

Romans 2:17-24

¹⁷ Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the Law, and boast in God; ¹⁸ if you know His will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the Law; ¹⁹ if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the Law the embodiment of Knowledge and Truth — ²¹ you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the Law, do you dishonour God by breaking the Law? ²⁴ As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Romans 2:17-24, Berean Study Bible-UK

1

Congratulations, you’re Jewish! Romans 2:17-24

Advantages of being God’s people. 2:17-20

The things I have. 17-18

The things I do. 19-20

Disadvantage of being God’s people. 2:21-24

The things I still do. 21-23

The things others do. 24

2

What is your problem? Romans 2:17-24

Your problem is pride. 2:17-20

Fail to see your dependence on God. 17 “boast in God”

Fail to see your dependence on others. 19-20 “guide for the blind...”

Your problem is preaching. 2:21-23

Fail to learn the best. 21 “teach... teach yourself”

Fail to do the best. 21-23 “do you...”

Your problem is personal. 2:24

Fail God. 24 “God’s name is blasphemed”

Fail others. 24 “among the Gentiles”

Fail yourself. 24 “because of you.”

3

Good. But not good enough. Romans 2:17-24

Successful show. 2:17-20

What believers believe they believe. 17-20 “rely... boast... know...”

What believers believe unbelievers believe. 19-20 “blind... darkness...”

Secret sins. 2:21-23

Sins that believers don't show. 21-22 “do you... do you...”

Sins that unbelievers don't see. 21-22 “teach... preach...”

Serious slander. 2:24

God is dishonoured to unbelievers. 24 “God's name is blasphemed”

God is dishonoured by believers. 24 “because of you”

4

What is your verdict? Romans 2:17-24

Claiming ‘Not guilty’. 2:17-20

Guilty of self-delusion

Guilty of pride

Evidence of ‘Guilty’. 2:21-23

Guilty of hypocrisy

Guilty of fraud

Witness proves ‘Guilty’. 2:24

Guilty of blasphemy

Guilty needing repentance

5

Good news and bad news for believers. Romans 2:17-24

Good news: I have obvious advantages. 2:17-20

I have knowledge of God.

I have the truth of God.

Bad news: I have unobvious disadvantages. 2:21-23

Failure of my knowledge.

Failure of my wisdom.

More bad news: I have obvious disadvantages. 2:24

Those around me still reject God.

They reject God, blaming me.

6

Everyone can see me. Romans 2:17-24

I am watching myself. 2:17-20

I like what I see in me. "call... rely... know..."

I don't see what I need to see. "if you..."

God is watching me. 2:21-23

God sees my sins of omission. 21 "not teach yourself"

God sees my sins of commission. 21-23 "do you steal"

The world is watching me. 2:24

The world fails to see God, at all. "blasphemed"

The world fails to see God, in me. "because of you"

7

Look in the mirror. What do you see? Romans 2:17-24

Benefits for believers. 2:17-20

I receive many benefits. 18 "know His will... instructed by the Law"

I can give many benefits. 19-20 "guide... light... instructor... teacher..."

Practice what you preach. 2:21-23

I first preach internal change. 21 "teach yourself"

I then preach external change. 21 "preach against"

Find us faithful. 2:24

My faith is seen by others. 24 "among the Gentiles"

I need to see my own faith. 24 "because of you."

8

Take a closer look. Romans 2:17-24

When believers see themselves in the mirror. 2:17-20

Believers see themselves supported by Scripture.

Believers see themselves with self-congratulations.

When believers are seen by unbelievers. 2:21-24

Believers are often seen as hypocritical.

Believers are often seen as holier-than-thou

When believers see themselves in Christ.

Believers are saved out of worldliness.

Believers are saved into Christlikeness.

9

Getting it right. Romans 2:17-24

Problems begin with pride. 2:17 “boast”

I immerse myself in humility

God immerses me in grace

Self-importance is self-delusion. 2:17-20 “if you...”

I need to know who I am. 17 “a (true) Jew”

I need to know why I am. 18-20

Hypocrites need help. 2:21-24

I need to boast less about what I do

I need to boast more about what God does in me

10

I've got something to boast about. Romans 2:17-24

Boasting may be beneficial. 2:17-20

I need to know who I am. 17 “a (true) Jew”

I need to know what I can do. 18-20 “guide... light... instructor... teacher...”

Boasting of my benefits. 2:18-20

I receive many benefits. 18 “know His will... instructed by the Law”

I can give many benefits. 19-20 “guide... light... instructor... teacher...”

Boasting should bring blessing. 2:21-24

The world needs to see God. “blasphemed”

The world needs to see God in me. “because of you”

Other possible titles

Could do better

No thanks. I'm good.

Is, to obey is better than sacrifice?

Faith, without foundations.

All show. No go.

Who are you – really?

Hello hypocrite!

Cross references

¹⁶ Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷ You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes it sacred? ¹⁸ And you say, ‘If anyone

swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' ¹⁹ You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes it sacred? ²⁰ So then, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹ And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the One who dwells in it. ²² And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the One who sits on it.

