
Calvary Church: Coordinated Curriculum 2007-2008

Romans: The Transforming Power of the Righteousness of God

Interlude

This interlude lesson is intended to:

- allow us to review—see the big picture after we have been focusing on the parts
 - see the review chart at the end of these notes
- allow us to re-examine any issues, topics or doctrines we did not cover with sufficient depth
 - you may want to refer to the Romans 3:9-10 notes section on total depravity
- allow us to slow down and insure that we are applying the main point of the section
 - by way of application, these notes include two discussions in one, how do we impact our world (missions and evangelism) by engaging our culture (intentional lifestyle, what many are now calling a missional lifestyle).

Main idea

Understanding the depth of depravity, the sinfulness of mankind, we should not respond by seeking isolation, but rather insulation and influence.

We must understand, from Paul, that the world (all mankind) is lost and in need of a Savior. This is true of our family members, neighbors and co-workers who have not personally responded to Jesus Christ as Savior. And it is true of those in our community and country who espouse other religions or no religion. And it is true of those around the globe.

Teaching ideas

Use this lesson to review any element that you don't feel you were able to cover well enough
Seek to find ways of helping the class remember the main points

It is highly recommended that this lesson be interactive (group activities) and very application driven

Questions

- How **do** we as believers impact our work which is corrupted by sin?
- How **should** we engage our culture?
- How should we change society, can we? Should we try?

- Should we be **afraid** of our culture?
- Should we **immerse** ourselves in our culture?
- What will impact those around us **most**?
- Where should I start?

Review

We have seen in Romans 1:18–3:20 that Paul makes it clear that all humanity (Gentile and Jew) are without excuse before God because they have:

- Suppressed the truth of God's self revelation and replaced it with idolatry, immorality and all kinds of sin
- Even those who have a privileged position by having God's Word and promises, rather than dealing uprightly have become judgmental and self-righteous
- All are without excuse and under sin
- All turn from God
- None seeks God

How to engage, interact and affect this generation

Introduction

How do we engage people and a society marked by sin?

General Questions

Can we just ignore it—hope it will go away?

Should we fight it—see if we can turn the tide?

Should we accept it—give into relativism and hope for the best?

How do we establish common ground in a secular relativistic culture?

Tolerance

How are we to react to a culture whose battle cry is tolerance? Are we to join in?

Does the Bible have anything to say about whether we are to tolerate each other and in what ways?

Relativism

What does the Bible have to say about truth and relativity?

Are there truths that are relative as the postmodern claims? Or is all truth absolute and objective?

Is it possible in a postmodern, relativistic culture to depend on the objective authoritative truths of Scripture?

Transition

Read the following poem and ask the class to react:

Initial response?

How do we respond appropriately?

What has Romans 1-3 taught us?



Talk about it

Turner's Creed

An excerpt from Ravi Zacharias' book "Can Man Live Without God?" Steve Turner says "No!"...But we try all the time....¹

Creed

by Steve Turner

We believe in Marxfreudanddarwin
We believe everything is OK
as long as you don't hurt anyone
to the best of your definition of hurt,
and to the best of your knowledge.

We believe in sex before, during, and
after marriage.

We believe in the therapy of sin.

We believe that adultery is fun.

We believe that sodomy's OK.

We believe that taboos are taboo.

We believe that everything's getting better
despite evidence to the contrary.
The evidence must be investigated
And you can prove anything with evidence.

¹ Steve Turner, (English journalist), "Creed," his satirical poem on the modern mind. Taken from Ravi Zacharias' book *Can Man live Without God?* Pages 42-44

We believe there's something in horoscopes
UFO's and bent spoons.
Jesus was a good man just like Buddha,
Mohammed, and ourselves.
He was a good moral teacher though we think
His good morals were bad.

We believe that all religions are basically the same-
at least the one that we read was.
They all believe in love and goodness.
They only differ on matters of creation,
sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation.

