

Religion & Other Things That Don't Work

ROMANS 2:17-3:8

Sunday, October 5, 2025 | Wawasee Bible | Milford, Indiana | Pastor Josh Weiland

KNOWLEDGE can't save you, (2:17-24)

doctrine is great... 2:17-20 2 Timothy 3:1-8; Titus 1:16; 3:8-11; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

...obedience is better 2:21-24 James 1:22-26; 1 Samuel 15:22; Matthew 7:21-24; John 13:17

RITUALS and religion can't save you, (2:25-3:8)

these things are beautiful... 2:25; 3:1-2 Deuteronomy 32:46-47; Genesis 17:9-11

...if you're obedient 2:25-29; 3:3-8 Deut. 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4; Hebrews 3:18-19

only a **TRANSFORMED HEART** can make you right with God. (2:29)

the evidence is obedience 2:29 James 2:17-18; Matthew 7:16-20; 1 John 2:3-6

"If your faith hasn't changed you, it probably hasn't saved you." Galatians 6:15, 5:22-23; Ezekiel 36:26-27; 2 Corinthians 5:17



Study Guide

Questions & Scripture for Further Study

What is this? – Each week people from Wawasee Bible meet in small groups in various homes to learn about Jesus, pray, eat, laugh, & live life together. **We call them Life Groups.** The questions here are based on the sermon each week (often a related part of Scripture), and guide each group's study. If you're interested in connecting with a Life Group, let us know on a Connect Card or at the Connect Desk!

Welcome to Life Group!

Getting to Know You

Part of our goal at Life Group is just learning more about each other. Toward that end, take some time to catch up with each other as you gather.

If it helps, here's a question to discuss and get you going. Have everyone answer:

This weekend we heard a few examples of things we can put too much trust into only to find out later they're "bogus." Can you think of a few things people put too much trust in when maybe they shouldn't? — What about you?

Digging Deeper – A Bible Study

Use this guide for further personal and group study this week. For the most impact in your life and in your group, *work through it on your own before you gather with your Life Group.* If your Life Group isn't gathering this week, use this guide for further study personally.

- Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard for the first time or anything that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
- Religious rituals alone don't make us right with God. Whether we call them *rituals, disciplines, or practices*, they can easily slip into empty habit or self-righteous display. Still, when done with the right heart, these same disciplines can strengthen our faith and deepen our walk with God. As you read the following verses, make two lists:

1 - Wrong motives: Why might someone practice these disciplines for the wrong reasons? What are those wrong motives?

2 - Right motives: How can these same practices be life-giving when done with right motives? What are those right motives?

Acts 2:16 Mark 12:41-44 Matthew 6:9-13 Matt. 26:26-28

- How might these disciplines help you personally if you were to focus on doing them with the right motives?
- Can you think of any other spiritual disciplines you currently incorporate into your week? If so, what are they and how do they help you?

We are sent to love people and invite them to follow Jesus with us.

(Study Guide continues on back panel...)

At Wawasee, each of us is growing to increasingly live out these four roles as we follow Jesus together.



Secure Son/Daughter

I live each day increasingly confident in being a loved child of God—resting in grace, not striving to achieve approval.



Courageous Connector

I cultivate honest relationships that cross barriers and create belonging—even before belief.



Ready Storyteller

I live each day with a sense of sentness, ready to reveal my story and God's story.



Legacy Builder

Because of Jesus, I multiply what has been given to me by spiritually investing in others for kingdom impact.

Word Find in the **Word**

Find the words from a passage related to this week's message.

Word Find: James 1:22-26 (CSB)

Find the words **bolded** below.

²² But be **doers** of the **word** and not **hearers only, deceiving** yourselves.

²³ **Because** if **anyone** is a **hearer** of the **word** and not a **doer**, he is **like someone looking** at his own **face** in a **mirror**. ²⁴ For he **looks** at himself, **goes away**, and **immediately**

forgets what **kind** of

person he was. ²⁵ But the

one who **looks intently**

into the **perfect** law of

freedom and **perseveres**

in it, and is not a

forgetful hearer but a

doer who **works**—this

person will be **blessed** in

what he does. ²⁶ If

anyone thinks he is

religious without

controlling his **tongue**,

his **religion** is **useless**

and he **deceives** himself.

L P F S P E R F E C T V T
H E A R E R O W L O N B K
K R C H S O M E O N E L G
S S E D F O R G E T S E B
Y O P E R S E V E R E S E
L N K C F R E E D O M S C
I M M E D I A T E L Y E A
K F I I N T E N T L Y D U
E T R V R E L I G I O U S
U H R E L I G I O N L Y E
M I O S O F T O N G U E L
W O R D O E R A N Y O N E
G O E S K I N D W O R K S
A W A Y S H M T H I N K S

3. We saw this weekend that knowing the truth isn't the same as living it. The religious people in Paul's sights in Rome knew God's Word but often didn't let it change them.

