

ROMANS

THE GOSPEL OF GOD



12-WEEK STUDY GUIDE ON
ROMANS 1-8

SERMON SERIES



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WELCOME LETTER

If you were to suggest a reading plan through the books of the Bible to a new believer, Romans would likely make your top five. It asks and answers some of the most foundational questions of the Christian faith. If the Gospels tell us **what Jesus did**, Romans helps us understand **what it means and why it matters**.

Many of Paul's other letters focus on specific churches, their struggles, and the challenges they were facing. Romans is different. It gives us one of the clearest and most comprehensive explanations of the gospel in all of Scripture. It tells us:

- Who God is
- What He has done through Christ
- What sin has done to humanity
- What it means to be made right with God

Romans is not a book we want to simply read and move on from. It is a book we want to **wrestle with, sit in, and allow to reshape our lives and our understanding of the Gospel**.

Romans can be heady and difficult at times, but throughout this study, we will invite you to dig into the text for yourself—to consider what Paul meant in his time and what those same truths mean for us today.

The year is around AD 57. If we look back to Acts 20-21, we find Paul in Corinth for three months, preparing to head to Jerusalem and eventually, continue on to Rome. A prophet from Judea warned Paul through the Holy Spirit of the danger that awaited him in Jerusalem, but Paul was willing to die for the name of Jesus.

It is within this context of urgency that he pens this letter to the church in Rome.

The city before us is not peaceful or quiet. Rome is the center of the world—the beating heart of the Roman Empire. Marble temples tower over busy streets. Soldiers move through the marketplace. Wealthy elites travel through the city while enslaved people carry water, clean homes, build monuments, and serve the powerful.



The Colosseum, Rome, Italy

But underneath all the glory is a city steeped in sin and idol worship.

Rome can conquer nations, but it cannot conquer what is restless in the human soul.

Now imagine being a follower of Jesus there.

You are part of a small gathering of believers meeting in homes throughout this massive city. Some of you are Jewish believers who grew up knowing the Scriptures, the covenant, and the promises of God. Others are Gentile believers, former pagans who once bowed before idols and Roman gods.

You all have Jesus in common, but it isn't easy.

The Jewish believers carry generations of identity tied to the Law of Moses. The Gentile believers are new to the story of Israel, and are still learning what it means to follow Christ. Tension exists. Questions remain.

Who truly belongs to God? What role does the Law play now? Can grace really be for everyone?

And into this small community of brothers and sisters comes a letter from a man named Paul.

Paul has never visited this church, but he understands what is at stake. He knows that the gospel is not simply about bringing Jewish and Gentile people into the same room, it is about creating a **new family** under a **new King**, a family made up of people from every nation and tribe.

In this letter, there will be moments when you have to slow down, read a sentence more than once, and wrestle with what Paul is saying. But you don't have to understand everything on your own. You can trust the Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, to guide you as you seek to understand them.

Because you are stepping into a rescue story. A story where sin doesn't show favoritism and neither does God. A story where religion cannot save you. Idols cannot save you. Morality cannot save you.

But Jesus can.

Romans is the unfolding declaration that the righteousness of God has been revealed through Christ for all people. It is the story of a God who does not abandon humanity in its sin, but makes a way for us to be reconciled to Him, adopted into His family, and transformed by His Spirit.



*Appian Way (Via Appia) in Rome,
Italy*

Over the next several weeks, we will travel through Romans 1-8, into the tension, hope, conviction, freedom, suffering, and wonder of a first-century church discovering that the gospel truly is the **power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.**

So don't rush through Romans. **Dig in. Ask questions. Let the Holy Spirit speak.** And most of all, let the gospel become more than something you know.

Let it become something that changes the way you see **God, yourself, your sin, your suffering, your freedom, and the life you have been invited to live in Christ.**

The Curriculum Team

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This study is designed for one interaction with the text each day over five days.

We strongly encourage you to establish a daily rhythm. Romans is a rich and densely packed letter, and this study is intentionally designed to help you slow down and sit with the text rather than rush through it. Each day gives you another opportunity to engage with the passage, allowing you to absorb what Paul is saying, notice what you may have missed, and consider what God is revealing. Give yourself time to sit with the text and allow the study to unfold throughout the week.

TWO TRANSLATIONS

Each week, you will read the passage in two translations. Because Paul's writing in Romans is densely packed, reading the same passage in two translations can bring clarity to his meaning, help break down complex sentence structure, and allow you to absorb the whole thought more easily.

FIVE DAYS OF STUDY

Throughout each week, the format moves through an intentional progression:

Day 1: First Impression

Day 2: Active Engagement

Day 3: Closer Observation

Day 4: Personal Interaction

Day 5: Prayerful Reflection

The week begins by encountering the text and engaging with what Paul has written. From there, we move toward closer observation and understanding before turning our attention

inward. By the end of the week, the study intentionally shifts into a more reflective space.

Romans gives us a lot to engage with intellectually, but our goal is not simply to understand more. We want to allow the truth of God's Word to move from our minds into our hearts. The final days of the study give you space to slow down, reflect on what you have learned, and consider how it intersects with your own life. What does this truth reveal about God? What does it reveal about you? Is there something God is inviting you to trust, surrender, confess, remember, or respond to?

Day 5 may look different from the other days. For some, reflection may mean writing out your thoughts, questions, prayers, or responses. For others, it may mean taking a walk and talking with the Lord. However you choose to engage, make space to listen and respond.

SCRIPTURE

The Scripture reading is provided in the Day 2 homework. Each time you are asked to refer to or read a verse throughout the study, it refers to the NIV unless otherwise noted.

NOTES

At the end of each study week, you will find space for *Notes*. Use this space however it serves you best. You might record sermon notes, prayer requests, additional thoughts, or

anything else that connects to that week's study.

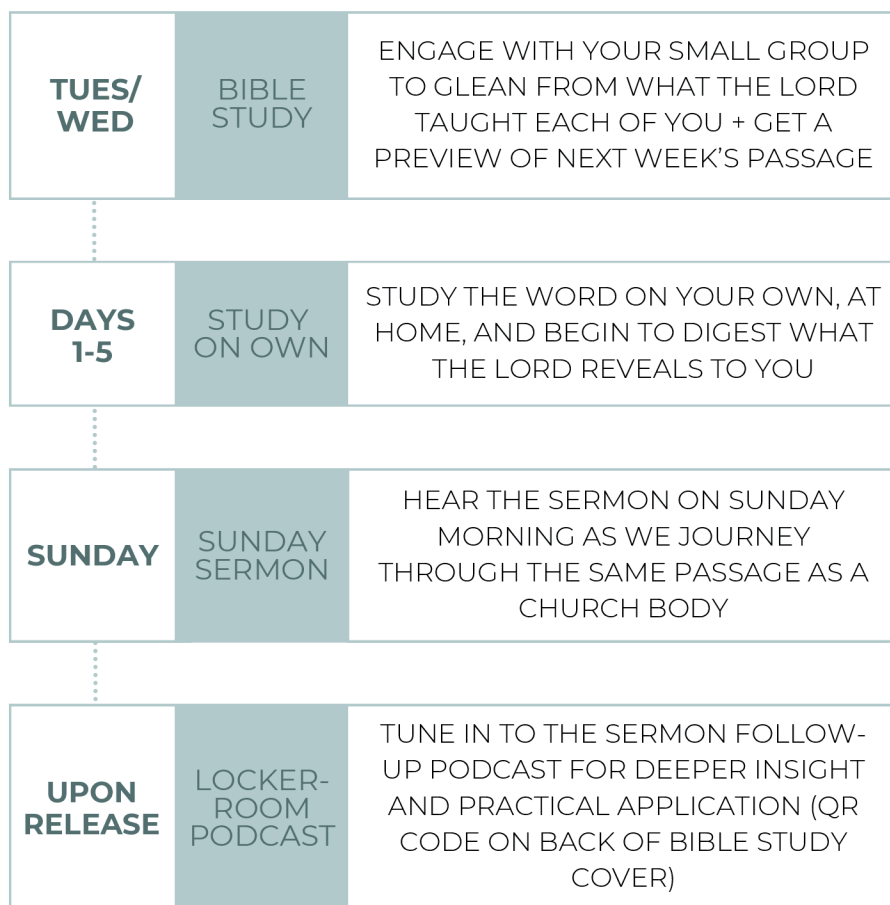


Courtyard of the Basilica of San Clemente, Rome, Italy.

LOGISTICS TIMELINE

Follow the *Logistics Timeline* on the following page to help you establish a rhythm and know how to move through each week of the study.

WEEKLY LOGISTICS PROCESS



Use this Logistics Process as a guide for structuring your Bible Study week. Adjust it to fit your schedule and make it your own as you engage with, absorb, and respond to God's Word.

ROMANS 1:1-17

THE GOSPEL: THE GOSPEL OF GOD

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

Have you ever waited years for the sequel to your favorite movie? Or counted down the days until the release of a book you couldn't wait to read? The believers in Rome experienced a similar kind of anticipation. They had heard of Paul and his ministry but had never met him personally. Imagine receiving a handwritten letter from this well-known missionary, a man whose faith, teaching, and sacrifice had become an encouragement to believers across the known world. Before they ever met him face to face, they were given the opportunity to hear his heart through the words of this letter.

The house churches in Rome likely gathered together to hear this letter read aloud for the very first time, like a glass of cold water while walking through the driest desert. Imagine the excitement: *What does Paul want us to know? What does he have to say to us?*

As you prepare to read the text for the first time, take your time. Brace yourself for Paul's lengthy run-on thoughts, and don't hesitate to reread a sentence if necessary. The two translations are provided to help you follow more clearly. It's a heady book with complex thoughts, but it all boils down to teaching us how to live the gospel.

Read Romans 1:1-17 twice, the first time in the NIV translation, the second time, in the NLT. (*Text provided in Day 2 homework.*)

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Since Romans contains some of the most powerful and notable verses in the New Testament, there is a risk that we may treat them as stand-alone verses, potentially losing the intended context. But we should consider each of them within the context of Paul's larger, cohesive message to have a full and true understanding of what each verse actually means.

Remember that you're reading a letter originally intended for a different audience. These were real letters written to real churches and people, addressing specific situations.

Day 1 was about getting a first impression of the text. Today, you'll have the opportunity to dig into it further. As you work through the exercises below, your goal is to move beyond a first impression toward a clearer understanding of what Paul is communicating.

1. Go through *Romans 1:1-17* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends. Look for transition words like: *therefore, so then, for this reason, finally*. These often signal a new section.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. We always want to have eyes for what the text says about who God is. **Underline in blue** anything this text tells us about God or Jesus.
4. Paul has some amazing responses to who God is. This chapter gives us some of those descriptions. **Underline in orange** anything this text tells us about Paul.

5. Now, **create a summary** using your section titles and words you underlined to encapsulate what God has shown you this section is about and write it below.

6. **Take your completed summary** above to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 1:18-32*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 1:1-17 NIV

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God — 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. 6 And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus

Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. **9** God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you **10** in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—**12** that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. **15** That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 1:1-17 NLT

1 This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. **2** God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. **3** The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, **4** and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus

Christ our Lord. **5** Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

6 And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. **7** I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

8 Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the world. **9** God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son.

10 One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you. **11** For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. **12** When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours.

13 I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. **14** For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. **15** So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News.

16 For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. **17** This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Today, you'll have the opportunity to begin digesting everything you've read and observed so far. Paul packs a lot into these short 17 introductory verses.

In the first seven verses, Paul describes his identity and calling as he greets the believers in Rome. In verses 8–15, he expresses his thankfulness for them and his ongoing desire to visit.

The final two verses of this week's reading, 16 and 17, serve as the thesis of the entire book of Romans. In your own words, summarize these two verses.

Notice that Paul uses the word "gospel" six times in these opening verses. Repetition in Scripture is rarely accidental. When an author repeats a word or idea, it's often because he wants us to slow down and pay attention. Let's look closer at the word *gospel*.

Let's spend some time defining this word we use and hear so often. Write down some words that you think of when you hear "gospel".

Now **look up these verses:** Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, and 1 John 4:9-10.

Using your summary of Romans 1:16-17 and the above verses, write below a comprehensive definition of the gospel.

The gospel is the good news that God has worked through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to save and restore all people. The gospel doesn't simply change what we believe, it transforms our hearts and renews our minds so that we can faithfully live as citizens of God's Kingdom.

The word *gospel* is used so frequently within Christian circles that it can become overly familiar. When that happens, we can lose sight of the incredible, life-transforming power available to us through the gospel when we place our faith in Christ.

After digging into the gospel more deeply today, what aspect of the gospel has been refreshed in your heart? Write it below.

Understanding the gravity of the gospel will be central to understanding the rest of Romans. It is no surprise that Paul ends this opening section with the thesis that shapes the entire letter. He is setting up the reality that everything that follows flows from the gospel: who we are, how we are saved, how we live, and how we relate to God and one another.

Thank God for what the gospel means in your life today. Spend some time in prayer thanking Him for the hope we have in Christ.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

We talked a lot about what the gospel is; now we are moving into how the gospel transforms us and how we should respond. In your homework yesterday, you developed a more comprehensive understanding of the gospel and its impact.

In verse 16, what was Paul's response to the gospel?

Where are you most tempted to feel ashamed of the gospel or hide your identity in Christ?

Where do you find yourself looking for identity, security, or hope apart from what Christ has already given you through the gospel?

The gospel is not only the message we first believe for salvation; it is the truth we continue to live by. What areas of your life do you struggle to believe the gospel has the power to transform?

[illegible]

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

This week, you've explored the opening of Paul's letter and his central message: the gospel. Yesterday, you spent time considering how the gospel personally shapes your life. Today, you'll slow down and reflect on your response. As you do, consider this question: *How would you live differently if your identity and your life were truly shaped by the gospel?* Ask the Lord to reveal areas where your beliefs and your daily life may not yet align, and how you can live more in light of the life transforming truth of gospel.

Pick one or two of these questions to reflect on.

Reflection 1: Do I live differently knowing that I was unrighteous but now I am righteous because of the judgement Jesus took on for me?

