

How can you be right with God?

The thirteen lessons in this quarter's study, *Beyond the Road: A Study in the Book of Romans*, will help you understand how God's righteousness is revealed to mankind, how God's righteousness is imputed to believers, and how believers should apply God's righteousness to their everyday lives.



The Real Faith in Life Devotional Bible Study is designed to help you dig into God's Word. Each lesson offers devotions for Monday through Saturday, along with an

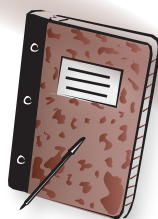
In-Class worksheet to be completed during your group study.

In order for you to gain the most out of your devotional time, use the following tools along with your student book.



Bible study tools: In order for you to dig into God's Word, consider using a Bible dictionary and a concordance.

If you are not familiar with these helpful guides, ask your pastor or youth leader for a recommendation.



Journal: Purchase a journal or notebook to record your personal thoughts and prayers. Bring your journal and student book to class each week so that you can take notes during the

lesson or write any special insights you gain from a particular activity. You may also use the journal for sermon notes or for prayer requests.

Or visit an online Bible tools Web site, such as www.blueletterbible.org.

This site offers commentaries, maps, and many other tools to help you in your Bible study. (This recommendation does not constitute a blanket endorsement by RBP.)

Righteousness Revealed

At the time Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, Rome was the center of the mighty Roman empire. In this great world capital, immorality flourished alongside prolific cultural and military achievements.

Yet in this city lived a number of true Christians, who were the recipients of Paul's letter. As you read his letter during the coming weeks, you'll find that what Paul told the Christians at Rome applies to you too.

Memory Verse



"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Monday

Read Romans 1:1–7 and answer the following questions.

1. Who wrote the book of Romans?
2. In what three ways did Paul describe himself?
3. What does "separated unto the gospel" mean?



Paul's greatest burden was to share the gospel. Throughout this great book, Paul clearly explains why all people—Jews and Gentiles—need to understand and personally receive this message.

4. What details did Paul give about Christ?
5. What do we know from these verses about the recipients of Paul's letter?



Memory Verse Activity: Tape your memory verse card to your bedroom window. Each time you read through your verse, remember that God's creation clearly reveals both His power and majesty. Then take a moment to thank God for revealing Himself in His creation!

Tuesday

Read Romans 1:8–17.

1. Why did Paul thank God for the Roman believers?
2. What was Paul's prayer request?
3. Why did he desire to visit the Romans?



This letter was a great encouragement to the believers in Rome. In that day Rome was a city of great wickedness, and many believers were facing persecution for their belief in Christ. What an encouragement for these believers to learn more about their salvation in Jesus Christ!

4. How did Paul feel about the gospel?



What is your attitude toward the gospel message? Are you ashamed or afraid to share this message with your unsaved friends and family?

5. What truths did Paul present about the gospel?

As Paul transitioned from his introductory remarks to the body of his letter, he introduced the theme of all that would follow: the righteousness of God.

Wednesday

Beginning in verse 17, Paul turned to his purpose for writing to the Christians at Rome: to give a defense of the gospel of God's righteousness through Jesus Christ. Picture Paul as a lawyer presenting the evidence that condemns mankind as guilty before God.

Read Romans 1:16–20 and answer the following questions.

1. What reveals God's righteousness?
2. Why is there a need to preach the gospel (v. 18)?
3. How has God shown Himself to mankind?
4. What specifically about God has been revealed?



Every person who looks at the world around him or her sees the great order and design of all that exists. That person is faced with the knowledge that Someone with great power and glory has made all things.

Because God has revealed all of this in nature, all people have the opportunity to recognize that there is a God Who made all things. Therefore, all people are accountable to this Creator God.

5. What two words describe mankind's condition before God (v. 20)?



These verses clearly state mankind's standing before the Creator God.

How do you stand before this holy God? Have you humbly recognized your need for salvation, or are you disregarding the truth of the power and deity of a God Who is over you and over all things? If you are unsure of your standing before God, talk to your pastor or Sunday School teacher today.

Yesterday you learned that God has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind. Today you will study how mankind has chosen to respond to God's revelation.

