

# ROMANS 3:21-8:39 READING PLAN



*Redeemer Community Church*

FALL 2021

Dear Redeemer Church Family,

We are so glad that you have decided to join us as we continue our study in Romans together as a church this Fall. We love the book of Romans, and we've been hard at work designing a study to help you glean as much from this precious book as you can. This past Spring, we released our study for Romans 1-4 as we walked through Romans 1-3:20 together. If you haven't yet studied those first few chapters, we'd encourage you to spend some time studying those chapters, because the gloriously good news of Romans 3:21-8:39 is all the more precious and amazing when it is painted against the backdrop of the bad news of Romans 1:18-3:20.

As Tim Keller has written, "The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." To put it another way, we only truly begin to recognize how good the gospel is when we first understand how little we deserve it.

Throughout church history, the Book of Romans has played an outsized role. John Piper called it "the greatest letter ever written," and Samuel Coleridge, the English poet, said it was "the most profound work in existence."

Martin Luther himself was converted to Christ while reading Romans 1:16-17, giving birth to the Protestant Reformation. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, was converted reading Martin Luther's preface to Romans, and the Lord used Romans 13:13 to bring the great Saint Augustine to Himself. Even our own pastor Joel Brooks once said that he taught his daughters to read in the hopes that one day they would be able to read and understand Romans.

It is our earnest prayer that the Lord would use our time together in Romans to leave us awed by the gospel of His glorious grace, as we understand to ever-deepening degrees the gap between what we have deserved from God and what we have received in Christ instead.

The questions provided in the following reading plan are meant to further your own personal study. We encourage you to first spend time prayerfully meditating through a Psalm, and then study the assigned passage on your own before trying to answer any of our questions. If you are new to Bible study or would like to be challenged to go deeper, we'd encourage you to read "How to Approach the Bible" and "Using the HEAR Method" in the Appendix.

We've designed this study to provide you with five readings a week, with one day for reflection and an additional day to catch up on any readings you may have missed. Most importantly, we want you to know that this guide has been made for your benefit, so feel free to use it in whatever way would be most beneficial for your walk with the Lord.

Praying that the God of hope would fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may abound in hope,

Matt Francisco  
Pastor of Discipleship

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# WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

*“God the Creator taking creation from its original flawless state through its current sin-marred (though still lovely) state to its final glorious state by means of His personal (Father-Son-Holy Spirit) comprehensive (people, places, creatures, and things) redemptive (from sin and decay) work that He shares with His servants, His people.” - Paul House, Beeson Divinity School*

1. We were created for **relationship** with God and to **reflect** God to the world.  
*Colossians 1:16, Isaiah 43:7, Genesis 1:17-28*
2. Everything in our world has been **ruined** by our **rebellion**.  
*Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23*
3. We can be **rescued** and **reconciled** to God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.  
*2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 2:4-5*
3. Those reconciled to God through Christ now **reflect** Christ and **restore** His world together with Him as we await His **return** and the redemption of all things.  
*2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Revelation 21:3-4, Philipians 2:9-11*

## GOD SAVES SINNERS

**GOD** – the Triune Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit; three Persons working together in sovereign wisdom, power and love to achieve the salvation of a chosen people, the Father electing, the Son fulfilling the Father’s will by redeeming, the Spirit executing the purpose of Father and Son by renewing.

**SAVES** – does everything, first to last, that is involved in bringing man from death in sin to life in glory: plans, achieves and communicates redemption, calls and keeps, justifies, sanctifies, glorifies.

**SINNERS** – men as God finds them, guilty, vile, helpless, powerless, unable to lift a finger to do God’s will or better their spiritual lot. God saves sinners... sinners do not save themselves in any sense at all, but that salvation, first and last, whole and entire, past, present and future, is of the Lord, to whom be glory for ever; amen.”

*-J.I. Packer, “Introductory Essay,” in The Death of Death in the Death of Christ, by John Owen*

# BACKGROUND TO ROMANS

The Book of Romans was written by the Apostle Paul around 57 A.D., towards the end of his third missionary journey, while he was stationed in Corinth for a few months before he set sail for Syria (Acts 20:2-3). While he had travelled extensively, Paul had never before visited Rome, and so this letter serves as an introduction of sorts.

While scholars debate who founded the church in Rome, it is clear that Christianity had become a fairly major presence in the city by at least the late 40s A.D. Most of the early converts were likely Jewish (which is unsurprising, perhaps, given that there were around 50,000 Jews living in Rome during Paul's day), but by the time of Paul's writing, it seems that the church was majority-Gentile (1:5f, 13; 11:13).

These Roman Christians faced persecution alongside their Jewish brethren. Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from the city in 49 A.D, a decree that remained in effect until Claudius's death 5 years later- but that persecution was nothing compared to that experienced under the rule of Emperor Nero. By all accounts, Nero was a despicable, violent, and possibly mentally disturbed man who deeply hated Christians. Towards the end of his rule, Nero famously captured Christians, dipped them in pitch, and used them as torches to light up his gardens at night.

Paul penned his letter to the Roman church during the early days of Nero, when Christian persecution was just beginning to increase.

The Book of Romans gives us the most comprehensive account of Paul's theology, but like his other letters, it was never intended to be viewed as a complete systematic theology. Given its contents, it seems most likely that Paul wrote this specific letter to address particular issues concerning the Roman church, particularly the apparent growing tensions between the law-observing Jewish Christians and the Gentile believers, who didn't live by the Mosaic law.

