

RIGHT THIS WAY

"A BETTER MAN"

ROMANS 5:12-21

This Week's Core Competency

Salvation by Grace – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 15:22 Paul says, "as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive." The apostle is talking about two outcomes, the outcome of one's connection to Adam versus the outcome of one's connection to Christ. The apostle succinctly unpacks the implications of solidarity with Adam versus solidarity with Christ in two *comparisons* using "just as" and "so also" in Romans 5:18-19.

First, he says, "just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all people (cf., "in Adam all die") so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all people" (cf., "in Christ all will be made alive") (v. 18). Adam's one act of disobedience involved others directly; it did not merely set a bad example. The condemnation of "all people" is his legacy. All people are condemned because "all sinned" (v. 12). Exactly how, Paul does not say. At the very least, it seems clear that "one man's trespass *resulted in the corruption of human nature, which caused all people to sin, and so brought condemnation*" (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 326). However, the words "all sinned" likely mean more. They suggest humanity's "solidarity" with their

Man must be found righteous in God's court, even though it be by the grace of the Judge.

– C. K. Barrett

progenitor, which suggests that "all sinned" must be given some kind of corporate meaning. One commentator explains the rather obscure notion of solidarity this way: "Paul can say both 'all die because all sin' and 'all die because Adam sinned' with no hint of conflict because the sin of Adam is the sin of all. All people, therefore, stand condemned 'in Adam,' guilty by reason of the sin all committed 'in him' (326). Whether solidarity with Adam is explained in terms of *sinning in and with Adam* or *because of a corrupt nature inherited from him* matters little. In either case, union *in Adam* clearly brings death and condemnation.

On the other hand, union *in Christ* clearly brings life. Christ's one act of righteousness, which likely refers to his death on the cross (Php 1:8), involved others directly, too. The justification that brings life for "all people" is his legacy. This is not to say that "all people" without qualification are justified. It means that all people in solidarity with Christ are justified, just as all people in solidarity with Adam are condemned. What's more, the justification, about which Paul speaks, brings life. One commentator explains, "The word 'justification' is set over against 'condemnation,' but something is added, namely, the observation that justification is more than the antithesis of condemnation, more than the setting aside of an adverse verdict due to sin, more than the imputation of divine righteousness. It is the passport to life, the sharing of the life of God (cf., v. 21)" (Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:64).

Second, he says, "just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners (cf., 'in Adam all die') so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made

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righteous" (cf., 'in Christ all will be made alive') (v. 19). The contrasting legacies of Adam and Christ turn on the meaning of the word "made." It likely means that in Adam people "stand constituted sinners," that is, they are placed into that category, which suggests that they sin because they are sinners and not vice versa. In the words of one commentator, "Not only did death rule over them, not only did they come under the sentence of condemnation, but sinnership itself became theirs by reason of the sin of Adam" (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 204). It also means that in Christ people "stand constituted righteous," which does not mean they are morally upright but acquitted, cleared of all charges. "Righteous" in this context is a legal or forensic rather than a moral term.

A comparison of union in Adam versus union in Christ reveals a stark contrast. Our solidarity with Adam prior to salvation entailed our condemnation and us being made sinners. Our solidarity with Christ following salvation entails our justification and being made righteous.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Romans 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned-

13 To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin

and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 12.
- * Underline "just as" in vv. 12, 18, 19 and "so also" in vv. 18, 19 indicating *comparison*.
- * Circle "sin" in vv. 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21.
- * Double underline "all" in vv. 12, 18 and "the many" in vv. 15, 19.
- * Circle "death" in v. 12.
- * Highlight "all sinned" in v. 12.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 13, 15, 16, 20.
- * Circle "reign/ed" in vv. 14, 17, 21.
- * Circle "pattern" in v. 14.
- * Underline "not like" in vv. 15, 16.
- * Circle "trespass" in vv. 15, 16, 17, 18, 20.
- * Bracket "how much more" in vv. 15, 17.
- * Box "consequently" indicating *result* in v. 18.
- * Underline "so that" indicating *purpose* in vv. 20, 21.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Describe the relationship of sin and death.
2. Explain the *contrast* in verse 13.
3. What does the fact that "death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses" (v. 14) prove?
4. In verse 15, Paul *contrasts* the outcome of what Christ did ("the gift") to the outcome of what Adam did ("the trespass"). Explain what the words "how much more" and "overflow" indicate about the outcome of what Christ did.
5. Explain the *contrast* in verse 16.
6. In verse 17, Paul argues that the act of one man, Jesus Christ, brings consequences even more glorious (cf., "how much more") than those of the one man (Adam) were deleterious. How so?
7. If according to verse 18 Adam's act brought condemnation to all, without exception, must we not conclude that Christ's act brought justification and life for all, without exception? If not, why not?
8. To whom does "the many" refer in verse 19a and 19b?
9. Explain the *contrast* in verse 20.
10. **Discussion:** "Sin" and "grace" are *personified* as rulers. Talk about their subjects, domains, and rule.

