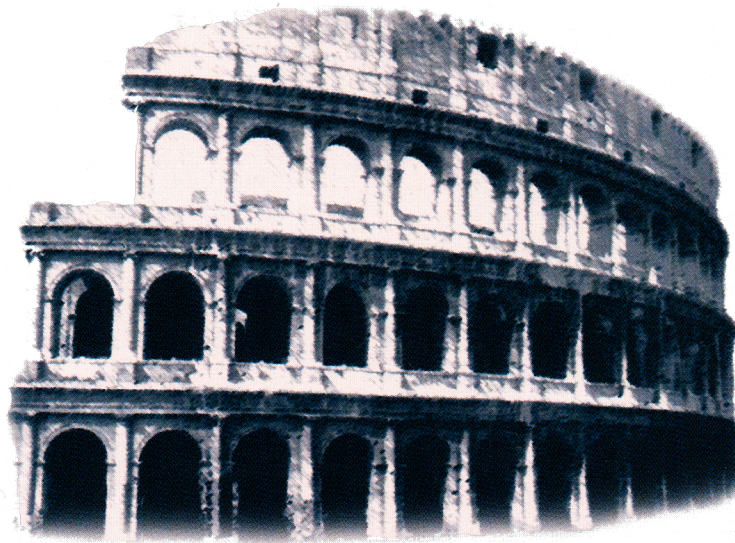


The Book of Romans



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INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

By Martin Luther (1552)

“This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes...

Thus in this Epistle we find most richly the things that a Christian ought to know; namely, what is law, Gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, righteousness, Christ, God, good works, love, hope, the cross, and also how we are to conduct ourselves toward everyone, whether righteous or sinner, strong or weak, friend or foe. All this is ably founded on Scripture and proved by his own example and that of the prophets. Therefore it appears that St. Paul wanted to comprise briefly in this one Epistle the whole Christian and evangelical doctrine and to prepare an introduction to the entire Old Testament; for, without doubt, he who has this Epistle well in his heart, has the light and power of the Old Testament with him. Therefore let every Christian exercise himself in it habitually and continually. To this may God give His grace. Amen.”

Taken from his commentary on Romans

WEEK ONE: ROMANS 1:1-7 and ACTS 9:1-22

OPENING QUESTION: *How do you introduce yourself to people you have never met?*

Note: Saul was the Jewish name and Paul the Roman name for the apostle who wrote the letter to the Romans.

1. Describe Paul's purpose for life before he met Jesus.
2. How did Paul encounter Jesus? (see also Acts 7:54-8:1) What do you personally find most surprising about this?
3. Who was Ananias and what do you learn from his example?

Note: An *apostle* is one "who is sent by authority with a commission". One of the requirements for an apostle was the experience of seeing the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1-2). Paul saw Christ on the road to Damascus.

Gentiles is the common English translation of the Greek term which refers to people of nations other than Israel. The news that God accepts Gentiles into full covenant relationship with Him was preached by Paul and threatened deep splits within the early church. (Dictionary of Paul and His Letters)

4. How did Paul describe his purpose in life after his encounter with Jesus as he introduced himself to the church in Rome? vv. 1-5 (see also Philippians 3:7-10)
5. Have there been any events in your life that reshaped your purpose?

6. What do you learn about Jesus in these passages?

7. Who is a saint and what benefits do they enjoy?

Colossians 1:12-14

Psalm 16:2-4

Psalm 116:15

Romans 8:27

Note: *Grace* means God's unmerited favor and blessings.

8. What difference do you think it makes to see yourself as a saint living in grace and peace?

Memory Verse: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." *Romans 1:7*

Prayer Guide: Jesus Christ, my Lord, lead me to the obedience that comes from faith

WEEK TWO: ROMANS 1:8-17 and ACTS 25:23-26:32

OPENING QUESTION: *Who are you longing to visit?*

1. Why did Paul give thanks for the Roman believers he had never met?
2. Are you a person who *first* thanks God? Who can you thank him for today?
3. How did Paul show his concern for the believers in Rome?
How could such concern impact those under your care?

Romans 1:8

Romans 1:9

Romans 1:10

Romans 1:11

Romans 1:12-13

Note: Verses 16-17 are the theme of the entire book. Martin Luther described that as becoming for him “a gateway to heaven.” They helped him grasp the truth that “by faith, through God’s grace and sheer mercy, people are made righteous before God.”

4. What is the gospel?

Romans 1:16-17

Acts 26:16-18

2 Timothy 1:8-9

5. How has the gospel impacted your life? How would you like it to impact your life?

6. List phrase that reveal Paul's commitment to the gospel.

Romans 1:8-15

Acts 26: 6-8, 16-29

7. Why was Paul not ashamed to preach the gospel?
vv. 16-17 (see also 1Corinthians 1:18-25, Acts 26:24-29)

8. Reflect on times when shame has weakened your witness. How can Paul's example help you?

9. How did Agrippa respond to Paul?

10. What response did Paul long for in Agrippa and all those to whom he preached?

Acts 26:20

Acts 26:28-29

11. What do you think it means to live by faith?
(see also Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:5)

Memory Verse: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." *Romans 1:16*

Prayer Guide: Jesus Christ, open my eyes to the fullness of the gospel.