Reflection 2: Has the gospel truly transformed my heart and the way I live?

Reflection 3: What situations, relationships, or fears make it difficult for you to openly identify with Christ, and what would it look like to trust the power of the gospel in those areas this week?

Now let's take some time to faithfully respond to where the Lord is leading. **While you take some time to process these questions, you could:**

Take a walk.

Journal your thoughts

Process with a trusted friend

Maybe pick the thing that feels the most uncomfortable to you. Maybe it's hard for you to write a prayer to God, do that. Maybe it's hard for you to walk outside when you are on a comfy chair, do that. Maybe it's hard to share how the gospel has changed your life with a friend, do that. Sometimes when we push ourselves to do uncomfortable things, God can meet us there and give us exactly what we need for that moment. He may even reveal something new that you never would have thought of had you stayed in your comfy chair.

ROMANS 1:1-17

NOTES

ROMANS 1:18-32

THE GOSPEL: GOD'S WRATH REVEALED

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

What beautiful words we've read from the apostle Paul, proclaiming the gospel, God's power for salvation through faith, reminding us that Jesus is the Messiah, and encouraging us to live confidently in Him!

If Paul were to stop here, the reader would leave refreshed and encouraged, celebrating the good news. We'd be left with powerful verses to quote in our sharing of the gospel to non-believers. The first 17 verses can stand alone with impact.

But thankfully, God gave Paul a lot more to say. And because we have a merciful God, trustworthy and loving, He doesn't leave us with only the good news of the gospel, but brings us to a place where we can evaluate our own heart and stand in greater awe of who He is.

Paul now moves from his introduction into his appeal to the church in Rome, inviting his readers to take an honest look at the human heart and an even deeper look at the greatness of God.

Read Romans 1:18-32 twice: the first time in the NIV translation, the second time, in the NLT. *(Text provided in Day 2 homework.)*

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In the Roman world, religion was everywhere—temples, idols, and even emperor worship shaped public life. It's in this context that Paul introduces the power of the gospel. In this week's text, Paul builds his case for why every person needs this Good News.

The beginning of Romans 1 points to our great God, and the chapter closes by revealing humanity's sinful decline in response to Him. Not only do we see all people living in sin, but we also see them approving of others' sin.

As you go through the text again today, pay attention to the immense divide between God as Creator and humanity as created.

1. Go through *Romans 1:18-32* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends. Look for transition words like: *therefore, so then, for this reason, finally*. These often signal a new section.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. All of Scripture is to tell us who God is. We always want to have eyes for what the text says about who He is. **Underline in blue** anything this text tells us about God or Jesus.
4. Go through with **yellow and underline any repeated phrases**.
5. Now, **create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this chapter is about.

6. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 1:18-32*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 1:18-32 NIV

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. **25** They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. **27** In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty

for their error.

28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.

29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, **30** slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; **31** they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. **32** Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 1:18-32 NLT

18 But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. **19** They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. **20** For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. **22** Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. **23** And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. **25** They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is

worthy of eternal praise! Amen. **26** That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. **27** And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

28 Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. **29** Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. **30** They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. **31** They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. **32** They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

As we begin another day, keep in mind the growing contrast we see in this passage between who God is and how humanity responds to Him. A great way to begin any reading of the Word is by reflecting on the character of God.

Just like last week, pick one of the things you underlined about God. Focus on that verse. Why does that stand out to you? Is there some new information or a new understanding?

How is what you focussed on this week different from what you learned about God last week? How does it build upon or deepen your previous understanding?

One aspect of God's character is that he sometimes gives people over to the consequences of their chosen rebellion.

What does it mean that God "gives people over" in verses 24, 26, and 28?

1.

2.

3.

Write down the ways "God gave them over":

1.

2.

3.

The verb in Greek for God "giving them over" is **paradidōmi** (**παραδίδωμι**). Look up a definition and write a brief meaning of this verb below:

With that in mind, what patterns do you notice in how humanity responds to God—and how God responds in return?

Think about a time you experienced the consequences of a decision you made. What did that season produce in you? Did it expose anything? What did it teach you?

Sometimes it is difficult to experience consequences and accept that they are good and perfect, especially when it challenges our own sense of what feels fair or deserved. Spend some time today reflecting on who God is and why He is just and perfect.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

Read Romans 1:22-25 and summarize below.

Paul repeatedly describes humanity "exchanging" what is true for what is false. Sin is portrayed as a reversal of reality. Throughout this passage, Paul presents truth and lies as opposites. Rather than worshiping and trusting what is true, humanity exchanges it for something else.

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

Romans 1:25

What is the "truth about God"? Spend some time writing out things you know to be true about God.

Any time we exchange God's truth for a lie, we allow another voice to have greater influence over us than the voice of God.

Can you identify any lies you have exchanged for the truth about God you listed above?

What makes the lies you wrote above so appealing? So appealing that you would exchange God's truth for them? Resist the urge to answer quickly. Spend time in prayer, asking God to show you what lies are most appealing to you and why.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

It might be easy to assume Romans 1 is primarily about behavior, but Paul makes it clear that it is ultimately about worship. Our lives reflect what we worship. Verse 20 says people are without excuse, seeing “God’s invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature.”

Worship is not just what we praise with our words, but what we trust with our hearts and what we build our lives around. In Romans 1, Paul shows that **people either worship the Creator or exchange Him for created things.**

To end your day, you are encouraged to sit in a place of reflection. Reflection slows us down so truth doesn’t just stay in our minds but moves into our hearts. It helps us see more clearly, and it reorders our posture before God into humility and dependence. These questions are meant to be mulled over, either throughout your day or over the next couple of days.

Choose one or more of the reflections below and spend time journaling, praying, or taking a walk and listening for the Lord.

Reflection 1: Anxiety and fear often reveal where we are placing our trust. What do you put your trust in when you are anxious or afraid?

Reflection 2: If someone looked at your life, what would they conclude that you worship? And what would that reveal about your heart?

Reflection 3: What is one area where you are convicted that you are not trusting God wholeheartedly? What steps can you take to trust God more?

Reflection 4: How might you re-center your affection and trust on the Creator rather than created things?

Close your day by asking God to reveal any created things that may be competing for your worship and affection. Thank Him that the gospel not only exposes false worship, but also invites us back to the Creator.

ROMANS 1:18-32

NOTES

ROMANS 2

THE GOSPEL: NO ONE IS RIGHTEOUS

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

Over the past two weeks, we have spent our time in Romans 1, where Paul lays a foundation that is both sobering and necessary. He has confronted humanity's rebellion against God, exposing the consequences of exchanging the truth of God for lies, and choosing worship of the created over the Creator.

As we step into Romans 2, ask the Lord to give you a soft heart. Once again, Paul's words are thorough, direct, and deeply convicting, so the way we approach this chapter matters. Before you begin, take a moment to pray. Ask God for eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that is willing to respond to His Word. Remember, while this letter was written to a specific church in Rome, it was preserved by God for His people throughout the ages. God has something for us in this chapter today.

As you **begin reading Romans 2** (*Text provided in Day 2 homework*), remember that today is a passive reading. This can be difficult in a chapter like this. The temptation might be to grasp every detail right away. Resist that temptation for now. Simply read it straight through for a general impression.

When you are finished, **read the chapter again in the NLT**, continuing to focus on the big picture before digging deeper.

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Yesterday, you resisted the urge to immediately dissect the text and instead allowed Romans 2 to make a first impression. Hopefully, by reading the chapter more than once, you began to hear Paul's voice, sense the weight of his appeal, and gain a feel for the overall flow of the chapter.

Today, we move from passive reading to active engagement. Pick up your pen, highlighter, or favorite study tool and begin interacting with the text.

1. Go through *Romans 2* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. Let's dissect a bit further. The primary goal of all of Scripture is to tell us who God is. **Underline in blue** anything in this text that tells us about God or Jesus (who He is, what He does, what He is like).
4. Lastly, **underline in red** every reference to God's judgment. Pay attention, not only to the fact that God judges, but also to what the text reveals about His judgment. What does He judge? How does He judge? What standard does He use?

5. Create a summary using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

6. Take your completed summary to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 2*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 2 NIV

_____ **1** You, therefore, have no excuse, you who
_____ pass judgment on someone else, for at
_____ whatever point you judge another, you are
_____ condemning yourself, because you who pass
_____ judgment do the same things. **2** Now we
_____ know that God’s judgment against those who
_____ do such things is based on truth. **3** So when
_____ you, a mere human being, pass judgment on
_____ them and yet do the same things, do you
_____ think you will escape God’s judgment? **4** Or
_____ do you show contempt for the riches of his
_____ kindness, forbearance and patience, not
_____ realizing that God’s kindness is intended to
_____ lead you to repentance?

_____ **5** But because of your stubbornness and
_____ your unrepentant heart, you are storing up
_____ wrath against yourself for the day of God’s
_____ wrath, when his righteous judgment will be
_____ revealed. **6** God “will repay each person
_____ according to what they have done.” **7** To
_____ those who by persistence in doing good seek

SECTION
TITLES

stealing, do you steal? **22** You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? **23** You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? **24** As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

25 Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. **26** So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? **27** The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

28 A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. **29** No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.

ROMANS 2 NLT

1 You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. **2** And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. **3** Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things? **4** Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

5 But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. **6** He will judge everyone according to what they have done. **7** He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. **8** But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. **9** There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. **10** But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. **11** For God does not show favoritism.

12 When the Gentiles sin, they will be destroyed, even though they never had God's written law. And the Jews, who do have God's law, will be judged by that law when they fail to obey it. **13** For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. **14** Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. **15** They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. **16** And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

17 You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, and you boast about your special relationship with him. **18** You know what he wants; you know what is right because you have been taught his law. **19** You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for people who are lost in darkness. **20** You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that God's law gives you complete knowledge and truth.

21 Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? **22** You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples? **23** You are so proud of knowing the law,

but you dishonor God by breaking it. **24** No wonder the Scriptures say, “The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you.”

25 The Jewish ceremony of circumcision has value only if you obey God’s law. But if you don’t obey God’s law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile. **26** And if the Gentiles obey God’s law, won’t God declare them to be his own people?

27 In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God’s law will condemn you Jews who are circumcised and possess God’s law but don’t obey it.

28 For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. **29** No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Yesterday, you began engaging Romans 2 more actively by marking shifts in Paul’s thought, identifying what the chapter reveals about God, and observing the theme of God’s judgment. Today, we are going to slow down and trace that theme through the broader story of Scripture.

Pick one thing you underlined about God in Romans 2. Focus on that verse. Why did it stand out to you? Did it give you any new understanding of who God is, what He does, or what He is like?

One of the dominant themes in Romans 2 is God’s judgment. What did you learn from this chapter about the judgment of God? What phrases did you underline? Did anything surprise, challenge, or even comfort you?

There is plenty to observe about God and His judgment in Romans 2. However, the concept of God as judge is throughout His Word. In order to get a robust “whole Bible” understanding of God as Judge, look up the following verses and write what you observe.

Genesis 18:24-25 _____

I Samuel 16:7 _____

Psalms 9:7-8 _____

Psalms 96:13 _____

Romans 1 was full of behaviors that God sits in judgment of. However, Paul is not done calling people out. In chapter 2 he now turns his attention toward those who may have been nodding in agreement while reading chapter 1.

Look up the following verses to gain a “whole Bible” understanding regarding what God says about the dangers of placing ourselves in a seat of judgment. Record what you observe.

Matthew 7:1-5 _____

Luke 6:37 _____

I Corinthians 4:3-5 _____

James 4:12 _____

In Romans 1 and 2, Paul lets us know that God is not interested in merely identifying sin in others; he is exposing the condition of **every** human heart including ours. If we come looking only for the sins of others, we may miss what God wants to reveal in us. But if we come with humility, asking the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, Romans 2 becomes an invitation to repentance and transformation.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

Today you have the opportunity to solidify and metabolize what you have learned. Take some time to think about and answer the following questions.

What qualities make God uniquely qualified to judge?

In the book of Isaiah, we learn that God's judgment is always paired with hope. Identify the hope in Romans 2 and summarize it below.

How does God's ability to see the heart distinguish His judgment from ours?

How would your view of judgment change if you saw it primarily as an expression of God's righteousness rather than His anger?

Ultimately, God's judgment is an invitation to repentance. When we respond with humility, conviction becomes the beginning of transformation.

Close today by examining your attitude toward the judgment of God. Ask Him to reframe your thinking so that you see His judgment in light of His righteousness, His love, and His desire to form a people who reflect His Kingdom.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Throughout this week, Romans 2 has challenged us to think deeply about God's judgment, His kindness, His impartiality, and His concern for what is happening in the human heart. Before moving on, take time to slow down and reflect on what God has revealed about Himself through this chapter.

Choose one or more of the reflections below and spend time journaling, praying, or even take a walk and listen to the Lord. If one of these practices comes easily to you, pick a different one so that God can speak to you in a new way. Don't rush. Sit with a question long enough for it to move from your mind to your heart.

Reflection 1: How does God's perfect judgment differ from the way you typically judge yourself or others?

Reflection 2: Romans 2:4 says that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. Where have you experienced God's kindness drawing you back to Him?

Reflection 3: What areas of your life are you tempted to focus on outward appearances/performance instead of the condition of your heart?

Reflection 4: What is one truth from Romans 2 that you want to carry with you into the coming week?

After reflecting, spend a few moments talking with God about what you learned in Romans 2. Praise Him for who He is. Confess anything He has revealed. Thank Him for His kindness, patience, and mercy. Ask Him to continue shaping your heart through His Word.

ROMANS 2

NOTES

ROMANS 3:1-20

THE GOSPEL: JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

Society is really good at categorizing people. Often, we are broken up into groups: introvert vs. extrovert, thinker vs. feeler, or what some might call a "head" person or a "heart" person. If you're a "head" person, you probably love the book of Romans. It's direct, to the point, and, compared to a narrative or a poem, leaves little room for personal interpretation. You tend to lead with thinking and logic. If you're a "heart" person, you might find this book long, complex, and maybe a little intimidating and find yourself longing for the Psalms of David or a narrative like Genesis.

