

# **The Book of Romans**

## **LESSON TWO**

### **“The Guilt of Spiritual Pride and the Moralist”**

In chapter one, Paul emphasized the guilt of those whose sins were the most obvious, evident and corrupt. Now in chapter two, he emphasizes the sins of those who consider themselves morally good and look at others with disdain.

Prayerfully read through chapter two of Romans.

1. Record what Paul says to this group in **verse one** of chapter two.
  
2. We may not **practice** the same kind of sins as someone whose sins are more outward and obvious, but our sins are no less rebellious to God’s perfect standards. To get a better understanding of this group of people Paul is addressing, look up the example that Jesus gives in **Luke 18:10-14**. After reading this passage, record **verse 14** below.
  
3. God not only looks at and judges our actions, but **our thoughts** and the **attitudes of our hearts**. What reminder are we given of this truth in the second half of **1 Samuel 16:7**? Record it below, along with **Hebrews 4:13**.

**1 Samuel 16:7b:**

**Hebrews 4:13:**

4. God’s eyes see all. Nothing is hidden, so the truth of **Romas 2:2** is rock solid. Write the verse down below.

5. Record the question Paul asks in **verse 3 of Romans chapter 2.**
6. These attitudes of our heart that are in rebellion against God are no less sinful than the actions of other's obvious sins. Record the **first half** of the verse in **1 Samuel 15:23a** below, followed by the warning of **Proverbs 16:18.**

**1 Samuel 15:23a:**

**Proverbs 16:18:**

7. Paul goes on in **Romans 2:4** to ask another important question. What does he ask?
8. When we truly recognize God's goodness and mercy toward us, it leads us to **repentance**. But when we are filled with pride, not only do we not recognize and acknowledge God's mercy and grace, but we take on an attitude of not being in need of it, or of entitlement, as if we were deserving of it. **David Guzik** writes: "**Paul points out that the moralist himself presumes upon the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God, which all should bring the moralist into a humble repentance instead of an attitude of superiority.**"

The **purpose** for God extending His kindness, His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering towards man is to lead them to **repentance**. Look up and write down the following Scriptures:

**1 Timothy 2:3 & 4:**

**2 Peter 3:9:**

9. **Romans 2:5 & 6** give us the reason why the unrepentant moralist is “**treasuring up**” for themselves “**wrath in the day of wrath...**” Looking at the beginning of **verse 5**, what is the reason Paul gives?
10. God’s **mercy** is **not giving us what we deserve**. For those who are outside of Christ, the fate that awaits them is **getting what they deserve**. Write down **verse 6** of **Romans chapter 2** below.
11. Reaping what we sow is a spiritual law that applies to the moralist and the obvious sinner alike. Look up and write down **Galatians 6:7 & 8**.
12. For those in Christ, this truth should fill our hearts with greater thankfulness and praise that we have been given **mercy (not receiving what we DO deserve)** and **grace (receiving what we DON’T deserve)**. Write down from **verse 7** the gift of God’s grace given to those who belong to Him.
13. Looking at **verses 8 & 9** list all of what those outside of Christ and God’s mercy will receive.
14. What byproducts are experienced by the repentant sinner who comes into faith in Christ, recorded in **verse 10**?

15. Your heritage, your station in life, your position, your success, your upbringing, your family, your excuses, your failures, your poverty nor your wealth will matter for the unrepentant sinner. What truth does Paul state in **verse 11**?
16. Most Jews, even some in Christ, had an attitude of superiority over the Gentiles. **David Guzik** states that some rabbis taught that, “**God will judge the Gentiles with one measure and the Jews with another.**” Paul clearly states otherwise here. Paul will go on to address this attitude in the next verses. Write down Paul’s statement in **verse 12**.
17. Paul goes on to explain this further in **verses 13 through 16**. His statement in **verse 13** could also apply to those who read their Bible every day and think that is enough. Having the Bible, and even reading the Bible, is not enough, just as having the Law is not enough. Paul’s statement about the Law in **verse 13** is similar to the words of James in **James 1:22-24**. Write down what James says in these verses about God’s Word.
18. Read **verses 14 through 16**. God has placed a conscience within every man that tells us what is right and what is wrong. Even the unbeliever knows that murder and stealing are wrong because of the conscience God has placed within them. Sin, however, can sear that conscience. What does **Titus 1:15** say about this?
19. This is true of those outside of Christ, but Paul gives a warning to Timothy regarding those in the church as well. Look up **1 Timothy 4:1 & 2** and write down this warning below.

