

## Romans: Verse-By-Verse

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Romans 2:21-24

### Student Notes:

**Last Time: Dealing with the Jewish moralizers.** Paul focuses on their rights and privileges but then asks them if they have lived up to their status as God's chosen people.

Today's Text: Paul points out the various beliefs and prohibitions of the Jews and then ask them how they are living up to them. (It's rhetorical; they aren't living up to the covenant).

Five questions that compare their claims to their lives:

**1. "Do You Teach Yourself?"** -- "You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?" - v. 21

John MacArthur: "What good does it do to teach something you don't live?" See Matthew 23:2-4

There is a deceptive illusion that to teach is to do – when, in fact, its more than possible for us to teach and not do. See: I Corinthians 9:27

**2. "Do You Steal?"** – "You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?" – v.21

- Allusions to robbery and extortion: Isaiah 56:11-12; Ezekiel 22:6, 12
- Stealing from God: Malachi 3:8-9
- Stealing from the poor: Matthew 21:13; 23:14

**3. "Do You Commit Adultery?"** – "You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?" – v. 22

Sexual purity was one of the hallmarks of Judaism. All of Judaistic society was built upon the principle of the sanctity of marriage and family.

By Jesus' day: Religious leaders were making a mockery of marriage, divorce, and adultery. The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:27; 31-32

Two Issues: Religious leaders committing adultery in their hearts. 2. Divorcing and multiplying wives in order to avoid technical adultery. By having several wives, no one could complain that they were cheating on their wife (singular).

Teaching something is the not the same as following that teachings. See: James 1:22-24

4. **“Do You Rob Temples?”** -- “You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?” – v. 22

The Jews were well trained to hate idols: “You shall have no other gods before me.” But it extended beyond that. As the chosen nation, the Jews strictly upheld their monotheism: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. “ - Deuteronomy 6:4

“Don't you **abhor** idols?” Greek word for “abhor”: Something that stunk so badly it forced you to turn your nose away from it.

Robbing Temples: Throughout the Old Testament the Jews were forbidden to have idols images in their possession. Paul's reference to this: Deuteronomy 7:25-26

Bible scholars suggest that by Paul's day the Jews were going into pagan temples and stealing silver and gold idols. The motive was to sell the idols for their value.

Acts 19:37: “You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.”

5. **“Do You Break The Law?”** -- “You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” -- Vv. 23-24:

Paul is making a very strong reality-based statement: The Jews habitually broke the very standard of the Law they learned and taught. To break God’s instructions is to dishonor God.

Sin is always a matter of dishonoring God’s sovereignty in favor of choosing something else. That’s why David said, “Against you and you only have I sinned.”

Paul’s quote from Isaiah 52:5: “And now what do I have here?” declares the LORD. “For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,” declares the LORD. “And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.”

In one sense, God is saying through Isaiah, “Because of the way you live, as your God, I am being blasphemed. See: Ezekiel 36:22-23.

In Israel’s days of disobedience and idol worship, the Gentiles watched their lifestyles and said, “They are no different than we are—even though they claim exclusive relationship to their God.”

A New Testament parallel: “If you claim to know Christ, if you claim to know God, and then you live a sinful wicked life, if you say you've learned the truth about God and you teach the truth about God and live a sinful wicked life, you just blaspheme God, that's all.” – John MacArthur

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The Jews simply didn’t live up to their covenant with God. They did the very things they faulted the Gentiles for doing:

Knowing God’s will is not the same as doing God’s will.