Yet neither preference should determine how we approach God's Word. Regardless of which side you find yourself on today, we all come to this study as people created by a Creator, opening the very Word of God. Rather than leading primarily with our head or our heart, let's begin with a posture of reverence for the letter written to a church nearly 2,000 years ago—a letter that is just as alive and active today as it was then.

Take a few moments to let that sink in. Set aside distractions and come before God's Word with a posture of listening, gratitude, and expectancy.

For a quick review, turn to the back of your book and **read your summaries** from the first 3 weeks of homework

As you prepare for your reading today, let it be just that: reading. Read it slowly and with curiosity. Before jumping to interpretation or application, spend time simply listening to Paul's words and imagine how his original audience may have heard them.

With the previous week's summaries in mind, **read Romans 3:1-20** first in the NIV and then the NLT. (*Text provided in Day 2 homework.*)

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Romans 3 concludes the appeal made by Paul in the first two chapters of Romans by responding to the questions he knew would arise from the recipients reading through Romans 1 and 2. Because letters lacked the benefit of immediate conversation and discussion, Paul anticipates these questions and addresses them directly. He writes Romans 3 with an understanding of his readers, knowing their questions and responses to Romans 1 and 2 have *"immense implications for the understanding of God, of salvation, and of who belongs to God's people."* (Baker Illustrated Study Bible)

If Romans 1 and 2 have shown us that every person is guilty of sin, the first part of Romans 3 ultimately levels the playing field by showing us that we all stand equally in need of God's grace and salvation.

Verse 20 sums up the previous 19 verses well: *"For through the Law comes knowledge of sin."* (NASB)

As you read today, take note of what questions Paul is answering and anything that surprises or challenges you.

1. Go through *Romans 3:1-20* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends. Look for transition words like: *therefore, so then, for this reason, finally*. These often signal a new section.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.

3. Go through and **write down any repeated words** below.

4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this chapter is about and record it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 3:1-20*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 3:1-20 NIV

- ---
- 1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision?
- ---
- 2 Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.
- ---
- 3 What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness?
- ---
- 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written:
- ---
- “So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”
- ---
- 5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)
- ---

6 Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? **7** Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" **8** Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just!

9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.

10 As it is written:

"There is no one righteous, not even one;

11 there is no one who understands;

there is no one who seeks God.

12 All have turned away,

they have together become worthless;

there is no one who does good,

not even one."

13 "Their throats are open graves;

their tongues practice deceit."

"The poison of vipers is on their lips."

14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and misery mark their ways,

17 and the way of peace they do not know."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. **20** Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

SECTION TITLES

ROMANS 3:1-20 NLT

1 Then what's the advantage of being a Jew? Is there any value in the ceremony of circumcision? **2** Yes, there are great benefits! First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God.

3 True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful? **4** Of course not! Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say about him,

“You will be proved right in what you say,
and you will win your case in court.”

5 “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.) **6** Of course not! If God were not entirely fair, how would he be qualified to judge the world? **7** “But,” someone might still argue, “how can God condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness and brings him more glory?” **8** And some people even slander us by claiming that we say, “The more we sin, the better it is!” Those who say such things deserve to be condemned.

9 Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin.

10 As the Scriptures say,

“No one is righteous—
not even one.

11 No one is truly wise;
no one is seeking God.

12 All have turned away;
all have become useless.

No one does good,
not a single one.”

13 “Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave.
Their tongues are filled with lies.”

“Snake venom drips from their lips.”

14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “They rush to commit murder.

16 Destruction and misery always follow them.

17 They don’t know where to find peace.”

18 “They have no fear of God at all.”

19 Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. **20** For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Although Paul is the writer of this letter, he draws heavily from the Old Testament in this section, especially Psalms and Isaiah, to support what he is saying. These passages help emphasize both the seriousness of humanity’s condition and the righteousness of God’s character.

While we did not specifically identify what this passage teaches us about God on Day 2, it still reveals much about His character. Based on your observations this week, write a summary of what you learned about God.

Summarize Paul's argument in **verses 1-7**.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

In contrast to the fruit we just considered, verses 10–18 paint a picture of what life looks like when sin shapes the heart. List the characteristics and behaviors Paul uses to describe sinful humanity below.

Based on these verses, how would you explain Paul's description of humanity?

If you look back at Day 2 and the repeated words you wrote down, you might find “law” on your list. What do you notice about how Paul uses the law in Romans 3:1-20?

Read Romans 3:19-20. In your own words, what is Paul saying about the purpose of the law and humanity’s standing before God?

Without the law, we would not know we were sinning. Without a moral-law giver, there would be no law and everyone would do what was right in their own eyes. It is only by the law that we have even a basic understanding or recognition of sin. The law helps us diagnose our sinful condition, but it cannot cure it.

Rather than comparing ourselves to others, Paul reminds us that when measured against God’s righteousness, every person falls short. No one can claim innocence or earn a right standing before God on their own.

Compare Paul's description of humanity to the characteristics of God you have noted throughout the past three weeks:

Paul's description of humanity invites us to a greater awareness of our need for God's grace. As we see more clearly our dependence on Him, we're reminded of the seriousness of sin and our utter need for Him. Sit in awe of the God we serve, and close your day with a posture of gratitude as you thank Him for who He is.

PERSONAL INTERACTION

Today is an opportunity to dig a little deeper into what we've learned about God's character, the condition of humanity, and our response to it.

If last week we learned that *"God's judgment is also an invitation to repentance,"* this week we learned that God's righteousness is also an invitation to confession. Spend time with the following questions as an opportunity to examine the beliefs of your heart and move toward honesty before God.

Verse 9 was written for Jews who believed they were superior to Gentiles, but it applies just as much to us today. The NASB says, *"What then? Are we better than they?"*

Where in your life are you most tempted to see yourself as “better than” (people, opinions, or situations)? Explain.

What rules, standards, or achievements do you tend to rely on to make you feel acceptable before God or others?

Our culture is built on independence and self-reliance, reinforcing the idea that we can do it all on our own. This shapes how we often approach life without even realizing it.

In what ways do you find yourself relying on your own strength instead of God’s grace?

Do you treat some sins as more serious than others in a way that minimizes your own? What does that reveal about your heart?

As these questions surface areas of our hearts, God does not leave us there—He speaks truth and grace into them.

If you find yourself feeling uncomfortable in confession, you can rest in this truth:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

And if shame begins to surface as you reflect, remember that confession is not the same as condemnation:

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

Following confession, God leaves us with an invitation to repentance. Consider the things you confessed above and close your day leaving those things at the foot of the cross, turning towards the Father and walking forward in new creation.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

This week, we have come face-to-face with the condition of all humanity: we stand guilty before God and in need of His grace. The law helps expose our sin and reveal our need for a Savior. Take a few minutes to reflect back on what you've learned and the work you've completed before moving on.

Now, choose one or more of the reflections below and spend time journaling, praying, or taking a walk and listening for the Lord. Sit with a question long enough for it to move from your head to your heart. Write them down and carry them with you throughout the day. Reflection grows deeper when we give it time to settle within us.

Reflection 1: How might a greater awareness and acknowledgement of your own sin change the way you view the people around you?

Reflection 2: How might the law and the character of God lead you into a deeper dependence and trust in Him?

Reflection 3: What is God inviting you to believe more deeply about Him or yourself after this week?

Reflection 4: Where did you feel most convicted, comforted, or challenged this week, and why do you think that stands out to you?

After reflecting, spend a few moments talking with God about what you learned in Romans 3. Respond to Him in prayerful gratitude. Thank Him for His law, His Word, and His kindness that leads us to confession and repentance.

ROMANS 3:1-20

NOTES

ROMANS 3:21-31

THE GOSPEL: JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

This week we will complete our study of Romans 3. If you have been feeling the weight of Paul's arguments, you're certainly not alone. For nearly three chapters, he has been helping us see the reality of sin and our need for God. If you have not read ahead yet, you may be ready for a bit of an exhale. Many believers have found exactly that in this second half of Romans 3, which contains some of the most cherished passages in all of Scripture.

Take a few quiet moments to read Romans 3:21-31 in both versions provided. (*Text provided in Day 2 homework.*) Since it is only ten verses, read slowly and prayerfully. We often come to Scripture looking for something: a quick answer, a “to-do” list, or a truth we can apply to our lives. While those things are important, first and foremost, we need to remember that Scripture is the very words of God. Before we analyze it, we should allow it to analyze us. Before we speak about it, we should listen to it.

The God who speaks in these pages is trustworthy, wise, and good. His Word does not merely give us information; it invites our trust, obedience, and worship.

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

What a gift God's Word and His gospel are! These verses deserve more than a single reading, so today, settle in with your Bible and enjoy examining this passage more closely. Pick up your pen and highlighter and don't be afraid to interact with the text. There is no right or wrong way to do this. This is simply you, God, and His Word.

1. Go through *Romans 3:21-31* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. Let's dissect the passage a bit further. One of the striking features of Romans 3:21-31 is the contrast between what God has done and what humanity has done. **Using blue, underline** every phrase that highlights God's actions, who He is or what He is like. Then, **in red, underline** every phrase that describes humanity's actions, attempted actions, condition, or need. Finally, **underline** every time the word righteousness or right is used **in yellow**.
4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 3:21-31*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 3:21-31 NIV

21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. 28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

ROMANS 3:21-31 NLT

21 But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago.

22 We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. **24** Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. **25** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, **26** for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

27 Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. **28** So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

29 After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. **30** There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. **31** Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Romans 3:21-31 is one of the most important passages in the entire Bible because it answers the problem Paul has spent nearly three chapters exposing; every single person is guilty before God. Humanity is guilty. No one is righteous. No one seeks God. The Law exposes our sin but cannot save us.

Go back into the text you marked up yesterday and circle the first two words of verse 21. Write them here.

After painting a bleak picture of humanity, these two words become precious as they shift our attention to the hope we have in Christ.

In these verses, Paul uses the phrase the 'righteousness of God' many times (you underlined them in yellow). What do you think this phrase means? What do you think righteousness is? What does it mean to be made "right"?

The justice of God is also mentioned several times in this passage (you may have underlined some in blue). How do you understand the justice of God? How would you define it?

Throughout Paul's Bible, what we call the Old Testament, 'righteousness and justice' are repeatedly paired together to describe God. They are central to who He is and to the way He relates to His people and the world. But their original meaning is broader and richer than our English words often convey.

When Paul used these words, his first hearers would not have heard them in isolation. They would have understood them against the backdrop of the Old Testament, with all the meaning and history those words carried. That makes it important for us to understand them as they would have understood them. If we narrow their meaning to our modern English definitions, we may miss some of what Paul intended his readers to hear.

Let's take a closer look at these two words and the fuller meaning each one carries:

- **Righteousness (Tzedakah in Hebrew):** living rightly within God's covenant.
- **Justice (Mishpat in Hebrew):** restoring God's order when that covenant rightness has been violated.

***Tzedakah** is God's standard of what is right.
Mishpat is God's action to establish and restore that rightness.*

Re-read our passage with these definitions in mind. Does this change your understanding? How? What stands out to you?

What overall, pervading picture does this passage paint of God and who He is?

Close today by thanking God for both the Law and the gift of Jesus. The Law reveals our sin and helps us see our need for a Savior. It gives us an honest diagnosis of our condition before a holy God. Yet God did not leave us there. In His great love, He sent His perfect Son, Jesus Christ, to do what we could never do for ourselves. Through Him, God satisfied both His righteousness and His justice, while extending mercy and grace to sinners. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

With those two amazing words, *"but now"*, this week's passage turns our eyes away from ourselves, our depravity, and our sickness, and toward our great God and His perfect righteousness, justice, mercy, and grace. Today let's take a deep dive into the Gospel.

Begin today by **reading Romans 3:23-24**. Verse 23 is heavily quoted and well-known, but verse 24 carries equal significance and beauty. Spend some time considering these verses together and how they build upon one another.

Read Romans 3:23 several times. What do you find yourself thinking about most: *"all have sinned," "fall short,"* or *"the glory of God"*? Why?

Many of us naturally focus on the fact that we have sinned and fallen short. But what if the most important words in the verse are actually **"the glory of God"**?

How would that change your perspective on this verse?

Hopefully, reflecting on that question helps us see this familiar verse a little differently. Sin is not simply about breaking a rule or failing to be good enough. It is falling short of the very purpose for which we were created: to reflect the glory of God. As significant as the phrase “the glory of God” is, Paul also does not want us to miss who has fallen short. The standard is God’s glory, and the verdict is universal: all have sinned. It does not matter how good we think we are or how bad we believe someone else is. We were created to reflect the glory of God, and every time we choose sin, we fall short of that incredibly beautiful standard.

Even if we have a good day, a good week, or even a pretty good month, we still cannot measure up. I like to picture it in terms of the Grand Canyon. Imagine that the goal is to jump from one side to the other. Some of us might barely make it off the edge, while others might jump farther, but in the end, the difference does not matter. None of us can make it across. We all fall short.

That is Paul’s point. We may compare ourselves to one another and feel like we are doing pretty well, but other people are not the standard. *God’s glory is*. And measured against His glory, every one of us falls short.

In what ways do you find yourself boasting in or relying on your goodness rather than resting in Christ's righteousness?

Which is more difficult for you to accept: that your sin is worse than you thought, or that God's grace is greater than you imagined? Why?

As universal as the problem is (verse 23, all have sinned), the solution offered by our gracious and merciful God is just as universal (verse 24, all who believe can be justified). The ground is level at the foot of the cross. **No one is good enough to earn salvation, and no one is too far gone to receive it.** Praise the LORD!

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Romans 3:21-31 is the great turning point. After exposing the depth of our sin, Paul reveals the depth of God's grace. After showing us what we could never do, he points us to what Christ has already done. Guilty sinners are declared righteous, not because of their goodness, but because of His. Not through works, but through faith. Not by earning God's favor, but by receiving His gift. Brothers and sisters, what an incredibly beautiful gospel we have been given.

