

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: How Faith Can Fix Your Life

March 13/14, 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. Identifying the REAL problem: Too often we rely on our self-diagnosis of the issues in our life, rather than turning to God – who sees and knows us - and asking Him to identify the REAL problem.

- When was the last time you invited God to show you how you need to change or grow?
- If you've done so recently, in what ways have you experienced progress?
- If you haven't done so recently, what's keeping you from asking God to do this work in your life? Are you ready to have that REAL conversation with Him now?

2. Separation from God: All sin moves us away from God. If we've placed our faith in Jesus, sin won't steal our salvation, but it can damage our relationship with God leaving us feeling disconnected or even cut off.

"It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore." Isaiah 59:2 NLT

- Have you experienced a time you felt disconnected from God? What do you think caused the distance?
- What happened to restore that connection?

Cultivate Confession Read 1 John 1:8-11 and Luke 5:32. Confession draws us closer to God and frees us to experience the fullness of our relationship with Him. Is there anything you need to confess to God today?

3. Separation from Others: Pastor Matt challenged us to wake up to the fact that we ALL fall short of God's standard. We live among, do community with, work alongside, have family, friends, spouses and kids who are all sinners – just like we are. Rather than blaming people, we need to start seeing sin.

"¹⁴Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. ¹⁵Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many." Hebrews 12:14-15 NLT

- As you consider your relationships, are there any in which bitterness or offense has caused trouble?
- Do you have room to pursue more peace and give more grace? Can you forgive as you've been forgiven?

4. Yet God, in His grace: When God sees us, He doesn't see our sin – He sees Jesus. He sees the person He has created us to be and the plans that He has for us. Sin robs us of the blessing of fully living life with Jesus.

"²³For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin." Romans 3:23-25 NLT

Close in prayer, express your gratitude to God for His gifts of grace and forgiveness. God wants us to live in those gifts and so, if you're battling shame for sin – past or present – lay that at His feet and find rest in His presence. Invite God to show you how you can continue to grow into the person He has created you to be, acknowledging that you are a work in progress. Continue this conversation with Him in the days and weeks ahead inviting God to work in you – spiritually, emotionally and relationally.