

Romans: A Study on Reformation  
Lesson 5 “Recognizing a Critical Spirit”

I. Introduction - We are continuing our series on the book of Romans today. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth to the church in Rome to bring reformation to this church in 57 A.D. We are studying verse by verse through the book with our focus being on “Reformation.”

A. Reform is a compound word. Re means to do again and form means to make or create. Reform does not mean to add to. God wants to go deeper that just bring revival to our nation. He wants to reform it. **Explain the difference between reformation and revival. This is about a new culture - way of doing life (return of Jesus to the center, parents more involved in kids lives, an understanding of identity, etc.**

B. The main problem Paul wanted to reform with the church in Rome was the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews believed they were God’s chosen people and they should be in charge and the Gentiles should adopt their customs. The Gentiles believed God had moved on from the Jews because they rejected Jesus so they thought they should be in charge and the Jews should adapt Gentile customs.

C. Last week we looked at how he showed the Gentile need for a savior. They had suppressed truth and lived in ungodliness (sexual sin, murder, theft, etc.) I’m sure when the Jewish Christians read this, they were like, “Amen Paul! You tell ‘em.” This is something those of us who have grown up in church tend to do when we see the sin of the world. This reveals one problem and creates another:

1. Many times we are like the Jews Paul addressed in **Romans 2**. We are doing the same stuff in secret that the world is doing in public, or at least we want to. This is hypocrisy. This is a massive problem.
2. The second problem isn’t doesn’t make those in the world feel safe to come to church and draw close to Jesus. Our pride, runs others from the Lord.
3. Today we are going to look at all of those issues as we look at **Romans 2** and how to “Recognize a Critical Spirit.”

II. Recognizing a Critical Spirit

A. **Philippians 1:9** May your love abound in discernment. There is no such thing as a gift of discernment (its discerning of spirits) Many have confused discernment with ey have a critical spirit. Discernment comes from the love of God and the love of God lays down its life. If we aren’t willing to lay down our lives for the ones we are criticizing we probably have a critical spirit

B. Hypocrisy - **Luke 12:1** Jesus warned of two types of leaven. The leaven of the the Pharisees (religious spirit - focus on rules instead of relationship. **Matthew 23:23**

1. The word hypocrite means to pretend or be an actor/stage player. Hypocrisy isn't having a standard and falling short. It is pretending to be something that you have no intention of being. ex: 1980s ministers calling out others for adultery.
2. Hypocrites condemn others (manifestation of the critical spirit).
3. **Hypocrisy tends to spread like yeast when left unchecked.**

## B. Romans 2:1-16

1. **Verses 1-3** Paul is basically saying, "It's great that you Jews recognize the sin of the world, but are you doing the same things. Ex: Condemn Kylie Jenner for pornography, but are you clicking on all her Instagram posts and enjoying it.
  - a. Judging others but doing the same is religious and unacceptable.
  - b. If you are believer you are saved if you sin, but God wants us to deal with our inner world and clean up our lives, not just the lives of others.
  - c. **Matthew 7:1-5** Process of judging - we can judge fruit, not hearts (**Matthew 7:16-20**). ex: Marriage conflict - this made me feel, not this is why you do what you do.
  - d. **The point is the Jews didn't have a right to look down on the rest of the world because they were Jewish. This is what they were doing.**
2. **Verse 4** The goodness of God leads to repentance (change of mind and heart) as compared with **Proverbs 16:6**. Fear will cause me to change my behavior, but it doesn't lead to heart change.
3. **Romans 2:5-13** Paul continues to level the playing field as he begins to show that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (**verse 11 no partiality**).
4. **Romans 2:14-16** Paul further condemns the religious spirit by describing how Gentiles have an intuitive knowledge of right and wrong. Paul effectively undoes what many of the Jews believed about having a special favor with God just because they were religious. Paul levels the playing field!

III. Conclusion - The reality is we still see this in our churches today. ex: Jesus people movement with hippies wearing jeans, sandals, being perceived as unclean, etc. When Elevation started Steven Furtick was criticized because he died his hair, was too trendy, and broke religious rules about how you do church. The critical spirit seeks to condemn instead of reconcile.

A. How do we know if we have a critical spirit? Do we seek to find fault and condemn or do we seek to gain understanding and reconcile?

B. Closing Prayer - Pray for a spirit of reconciliation and people would be rooted in love.

C. Call Up Prayer Team