WEEK THREE: ROMANS 1:18-32 and GENESIS 3

OPENING QUESTION: *In what natural setting are you reminded that God is real?*

Note: God's wrath is his holy hostility to evil which refuses to condone it, instead bringing just judgment upon it. (John Stott)

1. Why is God's wrath being revealed? vv18-23
2. What does everyone know about God? vv.19-20
3. How does God make these things known? (see also Psalm 19:1-6)
4. What role has creation played in your understanding of God?
5. What did people choose to do with their knowledge of God?
Romans 1:18

Romans 1:21

Romans 1:22

Romans 1:23

Romans 1:25
6. What did Adam and Eve do with their knowledge of God?
Genesis 3:1-6

7. What happens when God lets people go their own way?
In what ways can it be a judgment of God for them to get what they want?

8. What did God let the people choose?

Romans 1:24

Romans 1:26

Romans 1:28

9. What is idolatry and why is it so dangerous? Why do you think Paul connects it so closely to sexual sin?

Romans 1:22

Romans 1:25

Psalm 106:19-23

Jeremiah 2:11-13

10. How does sin destroy?

Relationship with God: Genesis 3:8-9 Romans 1:18-32

Relationship with others: Genesis 3:12-13 Romans 1:24-31

11. What sins in this downward spiral do you most need to work on resisting?

12. Read Acts 17:24-31. What hope does this passage provide?

Memory Verse "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 they are without excuse." *Romans 1:20*

Prayer Guide: Creator God, be glorified and praised.

WEEK FOUR: ROMANS 2:1-29 and LUKE 18:18-29

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you ever competed in an event that required you be judged for performance?*

Note: Paul switches to a popular ancient literary form and debates with an unseen opponent.

1. Why is it dangerous to judge another? vv. 1-4 (see also Matthew 7:1-2)
2. What guidelines *does* God give for responding to ungodly behavior and in what situation might you apply such advice?

Matthew 18:15-17

Luke 17:3-4

Galatians 6:1

James 5:19-20

3. Describe as fully as you can the judgment of God portrayed in Romans chapter 2.
4. What is the purpose of God's patient kindness?
vv. 4 (see also 2 Peter 3:8-9)
5. How do you think the rich young ruler expected to be judged by Jesus and why?

6. How was the young ruler similar to the people described in Romans 2:17-21? (see also Isaiah 64:6) What had he failed to realize about the law?
7. How could the young ruler obtain eternal life and how can you? (see also Romans 3:21-22, John 5:24, Ephesians 2:8-9)

Note: The *Law of Moses* was given to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai and included the Ten Commandments. The *law of conscience* is the distinction between right and wrong engraved on people's hearts. (LifeChange Romans Study)

Circumcision involved surgical removal of the male foreskin. It was instituted by God as a covenant sign for the Jewish people in the Old Testament.

8. Read Genesis 17:9-14. Why had the sign of circumcision been given?
9. What were the limitations and dangers of outward signs as pointed out by Paul?
10. What kind of circumcision matters to God?

Deuteronomy 30:6

Galatians 5:6

11. Who have you seen God to be in this lesson?

Memory Verse: "Do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" *Romans 2:4*

Prayer Guide: Kind Father, by your Spirit transform my heart.

WEEK FIVE: ROMANS 3:1-31 and ACTS 10:21-48

OPENING QUESTION: *Do you remember a time when you were given special treatment?*

1. How have your advantages in life impacted your spiritual journey?
2. What advantage did the Jewish people have? (see also Psalm 147:19)
3. How have you benefited through their advantages?
(see also Psalm 19:7-11)
4. What responsibilities go along with these advantages? With God's help, how are you living these out?
5. How does Paul picture the sin disease that everyone has?
List the phrases he uses.
6. What difference does it make to see yourself, along with everyone else, plagued by sin?

Note: *Justification*, a term borrowed from the law court, acquits a guilty person of the charges against him.

7. What is the law able to do and what is it unable to do? vv.20-21

8. How does a person become *righteous*? What does it mean?

Romans 3:22-28

Acts 10:42-43

Ephesians 2:11-13

Colossians 1:21-22

9. Who was Cornelius?

10. Why was his spiritual journey a surprise to the Jews?
(see also Romans 3:27-30)

11. What words describing God's character are contained in both passages?

12. How is your love for God deepened by remembering the immensity of his forgiveness?

Memory Verse: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." *Romans 3:23-24*

Prayer Guide: Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.

