

The Turnaround

A Series on Romans 1-8

Hillside Church of Marin - Small Group Discussion Guide

Part 1: In Need of a Turnaround, 02/11/24, Romans 1-2

Main Point: We all face the problem of sin in our lives and in our world. We need God's grace to help us turn around.

Getting Started

Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you were headed in the right direction only to realize you were turned around and were actually headed in the wrong direction? What helped you realize you needed to turn around?

Often we find ourselves moving away from God not towards God and his will for us. Paul was profoundly aware of his sins and broken past. God turned him around in a dramatic way. Why is awareness of our need for grace so critical if we are going to have sound theological/biblical beliefs?

Discussion:

*Highly recommended that everyone read **Romans 1 & 2** before coming to group.*

God's Response: Before this week had you ever thought about God's wrath? Read Romans 1:18. Why is it that God's wrath is actually part of good news? Why is wrath better than if God were indifferent?

In Romans 1 and 2 Paul spells out various ways we respond to the problem of sin. Let's think about three and where we find them in our own lives:

1. Denial: We live as if God does not exist. (Romans 1:21)
 - What are some of the consequences that a person faces who lives as if God does not exist?
2. Comparison: We judge the sin of others but not our own. (Read Romans 2:1-3, Matthew 7:3-5)
 - What are the signs or indicators that we are focusing on the sins of others while ignoring the sin in our own life? Why is this dangerous to us/others?
3. Religious or Moral Effort: We seek to earn God's approval by "being good." (Romans 2:17-29)
 - If we compare ourselves to people who are living deep in sin and are rebellious toward God, how can this bolster a false sense of self-righteousness?
 - If we compare ourselves to Jesus, what does this do to our arrogance and self-reliance?

Which of these three responses do you tend to get stuck in the most? Why?

If these won't help us turn around in a life changing way, then what does Romans 1:16-17 tell us the good news is all about? It's ok if you don't understand everything Paul says here. In many ways this is a summary of the next few weeks of teaching. But based on what you know, what does this mean? Can you try and paraphrase it?

What is a practical step that you can make that will move you toward fully embracing a turn-around in your life, embracing the grace of Jesus rather than denial, comparison, or self effort?

The Big Picture (Video): If you have time, to help you introduce Romans to your group, you might want to show them this video from BibleProject.com: [CLICK HERE](#) if you don't have time feel free to forward them the link!

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Prayer Time: As you come to the close of this time,

- Encourage your group to take a few minutes privately and ask God for forgiveness for the times when we have walked toward denial, comparison or moral effort rather than leaning into the grace of Jesus?
- Ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to assist us to look honestly at our own sinfulness, then repent of the sin in our hearts and life.
- Pray for freedom from belief in moral effort and for a deeper understanding of God's Grace in our lives.

Final Notes: Encourage everyone to read the text for next week: Romans 3-4.