

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Romans by John Calvin, William Hendriksen, Kent Hughes, and Bob Utley

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Romans 4:1-5 What counts for righteousness

Notes (See back page for authors) What has Abraham found? So Paul begins this chapter on “Christian accounting.” By that, we don’t mean how a person whose work is accounting should practice if they are Christians. Rather, Paul uses a word 11 times in this chapter that is translated variously as accounted, counted, imputed, reckoned, or credited.

Abraham is the father of true believers in the true God. Abraham had found something about what counts – what counts for righteousness. Or, to put it another way, how does God consider someone good enough? Hughes points out that *we naturally think justification ought to go to the good, those who are trying to do their best—the paddlers. But not to the ungodly!*

If Abraham was good enough, then he has something to boast about. But Abraham found he couldn’t be good enough, he couldn’t work hard enough. But instead, even though he was therefore ungodly, God declared him to be righteous. His belief in God’s promises is what counted for him as righteousness. What counts for Abraham counts for us too. God didn’t owe Abraham salvation. God doesn’t owe us salvation. Instead, if we believe, like Abraham did, God gives us salvation not as a paycheck but as a gift.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. How many times does Paul use this accounting word here?
 2. On what basis does God count someone good enough?
 3. Why isn’t being good, good enough?
4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 83²
1. Rejoice that God will count your faith as righteousness
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Romans 4:23-25 It counts for us too

Notes (See back page for authors) As Paul concludes these verses, we need to understand that faith was not just good for Abraham. Faith was not counted for righteousness only for him. No, these glorious truths are for us too – for all who believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus is necessary and sufficient for us.

What Paul is saying, notes Hendriksen, is that we too are vitally concerned with this story about Abraham, and with the manner in which the righteousness of Christ was imputed to him. Is it not true that we too are the ones to whom it is to be reckoned? Are not we included in the family of those who rest our faith on him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead?

The long list of references which indicate that The Twelve (often represented by Peter) and Paul were convinced not only of the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead but also that God had raised him—see Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37; 17:31; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:15; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:10 (cf. Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 1:21)—is significant. Does it not seem as if these passages are calling attention to the fact that God the Father must have been satisfied with the atoning sacrifice Jesus had offered?

This glorious and personal Jesus is Saviour to all who confess Him as Lord and believe God raised Him from the dead. For us, His righteousness counts – not ours.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What does the story of Abraham mean for us?
 2. What does it show that God raised Jesus from the dead?
 3. How can we be justified? (What does justified mean?)
4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 83
1. Pray that you and your family will ..., with God’s help
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

Reading

Romans 4:16-22 Believing God’s promise

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Hughes suggests we need to see in these verses *Abraham’s perception of the object of his faith... of the obstacles of his faith... [and] of the objectives of his faith.*

The object of Abraham’s faith was clearly God. God alone could give life from the dead. God alone could call things into existence that do not exist.

The obstacles are also clear. The promise to have as many descendants as the stars when he and Sarah had been unable to have even one, was staggering. Yet, as Hughes puts it, *Abraham weighed the human impossibility of becoming a father against the divine impossibility of God being able to break his word and decided that if God was God, nothing is impossible.*

The objectives of Abraham’s faith are clearly to give God glory and to be righteous. As Hughes concludes, *faith that makes one righteous before God perceives the immensity of God who creates from nothing and gives life to the dead (v. 17). Next, it is a faith that does not deny the existence of obstacles, but evaluates them in the light of God’s Word and power (vv. 18–20). Ultimately, it brings the full assurance that what God has promised, he will perform (v. 21). That faith is reckoned for righteousness (v. 22). Faith is the only way any of us will ever be righteous before God.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What was the object of Abraham’s faith?
2. What were the obstacles to Abraham’s faith?
3. What were the objectives of Abraham’s faith?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalm 83

1. Ask God to deepen your faith, trusting that what He promises He can and will do
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading

Romans 4:6-8 Do your sins count?

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Now Paul turns to King David – another “hero” from the OT. And, for David, this bookkeeping term counts as well. David received remission of sins. To remit is to lay aside a debt. Calvin says that *the creditor who is paid does not remit, but he who spontaneously cancels the debt through mere kindness. Away, then, with those who teach us to redeem pardon for our sins by satisfactions.* Away with them, indeed!

