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# What is a Life of Faith?



**Romans 4 – 5**

INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY GUIDE



## How to get best value out of these studies...

Welcome to a new series of New Testament studies in the book of **Romans**. These Study Guides are designed in a three part format...

- 1 Opening questions to get you thinking are listed as **Appetisers**.
- 2 Those which get you to investigate the text are contained in the **Main Course**.
- 3 The **Take Away Value** section prompts you to reflect on what you've looked at and consider how it will change you and those in your group.

**If you're using these Guides in a Small Group**, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

**If you're doing these studies individually**, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of dollars on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for good quality titles that will result in money well spent.

We trust you'll find the guides helpful, and we welcome any feedback you can give us as you use them.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Recommended Reading:**

F.F. Bruce, *Romans*, Tyndale Commentary, IVP. 1983.

St. Helen's Bishopgate, *Romans, Read Mark Learn Series*, Marshall Pickering. 2000. (this would be a particularly useful resource for small group leaders)

J.R.W. Stott *The Message Of Romans, The Bible Speaks Today*, IVP. 1994

J.R.W. Stott, *Encountering the Gospel's Power*, John Stott Bible Studies,

- 5 In verses 15-17 the differences between Adam and Christ are outlined. Summarise these.
- 6 In verses 18-19 the similarity between Adam and Christ is spelt out. What is it?
- 7 How does the law highlight what Christ has done?

### **Take Away Value...**

- 8 'The twin towers terrorist attack was so shocking because on the whole people are pretty good'  
Based on the passage how would you respond to this?
- 9 We are a 'free choice' society. Are we neutral moral agents? Do you think this passage argues that we have a predisposition to sin? Why? Why not? (make sure you are getting the answers from the passage)
- 10 How does this passage increase our confidence that we will be saved?
- 11 How is the worlds view about death and its origins radically different from a Christian perspective? How does this affect the way we view our lives?

## 3

**Experiencing Life***Romans 5:12 – 21*

This study raises the notion of what the theologians call 'original sin'. However, it is important not to let the study of the passage be high-jacked by this discussion. Aim to try and understand the passage on its own merits rather than by introducing extraneous ideas into it.

**Appetisers...**

- 1 Try to think of one action/decision your parents took (that you had no choice about) that radically affected your life in some way.
  
- 2 There is, and has been for some time, a debate about whether the key to our development as people is more influenced by nature or nurture ie our genes or our surrounding circumstances or influences. What do you think is the more significant of the two?

**Main Course...**

- 3 In verse 12 Paul commences a comparison between Adam and Christ that he doesn't return to until v18. What is the point of verse 12? Do you think this verse is saying Adam was the first of many sinners or that because of his sin all people became sinners? Give reasons.
  
- 4 Looking at verses 13-14 what are the consequences of Adam's sin?

## b

**Romans so far...**

One of the keys to grasping the message of Romans 4-7 is to have a good idea of the ground already covered in chapters 1-3. We have previously covered this in a morning series during 2001 and you might like to order the tapes to refresh your memory (or listen to it fresh if you have only recently joined the Trinity community) Alternatively there is a study guide for Romans 1-3 that might be useful and the office could copy this for you to work through at your leisure. Before commencing this series it would be a great idea to spend some time reading through Romans 1-3 so you have the argument so far in place.

Essentially the apostle Paul has been explaining God's rightful anger with sin against him. God's anger means that to some extent punishment is meted out now. eg God gives us over to our sin and the frustration that goes with it. In any event there will be a day of final judgement when all will receive justice for their behaviour. This will happen when Christ returns. At that point all who sin/rebel will be punished. The problem is that because all sin all will be punished.

People look for alternatives to rescue them from their inevitable punishment at the hands of God. Some hope that the Law will justify them (ie the rules and regulations so prominent in the Old Testament) But in fact the law doesn't justify, it only condemns.

However, God is rich in mercy. Therefore he delays punishment. Sin is overlooked until the Son, Jesus, pays for our sin and atones the anger of God. Therefore God redeems us out of bondage to sin and justifies us. As a result we are declared right with God. God retains his righteousness while declaring right the unrighteous!

This is a good point to spring into the argument of chapter 4 which pulls apart the notion of faith as the prerequisite for being justified.

## 1

**How Does Faith Work?****Romans 4:1 – 25**

This section focuses on the fact that the benefits of being in Christ are received 'by faith alone'. Abraham is justified by faith alone. It has always been this way in the economy of God.

