

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: Rejecting God

February 6/7, 2021

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

Following God in a culture that doesn't is easier said than done. The book of Romans is full of foundational gospel truth that will teach us how our faith can influence the world around us, instead of letting others tell us what to believe – especially in the places where Christianity and culture collide.

Use our Weekly Reflection Guide, in community or through personal study, to live out what we're learning on the weekends. It's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you. Choose the questions that are meaningful to you, then be REAL with self, God or others as you reflect, respond and pray.

1. Reflect/Respond: This weekend, Pastor Matt challenged us to work through any personal offense we feel in regard to God's word. Offense itself isn't bad – if what offends us is what offends God. However, left unchecked, offense can move from doubts about God's word to disapproval of God. It's how we handle our offense that reflects our heart for God and His truth.

³ Here's how we can be sure that we've truly come to know God: if we keep his commands. ⁴ If someone claims, "I have come to know God *by experience*," yet doesn't keep God's commands, he is a phony and the truth finds no place in him. ⁵ But the love of God will be perfected within the one who obeys God's Word." 1 John 2:3-5 TPT

- Have you experienced offense [annoyance, irritation, anger] in regard to God's word?
- Why were you offended – was it disagreement, pride, conviction, lack of understanding, etc.?
- How did you work through that offense? If you haven't, are you willing to submit to God's authority now?
- Have a REAL conversation with God. He can handle our questions and doubts, but we cannot authentically live as followers of God if we're selectively obeying Him. Pray, asking God for what you need – whether that's increased faith, spiritual growth or a change of heart. Invite Him to do that work in you.

Cultivate Community: If you're struggling to believe or obey God's word, seek out someone you trust to encourage and instruct you in your faith. The devil would love nothing more than to derail you, so wisely choose the voice you invite in. We're here to help too. Visit sandalschurch.com/next to connect with our ministers.

2. Rejecting God's authority: God alone has the authority to decide what is right, wrong and just. He delivers us that truth through His word. When we rely on other sources – whether that's our own ideas/opinions or those of others – to determine truth, we are rejecting God's authority. While culture may celebrate our "free thinking," as followers of Christ, we will answer to Him for what we do with what we know.

¹² For the word of God is alive and active...it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4:11-12 NIV

- When faced with a "what's right, what's wrong" dilemma, what is your first response? Do you turn to God and His word, pray, trust your instincts, ask a friend, seek out someone in authority, etc.?
- How is that helping you trust God more? If it's not, how would you like to grow in this area?

3. God's moral standard: God gives us purpose, meaning and blessing. He is a Father who provides and protects. If we choose to create our own moral standard and live outside of God's design, we risk the loss of His blessings. Imagine how it breaks God's heart when we live in such a way that what He needs to protect us from is ourselves?

²⁰ What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. ²¹ What sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think themselves so clever." Isaiah 5:20-21 NLT

- What is one way you've either found purpose, meaning or blessing by following God?
- Who in your life could benefit from hearing what God has done for you? We not only have a responsibility to live out God's truth, but to share it. Pray about the opportunity to start that conversation.

Dig Deeper: Read Isaiah Chapter 5 for a beautiful picture of the blessings God provides His people and the consequences of rejecting the law of the Lord.