

Rewards vs. Consequences

Romans 2:5-16

May Memory Verse: Psalm 56:3 “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.”

NOTE: It is our last week to work on this verse! Hopefully your kids and family have committed it to memory and can speak this truth to one another when things get scary.

NOTE ABOUT THE LESSON: When talking about rewards, it's easy to drift into a “prosperity Gospel” teaching. That's NOT the goal or focus! God does not promise health and wealth to His followers (quite the opposite, in fact – He promises difficulty and persecution). However, today's passage talks clearly about how, when we persist in doing good, God rewards us with eternal life. We want this theology to be clear: Our rewards are not always on this side of eternity.

Opening Activity: Choose one or two that seem most appropriate for your children to start the lesson. Alternatively, feel free to work one or two into the lesson if your kids start getting antsy and losing focus (like ours do).

- Practice saying Psalm 56:3 together. Say it in funny voices, say it as loud or as quiet as you can. When kids express fear throughout the week, remind them of the verse and continue saying it together.
- Pray together as a family for any needs you have. Remember to thank God for what He is doing, too!
- Introduce the key vocabulary words for the lesson:
 - Reward: Something to celebrate a good job or choice
 - Examples include a sticker, a high five, a special dessert/treat
 - Consequence: Something that happens because of a bad choice or sin
 - Examples: time-out, having a toy taken away, losing a privilege
- Help kids identify the relationship between actions and either rewards or consequences.
 - Rewards: Ask the following questions to help guide your child's understanding:
 - “Is getting a sticker a reward or a consequence?”
 - “What is a good job or choice you could make to earn a sticker?”
 - “Would you be happy or sad about earning a sticker? Why?”
 - “The Bible says God will reward us for the good things we do!”
 - Consequences: Ask the following questions to help guide your child's understanding:
 - “Is going in time out a reward or a consequence?”
 - “What is a bad choice or sin that would result in a time out?”
 - “Would you be happy or sad about going in time out? Why?”
 - “The Bible says God will punish or have consequences for the bad choices or sins we commit.”

Lesson:

- Provide a quick recap to your kids: “We are learning about the book of Romans, written by a missionary named Paul who loved Jesus. We have learned that we are called to obey, to belong to Jesus, and to be holy. We also learned about how Paul loved his friends in Rome and wrote them a letter because he wanted them to know about Jesus. We’ve talked a lot about making righteous choices, or good choices, instead of making bad or sinful choices.”
- Introduce the passage: “Today we are going to read in Romans 2:5-16, which is all about rewards and consequences. An example of a reward is earning a prize from a prize box. What is an example of a consequence?” If kids can’t think of any, remind them of common consequences within your own family.
- Read Romans 2:5-16, stopping to repeat verses, explain words, and ask questions, as appropriate for your kiddos. Focus specifically on these verses:
 - Vs. 6 – God will reward us or punish us according to what we do.
 - Vs. 7 – If we do good and seek God, God will reward us with eternal life.
 - Vs. 8 – If we seek ourselves and don’t follow God, He will punish us.
 - Vs. 9-10 – Both Jews and Greeks will be treated the same. NOTE: This is a good spot to practice Romans 1:16 again, because it references both Jews and Greeks.You could also consider reading the passage in *The Message*, which uses contemporary slang to present scripture in a much more informal manner. It was translated from the original Greek and Hebrew but was written to help connect contemporary readers to the text the same way the original audience would have been. *The Message* is available on www.BibleGateway.com.
- Make it relatable: “Paul is writing to his friends in Rome about how the choices we make result in rewards or consequences.” Share an example that is relevant to your family, such as, *Sometimes, when you go potty on the toilet, you get a special sticker! That’s a reward for being a big boy/girl and going potty!* “The Bible that God sees all the things we do. He wants to reward the good choices we make, but there are consequences for the bad ones. Consequences started in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve first disobeyed God and ate from the Tree that God told them not to.”
- Explain the Gospel: God created everything, including people. But the first people – Adam and Eve – chose to do their own thing instead of obeying God. Now, everyone sins. The punishment or consequence for sin is death and separation from God forever. But God sent His son Jesus to earth so that we don’t have to be punished forever for our sins. Jesus lived a sinless life. He was put to death on the cross, taking the punishment of our sin and guilt. He rose to life three days later, showing that He won over sin and death. If we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. Then we can know Him, be part of His family, serve Him, and spend eternity (or forever) with Him in heaven. Eternal life with Jesus is our reward for following and obeying Him.
- “When we make righteous or good choices, it pleases God. The best reward God offers us is eternal life with Him. It isn’t about us getting a new toy or candy, it’s about knowing God and making Him known. However, when we sin or make bad choices, it disappoints and saddens God. It also results in a consequence. So this week, let’s all practice making good choices so that we can please God together.”

- Pray, then do a couple of the activities, as appropriate for your family.

Activity Ideas: These are designed for use at the end of the lesson or throughout to break up the “sitting still” if needed.

- Together, make a list of righteous or good things you can do to help other people in your family, from your church, or in your community. Ideas could include helping clean your house or bedroom, taking someone flowers or a coffee, writing an encouraging note to someone who is having a hard time, helping someone who is hurt or sick, etc. Pick one or two to do together.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Paper, Pencil

- Paraphrase Romans 2:5 – When people have hard hearts, they are choosing consequences instead of rewards in heaven. Explain that a hard heart is caused by sin, selfishness, anger, etc. Ask, “What is the opposite of hard?” If possible, show your kids things that are both hard (like a rock) and soft (like a pillow). Ask if they’d rather snuggle a rock or a pillow. Which would they rather sleep on? Which one is cozier? Then, cut out or draw paper hearts together (if kids can’t cut well yet, you could cut them out while they decorate). On each heart, write a “soft” attribute, such as the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Tell you children you’ll be looking for soft hearts this week and when you see one, you’ll give them a paper heart to celebrate their soft heart.

SUPPLIES: Paper, Scissors, Crayons/Markers, Something Hard, Something Soft

- Print the coloring page on the following page (or make your own) to talk about something kind you can do this week.

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Coloring page/White paper, Crayons, Markers, etc.



I am helpful!