**Building A Strong Faith: A Study of the Book of Romans**

**On what wall is the ladder of my faith leaning on?**

**Romans 2:17-29 March 10, 2024**

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As we begin 2024, I can’t think of a more important asset than a “strong faith” relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Our world is filled with both great opportunities and great challenges. The apostle Paul writes, “The righteous shall live by faith.” The book of Romans will map out a path for us how we can be rightly connected to God, ourselves, and others. “Romans is a feast for one’s soul.” There is an amazing work that God desires to do in us through His Son Jesus and empowered by His Holy Spirit. My prayer is that we will grow in our understanding of the gospel of God. The result will be a strong faith that is able to draw strength from God no matter what comes our way. Today, we use the image of a ladder to remind us that we are all placing our ultimate trust in someone or something to make us right with God. Every person is on a ladder. The scriptures tell us that we should examine our lives and hearts to make sure our ladder is leaning on Jesus Christ and him alone.

**The Passage: Romans 2:17-29**

**Why Study Romans?** Romans 10:3For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

**Big Idea**: May the ladder of my faith be completely leaning on Jesus Christ and His finished work sacrifice to make me right with God.

Hypocrisy is one of the most subtle and terrible sins that can ever afflict us, and we cannot be warned of it too frequently. D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

1. It’s so \_\_\_\_\_ to lean your ladder of faith against the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_.

Romans 2:17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boat in God.

Externalities which were the symbols of possession counted for nothing, because the inward condition demonstrated the absence of the essential fact. G. Campbell Morgan

1. Beware of the wall of your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Philippians 3:5b of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews.

**My ethnic or religious history will not shield me from God’s wrath. What wall is the ladder of my faith leaning on?**

**Spiritual Growth Questions for March 10**

**Opener**: If you had to choose a character of the Bible who you related to most, who would you choose? What about their story resonates?

1. **Read Romans 2:17-24.** Paul applies God’s standard to the Jews, who were often inclined to judge their neighbor and feel self-righteous.
	1. Why did some Jews think God considered them superior to Gentiles?
	2. How did the Jews prove that they were not superior to the Gentiles?
	3. Are Christians today ever like the Jews Paul described in this passage? If so, what is Paul’s message to us?
2. Is **Romans 2:19-20** limited to those who are teachers? Explain why or why not? **Romans 2:20-21** refers to stealing and adultery. How might we be guilty of stealing and adultery (See **Matt. 5:27-28**)?
3. **Read Romans 2:25-29.** According to this passage, what is circumcision of the heart, and how is it demonstrated? **Read Deut. 10:16, 30:6; Jer. 4:4; Romans 4:4, 9-11A; and Co. 2:11.** What do these passages say about circumcision?
4. Taking this passage as a whole, how do you think the Jewish audience received Paul’s message? Do you imagine they were quick to understand? Quick to repent? What do you think the Gentile listeners thought? How does it sit with you?
5. What passages or stories come to mind when you think of Jesus calling out the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of his time? What examples come to mind of our modern-day church? If someone used hypocrisy as an excuse to not belong to a church community, what might you want to share with them?
6. **Read Romans 2:29.** In what ways do we seek praise from men, and in what ways from God? How would seeking praise only from God affect your actions at home or work? Think of at least one specific way, and then act on it.

**For discussion:** How would you define hypocrisy? What damage do hypocrites cause? What should God do with hypocrites? What should a hypocrite do to get right with God?

**Great prayer to keep my ladder leaning on the right wall**: Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

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2 Timothy 3:5having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.

Possible examples:

Philippians 3:3For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of Godand glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— (GGQ 4)

**Whatever ritual that I am trusting in will be the very thing that God uses to show me that my ladder is leaning on the wrong wall. What wall is my ladder of my faith leaning on?**

II. Lean the ladder of your faith on \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. Jesus will transform you from the inside out.**

Romans 3:28For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (GGQ 5)

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (GGQ 6)

Galatians 5:6For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

Titus 3:5he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

I Peter 2:1So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 3if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Christian who tries to find satisfaction in the husks of the world, has no appetite left for the things of God. His heart is filled with the former and has no room for the latter. A healthy infant is a hungry infant. A spiritually healthy Christian is a hungry Christian. This solves the problem of why so many children of God have so little love for the Word. Kenneth Wuest

I Corinthians 11:28Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. Psalm 139:23-24 Search me o God, lead me in your way.

**Prayer: Lord Jesus, show me when I am trusting in anything other than you for my salvation. May I love you with all my heart, soul and might. May I reflect outwardly the change that has been made inwardly.**

Mark 3:7He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

1. Avoid the wall of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Romans 3:17 Rely on the law and boast in God 18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law.

Rely-

Boast- (absence of humility, never conscious of any deficiency)-

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. (See Growth Group Question GGQ 1)

Romans 3:19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—

Romans 2:21you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.

Breaking the law-

Romans 3:24For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” (Isaiah 52:5) (Apply the truth to me first)

Galatians 2:21I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. (GGQ 2)

**Just possessing the law will not shield from the wrath of God. What wall is the ladder of my faith leaning on?**

C. Recognize the wall of religious \_\_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Romans 3:25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. (GGQ 3)

Romans 3:26So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law (Genesis 17:11)