Matthew 23:16-22, Berean Study Bible

³⁹ Jesus also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

⁴¹ Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' while you yourself fail to see the beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁴³ No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ For each tree is known by its own fruit. Indeed, figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor grapes from brambles. ⁴⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good treasure of his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil treasure of his heart. For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Luke 6:39-45, Berean Study Bible

¹ Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

² Watch out for those dogs, those workers of evil, those mutilators of the flesh! ³ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh — ⁴ though I myself could have such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, persecuting the church; as to righteousness in the law, faultless.

⁷ But whatever was gain to me I count as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God on the basis of faith.

¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Him in His death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:1-11, Berean Study Bible

you know His will, 18a

¹⁸if you know His will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;

¹⁹if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those in darkness, ²⁰an

instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— 19-20

¹²Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to re-teach you the basic principles of God's Word. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³For everyone who lives on milk is still an infant, inexperienced in the message of righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained their senses to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:12-14

³⁹Then Jesus declared, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind may see and those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard this, and they asked Him, "Are we blind too?" ⁴¹"If you were blind," Jesus replied, "you would not be guilty of sin. But since you claim you can see, your guilt remains." John 9:39-41

you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? 21a

Pay close attention to your life and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for by so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you. 1 Timothy 4:16

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1

You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²²You who forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³You who boast in the Law, do you dishonour God by breaking the Law? 21b-23

³Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' ⁵But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is 'devoted to God,' ⁶they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus, you nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition. Matthew 15:3-6, NIV

²⁷Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of impurity. ²⁸In the same way, on the outside you appear to be righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Matthew 23:27-28

¹⁰Whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. James 2:10-11

You who boast, 23a

The origin of the word “boast” relates to the neck. Hence, boasting is: holding your head up high, being unashamed, willing to stand up. The opposite is: hanging your head in shame.

As it is written: God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. 24

Whom have you taunted and **blasphemed**? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? **Against the Holy One** of Israel! 2 Kings 19:22

And now what have I here?

declares the LORD.

For My people have been taken without cause;

those who rule them taunt,

declares the LORD,

and **My name is blasphemed** continually

all day long. Isaiah 52:5

¹⁹I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered throughout the lands. I judged them according to their ways and deeds. ²⁰And wherever they went among the nations, **they profaned My holy name**, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, yet they had to leave His land.’ ²¹But I had concern for **My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned** among the nations to which they had gone.

²²Therefore tell the house of Israel that this is what the Lord GOD says: It is not for your sake that I will act, O house of Israel, but for **My holy name, which you profaned** among the nations to which you went. ²³I will show the holiness of **My great name, which has been profaned among the nations**—the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when I show My holiness in you before their eyes. Ezekiel 36:19-23

¹¹For My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place, incense and pure offerings will be presented in My name, because **My name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD of Hosts.** ¹²**“But you profane it** when you say, ‘The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is contemptible.’ Malachi 1:11-12

Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do what I say? Luke 6:46

Music and songs

Songs boasting of God, 17b

All creatures of our God and King

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Crown him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne,

God of wonders beyond our galaxy

Holy, Holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

How great is our God
 How great Thou art
 How deep the Father's love
 I could sing of Your love forever
 I love You Lord, and I lift my voice
 I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,
 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee
 Majesty, worship His Majesty
 My Jesus I love Thee
 O for a thousand tongues to sing
 O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder... How great Thou art,
 O Lord, You're beautiful
 O soul are you weary... Turn your eyes upon Jesus
 O worship the King, all glorious above
 Oh what a high and holy privilege (Getty)
 Open my eyes... Here I am to worship (Tomlin)
 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
 There is none like You. No one else can touch my heart like You do,
 This is my desire, to honour You... Lord I give You my heart,
 To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
 We stand and lift up our hands... Holy is the Lord (Tomlin)
 When I survey the wondrous cross
 Worthy is the Lamb
 You are holy (M W Smith)

Songs boasting of God's Word, 17b

Ancient words, Ot 94
 Continue, continue, continue in His Word... know the Truth
 Every promise of Your Word (Getty-Townend)
 Firm foundation... I put my hope in Your holy Word, MP 999
 Red letters (D C Talk)
 So many books (Michael Card), Ot 81
 The Book (Michael Card)
 x Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, Ot 63

Songs about serving others, 19-20

God exalted Him | ¹A lowly servant, rejected by His own (Item)
 Highest Place | ¹But took on, the nature of a servant, Ot 20
 Make me Your servant (Willard)
 O church arise... ⁴Of a servant good and faithful, Ot 68
 Replace it with Your love... Lord, I'm just a servant,
 Servant King, 674
 Sing your praise to the Lord... ^{ch}Praise Him oh ye servants (Item)
 As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, Ot 84
 Brother, sister, let me serve you. SiS 256
 He lives... I serve a risen Saviour, H 725
 We are His people
 Workers prayer... Before You I kneel

Songs about guilt, repentance, and forgiveness, 21-24
Forgive me my friend, I failed you.

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion.

1. Why is pride or boasting a good thing; but when does it become bad?
 2. List some things of which we can be boastful, 17-18.
 3. What is God's will for your life, 18a; and how do you know His will?
 4. How narrow, or how broad, is God's will for your life? 2 Peter 3:9b, 1 Thessalonians 4:3,8, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, and 1 Peter 2:15.
 5. What four images are used to describe you, 19-20; and why are they accurate?
 6. Suggest ways we can correct the perception of v24.
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