

Discussion Guide
Part 4; Romans 4:1-5:11



Read Romans 4

1. Paul tells Abraham's story as an example of how God's promises come by faith (v. 16). Looking back at Romans 1-3, what are some of God's promises that he has fulfilled through the gospel?
2. In verses 7-8 Paul uses forgiveness as an example of God's grace in action. Can you recall a time when God's forgiveness was especially precious to you? Please describe this experience.
3. Briefly review Abraham's story in Genesis 12 and 15. What did God promise to do in Abraham's life? How is Abraham's faith similar to us trusting God with our lives today? (8:21-24)
4. Long-standing followers of Christ can sometimes forget the amazing character of God's grace. Have you ever experienced this? Why do you think this sometimes happens, and how can a person have their heart restored if they have stopped finding God's grace amazing?

Read Romans 5:1-11

5. In this passage, Paul talks about the many gifts of salvation that come to those who believe: Peace (v. 1), grace (v. 2), hope (v. 3) rejoicing in suffering (v. 3-5), and confidence to face the future (v. 9-10). Which of these has been most meaningful to you lately? Which do you feel you most need right now?
6. Re-read verse 3-5, then read the dialogue below between the Skin Horse and the Velveteen Rabbit. The process of being shaped into Christ's image ("becoming Real" in *Velveteen Rabbit* terms) can be painful. Is there anything happening in your life now that causes you to resonate with the Skin Horse's words: "most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby"? Please explain.
7. In verses 6-8 Paul says that Christ died for us while we were "still powerless...still sinners." Do you ever find yourself feeling you are a disappointment to God or that you need to earn God's love? Or, do you find yourself feeling more accepted by God on some days and less so on others? Based on this passage, what might these verses say to a person struggling with these things?
8. In verses 9-10, Paul says we can be confident that we will be saved from God's wrath through Christ. If you were to die today and find yourself standing before God, do you feel 100% confident that he would welcome you into his presence? Why do you feel as you do?

Take time to pray for one another.

The Velveteen Rabbit

by Margery Williams

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day,
when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender,
before Nana came to tidy the room.

“Does it mean having things that buzz inside you
and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. ‘
It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you
for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you,
then you become Real.’

‘Does it hurt?’ asked the Rabbit.

‘Sometimes,’ said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful.

‘When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.’

‘Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,’ he asked, ‘or bit by bit?’

‘It doesn’t happen all at once,’ said the Skin Horse. ‘You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.’

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