At the outset of this study, we must acknowledge the elephant in the room. Romans 5:12-21 isn't easy reading. One commentator freely recognizes this fact in his brief overview of these verses. He writes: "This difficult portion of the Epistle, packed with close reasoning and theological terminology, stands at the very heart of the development of Paul's thought. He has presented all men as sinners and Christ as the one who has died to redeem them. Now he delves into the question How does it come about that all men—with no exception but Jesus Christ—are in fact sinners? In answer, he goes all the way back to the first man Adam to affirm that what he did has affected the whole of mankind, involving everyone in sin and death. But over this record of disaster and loss he puts the countermeasures taken on behalf of the race by another man, Jesus Christ, of which all are potential beneficiaries" (Harrison, 10:61). Clarifying the connection of these verses to Paul's previous paragraphs, another adds: "The passage shows why those who have been justified and reconciled [vv. 1-11] can be so certain that they will be saved from wrath and share in 'the glory of God': it is because Christ's act of obedience ensures eternal life for all those who are 'in Christ'" (Moo, 316).

One of the things that makes the passage difficult reading is its apparent disjointedness. Paul begins with a comparison that he never completes. In verse 12 he says "just as," which leads the reader to expect "so also" as in verses 18, 19, and 21, but then he turns aside to elaborate on the fact that "all sinned" by pointing out that "death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come." And then in a series of comparisons involving *contrast*, he continues to elaborate on the fact that Adam was a *pattern* or *type* of Christ. In verse 18 he picks up where he left off in verse 12 with a number of comparisons that serve to summarize and clarify what he has said to that point.

In verse 12, Paul establishes the necessary connection between sin and death and affirms that sin entered the world through one man, Adam. Tragically, his sin not only affected him, but it also affected all those related to him. He infected the entire human race with sin. Death through sin then spread to all men "because all sinned." Exactly how "all sinned" Paul does not say, but clearly his words imply that Adam's sin "*resulted in the corruption of human nature, which caused all people to sin, and so brought condemnation on all*" (326). Perhaps his

words imply even more, as many theologians suggest—even though they disagree as to what. "All sinned" should likely be given a corporate meaning, which would mean that "all sinned" with Adam, or in other words, God reckoned Adam's sin to be humanity's sin because of humanity's solidarity with Adam, whose name means "humanity."

In verses 13-14, Paul explains that even though *sin was in the world* as a result of Adam's disobedience, "no account is kept of sins" (GNT) when there is no law. The fact that "death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses" proves as much; even those who did not sin by breaking a command died. Put differently, because death comes through sin, since everyone died during the intervening period between Adam and Moses, Enoch notwithstanding, when there were no commands to break, sin had to be present. It was still all-pervasive and mortal in its effect, albeit apart from explicit commands with penalties attached.

In verses 15-17, Paul elaborates on what he meant by "Adam, who was a *pattern* of the one to come" (v. 14). He develops an analogy between them in two comparisons involving contrast. In both cases the *comparison* involves the universal impact of the acts of each; the *contrast* involves the different legacies resulting from these acts. One commentator explains: "Adam is the only Old Testament character who is explicitly identified as a type of Christ in the New Testament. Adam's act had universal impact and prefigured Christ's act, which also had universal impact. The point of similarity between Adam and Christ is that what each did affected many others. Each communicated what belonged to him (his legacy) to those he represented" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Romans," 2015 ed., 73, www.soniclight.com). What one did in each case affected not one but "the many."

According to the first (v. 15), the gift resulting from Christ's gracious act is unlike the consequence of Adam's trespass. As a consequence of Adam's trespass "the many died," but as a consequence of Christ's gracious act God's grace and gift "overflow" to "the many." Paul's point is that the blessings that come through Christ far surpass the curse that comes through Adam. This contrast is one of degree. On the expression "how much more" one commentator writes: "The work of Christ not merely cancelled the effects of Adam's transgression so as to put man back into a state of innocence under a probation such as their progenitor faced, but rather gives to man far

more than he lost in Adam, more indeed that Adam ever had. The gift, prompted by grace, includes righteousness (v.17) and life (v.18) which is later defined as eternal life (v. 21)" (Harrison, 10:63).