*“In his ministry of reconciliation between the Jews and Gentiles, Paul develops two themes and interweaves them beautifully. The first is the justification of guilty sinners by God's grace alone in Christ, irrespective of status or works. This is the most humbling and equaling of all Christian truths. The second is that the people of God are no longer defined by descent, circumcision or culture, but according to faith in Jesus. So ‘there is no difference’ now between Jews and Gentiles (Romans 3:22)”- John Stott (1921-2011), Romans: Encountering the Gospel's Power, p.6*

# THE MESSAGE OF ROMANS

*“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”*  
- Martin Luther (1483–1546)

Perhaps more than any other letter, Romans clearly demonstrates how Christianity is different from any other religion. While other religions may give instructions for its followers to obey in order that they may be good enough to be saved or to achieve nirvana or some other desirable eternal state, Romans teaches us that our God operates in *exactly* the opposite way, for “while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6).

Over the course of 16 magnificent chapters (neatly divided into 4 sections), Paul masterfully tells the unfolding story of the glorious gospel of grace. As Bob Johnson has written, “From the greeting (1:1) to the doxology (16:25) the gospel saturates this book. Romans teaches us our need for the gospel (1:18–3:20), the provision of the gospel (3:21–5:21), our growth in the gospel (6–8), the sovereignty of God and the gospel (9–11), and our life together in the gospel (12–16).”

In the first few chapters of Romans, like a world-class lawyer, Paul builds his case. He demonstrates clearly that each of us has exchanged the truth about God for a lie, worshipping and serving the creation rather than the Creator. As a result, Paul can rightly say, “There is no one righteous, no not one.” There is a debt of righteousness that each of us owe to God that we could never repay, and therefore, each of us- the immoral and supposedly moral alike- stands justly condemned before God on the basis of our own merit.

But it is not as though God is somehow overly harsh or vindictive- not at all. Instead, it is His perfect justice that demands that He shows no partiality. Therefore, Paul demonstrates, each of us is judged according to our works- not in comparison to others, but against God’s perfect standard. Therefore, we all- each and every one of us- are left without hope.

But then hope beyond all imagination begins to dawn, and starting in Romans 3:21–29, Paul begins to share the greatest news in the universe. Though we could not be found acceptable in God’s sight, Jesus, God’s own Son took on human flesh and lived a sinless life to fulfill the righteousness requirement of the Law. He willingly substituted Himself for *us* in death, as a sacrifice to atone the wrath of God, in order that His righteousness could be offered to us as *a gift by grace*. Anyone anywhere who confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead can be rescued and redeemed, brought into the very family of God.

We are a family of those from every tribe, tongue, language, and nation who have been justified *by faith*- just like Abraham himself. Since our justification is *in* Jesus Christ and since we are therefore *in Jesus Christ*, our hope is firmly secure. We can rest assured that we have access to God, that we have died to our sin, that there is no more condemnation for us, that we will be raised as Jesus Himself was raised, that we are co-inheritors with Jesus, that we are now *able* to obey God’s Law through God’s

Spirit, and that nothing- neither height nor depth, nor angel nor demon, nor things present or to come- will be able to separate us from God's love.

This has always been God's sovereign plan, and it is utterly unstoppable. God will bring to Himself all those whom Jesus purchased with His redeeming blood. Praise the Lord that *everyone* who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, but, Paul asks us, how can they call on him in whom they have not believed or even heard?

It is the task of the church, the new covenant family of Abraham through Jesus's death and resurrection, to proclaim this good news to the ends of the earth. As we go into the world as heralds, we offer up our gifts to build up the church, and we strive to live as a counter-cultural, supernatural community that fulfills God's law by loving our neighbors and welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us, for the glory of God.

We labor until that glorious day when Satan is crushed under our feet, and all the earth sings, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

## **PREPARING FOR ROMANS 3:21-8:39**

A few important things to note: first, the first eleven chapters of Romans are a rather dense theological treatise. For that reason, many of our study questions are intentionally more theological than practical in nature. We want to do all we can to help you grasp the depths of what Paul is saying about God, man, sin, righteousness, justification, and God's work of salvation- and yet, the Bible cannot merely be read intellectually. There is nothing given to us in the Bible simply to be known. His Word has been given to us that we might know Him through it, and, by the power of His Spirit, be changed into His likeness by it.

Our holy, loving God has given us His Word because He wants you to know and love Him- even as He knows and loves you. Therefore, as you open God's Word, come expecting to meet God, which means you come prayerfully, patiently, and persistently.

Second, from Romans 1:18-3:20 Paul builds his case for what Timothy George, the founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, has called humanity's radical depravity. This is the theological notion that every aspect of our being and world has been damaged through the Fall, and that we can do nothing to save ourselves. Then, beginning in chapter three, Paul began to explain the glorious good news of the gospel- that God demonstrates His righteousness through the death of His Son and then offers His righteousness as a gift to everyone- both Jew and Gentile. This gift comes through faith, and, as Paul explains in chapter 4, this has always been the way God has operated.

In chapters 5-8, Paul will paint a picture of the faith-filled life. Our faith in God's righteousness leads to a hope that cannot be put to shame. Our union with Christ means that we will always be acceptable in God's life because God the Father views us always in Christ. And this union empowers us to say no to sin, to cry out to God as our Father, to trust in the midst of suffering, and to rest in the knowledge that the Son and Spirit are always praying for us and have forever assured our future with God.

Third, the first few weeks of our study (Romans 3:19-4:25) were also included in the study we released this Spring. However, since our sermon series stopped for the summer at Romans 3:20, we decided to include those same lessons here, so you can continue at the pace of our sermons. However, if you have already completed these lessons, feel free to skip ahead to Romans 5.

Finally, we will be taking a break from Romans for our Advent season, but we'll plan on picking our study back up in the new year. We encourage you to spend the Advent season with Sound and Season, reading through the prophecies and the miraculous birth stories of our great God made flesh.

# WEEK NINE

## ROMANS 3:19-31

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 3:21-22

### Day 1: Romans 3:19-20

1. What is the “fear of God” that Paul is talking about here (see Psalm 110:10; 130:3-4)?
2. How is the whole world “held accountable to God,” if much of the world never had God’s Law (Look back at Romans 1:18-23 & 2:1)?
3. How does a right understanding of the Law stop every mouth (take a look at Matthew 5:21-30)?
4. Try to put verse 20 in your own words.