20. We don't want to be deceiving ourselves, like James warns us, thinking that because we attend church every Sunday or read the Bible every day, without truly surrendering our hearts and lives to Christ, that those things are enough to save us. There is only one thing that can save us from our sins, putting our trust in the One who took those sins upon Himself and paid the penalty we deserved. But until our hearts are surrendered to Him and we embrace, by faith, the gift of salvation He offers to us, we remain in our sins and under God's wrath. We come to Him as we are, sinful, wretched and poor, but as we humble ourselves before Him and His Spirit comes into our hearts, He forgives and cleanses us from our sin and we are born again as a new creature in Christ. What is the evidence of this experience according to **Romans 5:5** and **2 Corinthians 5:17**? Look up these verses and write them down below.

**Romans 5:5:**

**2 Corinthians 5:17:**

21. For those in Christ, the **love** of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and all things have become new. New attitudes, new desires, new speech, new actions, new goals, new behavior, new life. This is the **evidence** of the believer who has been born again of God's Spirit. What changes do you notice most in your life since becoming a believer?

22. What things do you still struggle with?

**23.** God **began** a good work in us the moment we embraced Christ as our Savior, but that work is not complete yet. It is still ongoing. Grab hold of this promise in **Philippians 1:6** and write it down below.

**24.** As we move on through chapter two of Romans, Paul directly points his finger at the Pharisaical Jews. From **verses 17 through 20** record the descriptions Paul give of this group.

**Verse 17 -**

**Verse 18 -**

**Verse 19 -**

**Verse 20 -**

**25.** As Paul continues this discourse in **verses 21 through 23** he now challenges these Jews, who think they are “all that,” by asking them to look deeper. Record his “challenges” to their attitudes in those verses below. Remember, as you go through each challenge, that these sins are not only “action sins” but sins of the heart and the mind.

**Verse 21 -**

**Verse 22 -**

**Verse 23 -**

26. These Pharisaical attitudes are not only among these Jews, but can be applied to us as well, and we need to be on guard that we don't allow these attitudes to creep into our own hearts. As followers of Christ, the world is always watching us, waiting to find something to accuse us of. Write down the sad statement Paul makes in **verse 24** of our chapter.

27. Look up and record Paul's admonishment to Titus in **Titus 2:7 & 8** below.

28. The Jews prided themselves on being God's chosen people because they were descendants of Abraham and were given the Law of Moses, and the proof of the heritage was in their circumcision. What does Paul say to them about circumcision in **verse 25** of Romans, chapter two?

29. They may consider themselves "keepers" of the Law, but what does Paul tell us in **Romans 8:3** and **Galatians 2:16** concerning the Law?

**Romans 8:3 -**

**Galatians 2:16 -**

What Paul says here of circumcision can also be said of **baptism**. There are those who believe they are in Christ because they were once baptized, even though they do not follow Christ. Those outward acts do not save you. Circumcision was an outward sign of an inward work, just as baptism is an outward sign of an inward work of God's Spirit. **David Guzik** states: **"Circumcision and baptism do about the same thing that a label on a can does. If the outer label doesn't match with what is on the inside, something is wrong! If there are carrots inside the can, you can put a label that says "Peas" but it doesn't change what is inside the can. Being born again changes what is inside the can, and then you can put the appropriate label on the outside."**

30. Paul give further confirmation to this truth in **verses 26 & 27** of Romans, chapter two. Write down those verses below.

31. Write down Paul's conclusion to this argument in **verses 28 & 29**.

**Pastor David Guzik** gives a very good conclusion of his own, stating that, **“All the outward signs of religion may earn us praise from men, but they will not earn us praise from God. The evidence of our rightness with God is not contained in outward signs or works, and it is not assured because of our parentage. The evidence is found in the work of God in our heart which shows itself in fruit.”**

32. What is your greatest take-away from your study of Romans, chapter two?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2026