



## **“The Power of the Gospel”**

### **WEEK ONE: Romans Background**

#### **DAY ONE**

#### **1. Who wrote the letter to the church in Rome, and how was it written? *Romans 1:1, Romans 16:22***

Paul wrote the letter. He describes himself as “a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle.” The letter was dictated to Tertius—Paul’s scribe (also known as an *amanuensis*). Based on 16:22, it is evident that Tertius was a fellow believer.

#### **2. Imagine you are a Christian in a church in the first century. You would not read the words of the letter to the Romans yourself. Rather, you, along with the rest of the local church, would hear them read to you, but not by the person who actually wrote the letter. How would this change the way you received the letter? What frustrations would *hearing* rather than *reading* the letter give you? Do you see any benefits to hearing rather reading the words?**

##### Frustrations

I may miss things as it was read to us. This could be due to my own lack of understanding or distractions around me. I might also miss things in the letter due to the way it was read (e.g., the reader emphasizing the wrong words in the wrong ways). Unfortunately, I couldn’t take the letter home with me to read the letter at my own pace. I would be forced to go at the pace of the church. It should be said, however, that hearing the letter rather than reading it was normal for people during that time period. I am sure they were better listeners than we are.

##### Benefits

I would be more likely to see the letter as one unit because it probably was read to the people in one sitting. I would be hearing the words at the same time as the rest of the church, so my growth would correspond with the growth of the church. The letter would probably be the topic of conversation for quite some time. As the letter would be read to the entire church together, rather than me reading it to myself, I would be more likely to see the words applying to the church at large, rather than simply myself.

#### **3. There is another important difference between believers today and in the first century. Today, when we read our Scriptures from the New Testament, we do not**

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**question the books' validity, for the early church leaders accepted them as inspired by God long before our time. However, in the first century, the New Testament writings had not yet been completed, let alone collected. As a first century believer, what importance would you place on knowing whom the letter was from? How would you know the letter was authentic? How would you know the letter was from God?**

The source of the letter would matter greatly. I would want to know how we received the letter and who delivered it. The trustworthiness of the messenger would impact how I received the letter. If the messenger was not trustworthy, I would have a hard time seeing the letter as trustworthy. I would receive anything from a known apostle with great eagerness. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit's "stamp" would authenticate the letter. It would have to meet his approval.

**4. Since Paul normally had someone else physically write his letters as he spoke the words, how did he prove that the letters actually came from him?**

***1 Corinthians 16:21, Galatians 6:11, Colossians 4:18, 2 Thessalonians 3:17***

At the end of the letter he would write a greeting in his own hand. He evidently was known for the large letters with which he wrote (maybe he wrote like a modern-day doctor!). His greeting was "the distinguishing mark" in all his letters.

**5. It is not known whether Paul included a hand-written greeting at the conclusion of the letter to the Romans. Assuming that he did not, how would people know that this letter came from Paul? *Romans 1:1, Romans 16:1-16***

1. He said that he wrote it.
2. He personally greeted 26 individuals and five churches at the end of the letter—the people Paul greeted surely could attest to whether the letter was true or not.
3. The contents are "Pauline." If you knew Paul, you could easily testify that these were his words. They sounded like him.

## **DAY TWO**

**6. The following verses include some important biographical information about the apostle Paul. Using these verses, describe Paul and his life as completely as possible.**

***Philippians 3:4-6***

Paul was circumcised on the eighth day. He was an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin (the most famous Benjamite had been King Saul—Israel's first king). Paul describes himself as "a Hebrew of Hebrews." He was a Pharisee (a member of an influential group in Israel known for their strict observance of the Law). He was a persecutor of the church. In terms of "legalistic righteousness," Paul considered himself to be "faultless."

***Acts 22:2-5 (Acts 5:34)***

Paul was “born in Tarsus of Cilicia” (modern-day Turkey), but he was “brought up” in Jerusalem. He was trained by Gamaliel, a “teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people” (Acts 5:34). Being taught by Gamaliel was no small honor, and it would have, at least among the Jews, increased Paul’s prestige. According to *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, Gamaliel was ...

The grandson of the great Hillel, and himself a Pharisee and celebrated doctor of the law. His learning was so eminent and his character so revered that he is one of the seven who among Jewish doctors only, have been honored with the title of *Rabban*. He was called the “Beauty of the Law,” and it is a saying of the Talmud that “since Rabban Gamaliel died the glory of the law has ceased.” He was a Pharisee but anecdotes told of him show that he was not confined by the narrow bigotry of the sect. He rose above the prejudices of his party. Candor and wisdom seem to have been the features of his character.<sup>1</sup>

Paul testifies that he persecuted the followers of Christianity “to their death.” He was so zealous to stamp out Christianity that he “obtained letters” from the high priest and the Council so that he might go to Damascus and bring followers of Jesus back to Jerusalem so that they might “be punished.”

***Acts 13:9***

Saul was also called Paul. He was not renamed at conversion. Rather, Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul was his Latin name. When traveling among the Gentiles, Saul used his Latin name.

***Acts 9:1-2***

Prior to his conversion, Saul was aggressively working against the church, “breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples.” His desire to stamp out this “heretical” wing of Judaism (at that time, Christianity was not considered to be a separate religion from Judaism) was so great that he asked for letters that he might take to the synagogues in Damascus, so that he might bring any who “belonged to the Way” as prisoners back to Jerusalem.

***Acts 22:23-28***

Paul was born a Roman citizen.

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<sup>1</sup> Merrill F. Unger, ed., *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody, 1988), 454.  
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***Acts 23:16***

Paul had a sister and a nephew. They lived in Jerusalem.

***Romans 11:1***

Paul describes himself as “an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.”

***2 Corinthians 11:22-33***

In these verses, Paul compares himself to the false teachers who were attempting to deceive the church in Corinth. He tells the church that he has “worked much harder” than the false teachers. He has “been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.” Paul goes on to list various persecutions/ troubles he endured in his ministry. Interestingly, many of the events listed here do not appear in the book of Acts.

**DAY THREE**

**7. Paul was, in his own words, a Pharisee. Based on Jesus’ own words, how would you describe the typical Pharisee? *Matthew 23:1-39***

Today, if someone called you a Pharisee, you would consider that to be an insult. We must understand that the Pharisees were highly regarded in Jesus’ day. “Pharisee” was not an insult at that time. However, Jesus did not regard the Pharisees with favor. He said that the Pharisees “do not practice what they preach” (v. 3). “They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them” (v. 4). “Everything they do is done for men to see” (v. 5). They “shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces” (v. 13). They “travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, [they] make him twice as much a son of hell as [they] are” (v. 15). Jesus called them “blind guides” (v. 16) and “blind fools” (v. 17) and “hypocrites” (v. 23). He said that they were “full of greed and self-indulgence” (v. 25) and “full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (28). His indictment against the Pharisees goes on and on.

**8. Jesus told his disciples to “watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees.” By this, he was referring to the teaching of the Pharisees. What does yeast do? What do you think he meant when he compared the teaching of the Pharisees to yeast? What, specifically, were the disciples to watch out for? *Matthew 16:5-12***

Yeast rises and spreads. It changes the dough. In this particular passage, the Pharisees wanted a sign from Jesus. They were attempting to control God! The disciples were to watch out for an attitude that uses the kingdom of God for your own purposes.

**9. In what ways was Paul, prior to his becoming a Christian, a typical Pharisee? *Acts 7:54-8:3***

He tried to stamp out Christianity, all the while claiming that he loved God. He thought he was above other men.

**10. What were the events surrounding Paul's dramatic conversion from Jesus Christ's enemy to His follower? *Acts 9:1-19***

He received letters from the high priest to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to "the Way" he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As Paul neared Damascus a light flashed from heaven and a voice spoke to Paul, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Paul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." At this moment, everything in Paul's life changed.

**11. (Personal) Have you, like Paul, confessed Jesus as Lord? If so, describe the events of your conversion. If not, why haven't you?  
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**DAY FOUR**

**12. Based on Acts 16:35-39 and Acts 22:22-29, what are some of the benefits a Roman citizen was entitled to receive? How difficult was it for a person to receive Roman citizenship?**

A Roman citizen was entitled to a trial before a public hearing. As a citizen, you were not to be flogged if you had not been found guilty. It was possible to purchase citizenship for a high price. Paul, however, was born a citizen.

**13. Why was it important that Paul, when compared to the other apostles, had Roman citizenship? *Galatians 2:7, 8***

He had been set apart for ministry to the Gentile. This necessitated travel throughout the Roman Empire. The fact that Paul was born a Roman citizen is a wonderful display of God's sovereignty. Even before Paul was born, God worked out events so that Paul would have Roman citizenship. God knew what Paul needed in order to fulfill this ministry.