*“The way to God is wide open. There is nothing standing between the sinner and his God. He has immediate and unimpeded access to the Savior. There is nothing to hinder. No sin can hold [you] back, because God offers justification to the ungodly. Nothing now stands between the sinner and God but the sinner’s “good works.” Nothing can keep him from Christ but his delusion... that he has good works of his own that can satisfy God... All they need is need. All they need is nothing... But alas, sinners cannot part with their “virtues.” They have none that are not imaginary, but they are real to them. So grace becomes unreal. The real grace of God they spurn in order to hold on to the illusory virtues of their own. Their eyes fixed on a mirage, they will not drink real water. They die of thirst with water all about them” – John Gerstner*

### Day 2: Romans 3:21-24

1. Look back at Romans 1:16-17. In what sense has Paul been describing for 2.5 chapters the “first half” of the gospel?
2. Take a moment to deeply consider the importance of specific words and phrases in verses 22-24. Why is it such precious news that:
  - a. God’s righteousness comes to us “through faith”?
  - b. God’s righteousness has been manifested “apart from the law?”
  - c. Redemption is “for all who believe?”

Important note: The word translated “righteousness” in verses 21 & 22 and the word translated “justify” in the rest of the passage are actually the same word — dikaiosune. This means that to be “just” or “justified” is exactly the same as receiving God’s righteousness.

*“Redemption is the word used for what is given to enemies in order to ransom captives and restore them to their liberty. Therefore human beings were held in captivity by their enemies until the coming of the Son of God, who became for us not only the wisdom of God, and righteousness and sanctification, but also redemption. He gave himself as our redemption, that is, he surrendered himself... and poured out his blood” – Origen (c. 184 – c. 253)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Romans 3:21-24 (continued)**

1. Take a moment to deeply consider the importance of specific words and phrases in verses 22-24. Why is it such precious news that:
  - a. There is “no distinction?”
  - b. We are justified “by his grace?”
  - c. This is not something we earn, but “a gift?”
  - d. Our redemption is not simply “by” or “through” but “in Christ Jesus?”
2. How would you summarize what Paul is saying in Romans 3:21-24 in your own words?
3. In light of all you’ve read up to this point in Romans, how would you explain the gospel to someone?

**Day 4: Romans 3:24-26**

1. Why couldn’t God simply just forgive us? Why did Jesus have to die in order for us to be reconciled with God?
2. What is God’s “divine forbearance?” What does it mean that God “passed over former sins” (look back at Romans 2:4)?
3. Verse 25. What’s the significance of God the Father voluntarily putting forward His one and only Son so that we could be brought into relationship with Him (See Ephesians 1:3-10) ?
4. How can God justify the wicked? Compare these verses to Romans 4:5 & 5:6.
5. How does Jesus’s sacrifice make God both just and the justifier of the one who believes? How can God justifying sinners be an act of His justice as well as His mercy?
6. Has there ever been a time when someone else’s “access” or position “justified” your entrance or inclusion into a group, event, etc.?

*“We can put it this way: the man who has faith is the man who is no longer looking at himself, and no longer looking to himself. He no longer looks at anything he once was. He does not look at what he is now. He does not [even] look at what he hopes to be as the result of his own efforts. He looks entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, and he rests on that alone. He has ceased to say, ‘Ah yes, I have committed terrible sins but I have done this and that...’ He stops saying that. If he goes on saying that, he has not got faith... Faith speaks in an entirely different manner and makes a man say, ‘Yes, I have sinned grievously, I have lived a life of sin... yet I know that I am a child of God because I am not resting on any righteousness of my own; my righteousness is in Jesus Christ, and God has put that to my account.” – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981)*

**Day 5: Romans 3:27-31**

1. Why do you think Paul would follow up the last few verses with a question about boasting (Romans 2:23)?
2. What’s the difference between being justified by the Law and being justified by grace?
3. In light of all we’ve read up to this point, how does the gospel render boasting obsolete (read Ephesians 2:9 & Galatians 6:14)?
4. How would this “level the playing field” between Jews and Gentiles, or, to put it another way, how does justification by faith alone humble and unite believers?
5. Why is all boasting then, in some sense, a failure to remember and believe the gospel (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)?
6. How do these verses point us back to the global scope of the gospel that Paul highlighted in 1:5?
7. Verse 31. What’s the significance of the Law now for a believer?

*“Paul shows that the Jews, by trying to put the Gentiles in their place, were insulting God’s glory by not allowing him to be the God of all. But if God is God of all, then he takes care of all, and if he takes care of all, then he saves all alike by faith” – John Chrysostom (347–407)*

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK TEN

## ROMANS 4:1-12

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 3:23-24

### Day 1: Genesis 11:27-12:9

In order to better understand Paul's argument in Romans 4 concerning Abraham's faith and righteousness, we're going to spend the first few days of this week looking at two important chapters in the Abraham story in Genesis.

1. Is there any indication in the text that Abram had a relationship with God before this or had done anything to deserve God's special favor on him and his family? What does that teach us about the nature of God's relationships with His people?
2. Verse 2. Why does God say that He will bless Abraham and make his name great?
3. What does verse 3 teach us about the global ends of God's blessing?
4. Verses 4-9. How do these verses demonstrate that Abraham believed God? What, then, does this story have to teach us about the connection between faith and obedience?
5. In what ways do we have to similarly answer God's call?

### Day 2: Genesis 15:1-21

1. God had made astonishing promises to Abram, but the crucial element in fulfilling those promises was still lacking: a son. In verses 3-6, how is Abram's response a mixture of faith and doubt? How does God respond and what should this teach us about how we approach our own doubts and fears or the doubts and fears of others?
2. What does it mean that Abram's faith was "counted" or "credited" to him as righteousness?
3. Verses 7-21. Why do you think God asks Abram to bring and cut up animals (Read Jeremiah 34:18 for insight)?
4. Why would it be significant that God went through the pieces- and only God went through the pieces?

