

That We Might Bear Fruit For God

Lesson 1

Basic orientation in preparation for bearing fruit for God
(Romans 5:12-21)

By F. M. Perry

Romans 5:12:21. “(12) Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- (13) for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. (14) Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (15) But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (16) And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. (17) For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (18) So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. (19) For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (20) And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, (21) that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. NASV.

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Questions for Study

1. Does Romans 5:13 teach that there was no law before the Law of Moses was given?
2. What is the "death" of Romans 5: 12-14?
3. In what way are Adam and Christ alike? In what ways do they differ? (Romans 5:15-21).
4. Of what significance is the "first Adam" and the "last Adam" to us today?
5. What is the purpose of the law? (Romans 5:20; 7:7-12).
6. What makes grace abound? How might this concept be misused? (Romans 5:20; 6:1-2).
7. Make a list of things to which justification can be attributed. (Romans 5:1; 5:9; 5:16; 5:18; 5:19).
8. Who are those whose sins were not like the transgressions of Adam? (Romans 5:14).
9. What is the concept of the word "justification" in the Roman letter? (Romans 5:16, 18).
10. What is the concept of the words "righteous" and "righteousness" in the Roman letter? (Romans 5:17, 19, 21).

11. Why should we be concerned about transgression of law given to us by an invisible God?
12. Is there any sin that does not involve the breaking of God's law?
13. What is the inherent nature of mankind with respect to sin? How did we get this nature? How does this nature affect our lives?
14. If a Christian allows his inherent nature to have ascendancy in his life, will it be possible for him to "bear fruit for God?"
15. What must "reign" in a Christian's life in order for him to "bear fruit for God?" (Romans 5:17).

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Questions and answers:

In Romans 5:12-21 Paul gives us basic orientation about our human nature as descendants from Adam, and the divine gift to free us from this debilitating nature. Paul teaches us first who we are, then goes on to show us who we can become through Christ.

1. Does Romans 5:13 teach that there was no law before the Law of Moses was given?

No. Paul was affirming just the opposite, that all men since the creation have been subject to some kind of law. Romans 5:12 says, "Through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world." That's a fact. Sin has been in the world ever since Adam. Sin was in the world before the Law of Moses was given. However, sin cannot exist without some kind of law. Hence there was law before the Law of Moses was given.

Turning back to Romans 2:14 Paul said, "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law (of Moses) do instinctively the things of the Law (of Moses), these not having the Law, are a law to themselves." This "law to themselves" is a reference to the innate moral code or natural knowledge of right which all people have. The people before the Mosaic Law had it. Gentiles who were living during the Mosaic dispensation had it. And all people who are born into the world today have it.

After men have been irresponsible for a long period of time, and their consciences have been seared, they lose their desire to obey the law which God put in their hearts.

2. What is the death of Romans 5:12-14?

Spiritual death--This means a separation of the soul and spirit from God, as in Ephesians 2:1, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins." Death (or separation from God) has passed upon all men who have personally sinned, "because all sinned."

3. In what way are Adam and Christ alike? In what ways do they differ? (Romans 5:15-21).

In terms of being alike, each is a prototype representative of humanity.

In terms of differences:

Adam	Christ
(1) Trespass	(1) Act of righteousness (5:15,18).
(2) Many died	(2) Many received grace (5: 15).
(3) Judgment	(3) Free gift (5: 16).
(4) Condemnation	(4) Justification (5:16, 18).
(5) Reign of death	(5) Reign of life (5:17).
(6) Disobeyed	(6) Obeyed (5:19).
(7) Many made sinners	(7) Many made righteous (5:19).

4. Of what significance is the "first Adam" and the "last Adam" to us today?

The "first Adam" is the prototype human being of all we who have been born since him. When we look back at Adam we see ourselves. We, like him, have a proclivity to sin. And, because of Adam, we were born into a world of sin where death reigns. Following the lead of Adam, we sin and die the death of separation from God. Also (very important to this study) because of our proclivity to sin which we have inherited from Adam, we continue to sin even after we have repented, confessed, been baptized, and are justified from our past sins. We must take additional steps of "obedience of faith" in order to be allowed to "bear fruit for God." (There will be more about this in chapters 6, 7, and 8. That is what this class is all about.)