WEEK SIX: ROMANS 4:1-25 and GENESIS 15, 21:1-7, 22:1-19

OPENING QUESTION: *Describe someone whose faith has been an example for you.*

Note: Jews in Paul's day honored Abraham as their father, the ancestor to whom they traced their own unique status as God's covenant people. (Douglas Moo)

1. Who was Abraham?
2. How did Abraham become right with God?
3. What did God promise Abraham?
4. Why would it have been difficult for Abraham to trust God's promises?

Romans 4:19

Genesis 15:1-6

Genesis 22:1-19

Genesis 21:1-7

Hebrews 11:8-12

5. What is your relationship to Abraham and what privileges are yours because of that? Romans 4:11-12, 16-18
6. READ GENESIS 15:6. List all the verses in Romans chapter 4 that refer to this verse.

7. What important truth is Paul trying to teach about righteousness?
8. What hope does this teaching provide for times when you feel unworthy?

9. What is faith?

Romans 4:18-20

Genesis 18:13-14

Hebrews 11:1-3

10. In whom are you to place your faith?

Hebrews 12:2

Psalms 25:1-6

Psalms 62:1-2

11. How much faith do you need for salvation?

Ephesians 2:8-10

12. What hinders your faith?

13. What strengthens your faith? How does Abraham's example inspire you to have deeper faith?

Memory Verse: "He did not waver through 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." *Romans 4:20-21*

Prayer Guide: God of Glory, increase my faith.

WEEK SEVEN: ROMANS 5:1-21 and LUKE 23:26-46

OPENING QUESTION: *Has there been an occasion when someone came to your rescue just in time?*

Note: *Justification* – “Through faith, Christ’s righteousness becomes our righteousness, and all that he has becomes ours. He himself becomes ours.” (Martin Luther)

1. What are the blessings of the person who has been justified by faith?

Romans 5:1, 11

Romans 5:2

Romans 5:5

Romans 5:9

Romans 5:21, Luke 23:43

2. Which of these blessings do you most need to be reminded of today?

3. Contrast the effects of Adam’s life and Christ’s.

Child of Adam

Romans 5:12,15,21

Romans 5:16, 18

Romans 5:19

Child of God

Romans 5:17, 21, 1. Corinthians 15:55-57

Romans 5:16, 18

Romans 5:19

4. How have you been shaped by suffering?
5. How can faith in Christ change a person's perspective on suffering? And what benefits can it bring? vv. 2-5
6. Describe the people Christ died for. How are such people usually treated?

Romans 5:6

Romans 5:8

Romans 5:10

Luke 23:32-34
7. When and why did Christ die for you? vv.6-8. What does this mean to you?
8. Contrast the responses of the two criminals to Christ. (Luke 23:39-42)
9. What did Christ extend to the believing criminal? (Luke 23:43)
10. Why is reconciliation so important?
11. What is Christ's role in reconciling sinful people to God?
(see also Colossians 1:19-20)

Memory Verse: "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." *Romans 5:8*

Prayer Guide: Christ my Reconciler, bring your peace.

WEEK EIGHT: ROMANS 6:1-23 and LUKE 15:11-32

OPENING QUESTION: *Did you ever have a job in which you felt like a slave?*

Note: In New Testament times baptism closely followed conversion. The dipping or immersion in water was an outward expression of an inward experience.

1. How is Christian baptism both a funeral and a resurrection?
(see also Galatians 3:26-27, Colossians 2:12 and 3:1-4)
2. How has God broken the power of sin in the life of the believer?
3. Why do people continue to sin? Why do you think repeated sin causes people to drift far from God?
4. What guidelines does Paul provide for people who yearn to live free of sin?
vv.11-14

Note: *Sanctification*: Becoming more and more like Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. Describe a slave's role. How is his life shaped by the master he serves?
6. Contrast the results of slavery to sin and slavery to God, (vv.15-23)

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7. Read Luke 15:11-32. Describe the younger son. Whom did he serve after he left his father?
8. What caused him to return home? What causes you to return home to the Father?
9. How did the father greet the son upon his return? How did his greeting illustrate Paul's teaching in Romans 6?
10. Do you think the father would greet him in the same way if he fell back into his old life at some point in the future? Explain.
11. How did the older brother describe his life with the father? Luke 15:28-32 Which teachings in Romans 6 had he failed to grasp?
12. What important lessons do these passages provide about how to live as a forgiven sinner?

Memory Verse: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." *Romans 6:23*

Prayer Guide: Jesus my Master, grant me a willing spirit to serve you.

WEEK NINE: ROMANS 7:1-8:4 and EXODUS 19:1-20:21

OPENING QUESTION: *How do you respond to speed limits?*

1. How do you respond to authority and rules?
2. What motivates you to follow rules?
3. What were the Israelites promised if they kept God's rules?

Exodus 19:4-5

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

4. Which laws on Mt. Sinai were given to protect man's relationship with God and which were given to protect his relationship with fellowmen?

Laws protecting relationship with God:

Laws protecting relationship with fellowmen:

5. What role do you think these laws have in society today? What happens when they are broken?
6. Read Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Ezekiel 36:24-28. What did God promise?
7. What would be given to allow people to freely obey God?