*"Here the covenant is simply a promise. It is one-sided as a commitment on the part of God to Abraham and exacts no comparable allegiance from Abraham to God. It is a commitment of free grace... God's movement toward Abraham is free and unconditional" - Walter Bruggemann (b. 1933)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Romans 4:1-8**

1. Underline all the times that “counted” or “credited” is used in chapter 4. What does it mean that “righteousness” was credited to Abraham’s account?
2. How does Paul use Genesis 15:6 to demonstrate the continuity between how God related to His people in the Old Testament or Covenant and how He relates to us now in the New?
3. Verse 4. What is a “wage?” What is a “gift” (see Romans 6:23 for help)? What are the main differences between the two and what are the implications for our relationships with God?
4. Verse 5. In light of what’s come before, what does Paul mean by “the one who does not work?”
5. In verse 5, the word *asebas* is translated as “ungodly,” but it literally means “one who refuses to worship.” How can a holy God justify those who refuse to worship or forgive someone’s lawless deeds (5:7)?
6. Verses 7-8. Look back Psalm 32:1-5. Why is so important that David ultimately did not cover his iniquity? What happened when he did try to hide or deny his sin? What did he experience when he finally confessed? What would this have meant for Paul’s audience and what does it mean for us?

*“If we compare other verses in which the same grammatical construction is used as in Gen 15:6 we arrive at the conclusion... that the [crediting] of Abram’s faith as righteousness means ‘to account him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him’” – Douglas Moo (b. 1950)*

**Day 4: Romans 4:9-12**

1. Why do you think Paul keeps highlighting the distinctions and commonality between Jews and Gentiles? What is he trying to drive home?
2. Look back at your study on Genesis 12:1-3 and re-read Romans 1:5. What was God’s blessing to Abraham, and was it ever intended to be “only for the circumcised?” How is God’s blessing to Abraham connected to Revelation 7:9-12?
3. Verses 10-12. The gap between the events of Genesis 15 (where God passes between the sacrificed animals) and Genesis 17 (where Abraham receives the sign of circumcision) is at least fourteen years. How does this help Paul’s argument? What does it say about God, His character, and His plans that He declared Abraham righteous long before he was circumcised?

4. If circumcision wasn’t a work that earned God’s favor, what does it mean that circumcision was both a “sign” and a “seal?” In the New Testament, baptism and the Lord’s Supper are meant to function for believers in a similar way. What parallels can you draw between the Old Testament rite of circumcision and the New Testament sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper?

*A sacrament, according to John Calvin (1509-1564) is “an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we in turn attest our piety toward him in the presence of the Lord and of his angels and before men.” They are “exercises which make us more certain of the trustworthiness of God’s Word... [they] lead us by the hand as tutors lead children. Augustine calls a sacrament ‘a visible word’ for the reason that it represents God’s promises as a painted in a picture and sets them before our sight.”*

**TAKE NOTES**

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**Day Five: Galatians 3:1-14**

1. Verses 3-5. What can learn from these verses about how these believers are to grow spiritually now that they are in Christ?
2. Paul warns the Galatians that they will constantly be tempted to slide back into works- righteousness. Can you describe the difference between dealing with sin through “believing the gospel” rather than just “human attainment?”
3. Verses 10-12. What are some of the differences between someone who has truly experienced the gospel versus someone who is trying to earn God’s favor?
4. What does verse 10 seem to say? If it’s true, how can God remain just and yet credit us as righteous and not be unjust (see 3:13-14)?
5. What do you think it means that Jesus did not simply take our curse but “became a curse” for us (see Isaiah 53:6)?

**TAKE NOTES**

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**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

# WEEK ELEVEN

## ROMANS 4:13-25

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 4:23-25

### Day 1: Romans 4:13-15

1. The Law was handed down to Moses over 400 years after the events of Genesis 12 and God’s promises to Abraham. How does this help prove Paul’s point in verse 13?
2. Why is it such good news that the promise comes to Abraham and his offspring by virtue of God’s promise and not through the law? Why is that?
3. In what sense was Abraham to become “the heir of the world” (Romans 1:6)?
4. According to v.14-15, can works and faith exist side-by-side? Why does that matter?
5. What does verse 15 mean (Look back at Romans 2:12 and consider checking out the glossary for the definition of “transgression”)?

*“Paul said this because God’s wrath is more severe toward a transgressor who knows sin by the law and still commits it” –Augustine (354-430)*

6. Look back at Romans 4 thus far. What are some instances where you are tempted to boast in yourself? When do you feel like you have earned God’s favor?

### Day 2: Hebrews 11:1-19

1. Following the first few verses of Hebrews 11, how would you define “faith?”
2. How do you see Abraham and Sarah (and the other believers in Hebrews 11) demonstrate what it means to walk by faith? Imagine being in their shoes, what would have been the most difficult aspects of trusting God for you?
3. In what ways has God called you to “walk by faith, not by sight?” Can you think of instances in your life where you’ve especially had to walk by faith?
4. Verses 13-16. What are the promises of God that you cling the most tightly to?

### Day 3: Revelation 21-22

1. In these verses, we begin to glimpse the heavenly city that Abraham longed for. What will it be like? How would you explain the heavenly city to a non-believing neighbor?
2. What pieces of this description were the most precious to you? Why?

3. Take some time to let your “holy imagination” run wild. Imagine what it would be like to live in a land where there are no more failures or lies or deceit, no more poverty or miscarriages or miscarriages of justice, no more greed or cancer, no more infertility or racism or sexism, no more envy or lust- and no more funerals, for death itself will be put to death. Dream and praise God for this certain, coming reality.
4. How do you think it would shape the way you view your time, your money, your hardships, and your relationships if you, like Abraham, often looked “forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God?”