Read Romans 1:21–23 and answer the following questions.

1. Complete the sentences below to reveal mankind's response to the revelation of God.

They became vain _____.

Their foolish hearts _____.

They professed to be _____, but instead were _____.

2. According to verse 23, how did mankind change the glory of the "uncorruptible God"?



Throughout history mankind has chosen to ignore the truths about God that are revealed in nature and in the Bible. People have instead chosen to worship idols and other false gods.

3. Think about mankind today. What things (or ideas) do people worship in place of God?

4. Examine your own life. Is there anything in your heart that you are placing above God?

Whether you like it or not, whatever takes first place in your heart before God is your idol. Commit today to giving God first place in your heart and your life.

Friday

Read Romans 1:24–32 and answer the following questions about God’s response to mankind’s refusal.

1. What sin is referred to in verses 24–27?
2. According to this passage, what does God think of the sin of homosexuality?



In today's society, people are encouraged to accept homosexuality as simply another preference that certain people have. However, believers must remember that God views homosexuality today the same way He did in Paul's time.

3. What did God give these unbelievers over to (v. 28)?
4. Record below the twenty-three descriptions from verses 29–31 of those who have a reprobate mind.
5. What common characteristics do you recognize in unbelievers today?

Saturday

In yesterday's devotions you learned about individuals who choose to ignore the truth about God. Today you will learn about their final punishment.

1. Read Romans 1:32. According to this verse, what are those who commit these sins worthy of?

2. According to this verse, why do unsaved people continue to live in their sins?



There is pleasure in sin, but only for a season. Each person will one day be accountable for his or her sin.

3. How does today's culture influence people not only to sin but also to take pleasure in those who commit sin?

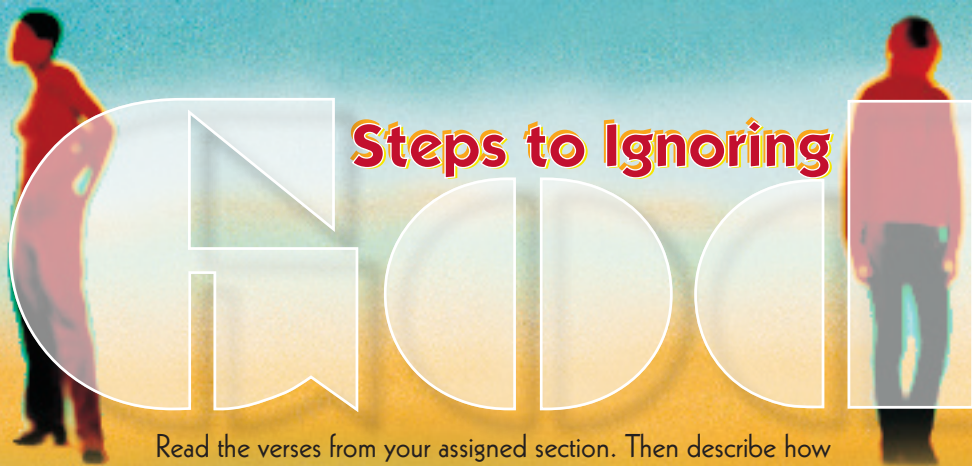
If you were to stand before the righteous and holy God today, what would you say to Him? Would you recognize Him as your Heavenly Father, knowing that you have accepted His free gift of salvation? Or would you stand in fear, recognizing that, like the people described in Romans 1, you are guilty?



I know I am right with God when I recognize my standing before a righteous God.



Journal Notes



Steps to Ignoring

Read the verses from your assigned section. Then describe how unbelievers ignore the truth, ignore Who God is, or pervert God's glory.

Ignore the Truth

(Psalm 19:1–6; Romans 1:18–20)

Ignore Who God Is

(Romans 1:19–21)

Pervert God's Glory

(Exodus 20:4, 5; Romans 1:22, 23)



Frequent visits to Blockbuster, late nights in front of the television, and quoting from classic movies are all habits that set me apart as a movie-aholic. But I came to realize that movies and the media in general had taken precedence over my relationship with Christ, as I allowed Hollywood's philosophies about God and love to get in the way of my commitment to Christ.