Ezekiel 36:26-27

Romans 5:5

Romans 7:6

Romans 8:1-4

8. What is the law according to Paul?

Romans 7:1

Romans 7:12

9. What is the law's relationship with sin?

Romans 3:20

Romans 7:5-6

Romans 7:7-11

10. Have you found in your own life that an awareness of God's standards creates greater awareness of your sinfulness? Explain

11. According to Romans 7:4, what is the goal of the Christian life?
(see also Philippians 1:9-11)

12. How does Paul describe his personal battle with sin? List the phrases.

13. In what way can you identify with Paul's battle even regarding a current temptation?

14. How is a person delivered from sin?

Romans 7:24-25

John 8:31-36

Memory Verse: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." *Romans 8:1*

Prayer Guide: Christ Jesus my Savior, help me to become more like you.

WEEK TEN: ROMANS 8:1-27 and ACTS 1:1-8, 2:1-21

OPENING QUESTION: *What do you like to read or think about in order to put your mind at peace before going to sleep?*

Note: *Condemnation* is a judicial term for a guilty verdict and is the opposite of justification.

1. What did Jesus tell His disciples about the Holy Spirit before He ascended into heaven?

Acts 1:4-5

Acts 1:8

John 16:5-15

2. Describe the setting in which the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. What might have been the point of the unique outward signs? (see Acts 2:1-13)

3. Why do you think it was appropriate that the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, the day when the Jews celebrated the giving of the covenant under the Law of Moses? (see also Jeremiah 31:33-34, Romans 7:6 and 2 Corinthians 3:6)

4. How can the Holy Spirit be received today and by whom?

Acts 2:38-39

John 3:5-8

Ephesians 1:13-14

Note: *Flesh*, according to Paul, is “our fallen, ego-centric human nature.” It is our “sin-dominated self.”

Spirit is the personal Holy Spirit who not only regenerates but indwells the people of God. (John Stott)

Adoption: In the Roman world of the first century men adopted sons to perpetuate their names and inherit their estates. They enjoyed all the privileges of natural born sons. (F.F. Bruce)

5. How are people's lives different when they are controlled by the Holy Spirit?

Romans 8:5-8

Romans 8:9-11

Romans 8:12-14

Romans 8:15-17

Romans 8:26-27

6. What hope is there in times when you don't even know how to pray?

7. Does your life display evidence of the Holy Spirit's control. In which area can you invite the Holy Spirit to work more fully?

8. How can you balance relying on the Holy Spirit's power and using your own resources?

9. In order to be controlled by the Holy Spirit what must be done with sin and why?

Romans 8:12-13

Galatians 5:16-25

10. What is the mind's role in allowing you to live as a Spirit-controlled person? What steps can you take to allow God's Spirit more control of your mind?

Romans 8:5-7

Romans 12:2

Philippians 4:4-9

Memory Verse: "You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" *Romans 8:15*

Prayer Guide: Holy Spirit, control my mind for life and peace.

WEEK ELEVEN: ROMANS 8:28-39 and ACTS 6:8-15, 7:54-60

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you ever won something when you really didn't expect to?*

1. What mars life at the present time? vv. 35-39

2. Reflect on Romans 8:28. What hope does this provide for the child of God struggling with tragedies and evil?

3. What is God's ultimate purpose for the believer? v. 29
How does this affect your daily choices?
(see also 1 John 3:1-3, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 1:11-12)

4. In your own words, describe what it means to you that God

foreknew you

predestined you

called you

justified you

is glorifying and will glorify you

5. What difference does this make to you as you battle sin?

6. What do you learn of God's love? vv.31-39
(see also Isaiah 43:1-4, 1 John 4:7-12)

7. What difference does it make to know that you are deeply loved by God?
What do you do when you don't feel that you are?
8. Can you recall a difficult experience in your own life that led you to
experience God's love more deeply
9. Who was Stephen?
10. What was the crowd's response to Stephen's testimony about Jesus?
11. What do you learn from the fact that God did not rescue him from death?
12. What was Stephen's relationship to Christ in the midst of his suffering?
13. What new truths have you learned in these passages and how do they help
you?

Memory Verse: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him
who loved us." *Romans 8:37*

Prayer Guide: Eternal God, help me to rest in your unfailing love.

WEEK TWELVE: ROMANS 9:1-33 and JOSHUA 2:1-24, 6:22-25

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you ever been surprised by someone's mercy toward you?*

Note: In Romans 9-11 Paul's focus becomes Israel's rejection of the Messiah and God's promise of future restoration.

1. Describe Paul's love and anguish for his people, the Jews. vv. 1-3

How is this similar to Jesus and Moses?