We believe that after death comes the Nothing
Because when you ask the dead what happens
they say nothing.
If death is not the end, if the dead have lied, then its
compulsory heaven for all
excepting perhaps
Hitler, Stalin, and Genghis Kahn

We believe in Masters and Johnson
What's selected is average.
What's average is normal.
What's normal is good.

We believe in total disarmament.
We believe there are direct links between warfare and
bloodshed.
Americans should beat their guns into tractors.
And the Russians would be sure to follow.

We believe that man is essentially good.
It's only his behavior that lets him down.
This is the fault of society.
Society is the fault of conditions.
Conditions are the fault of society.

We believe that each man must find the truth that
is right for him.
Reality will adapt accordingly.
The universe will readjust.
History will alter.
We believe that there is no absolute truth
excepting the truth
that there is no absolute truth.

We believe in the rejection of creeds,
And the flowering of individual thought.

If chance be
the Father of all flesh,
disaster is his rainbow in the sky
and when you hear

State of Emergency!
Sniper Kills Ten!
Troops on Rampage!
Whites go Looting!
Bomb Blasts School!
It is but the sound of man
worshipping his maker.

Engaging Culture part 1



Think about it



Talk about it

How should we relate to our culture?

This is a subject that comes up regularly in the church as well as in conversations with parents.

Since our culture does not espouse the same values we do, and in many instances is opposed to our values, how should we relate? What should we allow our children to be involved in?

When we think about this subject it is not just about moral values, but philosophical or thought processes as well. And it appears to me that there are at least 5 reactions or responses:

1. Ignore—it's just a fad, it will go away
2. Fight—it's evil, let's try to push back the philosophical time clock
3. Acquiesce—it's the way it is, let's make the best of it
4. Accept—it's the way it should be
5. Engage—it's here, let's interact, learn and make a difference

Put another way:

I think some people see culture as *intimidating* and so they seek *isolation*. They fear the affects of culture on themselves and their children, so they seek to create an isolated environment to protect their children. And while there may be some things we need to protect our children from (like sinful behavior), is isolation the best solution?

Others are not fearful, but definitely weary of the affects of culture so they seek to *instruct* their children so as to provide *insulation* from the affects of the world around them. This is how I often thought of my role as a parent. To instruct my boys in the way they should go—not fearing the world, but trying to prepare them to not be affected by the world.

Now that our boys are older, I think there is another approach. Rather than isolation or simply insulation I want my sons to be influencers. This requires intentionality—*intentionally influencing* others. Rather than the reactive approach—insulate them so they will not be affected by the world. I want to be proactive—help them intentionally influence those around them.

There may be a place or a time for each of these three approaches. But I think the last is the ultimate goal. Too often we seek isolation simply for our own benefit and forget that we have been placed here to be witnesses (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). When we simply seek to instruct for insulation we again forget that God has called us as His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). The intentionality I am speaking of means that we (and our children) need to evaluate the use our time, money, and energy to determine how best to invest our influence. This may require choosing not to do certain things (even isolation from certain activities) in order to do better things.

In the next post we look at ways that we and our children might be intentional influencers.

Engaging Culture part 2



Think about it



Talk about it

In order to engage our culture in a strategic way, we must invest our influence with intentionality.

In thinking through this concept we may at times walk a tight rope. So let's look at biblical instruction on this issue.

First, notice the progression in thought

I Corinthians 6:12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but ***I will not be enslaved by anything.*** (ESV)

I Corinthians 10:23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," ***but not all things build up.*** (ESV)

As we seek to be influencers and as we seek to help our children be influences, we must understand that some activities (good or evil) may be enslaving—may take control. But we should only have one Master.

Other activities are not evil but they are not what is best for us.

Second, notice the context into which we are to be influencers

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. (ESV)

Romans 16:19b but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. (ESV)

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. (ESV)

I Corinthians 14:20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. (ESV)

These passages make it clear that there are things in the world or culture around us that we must understand and need to be able to deal with wisely, yet in purity.

So how do we not only engage but influence our culture? A few key ideas:

Key #1: The Power of Integrity

An authentic life of integrity speaks volumes even to the most antagonistic.