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 4: Romans 4:16-25**

- 1. How does the fact that the promise rests on grace lead to assurance that is guaranteed?
- 2. Who does Paul mean by “the one who shares the faith of Abraham?” How do Paul’s words challenge the Jewish notion that Abraham is their father (look back at Galatians 3:7)?
- 3. Verse 18 tells us that Abraham hoped against hope. What do you think that means? What was Abraham hoping in? Is there anything you’re currently hoping against hope for? Take time to pray for it!

*“Abraham believed against the hope of nature but in the hope of the promise of God” -Theodoret of Cyrus (393-458)*

- 4. Verses 19-21. Reading through Genesis, it’s clear that Abraham led a less-than-exemplary life and, at least on occasion, wavered. What encouragement should that give us in our faith?
- 5. How have you seen God be faithful to His promises in your own life?
- 6. Verse 25. What does Paul mean when he says that Christ was “delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification?”

*“A man will be justified by faith when, excluded from righteousness of works, he lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous” -John Calvin (1509-1564)*

**Day 5: Galatians 2:11-21**

- 1. Verse 14. What does Paul mean when he says that Peter was not “acting in line with the truth of the gospel?”
- 2. Verses 13-14. In what sense was Peter being a hypocrite in his relationships with the Gentile believers? In what ways can we make similar mistakes?
- 3. In what sense are nationalism, tribalism, or racism not in line with the gospel?
- 4. Verses 15-16. How does Paul’s conversation with Peter help us better grasp the meaning of “justification?”
- 5. Try to put verses 20-21 in your own words, and then spend some time praying for the Lord to align your heart with Paul’s here.

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

- 1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
- 2. What were you convicted by?
- 3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK TWELVE

## ROMANS 5:1-11

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 5:1

### Day 1: Romans 1-4

1. Take a glance at Romans 1:1-6 and 16:25-27. As a reminder, these two passages serve as the bookends of Romans and serve to highlight the main topics that Paul is going to discuss in the letter. What are some of the themes you see in these passages?
2. As you read back over Romans 1-4, what are some of the main themes you see? What are some of the main things you want to remember and hold onto?
3. Remembering that the book of Romans is essentially one extensive theological argument, in 2-3 sentences each, summarize the major points of 1:28-3:20, 3:21-31, and 4:1-25.

### Day 2: Romans 5:1

1. Before we focus on this one verse, read over all of chapter 5 to get a glimpse of the case Paul is building, and then look back at Romans 4:22-25. What is the “therefore” in verse 1 there for?
2. There are more first-person pronouns (we, us, our) in Romans 5:1-11 than in the first four chapters combined. Who is Paul now speaking to? What has changed?
3. What does it mean that we have been “justified?” Why would it be important that we have been justified “by faith” as opposed to something else?
4. Paul essentially says that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who have peace with God through Jesus Christ and those who have aligned themselves as God’s enemies through their sinful rebellion (Romans 1:21-3:23; Romans 5:10). How does that align with your thinking? How would that affect your prayers?
5. The word that Paul uses for “peace” here is the same word used to translate “shalom” in the Old Testament. Cornelius Plantinga describes shalom as “the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in equity, fulfillment, and delight.” How does this deepen our understanding of the richness of what it means to have “peace with God?”
6. What does our justification NOT come through?

7. Why would it be significant that our justification has come “through” Jesus Christ? How should that shape our security about our peace with God? Are there times when you are tempted to believe that you are not at peace with God? If so, why? What does this verse tell us about the certainty of our peace with God?

*“The holy, righteous God, cannot be at peace with a sinner, while under the guilt of sin. Justification takes away the guilt, and so makes way for peace. This is through our Lord Jesus Christ; through him as the great Peace-maker, the Mediator between God and man. The saints’ happy state is a state of grace. Into this grace we are brought, which teaches that we were not born in this state. We could not have got into it of ourselves, but we are led into it, as pardoned offenders. Therein we stand, a posture that denotes perseverance; we stand firm and safe” - Matthew Henry (1662-1714)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Romans 5:2-5**

1. Verse 2. What is Jesus’s access to the Father like? What are the implications for us, given that our access is “through him?” In light of this verse, how would you describe what kind of access you have to God?
2. Have you ever been tempted to believe your access has been denied? How does knowing that this access has come by grace give us security?
3. What does it mean to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God?” (Hebrews 11)
4. How on earth are we supposed to “rejoice in our sufferings?” Why would we do that (look at James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter)
5. What’s the connection between suffering, character, and hope (Look at Romans 8:17. It’s helpful to note that the Greek word here translated “character” means “proof, a specimen of tried worth”)?
6. In light of verse 2, what does Paul mean when he says hope “does not put us to shame?” How does our knowledge of the future glory of Christ lead us to hope that is not shameful (Look up Ephesians 1:13-14)?

*“If God brought us near to himself when we were far off, how much more will keep us now that we are near! ...What grace is it to which we now have access? It is being counted worthy of the knowledge of God, being forced to abandon error, coming to a knowledge of the truth, obtaining all the blessings... for the reason he brought us near in the first place was that we might receive these gifts. For we were not reconciled merely in order to receive forgiveness of sins; we were meant to receive countless benefits as well” - John Chrysostom (347-407)*

**Day 4: Romans 5:6-8**

1. What do these verses show us about the nature and character of God, especially in contrast to us?
2. Who, in your life, would you die for? According to these verses, what kind of people did Jesus die for (Mark 2:17)?
3. Why would it be necessary to believe that you were weak, ungodly, and unrighteous in order for you to be justified by faith?
4. How do these verses assure you of God’s love for you? How would you describe God’s love to someone else in light of this passage?
5. What does Paul mean when he says that Jesus died “at the right time” (See 1 Peter 3:18)?