Matthew 23:37-39

Exodus 32:30-32

2. How do these examples encourage you to care for others with such intensity?
3. With what privileges had God blessed the Jewish people and what do they mean? vv.4-5
4. How did the prophets prepare people with the knowledge that God would call Gentiles into His family? vv.25-27
5. What does Paul teach about *election*? Does this cause you to question God's justice? vv. 10-13

6. How does the illustration of the potter and clay illustrate the tension between God's choice and human response?

Roman 9:20-21

Jeremiah 18:1-10

7. What leads to a hardened heart and what are the consequences of a hard heart?

Romans 9:17-18

Exodus 4:21

Exodus 8:15

Proverbs 28:14

8. Who is Rahab?

9. How did Rahab display faith?

10. How did God show mercy to Rahab? Joshua 6:22-25 (see also Matthew 1:5)

11. Which verses of Romans 9 are illustrated by Rahab's story?

12. What have you learned of God's sovereignty and mercy?
(see also Ephesians 1:1-14)

Memory Verse: "It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort but on God's mercy." *Romans 9:16*

Prayer Guide: LORD, Jesus Christ, save me in your mercy.

WEEK THIRTEEN: ROMANS 10:1-21 and ACTS 8:26-38

OPENING QUESTION: *Remember a time when you were lost and someone helped you find the way.*

1. What was Paul's prayer for the Jewish people? How can you follow his example?
2. Why do you think *zeal* without *knowledge* can be so dangerous? v.2
(see also Galatians 1:13-16)
3. What prevented Jews from being saved?

Romans 10:2-3

Romans 10:16

Romans 10:21
4. How are people saved? vv.9-13 Has this been your experience? Explain.
5. Why do you think it is important to give public expression of heart belief?

In what ways have you given public expression of your faith in Christ or in what ways might you?

6. Why are messengers of the good news of Christ so important?

Romans 10:14-15

Acts 8:30-31

Isaiah 52:7

7. Where was Philip sent and why?

8. Who was the Ethiopian and how did he reveal a seeking after God?

9. Read Isaiah 53. Why was the Ethiopian's question significant?

10. What lessons about being an effective messenger of the *Good News* do you learn from Paul and Philip in these passages? (see also 1 Peter 3:15)

11. Who in your life might benefit from your sharing the *Good News*? How could you arrange to spend time with them?

12. With what words could you share the *Good News* about Jesus to lead them to faith as Philip led the Ethiopian?

Memory Verse: "If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10:9

Prayer Guide: Jesus my Lord, compel me to share the *Good News*.

WEEK FOURTEEN: ROMANS 11:1-36 and JEREMIAH 31:31-37

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you ever been dropped by a friend?*

1. What important questions does Paul ask in shaping this chapter?

Romans 11:1

Romans 11:11

2. How does Paul argue that Israel's unbelief is only partial? vv. 1-10
(see also 1 Kings 19:10-18)

3. How might his example of Elijah comfort Jewish believers today?

4. What good resulted from Jewish unbelief? vv. 11-16

5. What are the consequences of unbelief? vv. 7-10

6. How do you think these consequences continue to impact people without trust in Christ today?

7. What was Paul trying to teach through his use of the grafting image?
What was his warning to the believing Gentiles?

8. What hope for Israel lies ahead?

Romans 11:25-26

Romans 11:28-29

Isaiah 62:1-4

Isaiah 62:11-12

Jeremiah 31:31-37

Zechariah 12:10

9. Reread Romans 8:29-36. How are you encouraged as you compare God's promises to you with His promises to Israel?

10. In reflecting on the Jeremiah and Romans passages, how would you respond to a person who said that God has no special relationship with ethnic Israel today?

11. How does Paul end these difficult chapters? Why is this an appropriate ending? vv.33-36

Memory Verse: "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable." *Romans 11:29*

Prayer Guide: Eternal God, your promises are forever.

WEEK FIFTEEN: ROMANS 11:33-36 and DANIEL 2

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you had an experience recently that overwhelmed you with awe?*

Note: After spending 11 chapters giving a comprehensive outline of God's plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, Paul stops to worship. "Like a traveler who has reached the summit of an Alpine Ascent, the apostle turns and contemplates."
(Frédéric Louis Godet)

1. What do you do when you recognize God's goodness and greatness?

2. What are God's riches?

Romans 2:4

Romans 9:23

Romans 10:12

Romans 11:33

Ephesians 2:4

2 Corinthians 8:9

3. How have you been enriched by God? Do you view yourself as *rich* because of God's wealth? Explain

4. What do you learn of God's wisdom?

Romans 11:33-34

Isaiah 55:8-9

1 Corinthians 1:19-31

Job 28:12-15, 28

Daniel 2:20-23

Colossians 2:2-3

5. Why is it important to understand how different God's wisdom is from human wisdom?
6. Why was Daniel so in need of God's wisdom?
7. Why are you so in need of God's wisdom today? (see also Proverbs 4:1-13)
8. How did Daniel receive the wisdom he needed? What lessons are provided by his example?
9. What was Daniel's response when he was given the wisdom he needed? What is yours? (see Daniel 2:20-23, 27-28)
10. What temptations do you think arise when God blesses you with wisdom?
11. What does the last verse of the doxology remind you about God and what your response to Him should be?
12. Write your own doxology to God in response to what you have learned of Him over these past weeks.