Key #2: The Power of the Word and the Spirit

The ability to influence our world doesn't come primarily from us, but from God by way of the Spirit through the Word. We must know the Word and live the Word.

Key #3: Building community—the Power of Love

Our culture is one of isolation, so we as believers need to understand that love is a powerful influencer. We should not simply see people as target of the gospel message, but as people loved by God, created for His glory.

Key #4: Focus on the Essentials—the Power of Priority

Focusing on minutia makes Christianity look weak and useless. We need to understand what the fundamental truths are, and while we can believe many more things, and we should seek to continually grow in our understanding of God and His Word—we shouldn't expect the world to believe as we do. Let's not fight the world for all our beliefs, but let's keep investing our influence in the most strategic ways possible.

People want to know if a relationship with God really works, will it help them, will it give meaning to life, will it place them into community. We can provide those answers, we can influence those around us, but it requires intentional investment.

[Engaging the World](#)



Think about it



Talk about it

One of the observations we have made in our study of the first section of Romans (1:1–3:20) comes from Paul’s stated goal of his ministry and reason for writing Romans and wanting to visit Rome.

Romans 1:5 through whom we have received grace and **apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations**, (ESV)

It is also clear from the theme of Romans that Paul is looking beyond just the people of Rome to a wider audience.

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (ESV)

This reminds us that we need to not only engage our culture, but engage the world.

Being *Founded on the Word* naturally produces a *Focus on the World*. Or as our education ministry states it, *Drinking deeply of Christ and flowing to others from neighborhoods to nations*.

How should what we have learned on the mission field help us in ministry in a postmodern culture?

Missions experts are well aware of the need for careful research, patient development of relationships within the community, and fluency in local language, including the ability to deliver the gospel in the local vernacular.

How can we apply those truths to our personal engagement in our culture?
What does Paul’s focus on the world (all peoples) teach us?



Act on it

Application

We must advance! The power of God is great. Whatever the dangers we face when we actively engage our postmodern culture, the dangers of flight are greater still. Once we adopt a posture of flight, we guarantee defeat. A church on the defensive is a church without vision. The people of our culture today need us more than ever. But remember this: Our battle isn’t against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12). We have no war to fight with the people in our society. They are the victims of our true enemy, the Evil One. We cannot and should not construct fortress communities to protect ourselves from postmodernism. Only when we advance toward postmodernists in love do we develop the mental and spiritual fiber we need to live victoriously for God.²

² Dennis McCallum, *The Postmodern Puzzle*, <http://www.leaderu.com/real/ri9802/mccallum.html>

Creed

by Steve Turner

<p>We believe in Marxfreudanddarwin We believe everything is OK as long as you don't hurt anyone to the best of your definition of hurt, and to the best of your knowledge.</p> <p>We believe in sex before, during, and after marriage. We believe in the therapy of sin. We believe that adultery is fun. We believe that sodomy's OK. We believe that taboos are taboo.</p> <p>We believe that everything's getting better despite evidence to the contrary. The evidence must be investigated And you can prove anything with evidence.</p> <p>We believe there's something in horoscopes UFO's and bent spoons. Jesus was a good man just like Buddha, Mohammed, and ourselves. He was a good moral teacher though we think His good morals were bad.</p> <p>We believe that all religions are basically the same- at least the one that we read was. They all believe in love and goodness. They only differ on matters of creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation.</p> <p>We believe that after death comes the Nothing Because when you ask the dead what happens they say nothing. If death is not the end, if the dead have lied, then its compulsory heaven for all excepting perhaps Hitler, Stalin, and Genghis Kahn</p>	<p>We believe in Masters and Johnson What's selected is average. What's average is normal. What's normal is good.</p> <p>We believe in total disarmament. We believe there are direct links between warfare and bloodshed. Americans should beat their guns into tractors. And the Russians would be sure to follow.</p> <p>We believe that man is essentially good. It's only his behavior that lets him down. This is the fault of society. Society is the fault of conditions. Conditions are the fault of society.</p> <p>We believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him. Reality will adapt accordingly. The universe will readjust. History will alter. We believe that there is no absolute truth excepting the truth that there is no absolute truth.</p> <p>We believe in the rejection of creeds, And the flowering of individual thought.</p> <p>If chance be the Father of all flesh, disaster is his rainbow in the sky and when you hear</p> <p>State of Emergency! Sniper Kills Ten! Troops on Rampage! Whites go Looting! Bomb Blasts School! It is but the sound of man worshipping his maker.</p>
---	---

Steve Turner, (English journalist), "Creed," his satirical poem on the modern mind.

