



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—2 Kings 7

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Have you ever noticed Israel's repeating cycle—God's blessing, their rebellion, God's discipline, their repentance, God's restoration—in your life? Where are you right now?
2. Why were the lepers willing to take a risk, and what would that be like in our lives? What usually gets you to that point?
3. When is risk-taking related to faith, and when is it not? What are some risks you have taken for God? Is there a risk God is calling you to take right now?
4. Talk about something God has blessed you with recently. How could you share that blessing with others?
5. Discuss ways to develop a lifestyle of sharing God's greatest blessing, that of salvation, with those around you. Get specific.
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

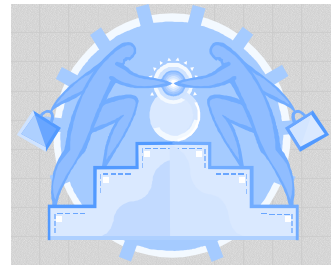
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

Room	9:00 Description	Room	10:45 Description
Rm104	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 104	Open—Bower-Chappell
Rm 112		Rm 112	Women—Byrum
Rm 201	30s-40s—Sims	Rm 201	How People Grow
Rm 202		Rm 202	“ “ “
Rm 203	Young Singles —Franklin/Reynolds	Rm 203	Singles—Bentzel
Rm 204		Rm 204	20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205	Open—Regis-Anderson
Rm 206	Experiencing God—Graham	Rm 206	30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 207	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 207	30s—Tripp-Tripp
Rm 208	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 208	Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker
		Gym	College—Ayres-Getchell

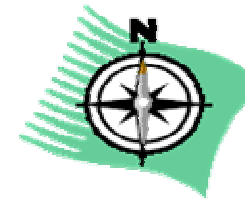
Sept 26, 2004

Extreme Makeover (Inside Edition)
Principles of Internal Change From the Book of Romans

Celebration Fellowship

The Big Picture

A preview of Romans 1:1-17



Volume 3, Issue 4
September 26, 2004

Inside this issue:

Introduction to Next Week's Study	1
Summary of Last Week's Study Questions	1-2
Study Guide	2-3
Life Group Questions	4

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

In order to truly appreciate details we must see how they fit into the big picture. Much of the misunderstanding surrounding the “details” of Christianity relates to this—the failure to grasp its overall vision and mission. In the first seventeen verses of Romans Paul begins to lay out this “big picture” of Christianity to which his entire letter to Romans will be devoted. He begins by showing the type of people that God uses to represent the gospel—those who are called, and those who serve. Christianity is built upon a personal

calling from God, and a personal calling to serve God. He also points out that Christianity is centered upon a person, Jesus, and not a set of rules. He was born in the flesh as a descendant of David, and proclaimed as God's Son by the resurrection, which the Holy Spirit brought about. Paul continues his “big picture” by showing that true believers not only serve God; they also are devoted to serving mankind. As Paul exemplifies, Christians want to bless other believers, but they also are indebted to God to share the gospel with



God wants to remake us from the inside out.

all people, both Jews and Gentiles. Finally, the essence of Christianity is its powerful word about Christ, the gospel, that is received and sustained by faith. This is the big picture—the good news of Jesus, given to the called, and served by them, so that all can know Christ by faith.

The Tell-Tale Heart

In Edgar Allan Poe's short story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, the beating heart of the person buried beneath the floor gave the crime away. God's heart is like that—it just won't stop beating. In this week's study Israel again showed why they deserved God's judgment, and gave no reason for ever being restored. But God's heart continued to beat for them, and at the end of Amos, His promised restoration for the faithful in Israel once again. But, He first revealed to Amos two proposed judgments: a plague of locusts and widespread fire that would lick up everything in its path. Both would have devastated Israel and caused famine. So Amos, in prayer, appealed to God's heart, saying that Israel, being so small, could not stand if He did this. God relented, showing that when we appeal to God's nature, our prayers really do matter. He waits for us to ask Him to act according to His desires, and then He does it. So, prayer meets

God's desires and others' needs. However, God revealed a third judgment, one He carried out. He would place a plumb line down the middle of Israel, an appropriate judgment considering how “crooked” Israel's leadership was. The sanctuaries, high places and palaces would fall because they couldn't stand straight against God's standard. He would complete His judgment by bringing the sword against any who remained. Amariah, the priest of the false worship center at Bethel, showed the validity of God's judgment. Rather than heeding Amos' warning, he sarcastically accused him of prophesying for money, and told him to go back home. He also accused him of conspiring against the king, because he said that Jeroboam II would die by the sword and Israel would go into exile. Amos responded that he was not a professional, but only a rancher and fruit grower from a small country town. His authority to

(Amos 7-9)

prophecy was only because God had told him to do so. He then told Amariah that he would die on unclean soil (a foreign land), his wife would become a prostitute, his children would die by the sword, and Israel would be parceled out in small pieces. This shows us that we must be very careful when slandering someone who speaks for God. If they are wrong, God will judge them; but if they are right, God will judge us, a foolish risk to take. Amos' prophetic role also teaches us that all of us are called to speak God's truth, whether we are “professional” ministers or not. After this incident God gave Amos a vision of late season fruit, intended to show that the end was near for Israel. God would spare them no longer, turning their palace songs into wailing; there would be so many corpses that grief would be turned to silence due to the shock. In spite of these visions Israel refused to repent. They continued to be so obsessed with making money that they