**DAY FIVE**

**14. What was Paul's prior relationship with the church in Rome? *Romans 1:13, Romans 16:1-16***

He had never been there, although he wanted to travel there many times. Paul knew many of the people in the church in Rome.

**15. What were Paul's motives for wanting to visit the church in Rome? *Romans 1:11-15***

He wanted to impart a spiritual gift to them in order to make them strong. He wanted to have a harvest among the Gentiles. He wanted to preach in Rome. He wanted the Christians in Rome to assist him on his journey to Spain. Antioch had been his home base. Now, because his work was going to be further west, Paul needed a city that would be closer to the area in which he would be working.

**16. Why do you think he wrote this letter to the church in Rome prior to his actual visit?**

He wanted to prepare the church for his arrival. He wanted their understanding to be clear about salvation, life as a follower of Jesus, sin, Israel, etc., etc..

**17. (Personal) Paul's passion was preaching the gospel (Romans 1:11-17). What is your passion?**

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**DAY SIX**

**18. Read Romans 1-8, preferably in one sitting. Don't take any notes as you read, just take the time necessary to slowly read the chapters. When you are finished, write any thoughts these chapters leave you with in the space below.**

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**19. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

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**“The Power of the Gospel”**  
**WEEK TWO: Romans 1 and 2**

**DAY ONE**

**Romans 1**

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 human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him and **for his name's sake**, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. 6 And you also are among those who are **called to belong to Jesus Christ**.

7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and **called to be saints**:

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 with my whole heart 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, 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 at Rome.

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

In other words, for his glory.

Paul did not preach a gospel that centered on faith alone. He believed that obedience came from faith. As James 2:17 says, “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

This is the verse that troubled Martin Luther. He hated the thought of God's righteousness for he knew that he was wicked. His meditation on this verse (and others like Psalm 71:2) led to the Reformation.

Or “the righteousness of God” (see ESV). The gospel showcases God's righteousness.

This is found in Hab. 2:4. The entire gospel message is found in the Old Testament!

Verse 18 begins a major new section in this chapter. Paul's words here set up his arguments in the coming chapters. The type of wrath discussed in 1:18-32 is being revealed. This means it is happening now. The popular "gospel" message that a loving God wouldn't show his wrath toward anyone is clearly unscriptural. The way God's wrath is being revealed may be seen in verses 24-32.

This is mankind's greatest sin.

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men 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 men 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 mortal man 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 of 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 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 indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to 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 are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 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.

## Romans 2

1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, 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 man, 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, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?



This wrath is not currently being revealed (as is the wrath discussed in chapter 1). This wrath will be revealed on the Day of Judgment.

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 give to each person according to what he has done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11 For God does not show favoritism.

12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) 16 This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

17 Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; 18 if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; 19 if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— 21 you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against 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 brag about 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 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 man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. 29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

## DAY TWO

### Read Romans 1:1-17

**1. Romans 1:1-17 refers to the gospel six times. According to these verses, what is the gospel and what is Paul's relationship to it? What significance does Paul give the gospel?**

The gospel is the good news regarding God's Son (v. 3). The gospel "is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (v. 16). The Old Testament proclaims the gospel (v. 2). God set Paul apart for the gospel (v. 1).

**2. Jesus said that his followers must do something for the gospel. What is it? *Mark 8:34-38***

Whoever loses his life for Jesus *and the gospel* will save it.

**3. How is this possible?**

The gospel and the proclamation of the gospel must be a priority in our lives. The gospel is more important than our needs, wants, reputation, etc. I must live with this in mind.

**4. Romans 1:2 says that the gospel was "promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures" (meaning the Old Testament). How is this confirmed in the following passages?**

#### ***Luke 24:25-27; 44-47***

The Jews had three sections of the OT: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Jesus explained to the disciples what was written about him in "Moses" (the Law—the first five books of the Old Testament), in "all the Prophets" (that is, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea-Malachi) and "the Psalms" (also known as the Writings: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1-2 Chronicles). This is highly significant. What Jesus is saying here is that all three sections of the OT are about him and the work he would and will do! The OT is not about a different God operating in a different manner. It is about the God of the universe and the eternal gospel of his Son!

#### ***Acts 2:22-36***

David wrote about Jesus. He wrote in such detail that he even wrote about Jesus' resurrection from the dead (v. 31) and his ascension to the Father's right hand (vv. 34-35).

#### ***Acts 3:17-24***

Notice verse 18: "... this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer." Verse 24 repeats the thought: "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days." The

primary message of the prophets was in regard to Jesus. This should impact how we view their understanding of the future. They were preaching about Jesus! This is confirmed in Revelation 19:10, where we read, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

#### ***Acts 8:30-35***

Philip “began with” Isaiah 53:7-8 to tell the Ethiopian eunuch “the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35). Isaiah 53 is clearly about Jesus. It would appear that this was not the only passage Philip used in preaching here. He “began with” this passage. Who knows how many other passages he discussed?

#### ***Acts 17:1-4***

Paul “reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead” (Acts 17:2-3). “The Scriptures” does not refer to the New Testament. The Scriptures Paul used were the same Old Testament Scriptures the Jews would have studied in the synagogue. Little did they know that they were all about Jesus!

#### ***Acts 18:27-28***

Apollos, like Paul, used the OT Scriptures to prove “that Jesus was the Christ.”

#### ***Acts 28:23***

Here, Paul—for a whole day!—met with the Jewish leaders in Rome and “[f]rom morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.” I would love to have sat in on the conversation that took place on this day. What OT Scriptures did Paul use in his arguments (surely Isaiah)? How did he explain the message of the OT? Did he walk the Jews through each book in these two sections, explaining how that book—and THE BOOK as a whole—points to Christ?

### **DAY THREE**

#### **Read Romans 1:18-32**

**5. In 1:18, Paul stops talking about the gospel and righteousness, and begins talking about God’s wrath and the wickedness of man. Why do you think Paul addresses this topic, and why does he do it at this point in the letter?**

How can you talk about the solution—the good news of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection—if you don’t discuss the problem first? Sin and wrath are the problems. “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men” (Rom 1:18). Obviously, this is a great problem. God’s terrible wrath is being poured out upon men because men deserve it. (By the way, those who argue that

the “angry” God of the OT has been replaced by the “loving” God of the NT need to carefully examine these chapters.

**6. God is just. He cannot act unjustly. All his actions are based on truth. Why is God justified in pouring out his wrath on mankind?**

God is justified in pouring out his wrath because men “suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Rom 1:18). “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him” (Rom 1:21). We owe glory and thanks to God. It is an eternal sin to not glorify him and to fail to thank him. He has clearly revealed his “invisible qualities” (Rom 1:20) so that men might see him and worship him. However, they have refused to do this. Instead, they “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for” other gods made to their own liking (Rom 1:23). A just God cannot allow this wickedness to go unpunished. If he did, he would not be just.

**DAY FOUR**

**7. In what ways has God made himself known to man? *Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-4 (referred to in Romans 10:16-18); Job 36:24-25; Colossians 1:23; Titus 2:11-12***

He has made his “invisible qualities” known through what has been made. The heavens (i.e., the sun, moon, and stars) proclaim his glory. They “pour out” speech and display knowledge. They demonstrate knowledge that is beyond compare.

**8. Why has God made himself known to man? *Acts 17:24-27***

He did this “so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him” (Acts 17:27). God is a little like a father playing hide and seek with a toddler. The toddler cannot find the father without help, so the father hides with a part of his body sticking out from behind the couch. But this might not even be enough! The father might need to start making noise so that the toddler can find him. On our own, we are so wicked that we would never want to find God (see Rom 3:11). He has made himself known so that we might find him and worship him!

**9. How does this understanding impact your view of man’s responsibility?**

We have no excuse because God has revealed himself to all men. (By the way, this answers the question people love to ask about the person living in the deepest jungle who has never heard of God. Such a person does not exist, for God has revealed himself to all men! All men are accountable to God.)

**10. How does this understanding impact your view of sin?**

We can’t say that we didn’t know any better. Humans—every one of us—are guilty of having seen the living God and withholding the praise and thanks that are owed to him.

**11. How, specifically, is God’s wrath “being revealed” against men? *Romans 1:18-32***

“God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts ...” (Rom 1:24); “God gave them over to shameful lusts” (Rom 1:26); “[God] gave them over to a depraved mind” (Rom 1:28). God gives the people what they want. The consequences of rejecting the living God are terrible—in this life and in the life to come.