According to the second (vv. 16-17), the result of Christ's gracious act is unlike the result of Adam's trespass. Adam's trespass brought condemnation, but Christ's gracious act brought justification (v. 16). Adam's trespass resulted in the reign of death, but Christ's gracious act resulted in the reign of those who receive his gracious provision in life. This contrast is one of consequence. Adam's act brought condemnation (v. 16b) and death (v. 17a); Christ's brought righteousness (v. 16b) and life (v. 17b).

In verses 18-20, Paul picks up where he left off in verse 12, but rather than completing the comparison with "so also," he introduces two more comparisons to more or less summarize his point. According to the first, (v. 18), just as Adam's one trespass resulted in condemnation for all men, so also Christ's one act of righteousness resulted in justification for all men. In other words, Christ willingly died on the cross so that all who identify with him by faith are declared righteous. Paul isn't teaching universalism here. All those in solidarity with Adam are condemned; all those in solidarity with Christ are justified. According to the second (v. 19), just as the disobedience of Adam resulted in "the many" being made sinners, so also the

obedience of Christ resulted in "the many" being made righteous. Paul is speaking in forensic terms, as one commentator explains: "In both parts of the verse, then, we are dealing with a real, though 'forensic,' situation: people actually become sinners in solidarity with Adam—by God's decision; people actually become 'righteous' in solidarity with Christ—again, by God's decision" (Moo, 346).

In verses 20-21, Paul addresses the part the law plays in the whole matter. He says it "came in beside" with a purpose: "that the trespass might increase." Ironically, its purpose was not to correct the situation created by Adam but to make it worse in some sense. The law increased the trespass. Paul has already said that "sin is not taken into account when there is no law" (v. 12). Once the law came people became accountable for breaking it. What's more, given human nature, the law has a "forbidden fruits" effect. Paul puts it this way in 7:7b-8, "I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.' But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire." The law certainly intensifies the seriousness of sin. Fortunately, by God's grace, "where sin increased, grace increased all the more," and this so that grace and its effects rather than sin and its effects might rule over those in Christ Jesus.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

Adam's legacy is death through sin and condemnation for all those in solidarity with him, whereas Christ's legacy is life through righteousness and justification for all those in solidarity with him through faith.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the message of Romans 1:1-7 and your response to it.

Explain why the message of this passage should not be dismissed as too theological.

What verses from Romans 5:12-21 would you consider using in a gospel presentation?

What is your personal takeaway from this passage?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 12 **therefore** Lit., "because of this" [dia touto]. The phrase suggests that what follows in vv. 12-21 is a conclusion Paul is drawing from something he argued earlier, perhaps in 1:18-5:21, 5:1-11, or just v. 11. But there is no consensus. One author says, "Suffice it to know that we have here a conclusion intimately germane to the doctrine unfolded earlier" (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 180). Another argues that "the verses make better sense when viewed as the basis for what has just been said [vv. 1-11] . . . We would then paraphrase the transition at 5:12 as follows: 'in order to accomplish this [namely, that God has promised to save all those who are justified and reconciled through Christ], there exists a life-giving union between Christ and his own that is similar to, but more powerful than, the death-producing union between Adam and all his own'" (Moo, 317-18).

v. 12 **just as** "Paul starts a comparison in this verse that he does not (grammatically) finish. Having introduced his comparison with reference to Adam and his sin, Paul becomes 'sidetracked' on this point and abandons the comparison, only to reintroduce and complete it later in the text. It is not until vv. 18-19 that the comparison is fully made" (319).

v. 12 **sin** Individual sins are the fruit of sin, their root. "In the present instance, then, the 'sin' that enters the world is more than an individual sin; it is the bridgehead that paves the way for 'sinning' as a condition of humanity" (319). One commentator calls Adam's one sin "the opening in the dike that led to the inundation, the poison that entered at one point and penetrated every unit of man's corporate life" (Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:61). Another likens it to a vapor that entered humanity through the front door and then penetrated the whole house (John A. Witmer, "Romans," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 458).

v. 12 **death** "Paul frequently uses 'death' and related words to designate a 'physico-spiritual entity'-'total death,' the penalty incurred for sin. Here, then, Paul may focus on physical death as the evidence, the outward manifestation of this total death; or, better, he may simply have in mind this death in both its physical and spiritual aspects" (Moo, 320).

