

DISCUSSION GUIDE: ROMANS 2:17-29

March 12, 2017

INTRO:

Romans 2:17-29 continues to build God's case against sinful humanity. Paul has indicted the Gentiles, the moralist, and now he addresses the Jews. Remember that this text is part of a larger section in which Paul is setting forth the justice of God's wrath against all humanity. Eventually, this will set the stage for the good news of the gospel explained in Romans 3:21-26.

1. In Romans 2:17-24, Paul describes the hypocritical Jew who considered himself better than others while he broke the very same law he taught. Hypocrisy is a charge often leveled at Christians as well.

—Read vv 17-23 as a group. Discuss how the Jews were being hypocritical according to Paul. Discuss how this might apply to Christians.

—Read v 24 again. What was the ultimate tragedy of the Jews' hypocrisy? What does this tell us about the purpose of the Christian life and why God saves us?

2. Take some time to read the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14

—How might we be prone to have the same attitude of this Pharisee in our context?

—Tax collectors were despised by the Jews as sellouts and traitors. They were unlikely candidates for God's blessing in the eyes of Jews, to say the least. Discuss the gospel implications that this despised tax collector was justified while the religious pharisee was not.

3. In the Old Testament, circumcision was an exterior sign that marked of the Jewish people from other nations. It was a physical sign meant to point towards a spiritual reality. In vv 25-29, Paul is indicting the Jews for relying on the sign rather than heart transformation it was meant to portray.

—How are we also tempted to trust in external things over spiritual realities? Discuss what some of these things might be for us as present day Christians.

—Discuss ways a healthy church culture can foster the pursuit of heart transformation rather than mere exterior religious forms?