**12. What is the result of this wrath being revealed? *Romans 1:18-32***

Sin increases in the lives of those toward whom this wrath is directed. They “become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity” (Rom 1:29). Ironically, there can be a redemptive aspect to sin increasing in the life of a person. Often, it is not until sin has totally overwhelmed a person that he finally acknowledges his need for a Savior. The wrath of God that is *being revealed currently* (the type discussed in Rom 1:18-32) differs from the wrath that *will be revealed* (the type discussed in Rom 2) in that the wrath people presently experience does not need to be permanent. That is, through faith in the work of Jesus, God’s wrath is turned from them and they, instead, experience his goodness. The wrath discussed in Rom 2, however, is permanent. Those who have not put their faith in Jesus will have no hope of a change in circumstances on that day. They will experience God’s wrath forever. Failure to glorify God and give thanks to him is an eternal sin.

**DAY FIVE**

**13. In chapter two, Paul doesn’t describe God’s wrath as “being revealed.” He talks about God’s wrath that “will be revealed” on “the day of God’s wrath.” What will happen on this yet future “day?” *Romans 2:5-16; Matthew 11:20-24; Matthew 12:38-42; Revelation 20:11-15***

“God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (Rom 2:5). He “will give to each person according to what he has done” (Rom 2:6). There will be “wrath and anger” (Rom 2:8) and “trouble and distress” (Rom 2:9) directed toward “those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil” (Rom 2:8). On that day, people who have received more light will be judged more strictly (see Rom 2:12). People will be judged by what they have done as recorded in God’s books. If anyone’s name is not found in the Book of Life, he will be thrown into the eternal Lake of Fire.

**14. People have not all heard or known the same truths about God – for instance, some have received the law (Jews), and some haven’t (Gentiles). How will God sort out these differences? *Romans 2:5-29***

All who sin apart from the law will perish apart from the law, all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. God will look at what is written on your heart—what you conscience says.

**15. The word gospel means “good news.” Chapters one and two contain far more “bad news” than good news. Now that you’ve read chapters one and two, explain why the message of the “bad news” needs to be part of the telling of the “good news.” *Romans 1:17***

Mankind is in a terrible situation. We have sinned against God and his wrath is currently being poured out (as evidenced by ever-increasing wickedness) and will be poured out on a future Day of Judgment. We are in danger from the living God. There is no more desperate situation than this. We have withheld praise and glory and thanks from him and have loved evil and wickedness, even though he has made himself known to us. We have no excuse. What is the solution to our problem? We can’t save ourselves. Who or what can and will deliver us from God’s wrath?

**16. When did you come to the realization in your life that you were a sinner and needed a Savior?**

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## **DAY SIX**

**17. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

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**“The Power of the Gospel”**  
**WEEK THREE: Romans 3**

**DAY ONE**

**Romans 3**

This is typical of Paul. He anticipates questions his readers might ask and then proceeds to answer them. He does this in verses 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 27, 29, and 31.

Verses ten through 18 are all taken from the OT.

In other words, no one is good. No one may stand before God and say, “I am a good man,” for no one is right before God. See Jesus’ words in Luke 18:18-19.

Mankind is so wicked that we would never seek for God no matter how bad things were. If no one seeks God, the only way a person comes to God must be by his first coming to us (see John 6:44). He is the initiator of salvation.

We weren’t created worthless. We were originally “very good” (Gen 1:31). We became worthless “together” when Adam sinned.

We can’t say that our good deeds will save us, for, according to this verse, we have no good deeds.

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, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man 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 we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written:

"There is no one righteous, not even one;

11 there is no one who understands,  
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;

The purpose of the law (the OT law) is to reveal sin, not to make anyone holy.

May also be translated “the righteousness of God” (see ESV). This righteousness that comes to us through faith is God’s own righteousness!

In other words, the OT is not about receiving righteousness based on keeping the law. It is about the righteousness of God which is totally apart from law. This righteousness comes to those who put their trust in Jesus.

Also translated as “propitiation” (see ESV, NASB) – a sacrifice that turns aside the wrath of God. Propitiation includes the idea of God’s wrath being satisfied. Wrath, remember, was the theme of Rom 1 and 2. This sacrifice is the answer to God’s wrath.

A major reason behind the death of Jesus is that it demonstrates an aspect of God’s character. Once again, we see that the gospel is not primarily about us, but about the greatness of God!

Only those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ are able to keep God’s law. Faith leads to obedience (see Eph 2:8-10).

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 his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice 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. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29 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.

## DAY TWO

### Read Romans 3:1-8

**1. Paul begins chapter three by focusing on the Jews. A Jewish reader of the first two chapters may have wondered at Paul’s reasoning to this point. After all, if the Jews were God’s chosen people, yet they, like the Gentiles (who were not God’s chosen people), are under God’s wrath, what is the advantage in being a Jew? This is a good question. What is the answer Paul presents in verse 2?**

The Jews have been entrusted with God’s words (the law). This is the only answer Paul provides in this chapter. He provides more answers to this question in Rom 9:4-5.

**2. Why were God’s words given to the Jews? Were these words supposed to lead the Jews? *Galatians 3:24***

The law was put in charge to lead the Jews to Christ. Jesus is God’s last Word. He is the ultimate focus of all of God’s speaking.



**3. Jesus claimed the Jews placed a wrong emphasis on the Scriptures. Why did they study God's words so diligently? *John 5:39-40***

They thought that by the Scriptures they possessed eternal life. In other words, the Scriptures became a sort of savior to them.

**4. How could they have used God's words? *Psalm 78:1-8; Isaiah 2:6-7***

They could have used them to see their own sinfulness and come to Jesus. They could have taught their children about the greatness of God. Their trust was to be placed in God (Ps 78:7). They could have used God's words to bring light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind (to help people see the truth), to free captives from prison (to free people from their sin), and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

**DAY THREE**

**Read Romans 3:9-20**

**5. What do these verses teach us about the condition of man without Christ?**

These verses are highly significant to our understanding of the nature of man. Notice how Paul includes every person in his statements. Jews and Gentiles alike are **all** under sin. No one is righteous, **no one** understands, **no one** seeks God, **all** have turned away, they have **together** become worthless, **no one** does good, etc., etc., etc. We cannot blame God for sending "good" people to hell, for there are no such people. All are wicked.

**6. How is this condemnation of man confirmed in the following passages?**

***Jeremiah 17:9***

The heart is deceitful above all things and **beyond cure**. This is significant. We can't fix the problem in our hearts. It is incurable. Beyond that, we can't see it ourselves, because our hearts are liable to deceive us. We are a mess!

***Mark 10:17-18***

No one is good except God alone. Jesus was not, however, saying that he is not good. He is God, therefore he is good. No man, apart from Jesus, may claim to be good.

***Isaiah 6:9-10***

People hear, but they don't understand; they see but don't perceive. Their hearts are calloused, their ears are dull and they have closed their eyes. People are so calloused by sin that they can't see the truth, hear the truth, or understand the truth. Beyond this, they do not want to see the truth.

***Ephesians 4:18***

They (the Gentiles) are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

***Isaiah 64:6***

All of us have become like one who is unclean and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. See the note on this verse on page 42.

**See also Mic 7:2-4; Lk 13:1-5; Eph 2:1-3**

**7. Based on the verses you have studied today, how would you answer someone who told you that they hoped to enter heaven because they are a good person?**

That person is deceived regarding his own character. He is not good. He is wicked. No one is righteous, and no one does righteous deeds. All have turned away from God. People have become worthless. A just God must deal with wickedness. Therefore, it is impossible for man, apart from a miracle from God, to be saved.

**DAY FOUR**

**Read Romans 3:21-31**

**8. In Romans 3:21 Paul says that “righteousness” has been made known. Look up the word “righteous” in a dictionary or Bible dictionary and write the definition below (keep in mind that your dictionary is not inspired and this definition, as well as others you will look up, will not include all that the Bible meant by the word):** “Just; accordant to the divine law. It denotes one who is holy in heart, and observant of the divine commands in practice” (Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English People*, 1828 edition).

**9. Carefully look through verses 21 and 22 and answer the following questions about this righteousness:**

**Where is this righteousness from? (See also 2 Corinthians 5:21)**

From God. According to 2 Cor 5:21 it is the righteousness of God.

**Who is this righteousness for?**

For all who believe.

**How is this righteousness received?**

Through faith in Jesus Christ.

**10. Look up the following verses and focus on the words “faith” and “believe.” How would you summarize the importance of faith for the Christian? *John 3:16-18; Romans 3:23-26; Romans 5:1; Romans 10:9; Galatians 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 10:38; Hebrews 11:6***

Whoever does not believe stands condemned already. Whoever does believe shall not perish. We must have faith in his blood (that is, in the work he accomplished by his death and resurrection). We are justified (declared free of guilt and declared righteous) through faith. Faith pleases God.

