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# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks  
Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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## Inward and Outward Romans 2:12-24, 28-29

### Lesson Background and Introduction

Paul wrote the letter to the church in Rome in about AD 58, near the end of his third missionary journey. He had not visited Rome but hoped to do so in the near future (Romans 1:10). Despite this lack of firsthand familiarity, Paul was quite knowledgeable about issues causing dissention in the church of Rome. Conflict between Christians of Jewish and Gentile backgrounds was one of these issues. This may have been sharpened by the expulsion of all Jews from the city through an edict issued by Emperor Claudius in AD 49 (see Acts 18:2). By the time Paul wrote, Claudius was dead, and Jews had returned to Rome. They included Jewish Christians. Gentile Christians had necessarily assumed leading roles in the church at Rome while the Jewish Christians were gone. We speculate that Paul knew that some of the returnees had attempted to assert their previous authority. In so doing, they may have elevated Jewish Christians above Gentile Christians. Circumcision, a sign of the old covenant, may have become a flash point in this conflict. For the Hebrew people, circumcision began with Abraham (Genesis 17) as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. That was in about 2000 BC. About 550 years later, circumcision of male babies was established (codified) to occur when the baby was eight days old (Leviticus 12:3). This tradition began with Abraham and his son Isaac (Genesis 21:4). The God-given instructions to Abraham seem to have presumed that the man knew what circumcision was, thus implying that circumcision was practiced by others before him. The antiquity of circumcision outside of Judaism was confirmed in 2021 when scientists “digitally unwrapped” the intact mummy of Pharaoh Amenhotep I (reigned about 1525–1504 BC), discovering that he had been circumcised. In Paul’s day of the first century AD, neither the Romans nor the Greeks practiced circumcision. Greeks viewed circumcision as an intentional marring or mutilation of the ideal body. Prohibition of the practice had been a notable factor in the Maccabean Revolt, which began in 167 BC (see the nonbiblical 1 Maccabees 1:60–61; 2:45–46; 2 Maccabees 6:7–10). Paul addressed the implications of the circumcision issue at length in the book of Galatians. But he also did so in Romans 2 - today’s lesson.

The idea of the circumcised heart was powerful for Moses and Paul, and must be for us today. Can we humble ourselves and leave behind our tendencies to be stiff-necked? Can we trust fully in Christ for our salvation, not our own good works? Paul’s exposition for the rest of the book of Romans required both Jews and Gentiles realize their need for God’s salvation because all are under the power of sin (Romans 3:9). For both groups, hope comes not from keeping the law, whether it be the law of the conscience or the Law of Moses. It comes from faith in Christ.

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**  
God wants to hear your heart

**COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:**  
Whatever you need to tell the Lord today, just say it, from the heart

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**  
So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm

**(Joel 2:13 NKJV)**

*(from "Our Daily Bread", Oct 18, 2016)*

**Series: God’s Law Is Love**

**UNIT 2: Faith Triumphs,  
Law Fails**

**NEXT WEEK**

**Old and New  
(Rom 7:1-12)**

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **Just Judgment (Rom 2:12-16)**

#### *Just judgment based on the sin versus Law (12-13)*

Just because of not repenting (Matt 11:21-22)

Just because of prior knowledge (Luke 12:47-48)

Just because sin that was overlooked will be judged at the appointed time (Acts 17:30-31)

Just because of not obeying the law (Rom 3:19-21)

#### *Just judgment based on obedience (14-15)*

Obedience is required and no excuse will be accepted (Rom 1:18-20)

Obedience that leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16)

Obedience that leads to the praise of God by others (2 Cor 9:13)

Obedience that keeps us remaining in God's love (John 15:10)

Obedience that leads to the reward of blessings (Deut. 28:1-6)

Obedience that brings the reward of freedom (James 1:25)

#### *Just judgment by Jesus (16)*

A judgment that will bring everything to light (1 Cor 4:5)

A judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)

A judgment entrusted to Jesus by God (John 5:21-22)

A judgment that all will stand before (Rom 14:10)

### **False Faithfulness (Rom 2:17-24)**

#### *By boasting about works (17)*

Because boasting about works ignores God's gift (Eph 2:8-9)

Because boasting about works ignores faith (Rom 3:27-28)

Because boasting about works ignores grace (Rom 11:6)

Because boasting about works ignores God's purposes (2 Tim 1:8-9)

Because boasting about works ignores God's mercy (Titus 3:4-7)

#### *By self-confidence in knowledge (18-20)*

Because human knowledge is frustrated by God (1 Cor 1:18-21)

Because human knowledge is foolishness in God's sight (1 Cor 3:18-19)

Because true knowledge comes from God (Eph 1:6-9)

Because human knowledge puffs one up (1 Cor 8:1-2)

Because human knowledge makes one wise in his own eyes (Prov 26:12)

#### *By being a hypocrite (21-24)*

Because hypocrisy shuts the kingdom of heaven from others (Matt 23:13)

Because hypocrisy causes us to fail seeing our own sin (Luke 6:42)

Because hypocrisy causes divisions and obstacles (Rom 16:17-18)

Because hypocrisy causes actions to not agree with words (Titus 1:15-16)

Because hypocrisy causes one to neglect important things (Matt 23:23-24)

### **True Identity (Rom 2:28-29)**

#### *True identity does not judge on outward but inward (28)*

Because the outward can produce wrong impressions (2 Cor 10:7)

Inward because God knows the heart (Luke 16:15)

Inward because God understands motives (1 Chron 28:9)

Inward because God searches the heart and mind (Jer 17:10)

Inward because nothing is hidden from God (Heb 4:13)

Because outward judgments are not valid (John 7:24)

#### *True identity based on the circumcision of the heart (29)*

Because it removes stubbornness (Deut 10:16)

Because it aids in loving God (Deut 30:6)

Because it avoids God's wrath (Jer 4:4)

Because it is done by God only (Col 2:11)

Because it is a way to avoid putting confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:3)