As you close this week's study, choose one or more of the reflections and spend time journaling, praying, or walking with the Lord. Sit with a question long enough for the gospel to shape your mind, your heart, your perspective as you go throughout your day.

Reflection 1: What aspect of God's character has become most precious to you through this study: His righteousness, justice, mercy, grace, faithfulness, or love? Why?

Reflection 2: If you could no longer point to your morality, accomplishments, knowledge, ministry, or good intentions as evidence of your worth before God, what would be left for you to stand on? If someone observed your life this week, would they conclude that you are trying to earn God's favor or resting in it? How would your life look different if you began living today with nothing to prove and nothing to boast in except Jesus Christ?

Reflection 3: What part of yourself are you still trying to prove to God? If God has already declared you righteous in Christ, what are you still striving to earn? Imagine waking up tomorrow with nothing to prove, nothing to earn, and nothing to hide because of what Christ has done. What would change? In light of that, what action steps do you need to take? What do you need to surrender?

ROMANS 3:21-31

NOTES

ROMANS 4

THE GOSPEL: ABRAHAM AND FAITH

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

We opened our study of Romans by looking at the background of Paul's audience, the Jewish and Gentile believers, who made up the church in Rome. This week, in Romans 4, we will continue by exploring one of the biggest threats to the unity of that church.

As we read, it can feel as though Paul is putting all humanity on trial, carefully presenting the evidence and declaring everyone guilty before God. But he does not leave us there. He continually points us back to the mercy and grace made available through Jesus Christ.

As you read and work through this week's study, place yourself in the story, not as an observer, but as one standing among the guilty who has been offered an incredible gift of mercy.

When you're ready, **read Romans 4**, first in the NIV, then in the NLT. *(Text provided in Day 2 homework.)*

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

At this point in Romans, you are hopefully used to the rhythm of Day 2: digging deeper and dividing up the text in a way that helps you take ownership of your experience rather than simply reading passively. This might also be the point where you are tempted to move past Day 2 for the sake of time, ease, or the belief that it isn't as important. But the hope at the end of this study is that this becomes a practice you can take with you beyond Romans and incorporate into your daily reading. So grab those colored pencils and your favorite seat, and take your time working through these steps. This is an important part of digging into and digesting God's Word!

1. Go through *Romans 4* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. Let's dissect the passage a bit further. Let's look at two specific ideas. The idea of credit/account/wages. **Using green, underline** anytime you encounter these words. Now **underline in yellow** anytime you see the words believe, faith or justified.
4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 4*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 4 NIV

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? **2** If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. **3** What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

SECTION
TITLES

4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.

5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. **6** David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord will never count
against them."

9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! **11** And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. **12** And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. **14** For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, **15** because the law

brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

SECTION
TITLES

16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. **17** As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” **19** Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. **20** Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22** This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” **23** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

ROMANS 4 NLT

1 Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? **2** If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God’s way. **3** For the Scriptures tell us, “Abraham

believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.”

4 When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. **5** But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. **6** David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it:

7 “Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sins are put out of sight.

8 Yes, what joy for those
whose record the Lord has cleared of sin.”

9 Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. **10** But how did this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

11 Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. **12** And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 Clearly, God’s promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God’s law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. **14** If God’s promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. **15** For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

16 So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift.

And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. **17** That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

18 Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" **19** And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb.

20 Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. **21** He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. **22** And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. **23** And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded **24** for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Circumcision was a major point of tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians. It was an issue they simply could not seem to resolve. In response, Paul turns to one of the most respected figures in Jewish history: Abraham. He uses Abraham as the ultimate example of faith and obedience, while highlighting some surprising truths that reveal why Abraham is not only the father of the Jewish people, but also the father of all who believe, including the Gentiles and the nations.

Paul also briefly points to David. While Abraham may represent remarkable faithfulness, David reminds us of something many of us relate to more easily: failure and sin. Yet both men were made right with God through faith.

As you read this week could you feel the tension? Jewish people (including Jewish believers) had been expelled from Rome under Emperor Claudius around AD 49 and later when they were allowed to return, they found churches that had continued largely under Gentile leadership and influence. So questions naturally arose: *Who are God's true people? How important is Jewish identity? What role does the law play?* As a result, the tension of circumcision was a big one.

Think of some of today's great debates around scripture interpretation. Now times that by a Jewish nation that believed they were the chosen people and that circumcision was the mark of that identity. So, how can those without the mark of the covenant really be "in"? Paul is saying they can, because Paul is saying there is a *new sign* of the covenant: faith in Jesus Christ and belief in His death and resurrection.

Yesterday you underlined the words credit/account/wages. These are all things that have to be *given*. **This is God's work of grace.** He gives to us what we cannot earn by works on our own.

Why do you think Paul uses those words so many times? What is he emphasizing?

What characteristic of God may Paul be highlighting?

Now look at the words you underlined in Red. **This is where we come in**, we are justified by what?

The English word “faith” means passive agreement. This falls drastically short of its use in the original languages. Look up ‘faith’ in Greek, **pistis (πίστις)**, and in Hebrew, **Emunah (אֱמוּנָה)**.

From the definitions you looked up, can you jot down some of the things that the original hearer would have understood when they read or heard the word ‘faith’ in this letter?

Both the Greek and Hebrew word for faith emphasize a *lifestyle of faithful obedience*, covenant loyalty and relying on external stability. The word Emunah appears in Genesis 15 when Abraham first believes...and guess what? This is before he is circumcised, which doesn't happen until Genesis 17. His circumcision was the *external seal* of his righteousness that God had given him years before.

What are the implications of why Paul would bring this up in Romans 4?

How was this faith lived out? Let's take a closer look at Abraham's example. **Read verses 4:16-20 again**, this time in the NASB translation. **Fill in the blanks** below:

Therefore, the promise comes by _____, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring- not only to those who are of the law but also those who have the _____ of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he _____ - the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. Against all hope, Abraham in hope _____ and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his _____, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead- since he was about a hundred years old- and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his _____ and gave glory to God.

So in other words, Abraham *believed* in God's presence and his ability to give life to the dead. He *believed* in the word and promise of God. His *faith* was strong and didn't waver. He gave all the glory to God!

This is the Abrahamic faith.

Write below some things that you believe about God. This is your faith!

Close today thinking about these two things: **Credit** from God that we didn't deserve, and the **faith** required to be **justified**. In verses 22-24 Paul says we can have this same Abrahamic faith! When we believe God for the improbable and impossible (resurrection, justification, deliverance, etc.), that same righteousness will be counted to us. We just read in Romans 3:23 that *"even if works could justify a man, he would in some way still fall short of the glory of God."* (David Guzik)

Thank you Jesus for crediting us with your free mercy and grace. Thank you Jesus for making a way even though we fall short. May we have the grace to believe and the strength to live out our belief faithfully.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

As we continue to dig into God's Word, it always reminds us how to live. Paul talks a lot about the gift we have freely received. Grace is the opposite of works, of striving, of being under the law. Grace transcends all the things we try to do with our own hands.

Sometimes we place a lot more value on our efforts than we need to. What can we *do* to earn God's love and favor? What can we *do* to get to heaven? What can we *do* to get out of our grave of sin?

Paul argues that we don't *do*. We believe. We trust. We have faith in the One who *did*.

So how, then, should we live if we are not always *doing*?

Let's look back at day 3, the Abrahamic faith. What do all these words you filled in have in common? Abraham had to trust in who God was, what He could do, and be convinced in God's ability to do it.

How about you? Are you fully convinced that God is able to do what He has promised? How does your life reflect what you believe? Explain. (Maybe look back at the summary of *your faith* for some inspiration!)

If you know Abraham's story, you know that God didn't always work exactly in a timeframe that made human sense. He gave Abraham and Sarah the promise of a son when they were very old. How does your understanding of time affect your trust in God?

Are there areas where you are tempted to believe God is late, absent, or not following through because He isn't working according to your expectations? Write down the areas where you're having difficulty trusting God.

Do you know someone whose faith reminds you of Abraham's? What is it about their faith that stands out to you? When you observe their trust in God, what is your typical response? Does it inspire you? Challenge you? Intimidate you? Make you skeptical? Why do you think that is? What might God want to teach you through their example?

In both Abraham and David's stories, Paul considers them "not guilty" by God's free pardon. True justification comes from faith and through God's grace. And if we don't fully appreciate God's forgiving grace, it may be because we haven't grasped just how serious our sin really is.

Close your eyes and picture yourself in a "court room". Jesus enters, pardoning you of each and every sin. Imagine Him bearing the weight of that sin, shoulders slumped, walking out of the room to march towards His punishment—for you. As great as our sin is, His love for us is that much greater. Thank you, Jesus.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

In Romans 4, Paul makes it clear that righteousness is not something we earn. Like Abraham, we are made right with God through faith, trusting that God is who He says He is and that He will do what He has promised to do. Abraham's faith was not passive. He trusted God even when the fulfillment of God's promises seemed impossible. His confidence was not in his own ability, but in God's character and faithfulness.

As you close this week's study, choose one or more of the reflections below and spend time journaling, praying, or walking with the Lord. Sit (or walk) with a question long enough for the gospel to shape your mind, your heart, your perspective, and your actions as you go throughout your day.

Reflection 1: In what area of your life is it hardest to trust God right now? Family? Work? Your future? Something else?

Here's some prompts you could use:

I'm finding it hard to trust You with...

I have a hard time trusting You when...

I want to trust You more with...

God, help me surrender...

Reflection 2: How does the reality that salvation is a gift—not something earned—change the way you view God? Or change the way you view yourself?

Reflection 3: Sometimes we struggle to receive God's gift because we are still trying to earn it. We may believe that if we can just do everything "right", then God will be pleased with us. Or we may seek approval from others, placing our identity and security in their acceptance rather than in Christ. How would your life look different if you could rest in the truth that righteousness is credited by faith, not achieved through performance?

ROMANS 4

NOTES

ROMANS 5

THE GOSPEL: A NEW HUMANITY IN CHRIST

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

One of Israel's most recognized landmarks is Masada, a mountaintop fortress in the Judean desert with a roughly cut, almost vertical path along the front. Herod's palace is situated at the very top overlooking the Dead Sea. The way to the top via foot is affectionately coined "The Snake Path", and has roughly 700 stone steps traversing to the plateau above. The summer sun brings temperatures in the 90s or hotter, and it is, after all, a desert.

As you climb higher and higher, every turn brings a sense of hope that it'll be the last. With sweat dripping, water bottles nearly empty, and the dry desert air carrying the salt of the Dead Sea, the feeling of elation when you discover the true last turn of the winding pathway is hard to put into words. Relief, joy, pride, and exhaustion are just a few of the emotions that replace the doubts and complaints that accompanied the climb.

In our reading this week, we have found ourselves turning that last corner of "The Snake Path", ready to take in the view Paul has been leading us toward. From this vantage point, we can begin to see why the climb was worth it. Just as those climbing Masada are rewarded with a breathtaking view at the top, Romans 5 invites us to pause and take in the beauty of what Paul has been building.

So do just that. Pause. Quietly take in your surroundings. Whatever distractions are competing for your attention today, gently set them aside as you turn your eyes and heart toward God's Word. Today might be an opportunity to read outside, in God's creation (weather permitting).

When you're ready, **read Romans 5**, first in the NIV, then in the NLT. *(Text provided in Day 2 homework.)*

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Romans 1-4 felt like a long uphill argument by Paul. By Romans 5, readers have climbed a mountain of theology:

Romans 1: Humanity's rebellion

Romans 2: God's righteous judgment

Romans 3: Universal guilt and justification by faith

Romans 4: Abraham as the example of faith

Romans 5 begins with a “therefore” that carries the weight of all that came before it and points forward to what is to come. With this in mind, today you are invited to engage the text a little deeper, paying attention to the shift in tone and the celebratory voice of Paul.

1. Go through *Romans 5* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. Since Romans 5 is a pivotal chapter, let's pay close attention to some of the repeated language Paul uses. **Underline in yellow** any words, phrases, or themes that are repeated throughout the chapter, **then write down** some of the recurring ideas below.

4. Using the repeated words, phrases, or themes you observed above, **place them into the appropriate categories** below under Humanity's Character or God + His Character.

Humanity's Character	God + His Character

5. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

6. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 5*.

SECTION TITLES

SECTION TITLES	
	time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.
	15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!
	16 Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!
	18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
	20 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 5 NLT

1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. **2** Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we

now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. **4** And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. **5** And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7** Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **8** But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **9** And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. **10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. **13** Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. **14** Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. **15** But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.

16 And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. **17** For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many.

But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. **19** Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

20 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. **21** So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Even though this chapter can stand on its own with lasting impact, the 4 preceding chapters only exemplify this text all the more. And it starts with one word: *therefore*.

Therefore definition: "for that reason" or "as a result".

It is an adverb used to connect two ideas logically, showing that the second statement happens because of the first.

In this one word, Paul connects everything he has established about humanity's sin and God's provision of righteousness through faith. Because of what Christ has accomplished, everything changes.

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord
Jesus Christ.*

Romans 5:1

In your own words, what two thoughts are the “therefore” connecting? Record below.

Romans 5 is the response to the “therefore”. It holds incredible power to reveal the new realities that belong to those who have been justified by faith.

Therefore, justification by faith changes everything. **Fill in the blanks** below with what we rejoice in due to our justification:

Therefore: Because we have been justified by faith...

We rejoice in _____ (vs. 1-2).

We rejoice in _____, knowing God uses it to shape us (vs. 3-5).

We rejoice in _____, demonstrated through Christ's death for us (vs. 6-11).

We rejoice in the _____ that is greater than Adam's sin (vs. 12-21).

WE REJOICE IN...PEACE WITH GOD.

Read Romans 5:1-2. What does it mean to "have peace with God"? How is this different from simply feeling peaceful?

WE REJOICE IN...SUFFERING

Read Romans 5:3-5. How do the verses before and after shape the meaning of this passage?

Why does Paul say believers can rejoice in suffering? What does this reveal about the difference between Christian hope and worldly optimism?