*“If Christ gave himself up to death at the right time for those who were unbelievers and enemies of God... how much more will he protect us with his help if we believe in him! He died for us in order to obtain life and glory for us. So if he died for his enemies, just think what he will do for his friends!” - Ambrosiaster (written between 366 and 384 AD)*

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**Day 5: Romans 5:9-11**

1. What does verse 9 tell us about what it took to justify us? Why is that cost significant (Hebrews 9:22)?
2. Try to put verse 10 in your own words.
3. What does it mean that we have been reconciled to God?
4. According to these verses, is it possible for a Christian to lose their salvation? Why or why not (Look at John 6:37-40 & 1 John 2:19)?

*“Paul’s deepest burden is our present security, given that past work. He raises Christ’s past work to drive home this point: if God did that back then, when you were so screwy and had zero interest in him, then what are you worried about now? The central burden of verses 6 through 11 is captured in the ‘since’ of verse 9 (notice the way the whole paragraph swivels at this point): ‘Since, therefore...’ Verse 10 drives the point even further home: ‘For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son’– and here’s the point again– ‘much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.’*

*The language of being ‘saved’ in verses 9 and 10 looks ahead to final salvation, referring not to the moments of conversion in this life but entrance into the presence of God in the next. Paul is saying it is impossible to be truly justified at conversion without God looking after us right into heaven. Conversion isn’t a fresh start. Conversion, authentic regeneration, is the invincibilizing of our future” – Dane Ortland, Gentle and Lowly, p. 193*

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK THIRTEEN

## ROMANS 5:12-21

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 5:6

### Day 1: Genesis 3:1-7

1. What doubt does the serpent plant in the mind of Eve?
2. How have you likewise been tempted to believe that God is “withholding” from you or that you know better what would be best for you?
3. Verse 4-5. What was true about what the serpent said? What was a lie? How does Satan often tempt us with things that are already more fully ours in God?
4. Verse 6 says the woman saw that the fruit was “a delight to the eyes,” a phrase that is often used in the Old Testament to describe the slide into temptation. How does this describe temptation in your own life? How have you seen the end results of sin in your life play out like this?
5. Verse 6. Where was Adam? What was he doing? What should he have done instead?
6. Verse 7. What was the result of their sin?

### Day 2: Genesis 3:8-24

1. How does God respond to Adam and Eve’s sin? What does it say about God’s character and pursuit of sinful mankind?
2. How do Adam and Eve respond to God’s questions?
3. Verse 15 has often been called the “first gospel.” From this point on, there will be enmity between the “seed of the serpent” and the “seed of God’s promise,” but God doesn’t let Adam and Eve sit in the hopelessness of their sinfulness or wonder what the future holds, but points them to a future, certain hope. What does this verse teach us about God’s character, power, promises, and love?
4. How does sin lead to consequences for the serpent, for Adam, and for Eve?
5. In verse 21, how does God provide to cover Adam and Eve’s sin?
6. In light of Adam and Eve’s sinfulness, how could we view verses 22-24 as an act of God’s mercy?

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Romans 5:12-14**

1. What is the “therefore” there for?
2. What’s the connection between sin and death (see Romans 6:23)?
3. What does Paul mean when he says that “all sinned” “through one man?” In what ways was Adam’s role different from those who would come after him?
4. In Romans 1:20 & 2:12, Paul already made it clear that God judges everyone based on whatever knowledge of God’s law (natural or written) they do have, so what does he mean (and not mean) in verse 13 (Consider also the fact God judged the world in Genesis 6–9 & 11:1–9 before Moses received the Law)?
5. In what ways does this passage explode our individualistic mindsets?
6. In light of question 3, in what sense was Adam “a type of the one who was to come?”

*In Romans 5:12–21, the Apostle Paul teaches the theological doctrine known as “federalism” or “federal headship.” Federal headship has to do with representative leadership, where one person acts on behalf of or represents the whole. Here Paul tells us that God appointed two representatives in redemptive history: Adam and Jesus. Adam failed his test in the garden and rebelled against God in sin. His disobedience led to separation from God, judgment, and condemnation– not merely for himself but for all those he represents (a doctrine which is known as “Original Sin”). As a result of The Fall, Adam and all his descendants have been born inclined to sin and under condemnation (Romans 1:18–32). But where Adam’s headship brought sin and the reign of death into the world through disobedience, through Jesus’s obedience, God has not only made a way to provide justification, righteousness, and life for all who believe, but has also planted the seeds of the New Creation (Romans 8:20–23).*

*Dr. Tony Evans once compared the idea of federal headship to an offensive lineman on a football team. If a guard false starts, the whole team is penalized 10 yards– even though he alone was at fault. However, if the running back scores a touchdown, the same guard shares in the celebration. He is a member of the team that has scored.*

**Day 4: Romans 5:15-17**

1. Circle every time Paul uses the words “free gift” and “grace” in these verses. What point do you think Paul is trying to make?
2. Compare and contrast the free gift and the trespass.

3. How do these words demonstrate the difference between Jesus’s work and Adam’s work?
4. Take time to pray and thank God for Jesus’s work.

*“Here’s the point. Someone might say that Adam / sin / condemnation / death equal negative ten (-10), and Christ / righteousness / justification / life are the counterpart that equal positive ten (+10). That would make clear that they correspond but are different. But that is not what Paul is doing here. He is saying that, yes, correspondence is there, but the positive side is much more than an equalizer of the negative side. It doesn’t just balance the number, leaving us at zero, so to speak. Christ and his righteousness and justification and life are much more than Adam and his sin and condemnation and death. They are not a positive ten, they are positive ten thousand... What does ‘much more’ mean? ‘If many died . . . much more will grace abound to many.’ Look at verse 10 to see the answer. Verse 10: ‘If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.’ ‘Much more’ in Paul’s mind is a ‘much more’ of certainty, not a much more of quantity. ‘Much more [certainly], having been reconciled, shall we be saved.’” –John Piper, “Adam, Christ, and Justification, Part 3”*

**TAKE NOTES**

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**Day 5: Romans 5:18-21**

- 1. What was Paul’s essential argument from Romans 1:18-3:20? What are some of the key themes Paul has been presenting from Romans 3:21 until now?
- 2. In light of your answer to question one and the fact that Paul is making one cohesive argument, how should we interpret what Paul is saying in verse 18? Will all people everywhere be saved? If that’s not what Paul means here, what does he mean?
- 3. How does Paul’s use of the phrase “those who receive” shape our understanding of what he means by “all men” in verse 18 (Look back at Romans 1:16-17, as well as at Acts 2:17 & 19:10)?