Memory Verse "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen." *Romans 11:33,36*

Prayer Guide: Wise God, I seek your wisdom.

WEEK SIXTEEN: ROMANS 12:1-2 and MARK 14:1-9

OPENING QUESTION: *Recall a time when you sacrificed for something and what motivated your sacrifice.*

Note: It is Paul's pattern to begin his letters with strong doctrinal sections followed by practical life exhortations. He now turns to what he earlier called "the obedience that comes from faith" and shows how it expresses itself in love.

1. What mercy of God has Paul reminded you of in past chapters of Romans?

Romans 5:1-2

Romans 5:8

Romans 8:26-27

Romans 9:16,23

Romans 11:30-32

2. What is to result from a grateful recognition of God's mercy?

3. How were Jews in the Old Testament to present sacrifices before God?

Exodus 29:38-46

Leviticus 1

4. What do you think it means to present your body as a sacrifice? What challenges come because you are a "living" sacrifice?
(see also 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Philippians 1:20-21, Romans 6:13)

5. How did the woman in Mark 14 sacrifice?
6. What do you think led her to such sacrifice and what do you learn from her example?

Note: To *conform* is literally “to be molded or stamped according to a pattern.” J.B. Philips translates Romans 12:2 “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.”

To *transform* literally means “a change from within” and comes from the same word as transfigure.

7. In what specific areas are you being tempted to conform to the world? For you personally, what makes these temptations hard to resist?

8. Why do you think the *renewing of the mind* is so important?

9. How do you renew your mind or how could you?

Ephesians 4:17-24

Philippians 4:4-9

Colossians 3:1

Psalms 1:1-3

10. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Romans 12:2. What great benefit results from living with a transformed mind? Are you experiencing such benefit?

Memory Verse: “In view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”
Romans 12:1

Prayer Guide: Merciful God, make my body, my mind, and my will your
Living Sacrifice.

WEEK SEVENTEEN: ROMANS 12:3-8 and ACTS 6:1-7

OPENING QUESTION: *What insight about your body have you gained from suffering an injury or illness?*

1. Why do you think Paul admonishes you to evaluate yourself accurately?
2. What are the dangers of thinking less of yourself than you ought?
(see also Exodus 4:10-13)

What are the dangers of thinking more highly of yourself than you ought?
(see also Galatians 6:3-5)

Note: *Gifts* (charismata) are God-given abilities to serve the community of Christ in a particular way. Several lists of gifts are included in Scripture but none is comprehensive. (Moo) For additional lists of gifts see 1 Corinthians 12:27-30, Ephesians 4:11-13 and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

3. What needs are the gifts to meet? Romans 12:6-8
4. Read Acts 6:1-7. What needs arose in the early church?
5. What principles about the use of gifts in the body of Christ do you learn from these passages? In what situation can you apply these principles?

Acts 6:2

Acts 6:3-4

Acts 6:6

Acts 6:7

Romans 12:6-8

6. What purposes are gifts to accomplish?

Ephesians 4:12-13

1 Peter 4:10-11

7. What gifts has God given you? How are you using them to benefit the body of Christ?

8. In what way are a group of believers like a single body? vv. 4-5

9. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. What preserves the health of the body?

10. Describe Christ's function within the body. (see also Colossians 1:17-20)

11. Read John 17:13-26. List Christ's prayer requests for you as a member of His body. How do they help you stand firm?

Memory Verse: "In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." *Romans 12:5*

Prayer Guide: God of Grace, use my gifts for your glory.

WEEK EIGHTEEN: ROMANS 12:9-16, 13:8-14 and LUKE 10:38-42

OPENING QUESTION: *How has an act of love by another touched you recently?*

Note: The word for *sincere* translates *without hypocrisy*. Love and hypocrisy exclude one another for love is the sum of virtue and hypocrisy the epitome of vice.
(John Stott)

1. Why do you think it is so important that love be *sincere*? Where might God prompt greater sincerity in your love?

2. What allows people to love sincerely?

John 15:4-17

1 John 3:16-18

1 John 4:7-12

1 Peter 1:22-23

Romans 13:12-14

3. Reread Romans 12:9-16. What does sincere love look like? List as many aspects of sincere love as you can.

Which of these presents the greatest challenge for you personally?

4. What is love's importance as it relates to the law and why?
(See Romans 13:8-10)

5. Why do you think arrogance and pride are such deterrents to love? What counters them? (see also Colossians 3:12-15)
6. Think of a relationship in which you can practice honoring another more. How might you begin doing this?
7. Who are the people in need God might want you to share with?

