your way out of a mistake you made? What were you attempting to salvage by doing so?

We try to justify ourselves and salvage our reputation and standing in others' eyes all the time. Did you forget to make Valentine's Day reservations? Time to fess up...

3. Romans 3:21-26 is filled with important and impactful theological terms. Take a moment to consider: *sin* (v. 23), *the glory of God* (v. 23), *justification* (v. 24), *grace* (v. 24), *redemption* (v. 24), and *propitiation* (v. 25). Which one of these words or concepts strike a chord in your heart? How does it cause your love for God and appreciation for his salvation to grow?

*Note:* Here are some definitions for the terms from various sources:

- **Sin** | Sin is displeasing God by ignoring his design and opposing his word. Sin is taking pride anything other than that which pleases God—even things we deem insignificant.
- **The Glory of God** | Simply put, “the glory of God is God Himself, because God is inherently worthy of praise.”<sup>2</sup> Another author expands the definition, writing, “God's glory is the magnificence, worth, loveliness, and grandeur of his many perfections.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's good news for the world*. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>2</sup> J. Ligon Duncan. “Romans: Justification by Grace Through Faith (2).” *First Presbyterian Church | Jackson, MS*, September 24, 2000, Retrieved from <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/justification-by-grace-through-faith-2/>.

- **Justification** | “A *legal* reality of the utmost significance, ‘to be justified’ means to be acquitted by God from all ‘charges’ that could be brought against a person because of his or her sins.”<sup>4</sup>
  - **Grace** | (G-R-A-C-E) God’s riches at Christ’s expense. “Grace is God’s free favor bestowed on those who deserve His condemnation at the cost of His Son.”<sup>5</sup>
  - **Redemption** | Our blood-bought freedom from sin’s consequences and power by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
  - **Propitiation** | It is “the placating of God’s wrath against sin.”<sup>6</sup> For those who trust in Christ, the full wrath of God toward their sin was poured out on Jesus, not them.
4. Paul clearly states that justification is by faith alone (vv. 22, 25, and 26) in Jesus Christ. How might that transform your motivation for *living* and *doing*? Would you say you are *moralist* (striving for acceptance in God’s eyes by doing) or are you able to rest in God’s acceptance of you and respond in obedience?
  5. Many Christians live with toxic guilt and shame over past (and confessed) sin, as if they’ve gotten away with it. Romans 3:21-26 reveals that no one gets away with sin. For those who trust in Christ, our sin has been *imputed* onto Christ and punished on the cross. Additionally, his righteousness has been *imputed* to us, so that we are accepted by God on the basis of Christ’s obedience. How does it make you feel to know that your darkest sins were punished on the cross? How does it make you feel to carry Christ’s righteousness?

*Note:* Imputation means to attribute something to someone or credit it to his or her account.

## PRAY TO CLOSE.

Consider breaking up and praying in gender-specific groups this week:

- How has God been kind to you? Praise him.
- Are you struggling with being a moralist? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you realize the implications of your adoption as a child of God.
- What do you need? Ask God to show you his lavish grace.

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Morgan, *The Glory of God*, The Gospel Coalition., Retrieved from <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-glory-of-god/>.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1996), 227.

<sup>5</sup> Duncan. “Romans: Justification by Grace Through Faith (2).”

<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 117.