WE REJOICE IN...GOD'S LOVE

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

This verse is another heavily quoted and widely known verse in the New Testament. The Greek word for *demonstrates* is **συνίστησιν (synistēsēsin)** — “to demonstrate / commend / prove by display.”

If we were to translate this verse and idea into a Hebrew way of thinking, it might be better understood as: *“God showed His love in a way that proves it beyond doubt...”* This was not considered a passive explanation, it was viewed as historical proof.

Considering everything Paul has built in Romans 1-5 and the context around verse 8, put this verse into your own words in a way that reflects its depth and impact.

WE REJOICE IN...THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Read Romans 5:15-21. Here we see the summaries of two opposing kingdoms: the kingdom of Adam and the kingdom of Christ. Use these verses to fill out the characteristics of each kingdom below. As you fill this out, pay attention to Paul’s repeated contrast structure and the “how much more” logic in the passage.

Vs.	Adam (One Man)	Christ (One Man)
15.	Many _____ through one man’s sin	Grace _____ to many
16.	Judgment led to _____	The gift led to _____
17.	Through one man came _____	Through one Man comes _____
18.	One tresspass brought _____	One gift brought _____
19.	Disobedience made many _____	Obedience makes many _____
21.	Sin reigned in _____	Grace reigns through _____, leading to _____

Paul carefully unfolds one reason after another for us to rejoice in all that God has accomplished for us through Christ. Like reaching the summit of a difficult hike, Romans 5 invites us to pause and take in the breathtaking view. On Day 1, we imagined standing at the top of the mountain. Now, after walking through the chapter, bask in the “*how much more*” we get to see. Sit in awe of all that God has accomplished for you through Christ. Reflect on all that you have to rejoice in because of Him.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

In our sinfulness, we often find ourselves responding to our sin in one of two ways: by condemning ourselves, believing “I’m worthless because I’ve failed”, or by defending ourselves, believing, “I’m not really that bad”.

Which response do you most naturally gravitate toward?

- Condemning yourself, believing you are defined by your failures and struggling to believe the gospel.
- Defending yourself, minimizing your own sin while more easily recognizing it in others.

Why do you think this is your natural tendency?

The problem with both responses is that they keep our eyes fixed on ourselves. The gospel lifts our eyes to Christ and what He has accomplished on our behalf. We see it this week in Romans 5. On Day 3, we saw that Paul’s response to our sinfulness is not to despair, but to rejoice, not because our sin is small, but because Christ’s work is bigger.

Tim Keller writes in ‘The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness’ about two truths:

- We are far more sinful than we ever dared believe.
- We are far more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared hope.

Which of Keller's two statements is harder for you to believe? Why?

To put it another way, David Guzik writes in his commentary on Romans 5 :

“The work of Jesus on the cross for us is God’s ultimate proof of His love for you. He may give additional proof, but He can give no greater proof. If the cross is the ultimate demonstration of God’s love, it is also the ultimate demonstration of man’s hatred. It also proves that the height of man’s hatred can’t defeat the height of God’s love.”

If you truly believed everything Paul teaches about your sin and God's love for you in Christ, what would change about the way you think, pray, or live?

*Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **reconciliation**.*

Romans 5:11

Reconciliation in Greek is **καταλλαγή (katallagē)**, meaning the restoration of a broken relationship. Paul isn't simply saying our sins have been forgiven; he is declaring that, through Christ, we have been brought back into fellowship with God.

The greatest gift of salvation is not heaven, it is restored fellowship with God. John Piper says: "*The greatest gift of the gospel is God himself.*"

If you truly believed that Christ himself is the greatest gift of the gospel, how would that affect your pursuit of Him? Do you know that He is relational? How do you approach a relational God?

Paul ends the chapter with a surprising and hope-filled truth:

Where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

Romans 5:20

Paul is not saying that God gave the law to create sin, but that the law revealed God's perfect standard and exposed humanity's inability to meet it. As people became more aware of their sin, they also became more aware of their need for God's grace. And wherever sin increased, God's grace proved even greater.

Through faith in Christ, God's grace is greater than every sin and triumphs over sin's power. In the end, grace has the final word, not sin.

Close your day by drawing near to the God who has reconciled you to Himself through confession. Take one thing you learned today, whether that's something you learned about who God is, something He revealed about your own heart, or an area where you have sinned against Him, and spend a few minutes in prayer confessing to Him. Finish by thanking Him that where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

We started our week climbing Masada, and we can end with the invitation to celebrate, while taking in the view from the top. Romans 5 moves from the “therefore” of justification by faith into the breathtaking realities we now receive through Christ: peace with God, hope in suffering, confidence in God's demonstrated love, reconciliation, and the gift of righteousness and life that overcomes the effects of Adam's sin. What a cause for celebration!

Close your week by choosing one or more of the reflections on the next page. Then spend time journaling, praying, or taking a walk and listening for the Lord. Sit with a question long enough for it to move from your head to your heart. It may be helpful to write one or more down and carry it with you throughout the day. Reflection grows deeper when we give it time to settle within us.

Reflection 1: Where have you seen this progression (suffering → perseverance → character → hope) play out in your own life? How has this impacted your faith? How does knowing that God can use suffering to produce a lasting hope change the way you view future suffering?

Reflection 2: Spend time reflecting on the reality that God did not wait for you to become worthy of His love. How does this truth shape the way you see God and yourself?

Reflection 3: Have you ever felt too unworthy to receive God's forgiveness and love? Are you able to fully grasp the depth of God's grace and His love for you? Why or why not?

Reflection 4: If you were to honestly consider the sins of today, your actions, thoughts, attitudes, bitterness, selfishness, pride, and the ways you have fallen short of God's holiness, how does the truth of Romans 5:8 shape your response to your own sinfulness?

ROMANS 5

NOTES

ROMANS 6

THE GOSPEL: DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

This week we have the extraordinary privilege of spending time in one of the most beautiful and hope-filled chapters in all of Romans, perhaps even in all of Scripture. For thousands of years, kings, prophets, and faithful men and women longed to hear from God. Today, through His Word and the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have the privilege of opening our Bibles and hearing the voice of our Creator, Redeemer, and King. Sit for a moment with that thought and take it in.

Romans 6 is filled with breathtaking gospel truths, profound theological insights, and life-changing answers to some of the deepest questions we wrestle with as followers of Jesus. But before you begin, remember that these are not merely Paul's words. The book in front of you now is filled with the very words of God, inspired by His Spirit and intended to bring about transformation.

Find a quiet place, free from as many distractions as possible. Ask God to quiet your heart and open your eyes, your ears, and your mind to all He wants to reveal through His Word. Then, when you are ready, **read Romans 6** first in the NIV and then a second time in the NLT. (*Text provided in Day 2 homework.*) Read slowly. Read expectantly. Read believing that the God who inspired these words desires to speak to you through them today.

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

I don't know about you, but as I read Romans 6, my heart begins to stir with what could be. A slow and steady drumbeat of hope begins to build, gaining momentum with every sentence. I can almost hear Paul gaining passion and strength as he calls the Romans, and us, to live in the reality of what Jesus has already accomplished for us. We are no longer slaves to sin. We have been united with Christ, raised to new life, and set free to live differently.

Francis Schaeffer, the great Christian theologian, philosopher, and cultural critic, posed one of the most important questions of the twentieth century: **“How should we then live?”**

Keep that question in mind as you turn to Romans 6. Read slowly, engage with Paul's words, and see what you discover about the life we have been called to live.

1. Go through *Romans 6* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. Up to this point in Romans, Paul has focused primarily on how we are made right with God, our justification. In Romans 6, he begins to explain how those who have been made right with God are now called to live, our sanctification. Today, as you read Romans 6, **use green to underline** every word, phrase, or verse that describes your new identity, your new life, and the freedom you have in Christ. Then, **use red to underline** every reference to your old self, sin, death, slavery, and your former way of life.

4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 6*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 6 NIV

_____ 1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on
_____ sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no
_____ means! We are those who have died to sin;
_____ how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't
_____ you know that all of us who were baptized
_____ into Christ Jesus were baptized into his
_____ death? 4 We were therefore buried with him
_____ through baptism into death in order that, just
_____ as Christ was raised from the dead through
_____ the glory of the Father, we too may live a new
_____ life.
_____ 5 For if we have been united with him in a
_____ death like his, we will certainly also be united
_____ with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we
_____ know that our old self was crucified with him
_____ so that the body ruled by sin might be done
_____ away with,[a] that we should no longer be
_____ slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has
_____ died has been set free from sin.
_____ 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe
_____ that we will also live with him. 9 For we know

that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. **10** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

SECTION
TITLES

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. **14** For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! **16** Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. **18** You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. **20** When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. **21** What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are

SECTION
TITLES

now ashamed of? Those things result in death! **22** But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6 NLT

1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? **2** Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? **3** Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? **4** For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. **6** We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. **7** For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. **8** And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. **9** We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. **10** When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. **11** So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

12 Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. **13** Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. **14** Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

15 Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! **16** Don't

you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. **18** Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

19 Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. **21** And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. **22** But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

One of the challenges of reading our modern Bibles is remembering that the original letter to the Romans did not include chapter and verse divisions. To Paul's original audience, Romans 5 flowed seamlessly into Romans 6. That is important because the opening questions of Romans 6 arise directly from Paul's final statement in chapter 5. Romans 5 ends with the remarkable declaration, "Where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (5:20). As Paul continues his letter, he immediately follows that statement with two important questions. Those questions provide the framework for much of Romans 6 and invite us to think carefully about the relationship between God's grace and the way we live.

Paul asks many rhetorical questions throughout this chapter, but two of them form the backbone of his argument. Today we will focus on the first.

Write out Paul's question from verse 1:

Now write out his response in verse 2:

Paul's response is both surprising and profound. At first glance, it raises an important tension. If followers of Jesus still battle temptation and still fall into sin, what does Paul mean when he says we have "died to sin"?

Before reading any further, pause for a moment. If someone asked you, "Have you died to sin?", how would you answer? Why? Based on your own experience, does Paul's statement in verse 2 feel obvious or confusing? Explain your thoughts below.

Paul mentions the practice of baptism in verses 2-4. How would you summarize your understanding of the meaning of baptism?

In verses 3-6, Paul makes a strong case that through baptism we are given a new identity because we are united with Christ. Read these verses carefully. Circle every word or phrase that describes our union with Jesus: "into Christ," "into His death," "buried with Him," "united with Him," "crucified with Him," and any similar expressions.

Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised to new life. Astonishingly, Paul says that everyone who belongs to Christ has been united with Him in each of those realities. Our old life died with Him. Our old master no longer owns us. Our new life began with Him. We are no longer defined by Adam, sin, or death. We now belong to Jesus.

Let that sink in for a moment. The defining reality of your life is no longer what you have done, but Who you are united to.

Continue reading verses 7-11.

What word begins verse 12? Remember in Romans 5, we learned that "therefore" carries the weight of all that came before it and points forward to what is to come. Why do you think Paul starts this section with that word?

Paul concludes this section by exhorting believers to live into their new identity. He does not just want this to be a mental shift or an existential reality. He wants us to actually live it. List every command Paul gives to believers in vs 12-13:

Paul starts first with our identity, and only then tells us how to live. Identity always shapes behavior. The more we embrace who we are in Christ, the less at home we become with the sin He died to defeat.

Take a few moments to prayerfully reflect. Is there any area where you are living as though sin is still your master? Is there a habit, attitude, relationship, or desire where you continue to surrender yourself to the old kingdom rather than the new?

Confess those things honestly before the Lord. Then, remembering who you now are in Christ, consciously offer every part of yourself to Him as an instrument of righteousness.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

Yesterday, we saw how Paul argued that believers have a new identity because they have been united with Christ. We have died with Christ, been buried with Him, and raised to walk in the newness of life. Because of that new identity, letting sin rule over us would betray who we are at the deepest level.

As Paul continues his argument, he asks another question that sounds remarkably similar to the first. If believers are no longer under the Law but under grace, does that mean we are now free to sin?

Write out Paul's question in verse 15.

Now write out his response.

Paul's answer echoes his response in verse 2. **Grace is never permission to keep living under the power of sin. Grace has freed us from our old master so that we can belong to God and live for Him.**

Read verses 16-18 and circle every occurrence of these words or ideas: slave, obey, obedience, righteousness, free, sin.

What two masters does Paul say every person can serve?

According to these verses, what determines who our master is?

In the ancient world, a slave belonged completely to his or her master. Paul borrows that image because he wants us to understand something deeply profound. Every human being serves something. We often think freedom means having no master at all, but Paul says that is just isn't true. There are only two ways to live: under the rule of sin or under the lordship of Christ.

The question is not, "Will I serve a master?" The question is, "Which master will I serve?"

Read verses 19-22.

What is the fruit of sin (verse 21)?

What is sin's end result?

What is the fruit of serving God (verse 22)?

What is the end result of serving God?

Paul reminds us that every path produces fruit. Sin promises freedom and satisfaction, but its harvest is shame and death. Following Christ may require surrender, but it produces holiness and life. Which kind of fruit is your life producing right now?

Conclude today by meditating on the final verse of Romans 6.

What is the difference between a wage and a gift? Why do you think Paul chose those two words?

Many of us have memorized this verse and heard it countless times. But now that you have walked through the entire chapter, read it again.

How has Romans 6 changed your understanding of this verse? What stands out to you now that you may have overlooked before?

Paul ends this chapter with one final contrast. Sin pays exactly what it promises: death. God gives what could never be earned: eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Every day you choose which voice you will believe and which master you will follow. One leads to slavery and death. The other leads to freedom and life.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Romans 6 is overflowing with good news. The gospel doesn't simply improve us; it makes us new. We are no longer defined by sin, ruled by death, or enslaved to our old master. Through Christ, we have been given a new identity, a new Master, and a new future. We have been welcomed into the family of God as His beloved sons and daughters, co-heirs with Christ.

What amazing grace! Sin's claim on us has been broken, eternal life has been freely given and God's presence is our reward. Now, our greatest joy is to offer all that we are and all that we have back to the One who first gave Himself for us.

