



For Further Study



Read and meditate on the passage below:

28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:28-31)

This passage comes from Paul's letter to the church in Rome. In this section, he argues that strict adherence of the Jewish law, called the Torah, is not the way to salvation. For many salvation is about what happens when we die, but it seems that much of the salvation of the people under Roman oppression (much like the Jews of old) was about freedom to live meaningful and authentic lives here on earth. If this is the case, then what Paul is arguing for is relational connection with God that propels a person into living in a way that gives purpose and vitality.

So, for Paul, exclusively following the rules (which were intended to be a means to a greater end) yields unfulfillment. This leads to a second point; if the faithfulness of Jesus for all people is what matters (not just following the law), then meaningful life can be found by those outside of Judaism, oftentimes referred to as the Gentiles.

Paul uses the imagery of the Jewish inclusion ritual, circumcision, to talk about how God welcomes everyone through the faithful act of God's love in Jesus. This compels us to uphold the guidance of Jesus to live out a loving acceptance of all people just as God welcomes all of us.



REFLECTION:

Consider whom you tend to exclude in your interactions and why you exclude them.

PRACTICE:

Spend time with someone very different than you and ask open ended questions.