*“The wording ‘as . . . so’ shows that Paul’s focus is not on how many will be saved but on the method of either sin or righteousness being passed from the representative leader to the whole group”  
 -The ESV Global Study Bible*

- 4. The word translated “trespass” here is elsewhere translated “transgression” (see the glossary for a definition). In light of this, what does Paul mean in verse 20 when he says that “the law came in to increase the trespass” (Look back at Romans 2:14-23 for help)?
- 5. In response to verse 21, is there any sin that grace cannot cover?
- 6. Looking back over Romans 5:12-21, compare and contrast the results of Adam’s work and Jesus’s work to act as representatives of mankind.
- 7. How is your understanding of and appreciation for your need of a Savior impacted by your inability to keep the law?

*“Look at yourself in Adam; though you had done nothing you were declared a sinner. Look at yourself in Christ, and see that, though you have done nothing, you are declared to be righteous”  
 -Martin Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)*

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

- 1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
- 2. What were you convicted by?
- 3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK FOURTEEN

## ROMANS 6:1-14

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 6:3-4

Romans 1-5 primarily describes what God has accomplished for us in the gospel, while chapters 6-8 center upon what God is accomplishing in us through the gospel.

### TAKE NOTES

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#### Day 1: Romans 6:1-2

1. Read all of Romans 6 and try to summarize Paul's main points in 2-3 sentences.
2. Look back at Romans 1:5. According to that verse, what was one of Paul's main aims as an apostle? How does that give us insight into what kind of impact the gospel of God's grace is meant to have on us? How does that begin to answer Paul's question in Romans 6:1 (see Romans 3:5-8 for more insight)?
3. How have you seen the gospel change your desires and actions over time? Are there any areas in your life where you are prone to dismiss the reality or weightiness of your own sin?
4. Imagine that you were talking to a friend who claims to follow Jesus, but doesn't seem concerned about areas of his or her life that are not in line with Scripture. In light of these verses, what might you say to them? How might a lack of concern over sin be connected to a lack of true understanding of the gospel?
5. What does Paul mean (and what does he not mean) when he says that we have "died to sin" (see Romans 5:21; 6:12-14; 7:18; 8:1)?
6. Take some time to pray for holiness, that God's grace would not only cleanse us and our church from our sins, but that God's grace would also deliver us from sinning.

*"The moment we become Christians we are dead, completely dead, to the reign of sin. We are out of sin's territory altogether... But now I imagine somebody putting forward an objection: 'How can you possibly say such a thing? We still sin, we still feel the power of temptation and the power of sin; how therefore can you say honestly that you are dead to the rule and to the reign and to the whole dominion of sin?' I answer this way. We must differentiate between what is true of our position as a fact and our experience... what he says is that every person in the world at this minute is either under the reign and rule of sin or else under the reign and rule of grace... It is either one or the other, he cannot have a foot in each position... [Why?] He is either 'in Adam' or 'in Christ'" - Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)*

**Day 2: Romans 6:3-5**

1. In this passage, Paul begins to unpack one of the most beautiful, transformative doctrines in all of Scripture: our union with Christ. Pagans were taught that they could never have a relationship with the gods because the gods had nothing in common with them. However, the New Testament teaches us that Jesus, who was fully God and fully man (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:14), came into the world and had everything in common with us. By His death and resurrection, He can share with us through faith everything that belongs to Him. How does this idea of being “in Christ” or being “united” with Christ affect the way that God views us and the way we view ourselves, our present, and our future?
2. How does our union with Christ in his death lead us to walk in a new life (see Matthew 16:24-26)? What power equips us to surely walk in a changed life?

*“As Christians, we wake each morning as those who are baptized. We are united with Christ and the approval of the Father is spoken over us. We are marked from our first waking moment by an identity that is given to us by grace: an identity that is deeper and more real than any other identity we will don that day” -Tish Harrison Warren*

3. In verse 5, Paul uses the word “certainly.” What hope and confidence can we draw from that?
4. How should these verses shape our understanding of the meaning of baptism and how our baptism should affect and shape the rest of our lives?

*John Piper described union with Christ as “the reality of all the ways that the Bible pictures our human connectedness to Christ, in which he is indispensable for every good that we enjoy. No saving good, no eternal good, no God-exalting good, no soul-satisfying good comes to us except as we are connected to Christ.”*

**Day 3: Romans 6:6-8**

1. Read Titus 2:14 alongside Romans 6:6. According to these verses, what is one of the main reasons that God crucified our old selves with Christ (hint: In Romans especially, Paul often uses the phrase “in order that”)?
2. What does it mean (and not mean) that those who are united to Christ have been “set free from sin?”

3. Has there ever been a time when obedience to God’s Word felt more like slavery than following your desires? What truths do these verses provide for you during those times?
4. How does verse 5 assure us that our belief (v.8) isn’t merely a vague wish?
5. Do you ever feel enslaved to sin? Spend some time praying that the Lord will give you a confident peace that you are no longer a slave, but a child of God.