As you close this week's study, choose one or more reflection and spend time journaling, praying, or walking with the Lord. Sit with a question long enough for the gospel to shape what you believe, transform who you are, and change how you live.

Reflection 1: Do you feel like your identity is sometimes more in your “old self”? Or do you believe that when you entered into a relationship with Jesus he put the “old self” to death? If so, how does that affect the way you live today? How do you embrace the new identity Christ has given you? Can you list some practical ways you could do that today/this week?

Reflection 2: Romans 6 repeatedly calls you to believe something that may not always feel true: that you are dead to sin and alive to Christ. When temptation comes, what truths about your identity in Christ do you tend to forget? How might your response to temptation change if you reminded yourself of who you already are before trying harder to do better?

Reflection 3: What voice do you give power to in your life? What voice do you choose to obey? How does knowing that grace and freedom are freely offered as a gift from God change the way you hear His voice? Does it lead you to a greater desire to obey Him? Why or why not?

ROMANS 6

NOTES

ROMANS 7

THE GOSPEL: FREED FROM CONDEMNATION

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

Today, we enter our ninth week of studying the book of Romans, a letter that has been described as one of the most theologically rich and comprehensive books in the New Testament. Taking a week to work through each chapter, slowing down and taking each section one bite at a time, is probably the best way to grasp all that it has to offer. Not only because Paul's writing can be difficult sometimes, but because it is so densely packed with truth.

If you've sometimes felt overwhelmed by the depth of Romans, I hope you can also look back and see how much we have learned. Some have called Romans the "Mount Everest of Scripture", and you've already climbed a long way.

John Calvin once said that if someone understands Romans, *"he has a passage opened to him to the understanding of the whole Scripture."*

So as you approach the text this week, keep it bite-sized. Read slowly. It may even be helpful to take a few slow, deep breaths, simply to slow your mind and heart down before you begin. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time in His Word. You may also find it helpful to listen to this week's passage as you read.

When you're ready, take your time and **read Romans 7**, first in the NIV, then in the NLT. *(Text provided in Day 2 homework.)*

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

If you open up an NIV bible, you may notice the two headings present for Romans 7: *Released From the Law, Bound to Christ* and *The Law and Sin*. These late additions in the form of section headings are a good summary of our text this week.

To mix it up, it may be beneficial to use these headings as a guide and take the chapter in two parts. So start with verses 1-6. Go through the steps below. Create half of your summary. Then go back and finish with verses 7-25, starting again with Step 1 before completing your chapter summary at the end.

1. Go through *Romans 7* and, within each section, **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. **In purple underline** every reference to the Law and **underline in red** every reference to sin.
4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 7*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 7 NIV

1 Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? 2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. 3 So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man.

4 So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the

commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. **10** I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. **11** For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. **12** So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. **15** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. **16** And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. **17** As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. **18** For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. **19** For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. **20** Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; **23** but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. **24** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? **25** Thanks be to God, who

SECTION delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!
TITLES So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to
God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to
the law of sin.

ROMANS 7 NLT

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? **2** For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. **3** So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries.

4 So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God.

5 When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death.

6 But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

7 Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "You must not covet." **8** But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power. **9** At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life, **10** and I died. So I discovered that the law's commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. **11** Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me. **12** But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.

13 But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good commands for its own evil purposes.

14 So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. **15** I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. **16** But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. **17** So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. **19** I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. **20** But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

21 I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. **22** I love God's law with all my heart. **23** But there is another power[e] within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. **24** Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? **25** Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

If Romans 6 showed us that our relationship with sin has changed, Romans 7 teaches us that our relationship with the law has changed. Romans 5 reminded us that God is relational and that our relationship with Him has been reconciled. The chapters that follow begin to show us just how profoundly that restored relationship changes everything else.

Fill in the blanks for the way our relationship progresses:

How do we relate to sin? (vs. 1) _____

How do we relate to the Law? (vs. 4) _____

How do we now live? (vs. 6) _____

Paul's logic begins to unfold through the illustration of marriage. Death changes the relationship. Just as death releases a person from the covenant bond of marriage, our death with Christ has changed our relationship with the law. We have died to the old order so that we might belong to *another*, to Christ, the One who was raised from the dead.

The old covenant master was the law, the new covenant master is the Holy Spirit.

Do you see the Holy Spirit as your master? We sometimes think of Him as the encourager or the one who enlightens us to God's truth. What role do you see the Holy Spirit playing?

Over and over again, we see Paul write throughout Romans the questions he anticipates his Jewish brothers and sisters posing in response to what he has stated. Having established that the law is no longer our master, Paul anticipates the next obvious question. We see this again in the second section of our text, beginning in verse 7.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sinful?” Write out a summary of Paul's response in verses 7-12.

To answer that question, Paul uses one of the Ten Commandments as an illustration. **Read Exodus 20:1-7.** Which one of these commandments does Paul use as an example of sin in Romans 7:7-8?

Why do you think Paul used this example of sin here in Romans? Of all the commandments, coveting is the only inward sin listed that explicitly deals with the heart. The rest of the commandments are behavioral and outwardly observable. You can avoid murder. You can avoid stealing. But coveting exposes desires, motives, envy, greed, and idolatry. It is a sin often known only to yourself and to God.

Paul then repeats an important phrase twice in verse 8 and 11. Write the completion of each verse below:

Vs. 8: But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, _____

Vs. 11: For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, _____

Refer to verse 11 above and circle the **action descriptions** of what sin did to Paul.

This is what sin does. It kills. It produces death, and even as believers, its effects are destructive whenever we allow it to have its way in us.

Paul is very intentional in using coveting as his example. He could appear to be very good at keeping the law and even feel spiritually alive until he came face-to-face with the command, "You shall not covet." Coveting is an intense desire for something that belongs to someone else, or a discontented longing for something God has not given you. It is different from many of the sins we can measure outwardly. You cannot see coveting, it reaches inward, into our desires, motives, and the hidden places of the heart. It exposes us at a much deeper level.

As Paul confronted the covetousness within himself, the illusion that he could achieve righteousness through the law collapsed. The commandment did not create the problem. It revealed it. Sin seized the opportunity, and as Paul puts it, "*sin...killed me.*" The law exposed what was already true: sin does not lead to life. It leads to death.

Paul asks one final question in verse 13. Once again, he insists that the problem isn't the law, it is sin. David Guzik summarizes it this way:

Once God draws a boundary for us, we are immediately enticed to cross that boundary – which is no fault of God or His boundary, but the fault of our sinful hearts.

Paul honestly describes the ongoing struggle with sin that marks life in a fallen world. Simply knowing God's law, as the Jews did, neither prevents us from sinning nor gives us the power to overcome sin.

As believers aware of our sin, we can all relate to Paul's declarations that we don't do what we want to do and we do what we don't want to do. He finally declares with a cry *"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?"*

Before we move to the final verse for this week, we will close our day with the mindfulness Paul gives us as it relates to our sin, our relationship with it, and the deception and death it brings. Read the following Psalm and spend some time in prayer with the Lord.

*Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 138:23-24

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

Today we'll continue where we left off yesterday, turning our attention to our final verse for the week.

*Thanks be to God, who delivers me through
Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my
mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful
nature a slave to the law of sin.*

Romans 7:25

Yesterday, Paul used the action phrase 'waging war' to describe sins' impact on our inner being, making us a prisoner to the "law of sin".

What action word is used in verse 25?

What is the one thing someone in the middle of a war longs for? Deliverance. Paul reveals the thing we all desire most when battling with our sinful desires, which lead us ultimately to spiritual death and separation from God! He shows us the greatest gift we could ever receive: deliverance from sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord, that restores us to fellowship with God. Because of Christ, we are no longer held captive by sin but are free to live in the new way of the Spirit.

In what areas of your life do you live as though the war has already been won? In what areas do you still live as though sin has the final say?

In order to have a deliverance, you need to have a Savior. Romans 7 begins and ends with the same issue.

- **Beginning:** How do we bear fruit for God?
- **End:** Why can't I do the good I want to do?

The answer is the same: **Not by the Law, but through Christ and the Spirit. Our Savior.**

We may pray for deliverance—from suffering, from sin, from the brokenness of this world—but do we readily accept what the Savior has offered to us? Paul makes it clear: he is so aware of his inability to rescue himself from sin that the only thing that could deliver him was Jesus Christ as Savior.

Do you live as if you need a Savior? Where else do you turn for saving and deliverance? We often look to subtle idols like control, power, approval, performance, and comfort. Which of these do you find yourself relying on most, and why?

Just as the Jews in Paul’s time looked to the law for rescue, we can find ourselves looking to other things for rescue. What does your answer above reveal about where you are tempted to find security, hope, or freedom apart from Christ?

The Hebrew word for trust, **בָּטַח (bāṭaḥ)**, conveys more than simply believing something is true. It describes reliance, confidence, and security, a willingness to let go of self-protection because we trust the One who is faithful.

We explored in Romans 4 that **אֱמוּנָה (emunah)** points to faithfulness and a life marked by faithfulness. Both words come from the same root, **אָמַן (aman)**, where we get the word Amen.

Our trust (**bāṭaḥ**) rests on God's faithfulness (**emunah**).

Do you believe God is faithful and trustworthy? What would it look like to live with greater dependence on Him?

End your day the way you started it, with “Thanks be to God”. Spend some time in prayer thanking Him for delivering us from the power of sin and death. Praise Him as a faithful, trustworthy Savior who gave His life so we could walk in the new way of the Spirit. Amen!

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

This week, in just 25 verses, Paul unraveled the reality of sin in our hearts and our need to be released from the law, while showing us the freedom we have through being united with Christ, our true Savior. Our battle with sin in this life is not over until He returns or calls us home, but we can rejoice because the old has gone and the new has come! Our relationship with the law has changed, and in Christ, we have been freed from condemnation.

Close your week by choosing one or more of the reflections on the next page. Invite the Holy Spirit to meet you in this reflection, resting in His trustworthy faithfulness. Then spend time journaling, praying, or taking a walk and listening for the Lord. Sit with a question long enough to really explore your heart’s true belief and ask the Lord to reveal “any offensive way in me”.

Reflection 1: The sin of coveting (an intense desire for something that belongs to someone else, or a discontented longing for something God has not given you) can often only be known by ourselves and hidden in our own hearts. Where do you see coveting take root in your own heart? Is it easy to hide and justify coveting in your life? How do you think God views your coveting and how do you think He wants you to respond to it?

Reflection 2: Romans 7 contrasts the old way of living under the law with the new way of living by the Spirit. Are there any old patterns, false identities, or ways of relating to God that you are still carrying? What are some ways you can embrace the "new way of the Spirit"?

Reflection 3: When you fail, is your first response self-condemnation or dependence on Christ? How does remembering the difference between the law that exposes sin and Christ's grace that gives life reshape the way you see yourself? How does it reshape the way you see God?

ROMANS 7

NOTES

ROMANS 8:1-11

THE GOSPEL: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, PART 1

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

This is the last chapter in Romans we will be studying together, but please continue to study on your own through the rest of Romans when you set down this book. Paul, in chapters 9-16 will move from belief to practice. Paul will remind the Romans that God is faithful to His promises, and because of His mercy, those who have been saved by the gospel are called to live lives that reflect Christ in their relationships, communities. He will also remind them of their responsibility to keep spreading the gospel. But for now, we get to sit right smack dab in the center and heart of Romans. We are breaking up this chapter into 3 sections because of its richness.

In this first section of Romans we ask you to engage your mind, for the mind animates what happens in the body and heart. Find a quiet place, free from as many distractions as possible. Ask God to prepare you for all He wants to reveal through His Word. Then, when you are ready, **read Romans 8:1-11**, first in the NIV and then a second time in the NLT. (*Text provided in Day 2 homework.*) Come to the text with an open heart and an attentive mind, trusting that the God who inspired these words desires to speak to you through them today.

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Here's a quick recap on where we have been:

- **Romans 5:** Peace with God through Christ
- **Romans 6:** Our Relationship with Sin has Changed
- **Romans 7:** Our Relationship with the Law has Changed

Over the next three weeks, we'll explore Romans 8 and discover how our relationship with the Holy Spirit has changed.

My mom used to say, “Your feelings aren’t wrong, they’re just feelings, and everybody has them.” I think there’s truth in that, but I’ve also learned we have a choice in how we respond to our feelings. For much of my life, I let my feelings dictate my perspective simply because they felt real. Then I heard someone say, “Tell your feelings the truth,” and it changed everything for me. Our feelings are real, but they aren’t always the full truth.

In Romans 8:1-11, Paul helps us understand the relationship between our mind, our body, and the Spirit of God living within those who belong to Christ.

As you read this week, **pay attention** to your own mind, body, and especially to the Holy Spirit. Notice how God is shaping your thoughts through His Spirit, because our minds influence so much of how we live. **Pay attention** to what God is asking you to do with your **mind** as He transforms the way you **think**.

1. Go through *Romans 8:1-11* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you’ve made.
3. With your **yellow** colored pencil, **underline** every time you see the word “mind”. Every time you see the word body or flesh, **circle it in yellow**. And finally, anytime you see the word spirit, put a **yellow box around it**.

4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 8:1-11*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 8:1-11 NIV

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you[a] free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not

submit to God's law, nor can it do so. **8** Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

SECTION
TITLES

9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. **10** But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life[d] because of righteousness. **11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of[e] his Spirit who lives in you.

ROMANS 8:1-11 NLT

1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. **2** And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. **3** The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. **4** He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. **6** So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. **7** For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. **8** That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of

Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) **10** And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. **11** The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

In chapter 6 we learned that the defining reality of our life is no longer what we have done, but who we are united to. Let’s revisit this as we zoom in on how Paul is asking us to live in light of Who we are united to, and Who dwells *within us*.

Fill in the blanks of Romans 7:25:

Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my _____ am a slave to _____, but in my _____ a slave to the law of _____.

Paul connects the above thoughts from chapter 7 with a **“therefore”** at the beginning of chapter 8: **“Therefore** *there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life who gives life has* **set you free from the law of sin and death.”**

In your own words, what two thoughts is the “therefore” connecting?