The "last Adam," of course, is Jesus, the Son of Man and God. He is God who took on flesh to become a prototype of the person we can become. His life on earth was the model for our new lives. He shed His blood as a propitiation for our sins, and He died, was buried, and resurrected so that our "old man of sin" in Adam might die with Him and our "new man" might be raised with Him to have "new life" outside of the "first Adam", a new life after our new prototype, Jesus, that can "bear fruit for God" while we are on earth, and a life that will be with God after we leave this earth.

“So also it is written, ‘the first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” (1 Corinthians 15:45).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among men.” (Romans 8:29).

5. What is the purpose of the law? (Romans 5:20; 7:7-12).

Romans 5:20 simply says that the Law came in that the transgression might increase. When we get to Romans 7:7-12, we'll get Paul's explanation of how the Law brought an increase in his understanding of sin and brought him to the knowledge that he was dead in his sins as a law breaker. As Paul said back in Romans 3: 20, "through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." And also in Romans 11:32, Paul said, "God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all." The object of the disobedience that he refers to is the law. The point is that one cannot or will not repent and be saved from the wrath of God until he realizes he is a law-breaker and sinner. As Paul said in Galatians 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." We can't be justified by keeping the law because we simply can't keep it. Therefore, we must turn to Christ in faith and let Him save us. That is a hard lesson for us to learn.

Would you believe that many of us, even after we become Christians and have been justified from our past sins by faith, still try to serve God

on our own as though by keeping the law? We may not be aware of it, but it happens. That's what this class is about. Now let's think for a minute what law this is that Paul is writing about. To the Jewish Christians who read this letter, the law that came to mind immediately was the Law of Moses. God's special Law for the Israelites. And the Israelite Christians understood that the Law of Moses was given to their forebears as they wandered in the desert long ago. It was given by God as a special extra law on top of the law that they, as human beings, already had written in their hearts. The Jewish Christians of Paul's time could understand all the points Paul made about law, since they could apply them to the Law of Moses.

But the Gentile Christians had never been subject to the Law of Moses and knew little about it. The Gentiles had a law to themselves, written by God in their hearts. The Gentile Christians of Paul's time could understand all the points Paul made about the law only by applying them to their own sense of law which God had written in their hearts. Most of us in the church today are Gentiles who have never been subject to the Law of Moses. All of the points Paul made about law are true and can be understood by us whether we have known of the Law of Moses or not. So I believe that the points Paul makes about law in the Roman letter usually apply to either law; the Law of Moses or the law written in hearts.

6. What makes grace abound? How might this concept be misused? (Romans 5:20; 6:1-2).

Sin makes grace abound. This concept might be misused if one said, "I should purposely continue in sin so that I can get an abundance of grace." Paul affirmed in Romans 3:8 that any idea of doing evil thinking that good might come of it is wrong. But think about this: We Christians do continue in sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us". (1 John 1:8). We continue to sin and, thankfully, grace continues to abound, if we continue to walk in obedience of faith. That's something of what this class is supposed to be about.

7. Make a list of things to which justification can be attributed? (Romans 5:1; 5:9; 5:16; 5:28; 5:19).

Justification is attributed to faith (5:1), blood of Christ (5:9), free gift (5:16), act of righteousness (5:18), and obedience of Christ (5:19). All of these, except faith, refer to the death of Christ on the cross.

8. Who are those whose sins were not like the transgressions of Adam? (Romans 5:14).

It seems likely that Paul referred to those who did not have verbal communication from God, i.e., the Gentiles mentioned in Romans 2:12-16. They sinned in violating the demands of the law written on their hearts, but they did not transgress an explicit command given by God as did Adam for they had not received an explicit verbal command.

9. and 10. What is the concept of the word "justification" in the Roman letter? (Romans 5:16, 18). The word "righteousness"? (Romans 5:17, 18, 21).

In Romans 5:16 the word "justification" is from the Greek word DIKAIOMA which means "declaration of right." In Romans 5: 18 the word "justification" is from the Greek word DIKAIOSIS which means "a setting right." The word is related to the Greek word DIKAOIS which means "just" or "righteous" and is used in Romans 3: 26 to indicate that God is "just."

