Family Discipleship Guide

Romans 2:25-29 | God Wants Our Hearts

Big Idea: God is not impressed by outward religion. He desires hearts transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Family Goal

Tonight's goal is to help everyone understand:

- Going to church doesn't save us.
- Having Christian parents doesn't save us.
- Looking like we have it together doesn't save us.
- Jesus saves us and transforms us from the inside out.

Key Verse:

"A person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people." (*Romans 2:29* NLT)

1. Opening Activity: The Wrapped Gift

Wrap an empty box or use a gift bag.

Ask:

"Who wants this gift?"

After someone volunteers, open it and reveal that it's empty.

Discussion Questions:

Children:

Why did you want the gift?

What made it look valuable?

Teens:

Have you ever bought something because it looked impressive?

Why are people often drawn to appearances?

Adults:

How easy is it to judge people based on what we see?

How often do we focus on appearances in our own lives?

Sometimes we spend a lot of effort making the outside look good while ignoring what's happening inside. That is exactly what Paul is talking about in Romans 2.

2. Read the Scripture Together

Read *Romans 2:25-29* aloud.

Simple Summary for Kids:

Some Jewish people thought they were right with God because they belonged to God's special people and followed religious traditions. Paul says God is looking for something much deeper: a heart that loves Him.

3. Understanding the Context

- The church in Rome was made up of - Jewish believers and Gentile believers
- These groups often argued about - Traditions, Customs, The Law, and Circumcision
- The Jewish believers were tempted to believe - "We're God's people, so we're better."

Paul says: Being connected to religious traditions is not enough. Everyone needs Jesus.

Discussion Questions

Children:

Have you ever thought you were better than someone else because you knew more about something?

Teens:

Why do people compare themselves to others?

Why does comparison often lead to pride?

Adults:

Where do Christians today place their identity besides Christ?

What religious activities can we wrongly depend on?

4. The Law Shows Us We Need Jesus

Illustration: Mirror

Hold up a mirror.

Do we use a mirror to see if our face is dirty?

- Yes, It shows where the dirt is.

Can a mirror wash your face?

- No.

–The Law works like a mirror.

The Law shows:

- Our sin
- Our selfishness
- Our pride

But it cannot save us….Only Jesus can.

Paul's point: The Law reveals our need for a Savior.

Discussion Questions:

Children:

Have you ever broken a rule?

Why do rules exist?

Teens:

What happens when people believe they can earn God's love?

Adults:
Where do you find yourself trying to prove your worth?
How does grace differ from performance?
Family Application

Ask:
What are some ways people try to earn God's approval today?

Possible answers:
- Church attendance
- Giving money
- Reading the Bible
- Helping people

These are good things, but none of them save us.

5. God Looks at the Heart
Read *Romans 2:29* again.
"A true Jew is one whose heart is right with God."

House Illustration
-Imagine a beautiful house.

-Outside has: Fresh paint, New roof, Perfect lawn, and Beautiful flowers

-Inside has: Mold, No electricity, Broken plumbing, and Trash everywhere

Ask:
Would you want to live there?
Why not?

Discussion Questions
Children:
Which part of the house matters most?
Why?
Teens:
Why is it easier to fix appearances than character?
What pressures make teenagers focus on image?
Adults:
What areas of life are easiest to fake?
Why do we spend so much energy looking successful?

-Read *Matthew 23:27-28*
Jesus said the Pharisees looked beautiful on the outside but were full of corruption on the inside.

Ask:
What's the danger of looking spiritual without actually loving God?

6. Heart Check Activity
Give everyone thirty seconds of quiet.

Ask each person to think:
Children:
Am I obedient when nobody is watching?
Do I tell the truth?
Teens:
Am I the same person online as I am in person?
What am I pretending is okay?
Adults:
Am I hiding any struggles?
Have I become more concerned with appearance than transformation?

After a minute ask:
Which is easier: changing behavior or surrendering your heart to God?

Discuss together.

7. The Holy Spirit Changes Us
Read *Colossians 2:11.*
Paul says Jesus performs a spiritual circumcision.

-That meansJesus cuts away sinful attitudes and desires.

The Christian life is not: "Try harder."

The Christian life is: "Trust Jesus and follow the Holy Spirit."

Discussion Questions
Children:
What is one thing Jesus wants to help you do better?
Teens:
Why can't self-improvement alone solve our deepest problems?
Adults:
How have you seen God change you over time?

8. Family Response Time
Give everyone a note card.

Ask:
What is one thing God may want to remove from your life?

Examples: Pride - Anger - Laziness - Gossip - Fear - Jealousy - Dishonesty - People-pleasing

Allow each person to write privately.

Everyone pray silently:
"Lord, help me surrender this to You."

9. Gospel Conversation
Ask:
Children:
Why did Jesus die on the cross?
Teens:
What did Jesus accomplish that we never could?
Adults:
How does the gospel free us from trying to prove ourselves?

Paul is showing us that:
-We aren't good enough.
-We can't save ourselves.
-We need Jesus completely.

Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn't live.
Jesus died the death we deserved.
Jesus rose again so we could receive forgiveness and new life.

Family Prayer
Father, thank You for seeing beyond our outward appearance and loving us anyway. Forgive us for the times we've focused on looking good instead of becoming more like Jesus. Help us stop depending on our own efforts and trust fully in Christ. Holy Spirit, transform our hearts and make us more like Jesus every day. Show us what needs to be cut away so we can walk closely with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Family Challenge for the Week

Every evening ask:
"What did God work on in my heart today?"
Not:

What did I accomplish?
What did I achieve?

Instead:

How did God convict me?
How did God change me?
Where did I trust Jesus today?

Family Takeaway: God is not looking for perfect appearances. He desires surrendered hearts that are being transformed by the Holy Spirit.