The Enduring Word Commentary takes it one step further:

“Romans 8:1 tells us we are free from the guilt of sin. Romans 8:2 tells us we are free from the power of sin.”

But **how** are we free? Look back at your underlined words from day 2 of this week’s homework. How many times did you put a box around the word “spirit”? I think I got 11! We go from the Spirit only being mentioned once in all of chapter 7, to being mentioned many times in chapter 8.

If we rely on our own strength and devices we fight a losing battle. So again, I ask the question: *how are we free?*

Fill in the blanks below (Romans 8:3-4):

For what the Law was powerless to do, because it was weakened by the flesh, _____ did by sending his own _____ in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin _____. And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the _____.

We become free in Christ by the power of His Spirit! The Spirit breaks chains, gives us new life, and gets the last word!

“For Paul the power to live a life that pleases God comes not from humans’ finite ability in isolation from God, but by the power of the Spirit. God had promised to provide the spirit so that his people could fulfill the moral purpose of the law.”

Cultural Studies Bible

Read verses 5-9. What new word did we emphasize that you underlined?

As we began active engagement, your instruction was to **underline the word “mind”**. God is going for a full transformation of the way we **think**. This is where we see Paul introduce our part. In your own words, summarize what Paul is stating.

*“Set their minds on the things of the flesh: Paul gives an easy way for us to determine if we walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh – to simply see where our mind is **set**. The mind is the strategic battleground where the flesh and the Spirit fight.”*
Enduring Word Commentary

What does it mean to "have the Spirit of Christ"? Most of us can probably think of someone who does all the right things and appears to be a "good church person", yet what is revealed in their heart doesn't seem to reflect the work of the Holy Spirit. Outward behavior alone isn't the evidence of belonging to Christ. The Pharisees looked righteous on the outside, but Jesus saw what was in their hearts. Though they appeared devoted to God, they did not truly belong to Him because their hearts had not been transformed.

So do you think you have the Spirit of Christ? How do you know?

Read verses 6-11 and list some words/ideas surrounding the:

Mind set on flesh: _____

Mind set on Spirit: _____

Paul reminds us that belonging to Christ is not ultimately about religious behavior but about being indwelt by His Spirit. The Spirit doesn't simply change what we do, it changes who we are. If we let the Spirit work in our lives the outcome is a **whole new identity**. You move from death and chaos to life and peace. You move from being hostile towards God, to God dwelling in you. You move from being lost, to being found in His righteousness alone. You move from being far from home to finding home in the fullness of His presence.

Google the definition of the word **identity** and write down what you find.

Now Google the definition of **biblical identity**. What are some differences you see from the definition above?

Romans has spent chapters exposing our sin, our condemnation, and our inability to fight against it. Then almost casually Paul states in verse 9, that those who do not have the Spirit do not belong to Christ. That's a statement with sobering implications. But it also implies that the converse is true: those have the Spirit belong to Christ! You have Paul's assurance here that by having Christ in you, you have His Spirit. It's not about *doing* anything, it's about *setting* our minds on the Spirit and then letting the Spirit do His work in and through us.

Close your day by meditating on these scriptures about the Holy Spirit's work in our life.

Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit...

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

John 3:5-8

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth...He lives with you and will be in you.

John 14: 16-17, 26

Remain in me, as I also remain in you... Apart from me you can do nothing

John 15:4-5

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16-25

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom... we are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

I don't know about you but at this point in Romans, I do start getting a little confused. We are dead to sin but still sinning? We have the power of the Spirit to defeat sin and death, yet our flesh can still rule us at times? There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus and yet we do what we don't want to do. It could make my brain explode. It is a whole lot of *already, but not yet*.

We have access to the King, but the kingdom is still at hand. We are dead to sin but still in a world full of it. We have the power to overcome sin with Jesus, but are tempted by the sin of our flesh. One day His Kingdom will come fully and we will be free of our mortal bodies and freed totally from death and sin. But for now, if we set our minds on Christ, and He is in us, we can begin to experience victory.

This tension between Spirit and flesh is precisely why Paul pulls back the curtain on what's really happening inside us.

In **verses 7-8**, Paul describes those governed by the flesh as being hostile to God and unable to please God. This is a startling statement! It's not just that the flesh breaks God's rules, it resists them.

What are some ways you live as "hostile" towards God? Or how do you tend to "live in the flesh?"

How does seeing the flesh as hostile to God (not merely flawed or weak) change the way you think about your need for the gospel?

Paul tells us when our mind is governed by the flesh, it *is* death. Not that it leads to death or produces it. It simply is.

Take a moment to list some of the opposite and beautiful outcomes of living by the Spirit (If helpful, refer back to the list you made on day 3.)

In **verses 14-17** Paul goes deeper into how living in the Spirit affects our relationship to God. We learned in Romans 5 God is highly relational: *“The greatest gift of salvation is not heaven, it is restored fellowship with God.”*

And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:11

Paul is saying God will give us life in our *mortal bodies*. He's reminding us that the bodies we live in are destined to die. Yet Christ gives them life, and life eternal. The promise is not just for our bodies to be given new life but points to a future resurrection as well. *The already but not yet.*

Which part of **verse 11** gives you the greatest hope, why?

As you wrap up your study today, meditate on both the hope of what we have in the already and the hope of what is still to come in the not yet. Pray these beautiful verses on the next page from 1 Peter as you close your day.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:3-9

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

2 Corinthians 5:21 sums up the whole gospel in a beautiful way: “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us. **That** is already accomplished. So that in Him we might become the righteousness of God...**That** may not be fully realized here on earth in our mortal bodies.*

Take some time today to sit with the already, and the not yet. Pick out just one or two questions from each of the following sections and really focus in on those.

The Already:

- Have you invited Jesus into your life?
- Do you believe the Spirit is living in you?
- How have you seen the Holy Spirit cultivate a desire in you to know, love, and honor Jesus?
- In what ways is the Holy Spirit transforming you to become more like Christ?
- What evidence of the Spirit's work do you see in your life? Consider the fruit of the Spirit, conviction of sin, growing obedience, or a deepening love for God and others.
- What identities have you embraced that are not rooted in who Christ says you are?
- Which truth about your identity in Christ do you need to believe more deeply today?
- How has Christ's victory over sin changed the way you view your own struggle with sin?
- Where have you experienced freedom because of the work Christ has already accomplished?
- What gives you confidence that God is continuing His work in you?

The Not Yet:

- Where do you most deeply feel the effects of living in a broken world?
- What aspect of your life are you most eager for God to fully redeem and restore?
- What ongoing struggle reminds you that you are still waiting for complete freedom from sin?
- How does the promise that one day you will be fully restored give you hope today?
- Are there areas where you have grown weary in the process of becoming more like Christ?
- What does it mean to you that one day your struggle with sin will be over?

- How does the promise of a resurrected body shape the way you view your current weaknesses?
- In what ways do you see God continuing to transform you, even though His work in you is not yet complete?
- Where are you tempted to seek fulfillment in this life instead of placing your hope in what is to come?
- How does remembering your future inheritance in Christ change the way you face today's challenges?
- What are you most looking forward to about being fully restored in God's presence?
- How does the reality of "not yet" help you extend grace to yourself and to others who are still growing?
- What would it look like to live today with the confidence that God will finish the work He has begun in you? (See Philippians 1:6.)

Conclude your time with this final question: As you consider the "not yet," what are you waiting for God to complete, and how can you faithfully trust Him in the waiting?

ROMANS 8:1-11

NOTES

ROMANS 8:12-30

THE GOSPEL: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, PART 2

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

We know that suffering is part of living in a broken world. Last week, we explored the tension of the *already* and the *not yet*—the reality that Jesus has already come to redeem us, yet we still long for the day when all things will be made new. Much of the Christian life is lived in that space of waiting.

I once walked through a season of waiting for an answer that lasted many years. Looking back, I can see that God was not absent in the waiting. He was teaching me to trust His character, to depend on His grace, and to experience His sustaining love in deeper ways. If we allow it, God's love doesn't simply help us endure the wait, it carries us through it.

As you read Romans 8:12–30 today, notice how Paul acknowledges both our present suffering and our future hope. Reflect on what it means to live faithfully in the "in between." Find a quiet place, free from as many distractions as possible.

Ask God to prepare your heart and open your mind to all He wants to reveal through His Word. Then, when you are ready, **read Romans 8:12-30**, first in the NIV and then a second time in the NLT. (*Text provided in Day 2 homework.*) Read with an open heart, asking God to help you receive His Word with humility and expectation.

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Paul is going to speak about life in the Spirit, which includes both groaning and hoping. As you read, pay attention to what Paul says about who you are, what you are experiencing in the present, and what you are still waiting for God to complete. Let the words of this passage speak to your own experience as you consider what it looks like to live faithfully in the tension between what God has already done and what is still to come.

1. Go through *Romans 8:12-30* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. **Underline in green** any familial language (father, son, adoption, etc.). Now, **in pink underline** any words or phrases that have to do with slavery or freedom.
4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** above to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 8:12-30*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 8:12-30 NIV

12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. **13** For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **19** For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. **20** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. **23** Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

SECTION
TITLES

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30** And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

ROMANS 8:12-30 NLT

12 Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. **13** For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." **16** For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. **17** And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. **19** For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. **20** Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's

curse. But with eager hope, **21** the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.

22 For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. **23** And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. **24** We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. **25** But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. **27** And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. **28** And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. **29** For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30** And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

We start with another **therefore** in this section. Let's do what we have been practicing with this word by linking the previous thought to the upcoming one.

Read Romans 8:10-11 and summarize here:

Read Romans 8:12-13 and summarize here:

What two thoughts is Paul connecting?

His use of the Greek word translated as "obligation" or "debtors" in Romans 8:12 is **opheiletēs** (spelled ὀφειλέτης in Greek). Literally meaning "one who owes a debt" or a "debtor," it describes someone bound by a moral duty or obligation. Paul is starting to paint a picture of the difference between slaves and heirs.

Ancient sources often contrast a householder's children, who are his heirs with his slaves. The relationship between the two is obviously different. For people in Rome "adoption" meant a cancellation of old legal relationships, establishing a new relationship as an heir.

Cultural Studies Bible

God writes long stories. Paul is referencing a relationship with God the Father that started long ago, even long before his time, after God made a covenant with Israel. A lot of his language throughout this section has to do with something that has already happened and something that is yet to come in this long story of God and His people. So let's go back.

In Exodus, we see the Israelites follow God as their Father, while groaning through their slavery, awaiting and hoping for the land promised to them.

GOD AS FATHER

In Day 2 you spent time underlining familial language; this points to God as Father. If you look back at God's relationship with His chosen nation Israel, we will see similar language used.

Read these verses and jot down any familial language you see: *Exodus 4:22-23, Romans 8:14-15*

It all started with God as our Father at creation, but when sin entered the world, so also began the painful exile of God’s children. We were separated from God the Father. Jesus calls out to God on the cross “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do!” In that one statement He is giving the children a pardon from the sin that caused the separation. But even though the cross was the final statement and gave us full reconciliation with the Father, we still live here, in the “in between” that we talked about last week.

Paul has already said we’re adopted (vs. 15). Then he says we wait for our adoption (vs. 23). That isn’t a contradiction. He’s talking about two aspects of adoption and a theme we talked about last week.

- **The Already:** our legal status has changed. We belong to God’s family.
- **The Not Yet:** the full experience of adoption hasn’t arrived until our bodies are redeemed.

GROANING

Paul goes on to write about groaning in the “in between” of the already and not yet.

- Creation** groans (vs 19-22)
- We/Believers** groan (vs. 23)
- The Spirit** groans (vs. 26)

Fill in the blanks:

*Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the _____ of the
Spirit, _____ inwardly as we wait eagerly for our
_____, _____, the redemption of our bodies.*

Romans 8:23

As Christians, we don't deny the severity of suffering. We groan. Just like the Israelites in the wilderness, we have experienced the initial redemption but await for our full inheritance and the promised land.

Just after all this talk of groaning, we come to the infamous and often-misused verse in Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." This isn't Paul standing on the other side of suffering declaring, "Everything is going to work out for me and my life!" He is writing from the middle of the groaning, from the recognition that fullness has not yet come. Suffering is still real, creation is still broken, and we are still waiting. **And yet, God is still working for the good of those who love Him.** But what is the good? Paul answers that in the very next verse: "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). The good God is working toward is not necessarily our comfort, our success, or the outcome we would choose. **The good is that we are becoming more like Jesus.** And if Jesus is our model, becoming like Him will often look a lot like suffering, surrender, perseverance, and trust. God does not waste our suffering; He uses even the hardest parts of our "in-between" to shape us into the image of His Son.

HEIRS

Read verse 8:23.

The Spirit is the firstfruit. That's an agricultural picture. Firstfruits aren't the whole harvest, they're the guarantee that the rest is coming.

We have the Spirit. We are children. We are heirs. We are adopted. And yet, we groan. Creation groans. We wait. Our bodies still die. Suffering still exists.

Why? Because we've received the firstfruits, not the entire harvest.

This explains why Christians can simultaneously have joy, assurance, hope, *and* suffering. Paul isn't saying something is wrong; he's saying this is exactly what life between Christ's resurrection and His return looks like.

The Spirit is what we get in the “in between”! What does life with the Spirit look like right now? **Fill in the blanks** with some of the “firstfruits” Paul says we have already received in Romans 8:

- 8:12: _____
- 8:15-16: _____
- 8:26: _____
- 8:27: _____

We are God's children, we have His Spirit, and we have been promised an inheritance. And yet we still live in the waiting. So until the fullness comes, we can groan honestly, hope confidently, and trust that even here, God is faithfully working for our good.

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

Let's do a recap of the week.

We **groan** because this world is broken.

We **hope** because we have the Spirit.

We **endure** because we know what's coming.

Our groaning is not the absence of hope; it is the expression of hope. We groan because we know this is not how things will always be. Our suffering does not cancel our hope, it gives voice to our longing for the day when God makes all things new.

Spend some time considering the categories from yesterday in your own life.

GOD AS FATHER

What comfort do you find in being a “child of God”?

What is the significance of being “adopted” into God’s family?