**11. Why do you believe faith is so important?**

Faith is proof that we acknowledge that God’s way is right and our way is wrong. It is a demonstration of our desire to be with God—as a lover of the light—on his terms, now our terms. It is an exhibition of trust in his goodness and character and the work he has done and a distrust in our own goodness, character, and the work we have done.

**12. Where have you placed your faith?**

?????

#### **DAY FIVE**

**13. Look up the word “justify” in a dictionary or Bible dictionary and write the definition below:**

Legal acquittal from guilt and pronouncement of the sinner as righteous. Notice, justification is more than simply being declared not-guilty. It is also the declaration that the sinner is right before God. It is as if the judge would say to the person standing before him, “Not only do I declare you not guilty, I also declare that you perfectly meet the standard for a law-abiding citizen in every way!”

**14. Where does this justification come from, and what does it result in? *Romans 3:24; Romans 5:1***

We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. The result is that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**15. What is the confidence a Christian can have in this justification? *Romans 8:31-34***

If God is for us, who can be against us? If he declares us free from guilt and right in his eyes, who could possibly say that we’re guilty?

**16. Look up the word “redeem” in a dictionary or Bible dictionary and write the definition below:**

Freedom obtained by the payment of a ransom.

**17. Who did this redemption come by, and what type of redemption is it? *Hebrews 9:11-12***

Jesus! He entered the Most Holy Place (the presence of God the Father) once for all by his own blood having obtained **eternal** redemption.

**18. Why is thought so comforting and strengthening for the Christian?**

My freedom has been purchased and it will not need to be purchased again. I am free eternally. See John 8:31-36.

**19. In verse 25 we read that God presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement. Look up the word “atonement” in your dictionary or Bible dictionary. What does the word mean? What is this sacrifice designed to do?**

The act by which God restores harmony between himself and human beings. The sacrifice was designed to bring us to God. It is important to understand that the idea of God’s wrath being conciliated (appeased) is bound up within this word. See the note on verse 25 in the Scripture passage printed at the top of this leader’s guide.

**20. Rewrite Romans 3:23-24 in your own words using the definitions you have looked up.**

Everyone has sinned and fallen far short of God’s glory (his goodness—see Ex 33:18-19), but justification, that is, pronouncement of innocence and righteousness is available because of God’s grace. This is all because of the work Jesus Christ accomplished by his death and resurrection. This was the ransom price that purchased my eternal freedom from slavery to sin.

**21. What do you think verses 25 and 26 mean? How do they relate to you?**

God is just. Sin cannot go unpunished. The sins of the OT saints—Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, etc.—were not paid for by the sacrifices of lambs or goats. God could not simply pass over these sins. He had to do something about them because he is just. The sacrifice of Jesus demonstrates God’s justice. In fact, according to these verses, this was a major purpose of the death of Jesus—to reveal God’s justice. Just as the gospel reveals God’s righteousness (see Rom 1:17), it also reveals his justice. These verses relate to me in that they demonstrate that the gospel is primarily not about me but about God. It is about God revealing his glorious character to people. We could not see the depth of his justice revealed if it weren’t for the death of his Son. We could not see the greatness of his righteousness, if it weren’t for the death of his Son.

## **DAY SIX**

**22. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**  
?????



**“The Power of the Gospel”**  
**WEEK FOUR: Romans 4**

**DAY ONE**

**Romans 4**

That is, in the matter of justification.

Boasting exalts man. However, as we have learned from Rom 1-3, man has nothing to boast about. See Rom 3:27 and 1 Cor 1:28-29.

Notice the different words used for faith in this chapter: “believed” (v 3), “trusts” (v 5), “faith” v 5), “being fully persuaded” (v 21).

In order to be saved, we must first understand that we are wicked (see Rom 3:9-18) and in need of a Savior. If we don’t understand this, we will always trust in ourselves and our own goodness for our own salvation.

This is the same word as is translated “credit” throughout the chapter.

Abraham was declared righteous in Gen 15:6. He was circumcised in Gen 17:24. The fact that the Bible clearly records the sequence of these two events is highly significant (and intentional). Once again, we see that the OT is about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Understanding this verse will impact how you understand the entire OT!

**1** What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, 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 the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

**4** Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. **5** However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. **6** David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

**7** “Blessed are they  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

**8** Blessed is the man  
whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

**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 the sign of circumcision, 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 also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

**13** It was not through 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 live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise

is worthless, **15** because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

**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 are of 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 things that are not as though they were.

**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.

The Jews were right in acknowledging that Abraham was significant. However, they just didn't know how significant he truly was.

This is a very important verse. Here we see the importance of faith. It gives glory to God. It demonstrates his power. It shows him off. The one who has faith admits that he is powerless to save himself. Instead, he is relying on the greatness of God.

This is a great definition of faith.

## DAY TWO

### Read Romans 4

**1. Abraham is the predominant character in this chapter. According to the following verses, what importance did the Jews place on Abraham and how did they describe their relationship to him? *Matthew 3:7-10; Luke 1:67-79; Luke 13:10-17; Luke 19:1-9; John 8:39-58***

It is striking how often Abraham is mentioned in the NT. He is highly significant. The Jews referred to Abraham as their father and to themselves as Abraham's sons and daughters. Some (perhaps most) thought that this relationship somehow brought the righteousness of Abraham to them. John the Baptist's words to the Pharisees and Sadducees point in this direction: "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham" (Matt 3:8-9). Apparently, John expected the Pharisees and Sadducees to resist repentance because they thought that their relationship with Abraham meant that they were already righteous. Therefore, they had no need to repent. John forcefully refuted that thought.

The NT affirms the assumption that one's relationship with Abraham is significant. It is clear that God treats people in a special way simply because they are Abraham's offspring. The Jews only considered those who were physically related to

Abraham as his offspring. The NT, however, considers those who share Abraham's faith to be his offspring: "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 are of the faith 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 believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were" (Rom 4:16-17).

**2. How does Paul use the Jews' love and respect for Abraham to his advantage in this chapter?**

He convinces his readers that Abraham's righteousness was received by faith. He did not earn it by his good works or by being circumcised or by keeping the law. If Abraham received righteousness through faith, we, too, must receive righteousness in the same manner.

**3. In Romans 4:3, Paul quotes from Genesis 15:1-6, which records a conversation between Abraham (then known as Abram) and God. How would you summarize this conversation?**

Abraham had no heir, so all he had would be passed on to his servant. But God told him that an heir would come from his own body and that his descendants would number as the stars in the sky. Abraham believed God and it (his belief) was credited to him as righteousness.

**4. What similarities do you see between Abraham's faith and the faith required of the Christian today?**

Abraham couldn't produce what he needed from himself. He needed a miracle. He trusted in God's words alone—without seeing. We must do the same. He trusted in God's offspring (Jesus). In a sense, he looked forward in time and saw Jesus (see Jn 8:56). We look back in time to his work on the cross. Both of us, then, put our faith in Jesus.

**DAY THREE**

**Read Romans 4:1-8**

**5. What are the main differences between a wage and a gift? Why is the distinction between the two important when it comes to the topic of justification?**

If you work, pay is owed to you. It is an obligation. A gift, however, cannot be earned. It is freely given based on the will of the giver. The difference between a wage and a gift is significant in regard to justification because I did not earn righteousness. I earned wrath (discussed in Rom 1:18-3:20). I was given righteousness. God was not obliged to give righteousness to me. He did this of his own volition.



**6. Verse three says that “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” The word credited is an accounting term. Use a dictionary to look up the word “credit” and write out the “accounting” definition below.**

“The balance in a person’s favor in an account” or “an entry on the right-hand side of an account constituting an addition to a revenue, net worth, or liability account” (Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). It is an entry of payment that has been added to one’s account. I like to think of our lives like a checking account registry. We have all sorts of withdrawals written in our registry. In fact, the numbers are written in red because we are overdrawn (this is symbolic of our sin). God wipes out our debt (our sins) and makes a deposit of righteousness in our account. This has nothing to do with our goodness. He does this to accent his own glory and goodness.

**7. How many times do you see that word, or a word implying the same thing, this chapter? In what context do you see the word used?**

11 times (the word translated “count” in verse eight is the same word). Ten times the word refers to the action God takes in response to faith—he **credits** the believing person with righteousness. One time the word refers to the action God does not take toward the person of faith—he **does not count** that person’s sins against him.

**8. According to verse five, what is credited to the one who believes? According to verse eight, what is not counted against the one who believes?**

Righteousness is credited to the one who believes. Sins are never counted against the one who has faith.