Taken from Ravi Zacharias' book *Can Man live Without God?* Pages 42-44

Overview—Romans 1:18—3:20

	1:18-32	2:1-16	2:17—3:8	3:9-20
Who is Paul addressing?	Pagan	Moralist	Jew	World (everyone)
How do they relate to God?	Disregard God	Try to distract God	Brag about relationship	No one seeks God
What is their problem?	Knowingly reject God Idolatry / Immorality	Judgmental	Self-righteousness hypocrisy	Sin
Favorite Phrase?	Live it up	Straighten up	You get to work	(Cursing and Bitterness)
Goal?	Satisfy own passions	Monitor their neighbor	Measure their merit	Autonomy
View of Sin?	No one is guilty	They are guilty, not me	Privileged, not guilty I'm guilty but privileged overcome	No regard (no fear)
Boundaries?	If it feels go, do it.	If they feel good, note it.	If it feels good, stop it.	None
Paul's Judgment?	You have no excuse for the things you do	You have no authority for the judgments you make	You have no solution for the problem you have	You have no hope in yourself
Key Verse	1:24	2:1	2:23 4:5	3:9-11
Summary	Condemnation: The Universal Need for God's Righteousness			

Overview—Romans 1:18—3:20

	1:18-32	2:1-16	2:17—3:8	3:9-20
Who is Paul addressing?	Pagan			
How do they relate to God?	Disregard God			
What is their problem?	Knowingly reject God Idolatry / Immorality			
Favorite Phrase?	Live it up			
Goal?	Satisfy own passions			
View of Sin?	No one is guilty			
Boundaries?	If it feels go, do it.			
Paul's Judgment?	You have no excuse for the things you do			
Key Verse	1:24			
Summary	Condemnation: The Universal Need for God's Righteousness			

Overview—Romans 1:18—3:20

	1:18-32	2:1-16	2:17—3:8	3:9-20
Who is Paul addressing?	Pagan	Moralist		
How do they relate to God?	Disregard God	Try to distract God		
What is their problem?	Knowingly reject God Idolatry / Immorality	Judgmental		
Favorite Phrase?	Live it up	Straighten up		
Goal?	Satisfy own passions	Monitor their neighbor		
View of Sin?	No one is guilty	They are guilty, not me		
Boundaries?	If it feels go, do it.	If they feel good, note it.		
Paul's Judgment?	You have no excuse for the things you do	You have no authority for the judgments you make		
Key Verse	1:24	2:1		
Summary	Condemnation: The Universal Need for God's Righteousness			

Overview—Romans 1:18—3:20

	1:18-32	2:1-16	2:17—3:8	3:9-20
Who is Paul addressing?	Pagan	Moralist	Jew	
How do they relate to God?	Disregard God	Try to distract God	Brag about relationship	
What is their problem?	Knowingly reject God Idolatry / Immorality	Judgmental	Self-righteousness hypocrisy	
Favorite Phrase?	Live it up	Straighten up	You get to work	
Goal?	Satisfy own passions	Monitor their neighbor	Measure their merit	
View of Sin?	No one is guilty	They are guilty, not me	Privileged, not guilty I'm guilty but privileged overcome	
Boundaries?	If it feels go, do it.	If they feel good, note it.	If it feels good, stop it.	
Paul's Judgment?	You have no excuse for the things you do	You have no authority for the judgments you make	You have no solution for the problem you have	
Key Verse	1:24	2:1	2:23 4:5	
Summary	Condemnation: The Universal Need for God's Righteousness			