v. 12 **all sinned** "Adam's act resulted in his descendants sinning and dying. We inherit Adam's nature that was sinful, and this accounts for the fact that we all sin and die. We are sinners, not only because we commit acts of sin, but also because Adam's sin corrupted the human race, and made sin and punishment inevitable for his descendants as well as for himself" (Constable, 70). Put differently, "one man's trespass resulted in the corruption of human nature, which caused all people to sin, and so brought condemnation on all men" (see Moo's critique, 326). Many theologians think "because all sinned" entailed more, e.g., "all sinned' must be given some kind of 'corporate' meaning: 'sinning' not as voluntary acts of sin in 'one's own person,' but sinning 'in and with' Adam . . . All people, therefore, stand condemned 'in Adam,' guilty by reason of the sin all committed 'in him' . . . For Paul, Adam, like Christ, was a corporate figure, whose sin could be regarded at the same time as the sin of all his descendants" (Moo, 326, 28; cf., Murray's comments on "solidarity," 186).

v. 14 **pattern** "Pattern" translates the word *typos*, ordinarily rendered "type." But how can Adam be a type of Christ; the two are so dissimilar? "It is in this sense that Adam is a 'type' of Christ: the universal impact of his one act prefigures the universal impact of Christ's act" (Moo, 334). "It is noteworthy that the only Old Testament character to be called explicitly a 'type' of Christ in the New Testament is Adam. And there is fitness in this, even if the typological relation between them is one of contrast rather than resemblance: in Paul's thought Christ replaces the first man as the archetype and representative of a new humanity" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, TNTC, 131).

v. 15 **the many** "Paul probably used the phrase 'the many' to contrast them (each group) with Adam or Christ respectively, who were individuals (cf. Isa. 53:11-12; Mark 10:45). In the case of Adam, 'the many' means all people, but in the case of Christ, 'the many' means all who receive the benefit of His saving act by faith, namely, all believers" (Constable, 74). "'The many' refers simply to a great number; how inclusive that number might be can be determined only by context. In the protasis of this verse, 'the many' clearly includes all people; for Paul has already said that 'all died' with reference to the sin of Adam (v. 12). But in the apodosis ('how much more . . .') 'the many' must be qualified by Paul's insistence in v. 17 that only those who 'receive' the gift benefit from Christ's act. Here it refers to 'a great number' of people (but not all of them) or to 'all who respond to the gift of grace'" (Moo, 336-37).

v. 17 **reign in life** Given the parallel expression "death reigned," we would expect "life reigned" here. "While the result of Adam's act is the subject in the first clause—'death reigned through the one'—it is human beings who are the subject in the second—'those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness' (Moo, 338).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

God's riches at Christ's expense. This acrostic to explain the word "grace" is familiar to some of us. Grace was certainly expensive to God as it cost Him His only Son. God's unmerited favor is granted to us though we are undeserving. I am grateful for a Heavenly Father who extends such mercy to me. I often stand in need of it! However, many times in my parenting journey rather than offering grace to my kids, I enacted judgment instead. I wonder if I missed some opportunities to model this beautiful gift of God to them. This quote from Melissa Kruger is resonating with me today. "Gracious parenting begins by daily recognizing our own need for grace. We must guard our hearts lest we fall into the trap of the unmerciful servant, who accepted the master's forgiveness of his own debt, but failed to extend mercy for a much lesser offense. Considering our inability to change outside of the Spirit's work fosters both a prayerful and patient attitude towards our children. As they struggle to obey the biblical standards we put before them, we have the opportunity to lovingly point them to Jesus. Only by his grace can their hearts learn to joyfully proclaim, "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" Psalm 119:32 (from *Walking with God in the Season of Motherhood*). Try extending some grace in that hard parenting moment this week.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Romans 5:12-21

1. How did sin enter the world (see Genesis 3)?
2. What is God's plan to make people right with Him?
3. Explain verse 19 in your own words.

What Do You Think

Grace has been defined as God showing favor or kindness to those who don't deserve it. Because of sin, none of us deserve it. What would you say to God in response to His gift of grace?

What R U Going To Do

Because we have been shown great grace, we should extend that same kindness to others. You will have an opportunity to show grace this week to someone who made you angry or sad. What happened? How did you feel afterwards?

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

Romans 5: 19 - *For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

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Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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