**9. Review the definition of Justification from the Romans 3 notes. How does that definition fit with your answer from the previous question?**

Justification is “the legal and formal acquittal from guilt by God as Judge, [and] the pronouncement of the sinner as righteous.”<sup>2</sup> **Justification has two sides: a not-guilty verdict and a righteous declaration.**

#### **DAY FOUR**

##### **Read Romans 4:9-12**

**10. In this section, Paul addresses the subject of circumcision and its relation to justification. This was a subject Paul was forced to deal with frequently. Read Acts 15:1-21 and summarize the controversy surrounding circumcision.**

People from Judea were teaching “the brothers” that unless they were circumcised according to the law of Moses they could not be saved. Paul and Barnabas engaged them in serious argument and debate. This debate was so serious that a delegation was sent to

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<sup>2</sup> Vine, Unger, White Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 339.

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see the elders and apostles in Jerusalem concerning this controversy. The church convened a large meeting. After a great deal of debate, Peter said that God had saved the Gentiles by faith. He said that requiring more of the Gentiles was “testing God.”

**11. Why do you think it was difficult for the Jewish Christians to accept the fact that those who were not circumcised were saved? Genesis 17:14**

God told Abraham that anyone who was not circumcised was to be cut off from the people as a covenant breaker. Circumcision was required for all Jewish boys. To not circumcise your son was to say, in the strongest possible language, that you were not part of God’s covenant.

**12. How does Paul prove that circumcision did not save Abraham?**

He looks at the time when Abraham was credited with righteousness. Did it happen when or after he was circumcised (thus establishing a connection between circumcision and righteousness), or did it happen before he was circumcised. According to Rom 4:10 it happened while he was uncircumcised. Circumcision did not “earn” him righteousness. Rather, it was a “seal” of the righteousness that Abraham had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

**13. What are the “circumcision issues” today—that is, the things that people are trusting in for their salvation rather than God’s grace alone? Did you have anything like this in your life? Do you now? Why are these supposed “methods of salvation” so hard to let go?**

There are many things that people think “earn” them righteousness: baptism; church attendance; confirmation; attendance at mass; good works; the fact that they are a good person; sincerity of belief. These things are hard to let go because they are strongholds, I believe, that Satan works hard to establish and maintain. Trust in these things keeps one from seeing the need for repentance and faith in Jesus. For instance, a person may trust in the fact that they were baptized when they were a baby or confirmed when they were young. That person is trusting in a work (baptism or confirmation) for their salvation, rather than the finished work of Jesus.

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Romans 4:13-25**

**14. In verses nine through 12, Paul discusses circumcision. In this section, he brings up another thing that people often trust in for their salvation. What is it?**

Keeping the law. This is referring to God’s law recorded in the OT.

**15. Based on what we have studied in Romans thus far, why can no one be justified by keeping the law?**

At least three reasons: 1. No one can keep the law (see Rom 3:12); 2. If those who are of the law are heirs, then faith is made empty and the promise is worthless (see Rom 4:14); 3. If we could be justified by keeping the law this would mean that we could boast about our salvation. However, no man will boast before the Lord (see Rom 3:27).

**16. What does the attempted keeping of the law result in? *Romans 2:12; Galatians 3:10***

It results in judgment and living under a curse. “[A]ll who sin under the law will be judged by the law” (Rom 2:12), “All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue doing everything written in the Book of the Law’” (Gal 3:10). The next verse in Gal 3 is very important: “Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (Gal 3:11).

**17. False teachers infiltrated the church in Galatia, a church that Paul planted, and persuaded the people there that their salvation must be based on the keeping of the law. Paul’s letter to the Galatians addresses this issue. What was his response to those who had abandoned grace and were instead relying on the law? *Galatians 1:6-9; Galatians 3:1-14***

Paul was amazed that the Christians in Galatia were abandoning the gospel and turning to a different gospel—a gospel based on works. He called them foolish. Again, he said that all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

**18. In Romans 4:13-15, how does Paul prove that Abraham was not saved by works?**

Because if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise (to Abraham) is worthless.

**19. In verses 18-21, Paul recounts the story of Abraham’s faith. Describe the circumstances surrounding Abraham’s belief in God’s promise?**

Abraham considered that his body was as good as dead and that Sarah’s womb was dead as well (in other words, he was infertile and she had gone through menopause). “Yet he did not waver in unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (Rom 3:20-21).

**20. Abraham had many potential excuses for doubting, yet he believed. Do you think anyone has a legitimate excuse before God that would excuse his or her refusal to believe? Why or why not?**

No. According to Rom 1:19 and many other verses, God's truth has been made known to all men. We are accountable for how we respond to that truth. According to Rom 3:19, "every mouth [is] silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."

**21. Romans 4 is perfectly summarized in Ephesians 2:8 and 9. Please write these verses in the space below, and if you have not already done so, memorize them word for word.**

#### **DAY SIX**

**22. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**  
?????



## HANDS to the PLOW MINISTRIES

“Through” is the preposition associated with Jesus in the NT. All we have is through him.

We are able to love others because God’s love has been poured into our hearts. We don’t love with our love. As Christians, we love with God’s love.

Christ’s death on the cross displayed God’s love to humanity. We would not know the greatness of God’s love if it were not for Christ’s death on the cross.

This neatly ties this chapter together with Rom 1 and 2. Amazingly, we’re saved from God by Jesus. We’re in danger from God, but our only hope is God!

This is a very important verse in regard to our understanding of man. Paul is teaching that all humans are sinners simply because of our relationship to Adam. When he sinned, everyone sinned. We are all in need of a Savior.

Adam was a pattern of Jesus. Jesus was not an afterthought—as if he were God’s plan B after plan A (Adam) failed. Rather, God knew all along that Jesus would come. The first three chapters of Genesis are carefully written to point us to Jesus.

Notice the comparison between Adam’s sin and Christ’s work on the cross. Because of Adam, many died. However, “much more” did God’s grace “overflow.” Everything Adam did, Christ has undone in greater measure!

Death reigned because of Adam’s sin. Look carefully—what reigns because of God’s grace and the gift of righteousness? What does this say about your purpose on earth now that you are a Christian? What should you be doing?

### “The Power of the Gospel”

#### WEEK FIVE: Romans 5

##### DAY ONE

##### Romans 5

**1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

**6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! **10** For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11** Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

**12** Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— **13** for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. **14** Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was 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** Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. **17**

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Again, we see that the law was given to point out the sin of the people. This was to point out their need for God's Savior. The law was not given to bring righteousness to the people. Our works cannot save us. Indeed, they condemn us, pointing out our unrighteousness.

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 the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. **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 added 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.

## DAY TWO

### Read Romans 5:1-5

#### 1. According to Romans 5:1, what is the result of having been justified through faith?

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We were under his wrath. Justification, however, brings us peace.

#### 2. Since this is a result of justification, what is the condition a person must be in before his justification? *See also Romans 5:10*

We were his enemies—actively fighting against God and his glory. This is a terrible position to be in. Notice the destiny of Jesus' enemies—Hebrews 1:13.

#### 3. If you are a Christian, describe the difference in your relationship toward God from *before* the time you believed in Jesus to *after*. How did your feelings toward God change?

(This question reminds me of Martin Luther's feelings toward God based on his understanding of Rom 1:17. Formerly, the thought of God's righteousness filled him with hate. Once he put his trust in Jesus, the thought of God's righteousness filled him with love.)

#### 4. Peace with God is attained *through* our Lord Jesus Christ. How many times in this chapter do you find the word *through* associated with Jesus? What, specifically, does the Christian have or receive *through* Jesus?

Nine times. **1.** We have peace with God. **2.** Through him we have gained access by faith into the grace in which we stand. **3.** We're saved from God's wrath through him. (this is key, as it ties the first three chapters of Romans together with this chapter). Unbelievably, we're saved from God by God. **4.** We're saved through his life. **5.** We rejoice in God

through our Lord Jesus Christ. **6.** We receive reconciliation through him. **7.** Christians reign in life through Jesus. **8.** Through the obedience of Jesus the many are made righteous. **9.** Eternal life is brought through Jesus.

**5. What does this teach you about the significance of Jesus?**

Everything comes through him. In the same way that I enter into a room by going through the door, I enter into every single one of God's blessings through Jesus Christ. This makes sense, for Jesus is God's firstborn—his heir (see Col 1:15). All God's blessings have been given to the heir. Thus, to receive God's blessings we must go to the Son. See also Col 1:15-20.

