

SENIOR HIGH Bible Teacher

For Teachers of Teens Ages 15 Through 17

SPRING QUARTER
March, April, May 2021



Senior High Bible Teacher

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Proclamation of the Gospel

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The Weeks Ahead

The Bible is a book of reality. The bad news of man's depravity and sin is found in Genesis. The positive theological and redemptive good news is explained and magnified in the epistle to the Romans.

This quarter's lessons are from the book of Romans. The first unit deals with man's propensity to sin and God's rejection and judgment of unrighteousness. Romans 3:10 makes the simple yet profound statement that "there is none righteous, no, not one." The good news is that salvation by grace through faith is redemptive.

Starting with lesson 4, the second unit of this quarter examines the fundamentals of the faith. The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is explained with emphasis on the imputed righteousness of Christ accessed through faith. Our actual righteousness grows, as does our dependence on Him in our day-to-day living. Our belief in Jesus' death and resurrection is the heart of our salvation experience as we die to sin and become followers of Christ.

The third unit is all about the implications of the gospel. We become more than conquerors by faith in Jesus Christ. The hold of a corrupt world is broken, and a promise of redemption in Christ is assured. The result of God's election is eternal life with God. Jesus is Lord of all, and ministry to unbelievers should be a large part of our lives as Christians.

Paul handles well the epistle's main themes: first, the definitive explanation of the gospel committed to him and, second, the solidarity of Jews and Gentiles in Rome's messianic community.

Paul seeks to establish a personal

relationship with his readers and attempts to dissolve ethnic divisions, as he knows most of the believers to be Gentiles (1:7, 13). He thanks God for all of them, prays consistently for them, and longs to see them as he has tried many times to visit them (vss. 8-13).

Paul took letter writing very seriously. He made it a vehicle for significant religious and theological teaching, an exception to ancient, contemporary letter writers. Romans was his longest letter with about 7,100 words. Its length and subject matter make it a very unusual correspondence for his time.

Augustine, Luther, and Wesley—three greatly significant contributors to our Christian heritage—all came to faith through the direct impact of the book of Romans. All the Reformers saw Romans as the key to understanding Scripture. A unique aspect of Paul's epistle is that it was written to a group of mixed believers (Jew and Gentile) he had never met.

One reason Paul used such a lengthy epistle to clarify emerging Christian doctrine was that it had been misrepresented in various church settings. In Jerusalem, the Judaizers overemphasized the law; in Corinth, some Gentiles were hedonists. Paul wanted to correct both doctrine and debauchery.

Paul brings together all of the Bible's greatest themes—sin, judgment, law, eternity, faith, grace, works, justification, sanctification, election, the plan of salvation, the Trinity, Christian hope, and the message of the Old Testament. Paul also focuses on the principles of personal holiness, morality, and a godliness visible to those around us.

PLEASE NOTE: Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of The Incorporated Trustees of the Gospel Worker Society, Union Gospel Press Division. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and yieldedness to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Peer Pressure on Christian Teens

Peer pressure exists when your decisions are influenced by other people's attitudes, values, or behaviors. It involves the ability of people from the same social class or age to influence other people's decision making. Peer pressure is evident when people do something either because they have been persuaded to participate or the observation of others makes them feel like everybody is doing it.

In today's society, most teenagers are extremely influenced by their friends. This influence has been compounded by the universally common usage of social media. Almost all teens in our culture have ready access to the various facets of electronic communication available today. Teens no longer need direct, face-to-face interactions to be direct participants in the peer pressure of their classmates or others. A peer could be a schoolmate, friend, neighbor, or even someone famous. Peer groups are very important and extremely influential in an open society—a society that has clearly visible and public interaction.

The prevalence of peer pressure is most common among teens, although adults are also influenced to “keep up with the Joneses” in trying to maintain the same financial status as their neighbors. Often teens go along with things they would not normally do to avoid scorn from their friends. Behavior can be controlled by an individual's desire to fit in and be part of the group.

Peer pressure is more prevalent and observable in teenagers because at younger ages, individuals have not developed a hard set of values or behaviors. The learning process is still a vibrant and expanding activity, and they still learn many things by trial and

error. For better or worse, most mature adults have developed a worldview that somewhat insulates them from the rapidly changing opinions of others.

Adults obviously can be influenced by peer pressure, for that is the objective of advertising. However, adults as a rule have a more resistant attitude toward immediately responding to peer pressure. This can be positive or negative. A negative aspect of adult imperviousness to the influence of others is seen in the smaller proportion of adults who come to faith after age thirty. Adults can become insulated to events around them and unresponsive to the message of Christian peers.

Here are some common scenarios that are often part of growing up in America today:

The first scenario: “Three of the guys in the senior class are throwing a party at an old barn outside of town. Everybody is going, and there will be alcohol and probably drugs. I want to go because I want my friends to think I'm cool.”

Second scenario: “My boyfriend keeps pressuring me to have sex. I really love him, and I can see us being together forever. If I don't have sex with him, he might reject me, and everyone else will think I'm uptight if they find out.”