Note: Hospitality was the expression of love to visitors and strangers. It was especially important in the early church because inns were often unavailable or unsafe. Paul urged people not just to receive strangers but to pursue them so they wouldn't end up on the streets without food or shelter. (John Stott)

8. How is hospitality to be practiced? (See also 1 Peter 4:9, Hebrews 13:1-2)
9. What stands in the way of practicing this today? How might you overcome these obstacles?
10. Read Luke 10:38-42. What difficulties arose as Mary and Martha opened their home in love? Have you experienced these as you opened your home?
11. What did Jesus remind Martha was central? How do his words connect with Romans 12:11-12?
12. What role does prayer play in your ability to love others?
13. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13. Make this your prayer as you seek to love sincerely this week.

Memory Verse: "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."
Romans 12:9

Prayer Guide: God of Love, teach me to love.

WEEK NINETEEN: ROMANS 12:17-21 and MATTHEW 5:38-48

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you ever fed or housed an enemy?*

1. What is your response to someone who threatens or hurts you?

Note: The prayers of the psalmists provide helpful insights into enemies and God's dealing with them.

2. What makes enemies so difficult to treat well?

Psalm 5:8-10

Psalm 10:2-11

Psalm 11:1-3

3. What were the psalmist's desires for his enemies?

Psalm 3:7

Psalm 9:19-20

Psalm 10:15

4. How did the psalmist express assurance that God would deal justly with enemies?

Psalm 5:4-6

Psalm 7:10-17

Psalm 9:7-10

Psalm 10:17-18

Psalm 94:22-23

5. What difference can it make for you to believe that God deals justly with enemies?

Read 1 Peter 2:23. What difference did it make for Jesus?

6. What do you learn from the psalmist's prayers as you seek to pray for and love your enemies?
7. Why are people not to take revenge?
(see also Romans 12:17, Deuteronomy 32:35)
8. Why do you think revenge can be so habit forming?
Reflect on the subtle and even socially acceptable forms of revenge you may be practicing. Seek God's help to end this practice.
9. Read Matthew 5:38-48. What were Jesus' directives about treatment of enemies?
10. How did Jesus treat His enemies? Luke 23:34
11. What does Paul command about treatment of enemies?

DO THIS

AVOID THIS

Romans 12:14

Romans 12:17

Romans 12:19

Romans 12:20

Romans 12:21

12. How does doing good to one's enemy overcome evil?

Memory Verse: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
Romans 12:21

Prayer Guide: Just God, I commit my enemies to you.

WEEK TWENTY: ROMANS 13

OPENING QUESTION: *Has a personal experience taught you to value government?*

Note: In Paul's time there were no Christian authorities in government power. In fact, the Roman or Jewish rulers were largely unfriendly or even hostile to the church. Paul experienced benefits of Roman justice but also saw the miscarriage of justice. (John Stott)

1. Read Romans 13:1-7. Why are people to submit to government authorities? (see also 1 Peter 2:13-23)
2. Read John 19:10-11. What important lesson concerning authority did Jesus teach in his encounter with Pilate?
3. Why are people not to rebel against governments?
4. Do you think it is ever right to resist governments?
5. How did the following people resist their governments and why?
Exodus 1:15-22

Acts 5:27-29

Daniel 3

6. What principles should guide such resistance according to Paul's words and the above verses?

7. Why do you think Paul refers to the government as God's servant?
What service does it provide and why is this important?

8. How are citizens to support governments?

Romans 13:7, Matthew 22:15-22

Jeremiah 29:7

1 Timothy 2:1-4

9. Read Romans 13:8-14. If you were under a cruel and corrupt government, how could you follow the underlying principles of Romans 13 and still do what is right?

10. How are you to prepare for Christ's Return?

11. What change does Romans 13 encourage in you?

Memory Verse: "Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." *Romans 13:1*

Prayer Guide: Sovereign God, purify and guide all those in authority.

WEEK TWENTY-ONE: ROMANS 14:1-15:7 and ACTS 15:1-35

OPENING QUESTION: *Recall a time when another who might have judged you extended grace instead.*

1. Why do you think people so easily judge one another? What damage results from judgment?
2. What were some of the disputable matters in the Roman church that led to judgment?

Note: In the ancient Roman world sacrifices were presented to a god in a pagan temple. Part of the meat-sacrifice was burned and part was sent to the market to be sold. While there was nothing wrong with eating such meat, since idols were worthless, this practice was offensive to some Jewish Christians still tied in conscience to the law's requirements. It also was offensive to Gentile Christians newly converted from idol worship.

3. Why are people not to judge others?

Romans 14:3-4

Matthew 7:1-5

4. According to Paul who is *weak in faith*? Who is *strong*?

5. What principles does Paul lay out which promote unity among people who disagree on matters not essential to faith?

Romans 14:1

Romans 14:3

Romans 14:7-8

Romans 14:13

Romans 14:17-18

Romans 14:19

Romans 14:22

Romans 15:1-2

Romans 15:7

Which of these principles do you need God's help in more fully living out?