**6. Verse two lists something that the Christian rejoices in. What is it? What do you think this means? Consider the following verses and how they might apply to this question. 2 Corinthians 3:18; Isaiah 26:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:10 and others**

"We rejoice in the hope (the expectation) of the glory of God." We look forward to the day when the knowledge of God's glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Of course, the earth is already "full of his glory" (Is 6:3), however, a great day is coming when the knowledge of that glory will be shared by all. Christians delight in the thought that all the world will one day acknowledge God's greatness. God's glory is the "weight" of his goodness (see Ex 33:18-19). Moses longed to see God's glory. God, in response to this request, showed him his goodness and proclaimed his name. Like Moses, Christians revel in the many different sides of God's goodness and enjoy seeing God's glory displayed for all of the world to see. As 2 Cor 3:18 says, we are currently reflectors of God's glory. His goodness shines through us!

**7. Is this something you find yourself doing?**

Yes. I feel God's pleasure when I consider his goodness and character. I feel his joy and peace when I enjoy his many attributes because that is the reason I exist. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." This is why we exist. I like John Piper's slight change to this phrase. He says that we glorify God *by* enjoying him forever. We rejoice in God's greatness. We feel his pleasure when we enjoy his goodness. Conversely, I feel his displeasure when I exalt myself. I also feel pain when I see the world exalt things other than God. I cannot wait for the day when I see his glory fully unveiled before me. This thought purifies me. It burns away lesser thoughts (see 1 Jn 3:2-3).

**8. Verse 3 indicates that, "we rejoice in our sufferings." Why would a Christian rejoice in suffering?**

We rejoice in our sufferings because suffering produces perseverance. Perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. Suffering doesn't, as we might expect, produce bitterness (although it does in non-Christians). It does the opposite. It makes one

usable by God. It is interesting that among the fruit of the Spirit listed in Gal 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, etc.) one does not find perseverance. Apparently, perseverance doesn't naturally grow in a Christian's life in the same way that love or peace or joy grows. Rather, perseverance is only produced by suffering. A loving God will allow us to suffer because it is only through suffering that we will see perseverance developed in our lives. It took 80 years of various trials for Moses to become the man of God we know and love. We should not be surprised that it takes time and suffering to produce a Christian of proven character.

**9. Has the suffering in your life produced the results Paul says that we should expect from suffering?**

?????

**DAY THREE**

**Read Romans 5:6-11**

**10. How does God demonstrate his love to mankind?**

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." It is interesting that God told Moses that he was "abounding in love" (see Ex 34:6). However, how would we know what this "abounding" love looked like if we did not see it demonstrated? We would never know the extent of God's love except for a demonstration of that love. God not only told us of his love ... he showed us his love. We ought to marvel at that love and enjoy it, for there is nothing like it.

**11. How does sending *Jesus* to die demonstrate *God the Father's* love?**

This is an important question. Rom 5:8 says that *God* demonstrates his love by sending *Jesus* to die for us. In other words, Jesus' death displays the Father's love in a way we wouldn't see it otherwise. We must understand that the Father loves Jesus. In fact, all his love is poured into him (see Jn 17:24-26). He referred to Jesus as his "beloved" (his "much loved") when he spoke to the people about Jesus from heaven (Matt 3:17). Yet, God loved the world so greatly that he gave his only Son for the world (see Jn 3:16). Amazingly, while the crucifixion demonstrates the Father's love for humanity, it also testifies to the Son's love for the Father (see Jn 14:31). How would we know how greatly the Son loved the Father if he didn't demonstrate this love by willingly obeying his Father, bearing our sins and dying the death of a criminal on a cross?

**12. When did you first realize that God loved you?**

?????



## **DAY FOUR**

### **Read Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-49**

#### **13. In this section, Paul discusses Adam and how he is a pattern of Jesus. In what ways was Adam like Jesus?**

By Adam's one action (his disobedience to God's command regarding the fruit) many were affected. In the same way, Jesus' one action (his obedience to God's command and his death on the cross) many were affected. Both Adam and Jesus are the heads of their respective races. Adam is "the man of dust." Jesus is "the spiritual man." All those who are "in Adam" are like Adam. All those who are "in Christ" are like him. In a sense, the "spiritual DNA" of these men pass on to those who are related to them. All who are "in Adam" receive Adam's "sentence" (death). All who are "in Christ" receive Christ's "sentence" (life).

#### **14. What is the title Paul gives to Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15:45?**

The last Adam. This is an appropriate name for it indicates that Jesus is, like Adam, the first of a race. By referring to him as the "last" Adam, Paul is saying that there will never be another "Adam." If men are to escape the death sentence they are under because of their relation to the "first" Adam, the only hope they have is to run to the "last" Adam. See Jn 14:6.

#### **15. Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. According to these verses, in what ways are Adam and Jesus very different?**

Adam brought death. Jesus brings life. Adam's one act brought destruction and the reign of death upon the earth. Jesus' one act brings life and healing and hope and happiness and the reign of believers upon the earth. "The first man Adam became a living being," but the last Adam is a "life-giving spirit." Adam was from "the dust of the earth." Jesus is "from heaven." Like the man of dust are those who are made of dust. Like the heavenly man are those who are heavenly. As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will bear the image of the heavenly man. See also 1 Jn 3:2-3.

#### **16. Why did God need to send Jesus as a man? Why didn't he save mankind in some other way? 1 Corinthians 15:21**

"For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man."

## **DAY FIVE**

### **Read Romans 5:20-21**

#### **17. What was God's purpose in giving the law? See also *Romans 3:20 and Galatians 3:19, 24***

It was given to multiply the trespass. The law brings knowledge of sin. The law is a guardian (you could also say a tutor) whose function is to lead us to Christ. Now that Christ has come we are no longer under a guardian for we are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

#### **18. The reign of grace is compared to the reign of sin in verse 21. How has sin reigned? What effect has this reign had?**

Sin's reign has been in death. The stench of death covers all mankind apart from Christ. The stench of death can be seen in all aspects of life—bad motives, addictions, pride, sickness, etc., etc., etc. These are all the children of Adam's disobedience. Death comes to all men—in all areas of life—because all sinned. All, that is, except one . . .

#### **19. How might the reign of grace be different?**

There can be no comparison between the reign of death and the reign of grace. Grace brings life—to relationships, situations, and people. It brings freedom and joy and contentment. Grace brings great productivity because it eliminates fear. Grace brings confidence because we know that our performance is not what is sustaining us. Rather, God's grace is sustaining us. Grace points to God and his goodness. This brings satisfaction, for there can be no satisfaction apart from God.

## **DAY SIX**

#### **20. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????



## HANDS to the PLOW MINISTRIES

If God's forgiveness displays his grace further, why not sin all the more? Paul's answer is stunning. We don't sin because we died to sin. Continuing to sin is completely illogical for the Christian.

Paul writes as if he assumes that the Romans would have known this to be true. However, most Christians don't know this to be true. That is a tragedy. If we don't know this to be true, we will probably perpetually struggle with sin.

God's desire for us is that we live a new life—free from the entanglements of sin.

When Jesus died I died.

A dead man who was an alcoholic while he lived no longer struggles with alcohol. The same should be true of the Christian.

That is, look at Jesus' life now and then think of yourselves in the same way.

We need to act like we actually died to sin. We need to count this as a reality in our lives.

Righteousness leads to, as Isaiah 32:17 says, "quietness and confidence forever." The righteous man can be quiet and confident because he knows that he is right before God.

### "The Power of the Gospel"

#### WEEK SIX: Romans 6

##### DAY ONE

##### Romans 6

**1** What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? **2** By no means! We 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** If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. **6** For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—**7** because anyone who has died has been freed 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.

**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 the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. **14** For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

**15** What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! **16** Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom 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 wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. **18** You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

**19** I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing

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wickedness, so now offer them in slavery 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 now ashamed of? Those things result in death! **22** But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to 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.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Read Romans 6:1-7**

**1. In verse two, Paul answers the question he asked in verse one. What is the question he asked in verse one and what is the answer he gives in verse two? Is this the answer you would have expected Paul to give?**

The question is “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” The answer is “We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer?” This is not the answer I would have expected. I would have expected Paul to say something like, “Don’t sin because it’s wrong.” Instead, he says, “Don’t sin because you died to sin.” These are very different answers and demand deep thinking. Will power is not the reason we are able to keep from sinning. Death is the reason.

**2. According to verses 3-6, exactly how did we die to sin?**

All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. In other words, when he died, we died. We were “put into” his death. We were buried with him through baptism into death. We have been united with him in his death. Our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin may be done away with, for anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

**3. Does Paul present this death to sin as a fact that all Christians have attained or a hope that all Christians can attain? Why is this significant?**

Paul presents this death as a fact that all Christians have attained. **This means we do not have to try to die to sin. We are dead to sin.** However, this does not mean that all Christians live as if they were dead to sin. Most do not now this to be true.