- What are some ways we can fall into that same trap—knowing the right answers but not letting them shape our lives?
- Why do you think it's easier to talk about faith than to obey what God asks?
- What's one area where God might be calling you to move from knowledge to action this week?

4. **Read Romans 2:28–29** and **Micah 6:6–8**. Paul says real faith is about a heart changed by the Spirit, not just an outward label or ritual. What do you think it means to have a "circumcised heart"?

- How does Micah 6:6-8 help define what genuine obedience looks like?
- What would it look like for your faith to be more about inner transformation than outward activity?

Taking it Home

5. Throughout this section of Romans, Paul has been stripping away every false source of confidence—religious heritage, morality, knowledge, and ritual—and points us back to Jesus. With this in mind, as you wrap up, discuss the following questions with your group:

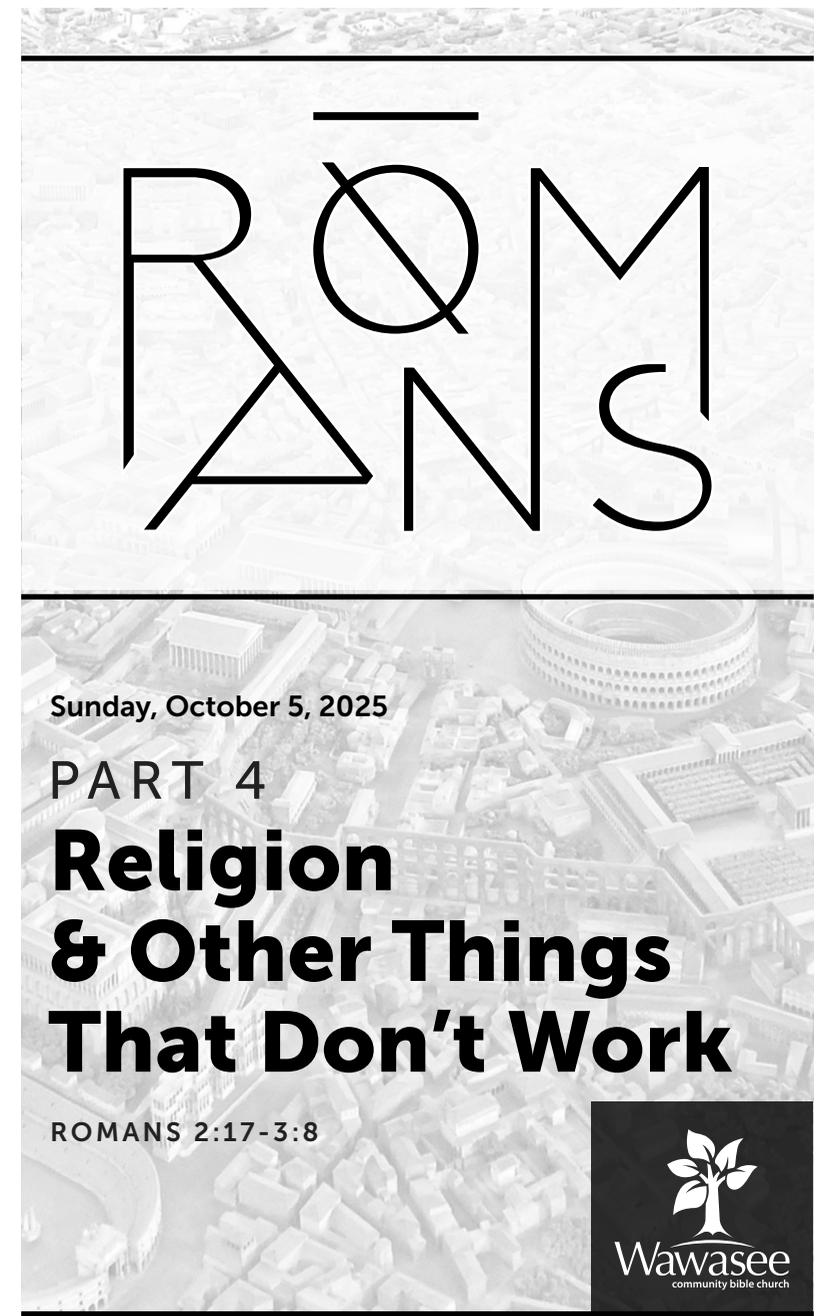
- Which of those do you most tend to lean on for a sense of spiritual security? (Or add to the list... what are other areas you or others find a false source of confidence?)
- What does it look like, practically, to put your full confidence in Christ instead of your performance?
- How can your group help one another live more out of grace and less out of comparison or pressure?

As you close, take time to pray for each other.



Wawasee Bible is part of the Evangelical Free Church of America. View our Statement of Faith online at wawaseebible.com/beliefs. Learn more about the EFCA at efca.org.

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PART 4

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We're Glad You're Here Today!

Scan QR code for our **App** with **Bulletin, Connect Card, & more.**

<https://wawasee.today>