GROANING

Is there an area of suffering in your life that has produced groaning, anger, and distance with God?

How has God worked “for your good” even when it didn’t feel or seem good?

Write about a time of groaning in your own life and how God was present in it.

HEIRS

Where have you seen God give you just enough to remind you that He isn't finished yet?

How does the promise of a future harvest help you endure present suffering?

How does recognizing that you are no longer a slave to sin, but an heir of God, change the way you live?

How do you live as if you hope confidently in what is to come?

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

We are going to take a break from our normal day 5 routine. Think of this more as a guided reflection through truths rather than a list of questions. Today is not about finding more answers. It is about bringing what you have learned before the Lord and allowing His Word to move from your head to your heart.

Find a quiet place, take your time, and pray through these reflections. You do not need to have polished words. Remember that the Spirit Himself helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us when we do not know what to pray.

Take a few moments to sit with this truth: **I am a child of God. I have been adopted. I belong to Him.**

Where do you need to receive this truth more deeply? Where are fear, striving, control, or the need to earn what God has already given you still shaping the way you live?

Now bring your places of **groaning** before Him. Think about the suffering, disappointment, uncertainty, or waiting you are in right now. What have you been afraid to say to God? Give yourself permission to be honest with Him. Your groaning does not mean you have lost hope; it may actually be the expression of a hope, a longing for God to make all things right.

As you think about your waiting, ask God to show you where He is inviting you to **trust Him rather than demand an answer**. What promise do you need to hold onto today? Where might God be asking you to believe that He is working for your good, even when you cannot yet see what He is doing?

And finally, remember Romans 8:28-29: God's good work in us is not simply about changing our circumstances; it is about **conforming us to the image of His Son**. Ask Him to show you how He is using this season to make you more like Jesus. What is He producing in you through the waiting? What might He be asking you to surrender?

End your time by simply sitting before the Lord. You do not need to fill the silence. The Spirit is with you, knows your heart, and intercedes for you.

What do you need the Holy Spirit to pray for you today?

Write whatever comes to mind. It may be a prayer, a word, a sentence, or even silence.

[illegible]

Father, help me to live faithfully in the in-between: to groan honestly, hope confidently, and trust You deeply. Remind me that I am Your child, that my inheritance is secure, and that You are not wasting this season. Make me more like Jesus as I wait for the day when what is now only firstfruits will be made complete. Amen.

ROMANS 8:12-30

NOTES

ROMANS 8:31-39

THE GOSPEL: THE TRIUMPH OF GOD'S LOVE

DAY 1: FIRST IMPRESSION

This week we arrive at the final section of our study in Romans. While Paul will continue writing beyond chapter 8, these closing verses bring the first major movement of his letter to a breathtaking conclusion. After carefully building his case for the gospel through seven and a half chapters, he no longer argues or explains. Instead, he erupts into a song of confidence and worship. Enjoy Romans 8:31-39 as the crescendo of everything Paul has written so far.

As you prepare to read this week, come with a posture of open hands and an open heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to quiet the competing voices around you and remind you of what is already true because of Christ.

Read carefully. Pay attention to the questions Paul asks and the confidence with which he answers them. Allow these words to move beyond your mind and settle deep into your heart.

Anticipate the love of God washing over you. Come expecting to be encouraged where you are weary, reassured where you are fearful, strengthened where you are weak, and reminded once again that the good news of the gospel is for you. He loves you and He has moved heaven and earth to step into the chaos of our world to bring you home.

Read Romans 8:31-39, first in the NIV and then a second time in the NLT. *(Text provided in Day 2 homework.)*

DAY 2: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

I don't know about you, but passages like Romans 8:31-39 are a deep exhale for me. When the questions, complications, sorrows, doubts and disappointments of our lives in this fallen world come crashing down, it is passages like these that breathe new life into my heart as they lift my eyes above circumstances and remind me of what is eternally true.

Paul has spent the first eight chapters of Romans carefully building his argument, but in these closing verses of our study there is a noticeable shift. As you engage today's reading, resist the temptation to focus on the nitty gritty. Instead, step back and pay attention to the flow of Paul's thought. Notice where one idea ends and another begins, and consider how each section contributes to the message of the whole.

1. Go through *Romans 8:31-39* and **break it into sections** by determining when there is a shift in one thought to the next. **Put a /** where a section begins and ends.
2. Once you have your reading separated into different sections, **write a title** consisting of a few words or a sentence to summarize each section you've made.
3. In our passage today, Paul asks a lot of great questions. **In yellow, underline** all of the questions Paul asks. Then, **in green underline** all of his answers.

4. **Create a summary** using your section titles to encapsulate what God has shown you this passage is about and write it below.

5. **Take your completed summary** above to the end of the book and record it in the section for *Romans 8:31-39*.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 8:31-39 NIV

_____ **31** What, then, shall we say in response to
_____ these things? If God is for us, who can be
_____ against us? **32** He who did not spare his own
_____ Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he
_____ not also, along with him, graciously give us all
_____ things? **33** Who will bring any charge against
_____ those whom God has chosen? It is God who
_____ justifies. **34** Who then is the one who
_____ condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—
_____ more than that, who was raised to life—is at
_____ the right hand of God and is also interceding
_____ for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love
_____ of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or
_____ persecution or famine or nakedness or
_____ danger or sword? **36** As it is written:
_____ “For your sake we face death all day long;
_____ we are considered as sheep to be
_____ slaughtered.”
_____ **37** No, in all these things we are more than
_____ conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For

I am convinced that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons, neither the
present nor the future, nor any powers,
39 neither height nor depth, nor anything
else in all creation, will be able to separate us
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our
Lord.

SECTION
TITLES

ROMANS 8:31-39 NLT

31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? **32** Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? **33** Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. **34** Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

35 Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? **36** (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") **37** No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. **39** No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

DAY 3: CLOSER OBSERVATION

Yesterday, you traced Paul's argument by identifying its major movements and summarizing each one. Today we'll slow down and look more closely at several key verses. Don't rush to answer the questions. Let Scripture interpret Scripture and allow Paul's words to shape your understanding before bringing your own assumptions to the text.

Read verses 31-32. Why do you think Paul is highlighting the fact that God gave His own Son? If God was willing to give His own Son for us, what assurance does that give us about everything else He promises to provide?

Verse 31 begins with, "If God is for us..." **Read verse 35.** Circle each hardship Paul mentions. What do you notice about the kinds of difficulties he includes?

Does Paul mean Christians will never experience opposition? Why or why not?

In **verses 33-34**, Paul uses courtroom language such as "charge," "justify," and "condemn." Paul pictures a courtroom where charges are being brought against us. According to these verses, why can no charge ultimately stand?

According to verse 34, what four things can we count on to be true about Christ?

- Christ _____
- Christ _____
- Christ _____
- Christ _____

Read verse 37. What do you think Paul means when he says we are "more than conquerors"? Do you think this is different from the world's definition of victory? How?

Read verses 38-39. Paul uses a series of contrasting pairs to describe what cannot separate us from God's love. What do you think he is communicating by covering such a wide range of possibilities? Is there anything you can think of that would be outside of his list?

Paul does not promise us a life without hardship, opposition, accusation, or suffering. In fact, he assumes we will face them. His confidence comes from something far more secure. The God who gave His own Son for us is the same God who justifies us, stands with us, and holds us in the palm of His hands.

This is what makes us “more than conquerors.” Our victory is not that we avoid the hard things of this life, but that none of them can undo what God has accomplished for us in Christ. Nothing we face, nothing brought against us, and **nothing in all creation has the power to separate us from His love.**

DAY 4: PERSONAL INTERACTION

Yesterday, we looked closely at Paul’s words and the sweeping confidence behind them. Today, we are going to ask what these truths mean for us personally.

It is one thing to understand that God is for us, that Christ intercedes for us, and that nothing can separate us from His love. It is another thing to live as though those things are actually true. As you return to Romans 8:31–39 today, allow Paul’s words to move from something you understand to something you deeply believe, something that settles into your life and transforms the way you live.

Read Romans 8:31-39. Look at the statements you underlined in green. There are some beautiful and incredibly precious statements in these nine verses. Which statement in this passage is hardest for you to fully believe for yourself? Why?

One of my favorite statements and one you can take to the bank every time is “If God is for us, who can be against us?” At first glance, we might hear Paul saying that if God is for us, no one will ever be against us. But Paul certainly knew that was not true. Throughout Scripture, the people of God faced very real opposition. Joseph had brothers against him. Moses had Pharaoh against him. David had Saul against him. Daniel had powerful men plotting against him. Jesus Himself was rejected, falsely accused, and crucified. And Paul wrote these words after experiencing opposition, persecution, imprisonment, beatings, and rejection himself.

Paul knows that we will face opposition. So why can he confidently ask, “Who can be against us?”

Most of us will experience people who oppose us, misunderstand us, criticize us, reject us, or even work against us.

Is there a person or situation in your life right now where you feel as though someone is against you? Or has there been a situation in the past where you felt alone, as though someone or life in general was against you? What thoughts, concerns, fears, and doubts have you experienced in that season?

Read Romans 8:31-34 again. What evidence does Paul give that God is truly for you?

Notice where Paul directs our attention. He does not ask us to determine whether God is for us by looking at our circumstances. He points us to what God has already done.

“He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all...” The cross settles the question.

When circumstances are confusing, people oppose us, or life does not unfold as we hoped, we may wonder whether God is really for us. Paul tells us to look somewhere more reliable than our circumstances. **Look at the cross.**

Yesterday we noticed how Paul stretches language to its limits: death or life, present or future, height or depth, and finally “anything else in all creation.”

What is the one circumstance, fear, failure, loss, or uncertainty that you are most tempted to believe could somehow separate you from the love of God?

Now **read verses 38-39** one final time. Where does the thing you just named fit within Paul's declaration?

Paul does not end Romans 8 by telling us to hold more tightly to God. He ends by reminding us *how securely God holds us*.

The circumstances of your life will change. There will be moments of suffering, questions you cannot answer, accusations that feel convincing, seasons when God's presence seems difficult to see and even times of opposition. None of those things get the final word.

God has already demonstrated the depth of His love by giving His Son. Christ has died, risen, and now intercedes for you. And because you are in Christ, there is nowhere you can go, nothing you can face, and nothing in all creation that can separate you from the love of God. Amen.

DAY 5: PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Over the past several weeks, we have walked through the first eight chapters of Romans. Today, rather than conclude by looking at the last few verses of chapter 8, we are going to step back and take in the whole view.

Intentionally revisit your work on Romans 1-8. Look at what you underlined, circled, wrote in the margins, and answered along the way. Turn to the back of your book and linger over the summaries you wrote for each week.

Studies show that if you write things out, you are much more apt to remember them. God, in His Word, commands us to remember. Remembering is a way of setting up standing stones in our lives. It helps us put a stake in the ground to anchor us to what is true and trustworthy. Let's spend a few minutes remembering. Do not rush this. You have invested a lot of time with Jesus and His precious Word. Let it make its home in your heart.

1. REST in one promise.

Look back through Romans 1-8 and choose one promise or truth you need to carry with you. Write it down. Read what you wrote a few times. Take God at His word. This promise is not just for everyone else; it is for you.

2. WORSHIP God for who He has revealed Himself to be.

Romans 1-8 has told us an incredible story about God, Himself. Look back through these chapters and notice all you learned about what He has done, what He has given, what He has promised, and what all of it reveals about His character.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Studies show that when we take what we learned even farther than writing it down to sharing it out loud with a trusted friend, family member or spouse it becomes even more deeply rooted in our lives.

Think about someone in your life who needs the hope you have encountered in these chapters. What truth from Romans 1-8 would you want them to know?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The gospel Paul has unfolded in Romans 1-8 was never meant to stop with us.

You have someone in mind. Don't let what you wrote stay on this page. Reach out. Make the coffee date. Find a time to get together. Share the good news that has met you here.

Sisters, we have learned so much together. The Spirit has been with us and spoken to our hearts.

Through the weighty language and convincing propositions of Paul, we have seen the reality of our sin and our inability to make ourselves right with God.

We have discovered a righteousness that comes through faith, received by grace rather than earned by works.

We have seen what it means to have peace with God and to be united with Christ.

We have learned that our relationship with sin has changed. Our relationship with the law has changed. We now live by the Spirit.

And we have been reminded of who we are.

We are God's children.

He meets us in our weakness and suffering.

He is for us.

And nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from His love.

Thanks be to God!

ROMANS 8:31-39

NOTES

ROMANS SUMMARIES

THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Over the course of these 12 weeks, you will spend time in the first eight chapters of Romans. Each week you will create a summary of the section you studied. Some chapters will be divided across multiple weeks, while others will be covered in a single week. As you move through the study, bring each completed summary to the following pages and add it to the summaries that came before it.

Bring your summaries together to create a growing overview of Romans 1-8.

WHEN YOUR STUDY IS COMPLETE

When you reach the end of your study, you will have more than a collection of weekly summaries. You will have *a resource you can return to again and again*. These pages will give you a condensed picture of the truths you have spent these weeks studying, wrestling with, and discovering in God's Word. Come back to them when you want to remember what you learned, refresh your understanding of Romans, or remind yourself of the richness and depth of the gospel Paul so carefully unfolds.

You may even want to challenge yourself to memorize your summaries. Imagine being able to carry the message of Romans 1-8 with you, not simply as individual verses or ideas, but as a growing understanding of the whole story Paul is telling. *Our hope is that what you have studied would not remain on these pages, but would take root in your heart and shape the way you know God, understand the gospel, and live in light of it.*

ROMANS 1:1-17 SUMMARY

ROMANS 1:18-32 SUMMARY

ROMANS 2 SUMMARY

ROMANS 3:1-20 SUMMARY

ROMANS 3:21-31 SUMMARY

ROMANS 4 SUMMARY

ROMANS 5 SUMMARY

ROMANS 6 SUMMARY

ROMANS 7 SUMMARY

ROMANS 8:1-11 SUMMARY

ROMANS 8:12-30 SUMMARY

ROMANS 8:31-39 SUMMARY



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