**4. Why were we “buried with him through baptism into death” (verses 4-5)?**

In order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, **we too may live a new life.** We were dead, but now we are alive. See 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 2:19-20.

### **DAY THREE**

#### **Read Romans 6:8-14**

**5. Given that you are, if you are a Christian, “dead to sin,” what is the action Paul encourages you to take? *Romans 6:11***

Count yourself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. This means you must consider it to be a reality in your life—“I am dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” If you are a Christian, you really are dead to sin. Your death with Christ is as real as your salvation.

**6. What is the difference between knowing you are dead to sin (verse 6) and counting yourself dead to sin (verse 11)?**

One is knowledge, the other is action based on that knowledge. You can’t count yourself dead to sin if you don’t know that you are dead to sin.

**7. According to verses 12 and 13, whose responsibility is it if sin reigns in the life of a Christian?**

It is that Christian’s responsibility. We are told, “Do not let sin reign in your mortal body.” I can’t blame the devil (although he certainly wants me to sin). I can’t blame God. I can’t blame my family history, my past, my spouse, my anything. If sin reigns in my life, I can only blame myself, for, through the death of Jesus and my inclusion with him in that death, my problem with sin has been dealt with.

**8. As a Christian, you are commanded not to offer the parts of your body to sin (verse 13). What, instead, is the Christian to do? Have you ever done this? *Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24***

Offer himself to God and the parts of his body to him as instruments of righteousness. Romans 12:1-2 says we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices. I have presented myself to God. I have told him, you have all of me to use as you see fit. (Of course, as Lord of the universe, he had all of me before this time. However, I worship him by willingly giving him all of myself to use as he sees fit.)

### **DAY FOUR**

#### **Read Romans 6:15-18**

**9. If you sin as a habit, what is your relationship to sin? *John 8:34; 2 Peter 2:19***

You are a slave to sin. You are slaves to the one you obey—even if that one is not your “legal” master. Many Christians are still slaves to sin, even though sin is no longer their “legal” master.

**10. What does slavery to sin result in? What does slavery to obedience result in?**

***Romans 6:16***

Slavery to sin results in death. Obviously, this is seen in eternal damnation. But the death that comes from sin may also be seen in the way sin kills intimacy with God, relationships with others, health, etc., etc., etc. Slavery to obedience leads to righteousness.

**11. According to verse 18, the Christian has been “set free from sin” and has become a “slave to righteousness”. If this is true, why do so many Christians still seem to live as slaves to sin? Please use both this chapter and your own life as a basis for your answer.**

In my own life, I can testify that I did not know that I was dead to sin. I knew that I was saved, I knew that the Bible promises victory over sin, but I thought I had to fight and use my will power to win that victory against sin. Again and again I was defeated. When I learned the truth that I had died with Christ it set me free. The decisive blow in my battle against sin is not coming sometime in the future. It has already happened. It happened when I died with Christ.

I believe most Christians do not know that they are dead to sin, and because they don't know it, they can't act on it.

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Romans 6:19-23**

**12. Please compare the results of a life led in slavery to sin and a life led in slavery to God.**

A life led in slavery to sin leads to greater and greater lawlessness (remember Rom 1:18 and following). The end of lawlessness is death. A life led in slavery to God leads to sanctification (more and more holiness). The end of sanctification is eternal life.

**13. The Christian is called a slave of God in this chapter. The Christian is also called free. How do you reconcile these two very different descriptions? See also *Psalm 146:7; John 8:32; 1 Peter 2:16***

The only true freedom a human may experience is as a slave to God. We were created to live as God's slaves. True joy is living in submission to him and marveling at his goodness.

**14. Paul used the slavery metaphor, “because you are weak in your natural selves”.  
What do you think he meant by this statement? *Romans 6:19***

Possibly because the people could not understand the teachings of true freedom in Christ. The idea of slavery is very limiting to us. It is a human analogy. We have a hard time grasping the freedom of living as a slave to God.

**15. Can someone not be a slave to sin, and yet not be a slave to God either? Is there, perhaps, some sort of middle type of slavery that Paul doesn’t mention here?**

***Matthew 12:30; Revelation 3:14-18***

No! Anyone who is not with Jesus is against him. Anyone who does not gather with him scatters. If we are not living as a slave to God, we are living as slaves to sin. Freedom is only found in full surrender to him.

**16. Are you living as a slave to sin or as a slave to God?**

????

## **DAY SIX**

**17. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

????

Paul asked this same question in Rom 6:3. By the way he asks the question, it is clear that Paul thinks that the Roman Christians should know this truth. The very fact that he asks the question, however, demonstrates that he thinks they do not know this truth. The question is significant.

The law applies to the living. Based on Rom 6, however, we died.

In the same way that you died to sin (see Rom 6). If you don't understand how we died to sin, you can't understand how we died to the law. If you do understand the one, you will be able to understand the other.

There are two significant reasons given why we died to the law: (1) that we might belong to Jesus, and (2) that we might bear fruit to God. The implication here is that if we didn't die to the law we would belong to it and not to Jesus, and therefore, we would not be able to bear fruit to God.

Christians are not following a list of dos and don'ts. Rather, we serve in the new way of the Spirit. In other words, the law is not external to us. Rather, it is written in our hearts and the Holy Spirit guides us into what is right. See Ezek 36:25-27 (particularly verse 27). See also Phil 2:13.

The reason we needed to die to the law is not that the law is bad. The problem, rather, is with us. We cannot keep the law.

The law serves to highlight our sin. The command, "Do not covet," demonstrates my covetousness.

Notice the abundance use of "I" in the next two paragraphs. I think this is a key to understanding these paragraphs. This is what happens when someone attempts to keep God's laws on their own. It leads to frustration and failure. We cannot keep God's laws. Compare these paragraphs to Gal 2:19-20.



## HANDS to the PLOW MINISTRIES

### "The Power of the Gospel"

#### WEEK SEVEN: Romans 7

##### DAY ONE

##### Romans 7

**1** Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he 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 of marriage. **3** So then, if she marries 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, even though she marries another man.

**4** So, my brothers, 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 to God. **5** For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, 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 sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." **8** But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. **9** Once I was alive apart from 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! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, 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** I know that nothing good lives in me, that

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This is the great question we all must ask: "How can I serve God when I am limited by my own shortcomings?"

Here's the answer! We are not expected to serve God in our own strength (indeed, doing so will result in failure). Everything we do is through Jesus Christ our Lord. He keeps God's laws perfectly and he desires to do that through us!

is, in my sinful nature. For **I** have the desire to do what is good, but **I** cannot carry it out. **19** For what **I** do is not the good **I** want to do; no, 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: When **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 the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. **24** What a wretched man **I** am! **Who will rescue me from this body of death?** **25** Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

## DAY TWO

### Read Romans 7:1-6

#### 1. How is the Christian's relationship with the law similar to the Christian's relationship with sin (as Paul discussed in Romans 6)?

We died to the law through the body of Christ.

#### 2. How did the Christian die to the law?

Through the body of Christ. That is, when he died, we died.

#### 3. Is this presented as a fact for the Christian, or as something that needs to be attained?

A fact. I did die to the law. I am dead to the law. I have been released from the law so that I might serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. You can't serve in the new way of the Spirit if you are alive to the law.

#### 4. What is the point Paul is trying to make by his example of the married man and the woman?

The law has authority over a man only as long as he lives. Death breaks the law's hold on a person.

## DAY THREE

### Read Romans 7:7-13

#### 5. What is this "law" Paul is talking about? What is the nature of this law?

It is God's law. It is holy, righteous, and good.

**6. How does sin use the law to its own advantage?**

It seizes the opportunity afforded by the commandment and deceives us. In other words, it uses the law like a pry bar to push us into more sin. See 1 Cor 15:56-57.

**7. What is the intended function of the law? *Galatians 3:24***

The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ so that we might be justified by faith. Once the law fulfills its function it is no longer needed.

**DAY FOUR**

**Read Romans 7:14-20**

**8. Can you identify with Paul's words in this section? If so, in what way?**

Yes. I have, as a Christian, struggled to keep God's law ... until I learned the truths outlined in this chapter and in other Scriptures.

**9. Do you believe these verses describe Paul's experience as a Christian, or as a non-Christian? Please explain your answer.**

As a Christian. He writes in the present tense. Also, Paul's description of his experiences in these verses has been mirrored in my life and in the life of every Christian I have known. We absolutely need to know that we died to the law.

