

romans

a life of faith


“BELIEVING, OR BELIEVING IN?”
SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:
ROMANS 3:1-4:3

We all judge other people. It's a very human thing to do but it's not a Christian thing. Why? Well, we're told not to because judging others makes us a hypocrite. When we judge others, we also judge ourselves. We agree that there are standards they fail to meet, and when we make that assessment, we unconsciously include ourselves. Why? Because we all fail to meet even our own standards, let alone God's. All of which is the common failure of human justification, legalism, and religiosity.

Paul writes about the cure for this kind of judgmental hypocrisy. He calls it faith, and he gives us a concrete example in Abraham. When we lean into what Paul is writing, we see a difference between believing in something (or someone) and *believing* them.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What are some things you *believed in* as a child that you no longer do?
2. Have you ever caught yourself being “judgey” or “judgmental” like Pastor Brad described? What was that like?
3. Who is someone you believe in your life — like a parent, friend, or spouse — and why do you trust them?
4. What was your high/low for this past week (or since group last met)? What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What does Paul remind us of in Romans 2:1?
2. What do you notice about Romans 3:10-12 (maybe even 10-18)? What might you also see in Psalm 14 and 53 that could shed more light on Romans 3?
3. In Romans 3:23-24 Paul says something very specific about all humanity. What is that and why is it important?
4. In the same passage, he writes about justification? What does he say, and what are the implications for we humans?
5. Romans 3:27-28 contrasts two ways of being right with God. What are they and how are they different?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Where do you see people being judgmental today? Where and how is that most destructive to human flourishing?
2. Can you think of any examples in our own world where the people are hypocritical in their judgments? How do we normally feel about such individuals?
3. What role does hypocrisy play in Cancel Culture?
4. How do people who have been judged or canceled try to redeem themselves? Are they often successful and why or why not?

CONTINUED:

5. Where do you see the difference between *believing in* or *believing* (trusting) playing out in our culture?

Look In: These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Where are you most likely to put yourself in the place of a judge and jury, condemning another person, and why?
2. How might it change your attitude towards others whom you might normally judge if you took Paul's assessment that "None are righteous, no, not one..." as seriously as he intends?
3. How does knowing you are the object of God's grace, not his judgment, make you feel?
4. Is it easier to believe in God or believe him, and why?
5. How have you entered into God's grace? What did (and does) that transformation look like in your life?

LIVE IT OUT: These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Ask God if there is someone in your life who you've judged in the past. If so, humble yourself and ask for their forgiveness. That can be hard, but it's also an opportunity to believe God, to trust that he can do remarkable things from within your faith-filled humility.
2. If that's too much right away, then journal your confession. Share it only with God at first, trusting that even a small first step can lead to greater freedom and restoration.
3. Take a walk with God, or just sit quietly with him, and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal to you during your stroll all of the ways God delights in you and showers you with his grace.