David’s sins were serious indeed – coveting, adultery, murder. No wonder he is so joyful – those serious sins are forgiven, covered, not charged to his account. Utley points out that *the three verbs in this quote all denote the acquittal of sin.* As Hughes puts it, *David’s case was hopeless. There was nothing he could do but cast himself on God’s mercy.* Our case is hopeless too. Even if our sins don’t seem as serious as David’s, we are still guilty before God. How can we be forgiven?

Hendriksen notes that *David is thinking not only of the pardon he himself received. The very words, “Blessed (are) those... indicate that he includes... all those who have received a similar blessing. The main point here stressed is that the forgiveness, granted and experienced, was the result not of human work but of divine grace. In this respect Abraham and David have something in common. Both are the recipients of God’s sovereign, unearned favor.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why was David so joyful/blessed?
2. How serious were his sins? How serious are ours?
3. How can David’s sins, and ours, be acquitted?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalm 83, 32c

1. Rejoice with your family if God will never count your sins against you
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

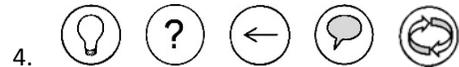
Reading Romans 4:9-12 When is righteousness counted?

Notes (See back page for authors)
Paul returns to Abraham. And he holds him up as the spiritual father of both Jewish and non-Jewish believers. When was Abraham’s faith credited to his account as righteousness? Not when he was a circumcised Jew, but in effect, when he was still an uncircumcised Gentile. We know from the history of the early church that this was a shocking truth! God saves uncircumcised non-Jews just like he saved Abraham – by faith alone!

God not only saved Abraham, He gave him a sign and a seal of that salvation. That OT sign and seal was circumcision – for Abraham, Ishmael and the rest of the men in Abraham’s household (Gen 17:26-27), then later for Isaac (Gen 21:4). Abraham’s righteousness was counted before the sign and seal. But, for Isaac and all other true children of Abraham, the sign and seal came first, and the faith later. Why is that important to us? Because we have a sign and seal too. No longer circumcision, but baptism signifies and seals saving faith.

And we believe, like Abraham, that the sign and seal is to be put on believers *and their children*. All the objections against baptism of infant children of believers are also objections against circumcision of Isaac and all those eight-day old boys who came after him. As Calvin notes, *the fact as to Abraham himself, that righteousness preceded circumcision, is not always the case in sacraments*.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Of whom is Abraham the spiritual father?
 2. What was the sign/seal of Abraham’s righteousness? Of Isaac’s?
 3. What is our sign and seal of righteousness by faith?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 83
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to “improve on your baptism”, with God’s help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Romans 4:13-15 Law or faith?

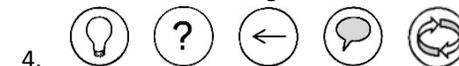
Notes (See back page for authors)
I believe God. And, I obey His law. Such is the truth of any true Christian. Yet some have taken from that truth the idea that my believing God *and* my obeying His law is the basis for God saving me. Paul here, writing as God’s spirit breathes the words into him, simply says that can’t be.

God made a promise to Abraham and to his descendants. (And, we’ve already seen that Abraham’s true descendants are true believers in God – both Jews and non-Jews.) God’s promise was that Abraham would inherit the world. Hendriksen notes that *the same was and is true, of course, with respect to all those who have a share in Abraham’s faith. If the Lord is their God, which is the very essence of the covenant of grace (Gen. 17:7), all is well*.

If, however, obedience to the law instead of faith in God’s promise is the basis for salvation, then, as Hendriksen draws out, *faith—reliance for salvation not on self but on God—would have lost its value. Also, on that basis no one would ever be saved, for the law demands perfection, which no sinner is able to render. Therefore the promise would be rendered worthless, for under those circumstances it could never be fulfilled*.

The law, instead of saving you, points out how just God’s anger is toward you because you break His law. So don’t put your hope in salvation by keeping the law – unless you can keep the whole thing perfectly. Instead trust a righteousness that is by faith.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What does the law do?
 2. What can the law not do?
 3. On what basis is righteousness counted?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 83
1. Rejoice with your family in a righteousness that is by faith
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member