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Romans 7:21-25**

**10. Do you believe struggling with the law in the way Paul describes here must be a life-long battle for the Christian? Why or why not? Use verses from this chapter to prove your point.**

No. It should not be a life long battle. I died to the law through the body of Christ so that I might serve in the new way of the Spirit. An example I sometime use is of hiring two people for a job. One person is told, "Do these 425 things and you can keep your job." The other person is told, "We hired you because you have what it takes within you to do the job. Just do what is in your heart and you'll be okay." The first person will constantly be worrying about the 425 things that need to be done and will not be able to effectively do his job. The Holy Spirit is within us. God promises that he will move us to follow his decrees and be careful to keep his laws (Ezek 36:27). He has taken the law keeping upon himself.

**11. Where does Paul find his relief from this problem with the law? *Romans 7:25***

Through Jesus Christ our Lord! See Gal 2:19-20. He lives in us and keeps God's laws through us. We need to quit trying to do everything in our own strength, for that will lead to sure failure.

## **DAY SIX**

**12. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

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**“The Power of the Gospel”**  
**WEEK EIGHT: Romans 8**

**DAY ONE**

This word is a clue that Paul is summarizing things here.

So that I might bear fruit to God. See Rom 7:4.

The word “Spirit” (in reference to the Holy Spirit) is used just four times in the first seven chapters of Romans. It is used 18 times in this chapter. This is obviously quite significant. I believe the Spirit is emphasized here because of his role in the life of the one who has been saved. In chapters one through seven, Paul was describing the salvation process (he could have talked about the Spirit’s role in that process). Here, however, he is focussing on the life of the one who has been saved. That life, we learn here, is to be lived in accordance with the Spirit.

This verse should not surprise those who have read Rom 3:10-18.

Don’t let anyone fool you. Those who live like the world will share the world’s fate.

Those who “say” they are sons of God are not necessarily sons of God. His true sons are those who are led by his Spirit.

This is important! People know if they are part of God’s family because the Holy Spirit will tell them this fact.

We will share in his sufferings if we are believers.

**Romans 8**

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

**5** Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6** The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; **7** the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. **8** Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

**9** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. **10** But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive 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 through his Spirit, who lives in you.

**12** Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. **13** For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, **14** because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of 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.

A day is coming when this world will be as perfect as God always intended. Creation will be set free from its bondage to decay.

We have a downpayment. See Eph 1:14.

Jesus is also interceding for us. See this verse 34.

Notice why we have been predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus - that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. In other words, God planned that we would look like Jesus so that Jesus might be shown as preeminent. Ultimately, our salvation is about the glory of Jesus.

This is a great thing to remember when you're going through a tough time. God is for you! The Holy Spirit is for you! In fact, he's praying for you right now. Jesus is for you. He's interceding for you right now.

In the same manner as the Holy Spirit.

**18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **19** The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons 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 glorious freedom 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 as sons, 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 he already has? **25** But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

**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 with groans that words cannot express. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

**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 likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

**31** What, then, shall we say in response to this? 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 is he that condemns? 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.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Read Romans 8:1-17**

#### **1. What do you think it means to live according to the Spirit?**

It means to live in accordance with what the Spirit desires. It means to have your mind set on his desires and plans.

#### **2. What is some evidence that a person is living according to the Spirit?**

Their mind is life and peace (v. 6). By the Spirit they put to death the misdeeds of the body (v. 13). Sin no longer dominates them. There will be great freedom in their life (2 Cor 3:17). Love, joy, patience, etc., etc., will be evident in their life (see Gal 5:22-23).

#### **3. In what ways does Paul describe the Spirit's role in the believer's life in verses 1-17?**

He leads us (v. 14). He controls the mind (v. 6). He controls the person (v. 9). He gives life to our mortal bodies (v. 11). He testifies with our Spirit that we are God's children (v. 11). By the Spirit we put to death the misdeeds of the body (v. 13).

#### **4. How does a person positively know whether he or she is a child of God? *See also 1 John 3:24***

The Spirit himself testifies with our Spirit that we are God's children. We know God lives in us by the Spirit. By the way, take a close look at 1 Jn 3:24. It is a remarkable verse.

## **DAY THREE**

### **Read Romans 8:18-25**

#### **5. In verses 17 and 18, our present sufferings are contrasted with the glory that will be revealed in us. Use the following verses to describe God's glory and our relation to that glory.**

##### ***Exodus 33:17-23 and 34:29-35***

Moses desired to see God's glory. God said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you." Thus, God's glory is equated to his goodness. Moses spent time in God's presence and this changed him so much that he radiated this glory. By the way, one of the Hebrew meanings of the word translated glory is "heaviness." In other words, God's glory is the heaviness of his goodness. His goodness is weighty. See also Ex 34:6-7 to see how God describes his glory.

##### ***Habakkuk 2:14***

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. We are part of the process of the knowledge of God's glory covering the earth. As

his image bearers (see Gen 1:26) we are to bring the knowledge of his goodness with us wherever we go.

***Romans 3:23***

Sin keeps man from God's glory - ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This was evident in the way the temple was constructed. A large curtain kept people from seeing the place where God said he would dwell (the Most Holy Place). Sinful people cannot coexist with a holy God.

***Romans 9:23***

God makes the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory. We have been prepared for glory! This is an act of mercy by God, for we only deserve wrath.

***2 Corinthians 3:18***

With unveiled faces (Moses veiled his face so that people wouldn't see that the radiance on his face was fading) we reflect the Lord's glory (Jesus' glory) and are transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord. We don't have to worry that the radiance in us will fade, because we are never out of God's presence. He lives within us!

***2 Corinthians 4:17***

Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us a glory that far outweighs them all. This is speaking of the reward we will receive in heaven (and here on earth). This glorious reward far outweighs (there's the idea of heaviness again) any troubles we might face.

***Colossians 1:27***

Christ in us is "the hope of glory."

***1 Peter 5:1***

Peter said that he also (along with the other elders) would share in the glory that is to be revealed. As saints, we celebrate Christ's return, for we will share in the glory that will be revealed at that time.

***2 Thessalonians 1:10***

On the day Jesus comes he will be glorified in his holy people and marveled at among all those who believe. Have you ever marveled at anything? That's when your jaw drops and you are rendered speechless. That is what will happen to us when we see Jesus.

## **2 Thessalonians 2:14**

God called us that we might share in the glory of our Lord.

### **6. In verses 18 through 25 Paul portrays creation as “waiting” for the sons of GOD to be revealed. Why is creation waiting for this event? What do the sons of God have to do with creation? *Genesis 1:26-30; Genesis 3:17-19***

God made man in his image and said, “Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the live-stock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” We were created to carry God’s image to the end of the earth. We are his image-bearers! The things we lay our hands to are to reflect God’s glory because we reflect his glory. Unfortunately, Adam’s sin has marred that image bearing. Creation was cursed because of Adam’s sin. However, because of the work of Jesus, the Sons of God have been born again. Creation is waiting for our “official adoption ceremony” (to coin a phrase). When we are liberated from these bodies, creation will follow suit. The mandate to bear God’s image has not changed and it will not change for all eternity.

### **7. According to verse 23, we are waiting eagerly for the redemption of our bodies. When will this event take place? *1 Corinthians 15:35-58***

This will happen at the last trumpet (see 1 Cor 15:52). The trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. I can’t wait!

## **DAY FOUR**

### **Read Romans 8:26-27**

### **8. What is the believer’s weakness?**

“We do not know what we ought to pray for.” This would be a debilitating weakness, except ...

### **9. How does the Holy Spirit help this weakness?**

The Holy Spirit “intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” We can have great confidence in the Holy Spirit’s intercession, for he “intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

### **10. Practically speaking, how do you think this intercession works? Have you seen this is your own life? If so, when and how?**

I think this intercession is taking place through us when we pray and it is also taking place when we are not praying. Paul is writing these verses to show how the Spirit helps us. His help, I believe, comes at all times. We must not assume that the Holy Spirit is only looking out for us when we are actively praying. For instance, I don’t just think of my kids only when they’re obeying me. I am acting on their behalf even when they’re



disobedient. This should bring great comfort to the Christian. God is on our side! The Holy Spirit is calling out to God for our help even when we don't know that we help!

#### **DAY FIVE**

##### **Read Romans 8:28-39**

**11. In verses 28-39, Paul lists many reasons why we as Christians can have confidence that God is for us. List as many of those reasons as you can find in these verses. Are you living as if these are, in fact, true?**

In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. He foreknew us and predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. This means that God's plan is that I would look like Jesus! I can have confidence that his will will be done in my life. He called us, justified us, and glorified us. He gave us his Son - therefore I can be assured that he will graciously give me all things that are needed. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father interceding for me (think of that - if you're a Christian, both the Holy Spirit and Jesus are interceding for you right now!). We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **DAY SIX**

**12. This week, the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

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