Third scenario: “In my church youth group, there is a guy who smokes outside, and he offers smokes to others. He's very friendly, and I am curious. My dad smokes on occasion, so it's probably not that bad.”

Your decisions for handling any of the above scenarios can have a life-long effect. How should these situations be handled? Here are some of the risks that need to be assessed when considering others' activities:

- Does this behavior coincide with God's Word?
- Can this affect my health?
- Is my action unlawful? Could I go to jail?
- How will this affect my family?
- Could this decision affect others?
- How will my educational or vocational aspirations be affected?

In the first scenario, attending an underage party with alcohol and drugs could affect many aspects of one's life. Even nonparticipants get arrested when drugs appear at a party. When alcohol and drugs are involved, anything can happen.

For the second scenario, there is the obvious fact that sexual intercourse can lead to pregnancy. STDs are more prevalent than ever, and a sexually transmitted disease is a legitimate risk. Unmarried sexual activity in the teen years reaps a bitter harvest.

In the third scenario, the perception of smoking has changed drastically over the last twenty-five years. Most teens now know the ill effects of tobacco and make better choices than many older people who never quit smoking.

The Bible records several stories of those who succumbed to peer pressure. Aaron, the brother of Moses, built a golden calf for Israel to worship. He had been a witness to some of the most dynamic miracles of all time, but he still succumbed to the people when they exerted pressure on him (Ex. 32:1-6).

Peer pressure can be overwhelming. The Prophet Samuel warned the people about having a king rather than continuing the established theocracy with judges. But no one heeded him, no doubt in part because the clamor of the crowd for a king was too strong to counter. Consequently, the rebellious people of Israel slid into long-standing subservience (I Sam. 8).

The trial of our Lord Jesus was the supreme example of peer pressure

gone awry. Pilate tried to release Jesus, but the chief priests and elders pressured the people to have Jesus crucified. The multitudes made a devastating decision about a person they had recently esteemed. In one week, they had moved from admirers to murderers under the baleful influence of their leaders. The people had been pushed into sacrificing the Creator of the universe (Matt. 27:20).

Pilate's acquiescence to the peer pressure of the mob is recorded in Luke 23:23. In group situations, the people who are the best individuals to make a decision are often relegated to the status of observers, while the loudest, least-qualified people lead the group. High-school parties can evolve with this unfortunate framework.

God has unbelievable patience with those of us who are distracted by the opinions and pressure of our peers. We live in a world full of temptation. We are easily distracted and led in the wrong direction. Fortunately, God is on our side. He is for us—our past, present, and future sins were already paid for at Calvary.

All of us at some time have made questionable and poor decisions. We have let the values and opinions of others determine our behavior; we have succumbed to peer pressure. Our best line of defense toward negative peer pressure is a closer walk with Christ. There are not many followers of Jesus who have a regular prayer and Bible study time and would still depend on the opinions of their peers over God's guidance.

The Apostle Paul makes an appropriate and relevant comment about the events and pressures that surround teens: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). Stand fast in your faith.

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

ROM. 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 Now I would not have you

ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

NOTES

Paul's Desire to Visit Rome

Lesson Text: Romans 1:8-17

Related Scriptures: I Thessalonians 1:1-4; I Corinthians 1:18-24;
Galatians 3:10-14

TIME: A.D. 56

PLACE: from Corinth

GOLDEN TEXT—"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

Studying the Text

The book of Romans is magisterial; that is, it is a large and expert summation. It is authoritative on all the doctrines and principles of the Christian faith that it mentions. The author, the Apostle Paul, probably wrote the letter in about A.D. 56. He had never been to Rome or met the believers there. The faith of the Roman Christians was well known, and Paul had desired to visit them for quite a while (1:8, 13).

The Roman church may well have been started by Jewish pilgrims who had been in Jerusalem for Pentecost and heard the gospel there (Acts 2:10-11). They had the unparalleled experience of witnessing the first multiethnic crusade by a uniquely commissioned apostolic evangelist, Peter (vss. 40-41).

The faith of the Roman Christians was proclaimed "throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8), and the Roman church seemed to function rather well even though it included a mix of both Jewish and Gentile believers. The number of Jewish believers was diminished when the emperor Claudius expelled them from Rome in A.D. 49. Many returned

before Nero's persecutions (A.D. 58) and were martyred. The unique situation of a mixed congregation in a foreign land (not Israel) had an unequaled beginning; it was started by the believers themselves without direct apostolic input.

PAUL'S THANKFULNESS FOR ROMAN BELIEVERS—Rom. 1:8-12

Paul was a participant in the rejoicing over the salvation and sanctification of a mixed people group. Not only were the Christ-followers in Rome true Christians, but their witness as a group was significant. The news of their presence in the "world's capital" had spread to wherever there were followers of Christ.

Although Paul was not the immediate or original evangelist to these Roman believers, he was deeply and genuinely thankful for their presence in the kingdom of God. Because of the unusual beginning of the Roman fellowship, believers voluntarily associated because of mutual faith. Paul wanted to visit them and informed them that they were constantly in his prayers. His