In this sense then Abraham is the true father of all who believe.

**Appetisers...**

1. What are some of the ways people think that they can be right with God?
  
2. The events of Sept 11, 2001 were shocking. One of the things that puzzled so many was what could have caused young men to commit acts that inevitably meant they would die. It is the same with the suicide bombers in the middle East. Press reports indicated these men were convinced that if they gave their lives for the cause of Holy War then Allah would reward them. Is it the same when Christians are martyred? What's the difference?
  
3. When people talk about faith in our society what do they mean? (ie what is "Faith"?)

**Take Away Value...**

9. You get together with some non-Christian friends the day after you do this study in your home group and one of them asks you 'What is the best thing about being a Christian?' How would you respond? (think carefully about how you would express this for the non-Christian 'ear')
  
10. Why doesn't the world around us crave peace with God more? What do you think most non-Christians would think 'peace with God' is? How would most people think you could achieve peace with God?
  
11. The word for rejoice is the same one used in 3:27-31 where it is translated as boast. Why are we permitted to boast in Romans 5 but excluded from doing so in Romans 3?
  
12. Do we boast/rejoice enough in the peace we have with God? What could we do that would help us do this more both publicly and privately?
  
13. Pick up the argument of Romans 5 and explain how we can be confident that we will be saved on judgement day.

- 4 Justification also affects our thinking about the future. Why do justified Christians (excuse the tautology) 'rejoice in the hope of the glory of God'? What is this hope of glory?
- 5 No-one looks to suffer. Why should Christians rejoice in their suffering? (verses 3-4)
- 6 It seems odd to link hope and love in verses 5-8. Why does the love of God assure us that our hope won't be disappointed?
- 7 Explain in your own words the 'how much more' argument that Paul uses in verses 9-10.
- 8 What does it mean to rejoice IN God? (verse 11) ie you tend to rejoice because of something occurring or rejoice WITH someone - but you don't tend to rejoice IN someone.

### Main Course...

The word 'faith' is translated as faith and belief in the new testament. Romans 4 explores in detail the nature of 'saving' faith. Get some background to chapter 4 by reading Romans 1:16, 3:22-23, 3:26, 3:27,3:30, 3:31. What do you think faith is from these verses?

- 4 Romans 4:16-17 form a hub for the passage. What is the 'promise' being referred to? (It might be good to read Genesis 12;1-3 and see the way this is taken up in Gen 15,17 etc.) How are 'grace' and 'law' contrasted?
- 5 Read through Romans 4:1-8. How does Paul show that Abraham was not made righteous by 'works'?
- 6 How does the illustration in verses 4-5 strengthen this?
- 7 Read verses 8-15. How was Abraham not made righteous by circumcision? Why wasn't he made righteous by the law?
- 8 Read verses 18-25. How then was Abraham made righteous? What was the 'saving' character of his faith?

- 9 What then is the basis for being counted as one of Abraham's descendants?

### Take Away Value...

- 10 Abraham believed God that he would have a child when he was an old man. For us to have faith does it mean putting off children until we are almost a hundred? What is the object or goal of our faith today? How does it relate to the promise made to Abraham?
- 11 We talked earlier about the nature of faith. How is the faith spoken of in this passage different from the 'leap in the dark' faith that is the caricature of Christian faith in our society?
- 12 What is hard about believing we are made righteous by faith?
- 13 Paul torpedoed reliance on law, circumcision etc as a means of being made right. What things are we likely to rely on apart from faith in Christ?

## 2

## Experiencing Faith

### *Romans 5:1 - 11*

From Romans 1:18 - 4:25, Paul has been explaining the good news of justification by faith (ie how God declares condemned sinners to be righteous if they trust in Jesus death). From chapter 5 he now focuses on the implications of justification, (ie. what it means to be a justified person). The goal of chapter 5 (and the following 3 chapters) is assurance of salvation.

### Appetisers...

- 1 When you get together with friends or family what are the things you tend to get excited about? (some people are always talking about their kids achievements or sport or work or...)
  - a. When you are with Christian friends what is it about being Christian that you are most likely to give thanks for?
- 2 Say you have Christian friend who has been hit by tragedy. They are struggling to come to terms with it and how God could possibly have allowed it to happen. What sort of things could you say to be helpful?

### Main Course...

- 3 In 5:1 Paul says we have peace with God. What is the connection in this verse between Justification and peace?