6. What do you learn about God's judgment that encourages you to relinquish *yours* to Him?

Romans 14:3-4

Romans 14:10-12

James 4:12

7. Read Acts 15:1-35. What disputable matters were dividing the church? vv.1-5

8. What truth bound Jewish and Gentile believers together?

Acts 15:8

Acts 15:9

Acts 15:11

9. Why was it imperative to focus on the truth that united them? Why is it imperative for believers today?

10. How was the Jerusalem conflict resolved and what do you learn from their resolution?

11. Is there area in your life where God is prompting you to exercise restraint for the sake of others? Is there an area where He is prompting greater freedom?

12. What insight has God given you about the difference of living for the *good of others* versus living simply to *please others*?
(see also Philippians 2:3-5, Galatians 1:10)

Memory Verse: "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification." *Romans 14:19*

Prayer Guide: Prince of Peace, make me an instrument of your peace.

WEEK TWENTY-TWO: ROMANS 15:1-33

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you ever traveled some distance to spend time with people of faith?*

1. What example of ministry did Christ provide?

Romans 15:3

Romans 15:7

Romans 15:8

2. What example of ministry did Paul provide?

Romans 15:15-16

Romans 15:17

Romans 15:18-19

Romans 15:20

3. How do Christ's and Paul's example inspire you? (see also Philippians 2:14-16)
4. How have you seen God use your ministry or how would you like Him to use it?
5. How will Gentiles participate fully in worship? (vv. 9-12)
6. What is Scripture's purpose? How is this being accomplished in your life or how might it be? (v.4)
7. Who provides endurance, encouragement, unity and hope? What role do these have in your life currently?

8. How can people have hope? As you reflect on these verses, what help do they provide in the midst of a difficult situation?
9. What was so significant about the gift Paul was taking to Jerusalem?
10. What were Paul's needs as he invited the Roman believers to join in his struggle by praying for him?
11. Whose struggle might you join in today by praying?
12. What were Paul's expectations in a face-to-face meeting with the Roman believers?
- Romans 15:24
- Romans 15:29
- Romans 15:32
13. Read Acts 28:11-31. What happened when Paul finally arrived in Rome? What impact did this have on his ministry?
14. What lessons about ministry in the face of unmet expectations are provided by Paul's story?

Memory Verse: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow by the power of the Holy Spirit."
Romans 15:13

Prayer Guide: Lord Jesus, make me your servant.

WEEK TWENTY-THREE: ROMANS 16:1-27

OPENING QUESTION: *Have you received a greeting from a distant friend recently that encouraged you?*

Note: Letters of commendation were important in the ancient world where people depended on the aid of those they had never met. Pheobe was probably the carrier of Paul's letter to Rome.

1. Imagine yourself among believers at Rome as Paul's letter was read. How might the words of this final chapter affect you?
2. Why did Paul commend Pheobe?
3. What other women are greeted by Paul and for what are they recognized? What does this reveal of Paul's own attitude toward women?
4. What insights into the early church are gained from Paul's greetings?
5. What did Paul value in the Roman believers? Which of these would you like to incorporate in your life?
6. What do you value in the friends God has given you? Will you let them know that you appreciate them?

Note: The holy kiss was a part of worship in Paul's day and remains so in some traditions.

7. Who was a danger to unity and why?
8. How was the danger to be avoided? Can such destructive people still be handled this way?
9. How do you think one becomes *wise about good* and *innocent about evil*? v.19 (see also Matthew 10:16, 1 Corinthians 14:20)
10. What truths about God does Paul remind you of in this letter's conclusion?
11. Read Romans 1:1-5 and Romans 16:25-27. Which of Paul's major themes, pointed out at the beginning of the letter, are summarized at the end?
12. Write your own short doxology expressing praise for what God has done in your life through Christ.

Memory Verse: "To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen." *Romans 16:27*

Prayer Guide: ONLY WISE GOD, TO YOU BE THE GLORY!

REVIEW LESSON I

1. What verses have you found especially meaningful?
2. What has impressed you about the apostle Paul's life and ministry?
Are there any changes he has inspired in your life?
3. What questions from lessons or lectures continue to challenge you personally?
4. What have these words have come to mean to you?

Grace

Gospel

Righteous

Justification by faith

Obedience that comes from faith
5. What have you learned that could help you or a friend struggling with sin and guilt? How has Paul helped you to stand in grace?
6. What new insights about Jesus Christ have you gained?
7. Is there anything from our study that has deepened your faith?
8. How has God answered your prayers?
9. What thanksgiving can you offer to God?

REVIEW LESSON II

1. What verses do you want most to remember from your study of Romans?
2. What has Paul taught you by his example about being an effective messenger of the gospel?
3. How have you seen Christ more clearly in this study? List any verses that helped deepen this understanding.
4. Are there some specific examples of how your thinking has been changed and your mind renewed through this study?
5. Which of Paul's warnings have you taken to heart?
6. What insights have you gained about
Authority
Judgment
Enemies
Forgiveness
7. How has this study helped you love differently?
8. Paul's aim was greater obedience through deepened faith. Has this been your experience through the study this year? Explain.