(Continued on page 2)

Amos 7-9 (continued from pg 1)

took advantage of the poor and helpless to do it. They couldn't wait for their monthly (new moon) and weekly (Sabbath) worship times to conclude so they could resume their unethical business practices. They illegally overcharged their customers, enslaving the poor for a "pair of sandals", paid less than they should due to inaccurate weights, and sold products of inferior quality by using "filler". Whenever we obtain money through deceit, failing to exchange value for equal value, we abuse people in the same way. In light of God's judgments on Israel for this, we should avoid such abuse by committing to maintain high standards even when we think we can "get away" with it. Because Israel would not repent God promised to shake the whole land with an earthquake, and to cause an eclipse of the sun at noon. This would turn their festive occasions and songs into times of mourning and funeral dirges. It would be such a bitter time that everyone would put on robes of grief, pull out their hair in anguish, and experience pain like that of losing an only child. God would also bring upon them a famine of His Word. When they would seek a solution from His prophets, but there would be none. They would stagger all over the land

because the Word was no longer available. Even the healthy—beautiful virgins and young men—would faint, and those who swore by idols would fall, never to rise again. This all shows the importance of God's Word—when it is ignored or no longer treated as relevant, society is in chaos, because it has no absolute truth upon which to rest. God would then judge those who worshipped at the false altar, and the whole temple would come down on their heads. Those who didn't die there would fall by the sword; no one would escape. God would find them if they buried themselves, if they fled to the highest mountain, if they swam to the bottom of the sea, or if they went into captivity. They would be punished by the

serpent and sword. His nature guaranteed this would happen, because he was over all—He caused natural catastrophes, lived in the heavens above, created the atmosphere, and sustained our system of rain. Furthermore, Israel's, due to their sin, would no longer receive special treatment. God had delivered Israel, but He had also done so with other nations; their faithfulness to His covenant is what set them apart. When they were unfaithful, He would judge them, because His eyes are always on any sinful nation to judge them. However, God also promised to not destroy the whole house of Jacob, and to not allow one faithful "kernel" to fall to the ground. In fact He promised to restore the Davidic kingdom (through Jesus), to allow Israel to rule over the nations, and to bring about such prosperity that the sowing and the harvesting would overlap. Israel would return home and rebuild their cities, never to be uprooted again. This shows the incredible grace of God. The message of Amos relates to this: He cares about people so much that He considers sins of social injustice to be sins against Him. Those who understand and appreciate His heart must speak out for Him about this, whether "professional" or not. God's tell-tale heart will not stop beating.

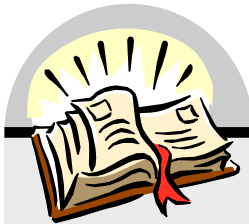


"His eyes are always on any sinful nation to judge them."

Study Questions for Romans 1:1-17

Paul introduces himself to the Romans, and his purpose for writing—to present the real message of Christianity.

1. Read Romans 1:1-2. Who wrote this letter (v1), and how does he describe himself (v1), and his purpose (v1)? What is he going to write about (v1), and when was it first revealed (v2)?
2. From Romans 1:3-4 who is the gospel about (v3), and in what two ways is He described (v3, 4)? Why are these descriptions important?
3. Look at Romans 1:5-6. What equipped Paul to be able to write this letter (v5), and what was his two-fold objective (v5)? What qualified the Romans to receive this message (v5-6)? Apply to us.



"Whenever we obtain money through deceit... we abuse people"

4. In Romans 1:7 how are God's people described? "Saints" means "ones set apart"; to what or to whom are we set apart? What two things does Paul pray for that only God can give? Why are these important?

5. Using Romans 1:8 what was Paul's attitude regarding the Roman believers, and why? Considering that Rome was the capital city of the empire, and that Paul had not been there, why was this important?

6. Looking at Romans 1:9-10 how did Paul show the sincerity of his concern for the Romans (v9, 10), and what was the underlying reason for his attitude towards the Romans (v10)?

7. Read Romans 1:11-12. What did Paul want to do for the Romans (v11), and for what purpose (v11)? What do you think this meant? What would that do for him (v12)?

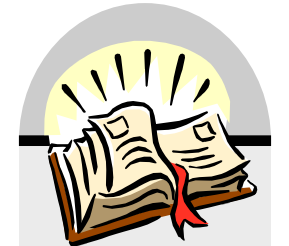
8. From Romans 1:13-14 what objection did Paul anticipate (v13)? What did he want from the Romans (v13), and what was his reason (v14)? What obligation or debt did he need to pay, and to whom (v14)?

9. Using Romans 1:15-16 how would Paul pay his debt to the Romans (v15)? What did he think about the gospel (v16), and why (v16)? In what way is the gospel powerful, and to whom is it powerful (v16)? Apply.

10. According to Romans 1:17 what does the gospel reveal, and to what does this refer? How is the gospel revealed, and what does this mean—how does this process work?

11. From Romans 1:1-17 summarize what Paul says about himself (v15, 8, 9-10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). In what ways is he a good example for us to follow?

12. Reflecting on Romans 1:1-17 write down what Paul says about the gospel (v1-2, 3-4, 9, 16, 17). Using this list, what makes the gospel "good news" for us?



Memory Verse

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation."
Romans 1:16**