A Lesson from Romans

The Romans in Paul's day were a corrupt people full of godlessness and wickedness, as Paul writes in the first chapter of his letter to the Roman believers. Because of the unbelievers' wickedness in that day, God gave them over to sinful desires, shameful lusts, and depraved minds. Romans 1:29–31 provides a detailed list of the sins that

characterized these depraved people. Among these vices are greed, envy, murder, malice, gossip, slander, arrogance, and disobedience. It is clear that as believers, we must be diligent to keep these sins from our own lives, but there is another important implication in the following verse. Verse 32 says, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but *have pleasure in them that do them*" (emphasis mine). The sin of the Romans was not only *doing* these things, but also *approving* of others who partook in them. How often do we invite these very same sins, like homosexuality, adultery, malice, and disobedience, into our homes in the form of entertainment? By doing so, aren't we also approving of them?





Media and Morals

The media permeates every home and influences every life in one way or another. Television, newspapers, magazines, music, books, and the Internet are the most common ways that the world's value system seeps barely noticed into our minds and hearts.

We act as though watching, hearing, or allowing others to commit an offense is not a problem as long as we are not personally committing the offense. The truth is, we are living in an age of tolerance, where even the Christian community refuses to see sin as sin. Instead, we have rationalized, justified, and compromised until Christians have become so desensitized to evil that rather than shunning "even a hint of immorality," we have accepted it as a means of enjoyment.

We watch movies with immoral overtones, crude humor, and perverse language, because we think the movies are funny. We rationalize singing along with today's popular songs, which often encourage promiscuity and use raunchy language, because the beats are catchy. We fail to recognize that

our enjoyment of something does not make it right. But, more importantly, there are Biblical reasons for avoiding the world's corrupt form of entertainment. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Christians are quick to jump on the first half and get busy serving in soup kitchens and giving to charities. We get so caught up in what we are doing that we completely miss the second half of the verse, which is not a command *to do*, but rather *to keep from doing*. Just as we are to be proactively showing God's love to the world, we are to be proactively protecting ourselves from being corrupted by the world.

If it is clear that God is not pleased when we approve of others' sin, and if James clearly teaches that we are not to be polluted by the world, why is it that Christians continually rationalize their entertainment choices? Why are we compromising our moral standards for a laugh, a catchy beat, or a tear-jerking romance? There are three possible reasons.





We teenagers seem to struggle the most with allowing the media to subtly influence our minds.



Media Myths

#1: *We don't think about it.* Many of us have grown so familiar with the perverse and sinful nature of today's media that we don't even consider what God might think as we sit down to watch an episode of a prime-time television show, which likely promotes sin as a satisfying way of life.

#2: *We think it doesn't affect us.* I once heard a Christian teenager say, when confronted about listening to music with obscene language, "I just like the music. I don't even listen to the words." Regardless of whether we are focusing on the lyrics, they do affect us. In fact, all forms of media affect us in one way or another. Advertisers understand this concept. Why else would they spend so much money to flash a little ad at the top of our computer screens or to buy a ten-second radio commercial? Because they know that what we see and what we hear affects us.

#3: *We think it will help us reach the lost for Christ.* While we do not want to be a completely ignorant, unlearned generation, there is a point at which stepping into our culture hurts our testimony more than helps it. Christians should know what controversial movies are about, what the themes are, and why the movies are wrong, so that they will be able to share their reasons for not watching the movies if they are asked. But actually watching the films is unnecessary. The best way to stand out for Christ is to live differently than the world, not as similarly as possible.

A Small Price to Pay

As much as I hate to admit it, we teenagers seem to struggle the most with allowing the media to subtly influence our minds. We want desperately to fit in, to enjoy what's popular, and to have fun. I hate it when I have to turn off a movie because of crude humor or change the channel because of a sex scene, but I determined when I gave my life to Christ that He would take first priority in my life. For that reason, I gave up all movies, music, books, video games, and television shows that contain worldly, sinful philosophies. I view it as a small price to pay to show my Savior, the One Who bled and died for me, that I love Him. I challenge you to make the same commitment and see how God blesses you.

