

Romans: A Study on Reformation  
Lesson 9 “Relationship Not Rules”

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 than 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. Today before we baptize several folks we are going to look at the first half of *Romans 4* and talk about “Relationship Not Rules.” God saved us to bring us into a relationship and not a list of rules to follow. He also didn’t save us just so we could go to heaven, but rather so He could set up the kingdom of heaven in us and see it pour out on the world around us.

II. Relationship Not Rules

A. **Romans 4:1-4 Example of Abraham**

1. At the end of *Romans 3*, Paul makes the case we are justified (declared innocent) by faith apart from the works of the law. This was right after listing about a dozen Old Testament passages that showed all of humanity (both Jew and Gentile were sinners). The goal was to get everyone to look to Jesus.
2. Throughout these verses Paul is continuing to break the legalistic mindset that the Jews and many religious Christians have.
3. **Verses 1-3** Paul shows Abraham was not justified by works because he was counted as righteous before he was ever circumcised.
  - a. **Genesis 15:6**
  - b. A modern equivalent today is baptism. We believe in baptism because Jesus commanded it, but it was not a requirement for salvation. If so, what do you do with the thief on the cross who Jesus told, “Today you will be with me in paradise.

- c. Many Christians argue over baptism (whether to dunk or sprinkle, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or in Jesus name) and miss the point. The point isn't the technicality, it's the fact that the old man is dead and washed away and the new man is raised to life in righteousness.
- 4. Anyone who works to earn from God is in debt and debt isn't a small amount it's into the hundreds of trillions.
  - a. The point is everything comes by grace.
  - b. **Genesis 15:8-18** God made covenant with Abraham and fulfilled all of the covenant while Abraham was asleep. The point He wanted to drive home is it wasn't about what Abraham had to do to earn, it was simply about believing God would do what He said He would do.

### **B. Romans 4:5-8 God's Not Imputing Sin Today**

- 1. Paul begins to use accounting terms in these passages. He says the person who believes gets credit for righteousness (it's store credit our older brother left us).
- 2. He goes on to say God is not imputing our sins against us. This means He's not charging the believer with sin. Quotation of **Psalm 32:1-2**. David looked forward to our day because we have a better covenant.
- 3. Example of paying off someone's home and cancelling their mortgage debt. The mortgage company would be wrong to impute them with a house payment.

### **C. Romans 4:9-12 Actions Follow Faith**

- 1. These verses say Abraham was righteous before he performed the sign of covenant. This is true for those being baptized today. They are righteous based on what they believe and not what they do.
- 2. Paul goes onto say, Abraham is the Father of faith to the Jews (those of circumcision), but also to the Gentiles (those not of circumcision). The point of all this is to show us that following the rules, technicalities, etc. don't earn us a place in God's kingdom. It's not about what we do to earn. It's about what we believe. If we believe right, we will behave right.

III. Conclusion - God has always been of God a relationship and not rules. If we come into a real abiding relationship we'll live holier on accident than we ever did just trying to keep lists of rules.

### **A. Romans 3:3-9**

### **B. Baptisms**

### **C. Closing Prayer and Call Up Prayer Team**

