



## Small Group Discussion Questions (Romans 3) March 8, 2018

1. Romans 3:10-11 (NIV) says, “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.” What do you think when you read that? What do you think it means to be righteous, or to understand, or to seek God? Tim Keller wrote, “[S]inful self-centeredness controls all spiritual searching for meaning and experience, so that we will try simply to get blessings from God, keeping control ourselves and expecting (or demanding) that God serve us and shape himself to fit our needs” (p. 70). How does this help you understand what it means (or does not mean) to seek God? How does this show up in your life?
2. Romans 3:12b (NIV) says, “[T]here is no one who does good, not even one.” Keller points out that it is not enough to do “good” things, for something to be truly good we must do the right thing with the right motive. This deeper understanding is what separates Christians from legalists: “The main difference between a Christian and a [legalist] is not so much their attitudes to their sins, but toward their ‘good deeds.’ Both will repent of their sins; but only the Christian will repent of wrongly-motivated good works, while the [legalist] will rely on them” (pp. 73-74). How have you relied on external “good works” in your life? Do you consistently repent not only of your wrong action, but also your good action done for the wrong reasons? What do you think it looks like to confess and repent of sinful motivations?
3. If righteousness cannot be gained through the law, what do you think the purpose of the law is? (See Romans 3:20) Is the law good or bad? Why or why not?
4. Keller rightly points out that we are not justified by faith in general, but by faith in Jesus Christ . . . in His death that both paid for our sin and transferred the righteousness of God to us, and in His resurrection that guarantees us life in His name. There are many who have a vague faith in God or general belief in a supreme being, but only faith in the finished work of Jesus saves us. Have you come to a point in your life where you’ve placed your faith in Jesus alone to save you? If so, share this experience with the group. If not, take advantage of this moment to trust in the finished work of Christ for you.
5. Paul has clearly established that righteousness cannot be gained through the law, yet so many of us believe if our “good” outweighs our “bad” that somehow God will be pleased with us. Can you identify with this? Why do you think it is so difficult to break free from this belief, even after we trust in Jesus?
6. What does it mean that God is both just and the one who justifies (Romans 3:26)? Where do we simultaneously see the justice of God and the justification of humanity? What does the cross say about God? What does it say about you? Take a few minutes to end your time meditating on the power of the cross and the love of God for you.