The word "righteousness" is a translation of a kindred Greek word, DIKAIOSUNE which means "rightness" or "justice." "Righteousness" and "justice" convey the same idea when used to describe God. A. W. Tozer said, in his book "The Knowledge of the Holy", p. 82, "In the inspired Scriptures justice and righteousness are scarcely to be distinguished from each other." The same word in the original becomes in English either 'justice' or 'righteousness' almost at the whim of the translator."

Paul's letter to the Romans tells us that God is "just" in His

condemnation of us for our "sin" or "law-breaking." But the Roman letter also tells us that God is the "justifier" because, through His grace He provides the "justification" to forgive us for our sins. (Romans 3:26).

11. Why should we be concerned about transgression of law given to us by an invisible God?

We should be concerned because we are creatures of the One righteous invisible God, created with responsibility and accountability to Him. Although He is invisible, He is real. Just as surely as we exist, He exists. We have failed in our responsibility to keep His law and have become sinners, or law-breakers. There is henceforth laid up for us, as unforgiven sinners, wrath and condemnation by our righteous and just God." Our God is a consuming fire!" (Hebrews 12:29). "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" That is why we should be concerned about our "law breaking." That is why mankind needs the gospel of Christ.

12. Is there any sin that does not involve the breaking of God's law?

Apparently not. A great premise of Paul's Roman letter is that no people on earth since the Creation have ever lived without being subject to a law of God. In Romans 1:18-32 Paul made a great lament that all mankind since the creation of the world have suppressed truth which God has made known to them. In suppressing truth which God has revealed to them, they have failed to fulfill responsibilities which God has placed upon them, leaving them without excuse before God. Paul's conclusion in Romans 3:23 is that all people since the creation of the world have sinned by breaking law.

Paul finally says in Romans 5:19 that through Adam's disobedience the many (that is, all Adam's progeny) were made sinners. At this point in chapter 5 of the Roman letter Paul wants to get across the fact that we all (even Christians) sin because we have inherited from Adam a proclivity to sin. Because of our kinship to Adam we have all been constituted sinners. Paul wrote of the "law of sin and death" which abides in all of us when he said, "the many were made sinners."

13. What is the inherent nature of mankind with respect to sin? How did we get this nature? How does this nature affect our lives?

Our inherent nature is the nature which we inherited from our father/prototype Adam. In that inherent nature is a proclivity to sin. We act according to our nature and so we sin. John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8). We got this nature simply by being born into the world. We had no control over our birth into the family of Adam. As a result of our inherited nature, we continue in sin throughout life. Without assistance from Christ, we are not able to present ourselves as sanctified vessels to have Christ work and produce fruit in us. This inherent nature, without the application of Christ's gospel, brings about sin and death in us.

We might say that we were all born into the family whose surname is "sinner." Like the alcoholic who stands up before Alcoholics Anonymous and says, "I'm an alcoholic," we stand up and say "I am sinner!"

14. If a Christian allows his inherent nature to have ascendancy in his life, will it be possible for him to "bear fruit for God?"

When we turn to Christ, and by steps of obedience resulting in our baptism, we are forgiven of our past sins, we do not automatically cease to sin. Even as Christians, we continue to sin (as John said in 1 John 1:8). As we were baptized our old man of sin symbolically died and we received a new spiritual life which is acceptable to God for Christ's production of fruit in us. But, because our old man of sin is still with us, further steps of obedience are necessary for us to present our new life to God for Christ's use.

Our inherent old nature has a great hold on the faculties of our soul and it will be difficult for us to stop sinning. If we are not enabled to take advantage of the fact that our old man died spiritually and make progress against the sin which he continues to introduce into our life, it is impossible for us to "bear fruit for God."

15. What must "reign" in a Christian's life in order for him to "bear fruit for God?" (Romans 5:17).

"The gift of righteousness" must "reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17). Christ has made it possible for grace to "reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21). Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to "bear fruit for God." We must continue study of Romans 6, 7, and 8 to gain inspired instruction how we may take steps of progress to a fruitful Christian life.