

“But,” some might say, “our sinfulness serves a good purpose, for it helps people see how righteous God is. Isn’t it unfair, then, for him to punish us?” (This is merely a human point of view.) Of course not! If God were not entirely fair, how would he be qualified to judge the world?” Romans 3:5-6 NLT

## lectio // Romans 3:1-8

Wow! What an insight into the Jewish mind. “Our sin serves a good purpose,” hmmm, what a way to justify our behavior. Oh, I don’t really understand it, but the Jews seemingly thought they could twist it to keep sinning and making God look really good. I’ve been raised more like a Gentile, so my justifications would be, “everyone else is sinning and my sin is just not as bad as theirs.” So, just go punish the really bad people and ignore my little puny “mistakes.” Both Jew and Gentile would be missing the point - everyone sins and every sin DEMANDS payment/accountability. EVERY sin, big, like mass murders and serial rapists as well as little, stealing a package that was not yours, lying to your mother or boss and gossiping about a certain person’s secret. They all require justice and fair judgement. By whom? By another sinner? Should murder be judged by murders and liars be judged by other liars? Or maybe thieves should judge pedophiles and gossips should judge adulterers? Yeah, that’s how our jury system works and it’s perfect, right? But sentence all sinners to death? Isn’t that extreme, the Gentile (non Jew) may say. God’s justice demands absolute truth. God does not operate on YOUR truth. What good is your truth? We will never be good enough, or fair enough to judge by OUR truth. That’s the point - we’re broken. I don’t think we should waste time trying to con God with cool little justifications of our choices. We should figure out how to make sure that God sentences someone else for OUR sin and THEN he forgives the sin - forgives the lie, the gossip even the murder. That’s how we receive a fair pardon, not a weak-sauce excuse that it’s not a big deal or that we’re not as bad as the next human.

## oratio

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

I could never use the Jewish justification angle to feel better about my sin. Of course I feel more comfortable hiding my sin or trying to get you to look at someone worse than me - even just a little bit worse. Either way, that’s not dealing with my choices at all, is it? I have to face the fact that my choices, my sin is killing me and would completely destroy me and put me as far from you as possible if it were not for Jesus! I feel the gratefulness of Christ’s payment for my small and large failures and willful disobedience. Thank you.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root