

## A Brief Bible Study

(Romans 1-8)

- 1) Human beings ought to know God because there is so much evidence for Him in this wonderful world, because we also are His creation and because we have consciences.
- 2) In fact, however, we are all rebels without exception (except Jesus).
- 3) Any attempt on our part to justify ourselves is doomed. In our fallen state, we simply cannot attain the standards prescribed by God's Law – that we should be His children and therefore His image which is love.
- 4) Those who do attempt to justify themselves make matters worse. If they realise how far short they fall of what God requires of us, they despair. If they are foolish enough to believe that they are righteous, they look down on other people whom they regard as inferior.
- 5) We do not need to justify ourselves to God. God justifies us for no other reason than that He loves us. No matter how sinful we are, God loves us. In Christ, He washes our sins away. What is required of us is faith and God supplies even that requirement. Our faith is God's gracious gift. His grace is an aspect of God's faithfulness to us.
- 6) Because God loves us, we are inspired to love Him and therefore to live in accordance with His perfect law of love.
- 7) We don't conclude that because we are justified apart from the Law, it doesn't matter how we behave. On the contrary, because we are justified, because God loves us as we are, we continually seek His grace to live continually in accordance with His Law, summarised by love.

The best analogy I can think of is of children brought up in a good home. They don't try to be good because they are afraid their parents won't love them if they're bad. They know that their parents will love them come what may. On the other hand, they don't grieve the parents who love them by behaving badly. They behave well because they love the parents who love them and want to please them and imitate them. No human family, of course, is perfect and the above doesn't work out perfectly in any home – though some are much better than others! God is, however, the perfect Father. Jesus is the perfect Son and we dwell in Him and He is in us so that we may become more like Him.