

Romans: The Hope of Righteousness part 1 | Peace With God Means Hope in Hardship |
Romans 5:15

1. **THINK:** What is the difference between having peace IN God and having peace WITH God? How does one lead to the other and which one comes first? Talk through this as a small group. What is the fruit of having peace WITH God? What is the fruit of having peace IN God? **DO:** Contemplate and journal what life was like in the theme of peace before you came into a right relationship with Jesus? How was your life a life of un-peace? What makes the difference now in your mindset (if you do indeed know Him) that allows you the privilege of having peace in your life?
2. **THINK:** Peace is a very viable term when it comes to a relationship with God. How is peace, as subject matter, important when communicating the Gospel to another person? Most would agree that love is the theme when we communicate the Gospel, but why is peace also such a strong point to make? How does communicating the Gospel with the love theme lead us to talking about the peace theme? **DO:** Formulate a Gospel presentation to someone where you combine both peace and love, and though God loves, he is still very much not at peace with those who do not know Him. Explain that using Scriptures.
3. **THINK:** How does peace WITH God give you a platform to have a relationship with Him? What does that look like in real life? When you pray, does it ring in your heart that you can even do that because you have peace WITH God through faith in Christ? What reasoning does God employ to even hear you when you pray? **DO:** Work through these themes and discuss how having peace WITH God affects them:
 - a. how does peace with God affect your daily needs
 - b. how does peace with God affect your purpose in suffering
 - c. how does peace with God affect your future
 - d. how does peace with God affect getting through hardship
 - e. how does peace with God affect your identity
 - f. how does peace with God affect you when others do not agree with you
 - g. how does peace with God affect how you spend your time
 - h. how does peace with God affect your motive in serving others
 - i. how does peace with God affect you when you are sick
 - j. how does peace with God affect or direct your giving
 - k. how does peace with God affect your desire for others to like you
 - l. how does peace with God affect your conversations
 - m. how does peace with God affect what you watch and your media time
4. **THINK:** When in trial, or disappointment has happened upon a person's life, it is very common, even for unbelievers to say 'everything happens for a reason', which must pre-suppose someone else intentionally bringing trial in their life. As believers, how do we explain this further, add great depth to this truth and actually explain the concept without perfectly explaining the reason? **DO:** Do you have a working theology of suffering? Can you begin to comfort someone who is

struggling with the themes of Scripture and add weight to the purpose? Take some time to gather Scriptures and determine how you would explain suffering to a believer and how you would explain suffering to a non-believer.

5. **THINK:** There are two different sides to dealing with trials and suffering. We can merely tolerate it, with the attitude of ‘Just get me out of here and get me through it, God!’ We can also embrace it, when we welcome the hardship so that we gain more in Christ. “God, I don’t like this, but I willingly go through it for your glory and for you to have your way in my life, though I don’t fully understand it.” What is the difference between the two? Romans says that we can rejoice in suffering. Which camp: tolerating or embracing, would you place that verse in? **DO:** Survey your life thus far. How have you suffered? How has God used this in your life to make much of Him? When were you responsive to Him doing this? When were you rebellious in Him doing this? What was produced in you: bitterness, resentment, disdain, isolation? Or, endurance, character, hope and a reality of lost shame and the love of God?

6. **THINK:** How can you prepare for the next bout of suffering? What do you want God to show through you in that tool in His hands? What should you be preparing for and doing now so that when it hits, your life would through suffering be spent to draw eyes to Christ and not your suffering? **DO:** Write a prayer to God that reflects your desires to be salt and light in your suffering. What do you want Him to do through it? How do you want Him to use it? Tell Him. Make it a prayer of adoration. Then save it for your next rainy season.