*“Until this price was paid for all men by the shedding of the Lord’s blood for the forgiveness of all, blood was required of each man... since the price has been paid for all after Christ the Lord suffered, there is no longer need for the blood of each individual... and in his cross we have all been crucified and with him buried together in his tomb and planted together in the likeness of his death that we may no longer be slaves of sin” -Ambrose (340-397)*

**TAKE NOTES**

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**Day 4: Romans 6:9-11**

1. If Paul has already said that we are dead actually to sin (6:1-4), why would he immediately argue that we must still “account” ourselves dead to sin?
2. What does it mean that Christ died to sin, once for all (See Hebrews 7:27 and 1 Peter 3:18)? What does Christ’s “once for all” sacrifice say about our guilt and shame and fear?
3. In verse 11, the word that Paul uses for “consider” is the same word he used in Romans 4 to describe God “crediting” or “accounting” sinners with Christ’s righteousness. How does that shape the meaning of what Paul is talking about here?
4. Have you ever felt powerless in the face of temptation? What does Romans 6:1-11 have to say to you in those moments? How can these verses better equip you to fight sin in the future?

*“Since Christ died once for all, no one who has died to Christ since then can live again to sin” - Tertullian (155-220)*

**Day 5: Romans 6:12-14**

1. Re-read Romans 6:1-14 and compare it to Galatians 4:1-9. Now that we are in Christ, how have our relationships changed with God, sin, and the law?
2. What does it look like to let sin “reign in your mortal body?” Look back at Romans 1:18-32. What happens when we willingly let sin rule in our bodies?
3. If we are freed from sin (see verses 6 & 7), why do we still need these instructions?
4. See 1 John 4:4 & 1 Corinthians 10:13. How do these verses deepen our understanding of what Paul means when he says, “sin will have no dominion over you?”
5. Slow down to ask the Holy Spirit for discernment about any areas in your life where you are presenting yourself as an instrument of unrighteousness, and then take time to repent. Then ask the Spirit for wisdom about how you can offer yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness this week.

*“No longer does the law speak to us as it did before. We are not now under the law, but another principle governs us. The grace, the favor, the love God has shown us in Christ Jesus appeals to our hearts, and we cheerfully yield to it in the obedience our unregenerate spirits refused to render when the law demanded it” -Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)*

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**


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# WEEK FIFTEEN

## ROMANS 6:15-23

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 6:23

### Day 1: Romans 6:15-16

1. Go back and read Romans 6:1-14, and then compare Paul's question in verse 15 to his question back in verse 1. What are the similarities and differences in the questions that Paul is seeking to address? How does Paul specifically seek to answer this question in verse 15?
2. Read John 3:19 & 8:34. How do these verses give us insight into what Paul is talking about here? How is sin slavery?
3. Think about the last time you were angry or afraid. Was there something more important to you than it should have been? Was there something you were telling yourself you had to have? Were you angry or afraid because you were being blocked from having something you thought was a necessity when it was not?
4. What makes you feel the most self-worth? If you were honest with yourself, what do you think you need in addition to Jesus to have a happy, fulfilled life?
5. According to these verses, what would be the end result of pursuing these things above or alongside Christ? On the other hand, according to these verses, what is the end result of obedience to Christ?

*“Righteousness and sin are mutually incompatible. As the Lord himself said in the holy Gospel, ‘No man can serve two masters’”*  
-Theodoret of Cyr (393-458)

### Day 2: Romans 6:17-19

1. For whose benefit does a slave work? What are the implications from these verses?
2. How are we instructed to live out of our freedom from sin (compare to Philippians 2:12-13)?
3. What is the connection between “presenting” and sanctification?
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Romans 8:29, and 1 Corinthians 15:10. How do these verses help us understand the nature of sanctification and where believers find the power for sanctification?

*“The New Testament method way of sanctification, therefore, is to get us to realize our position and standing, and to act accordingly. That is the New Testament way of teaching... holiness. In other words, ‘be what you are’... How often we are told that we need something further... but there is no indication of that anywhere here. It is because of what has already happened, it is because of what is true of us, that this command is addressed to us [to offer ourselves slaves of righteousness, v.19].”* -Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

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**Day 3: Romans 6:20-22**

1. In light of verse 21, look at Matthew 7:15-20. How does our “fruit” indicate the state of our hearts?
2. What is “the end” of choosing sin?
3. In light of verse 22, read over Matthew 3:8 and John 15:1-8. What do these verses teach us about what “sanctified” fruit looks like?
4. What is “the end” of choosing obedience (see John 17:3)?

“So what fruit was produced then from the things you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death.’ We might say to the slave of sin, ‘You had such pleasure as sin could give you, but was it worth having? You derived some profit, perhaps, from evil pursuits, but did the profit ever make up for the loss you thereby sustained? You who have had experience of sin to the full, has it, after all, turned out to be the fair and lovely thing it once seemed to be? It came to you with all manner of deceitful unrighteousness, like Jezebel with her painted face, but it has worked nothing for you but sorrow and suffering, and it will work your eternal ruin unless God, in his great mercy shall prevent it” - Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

**Day 4: Romans 6:23**

1. What is a “wage?”
2. According to this verse, what have we earned for our sin? If you were in a conversation with a non-Christian, how would you explain the first half of this verse?
3. Why is it so crucial to understand that eternal life comes to us as a “free gift?”
4. Read back over Romans 6:1-5. What’s the importance of eternal life being given to us “in Christ Jesus?”
5. How is receiving the gift of God tied to recognizing Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10)? How does recognizing Jesus as Lord impact the way we view our lives, our time, our finances, our desires, and our fears? Are there any areas of your life that the Spirit might be calling you to submit to Jesus as Lord?
6. How would you explain the gospel through this one verse?

“Paul does not parallel ‘the wages of sin’ with ‘the wages of good deeds’ because he wants to show that they were not set free by their own efforts, nor had they done anything to earn their salvation. It was by grace alone that all these things came about” -John Chrysostom (347-407)

**Day 5: Romans 5-6**

1. What were the major lessons you learned from chapter 5?
2. What were the major lessons you learned from chapter 6?
3. How do these chapters relate to each other?
4. What do these chapters show us about the character of God that we can praise Him for? (Take some time to do that).
5. How has the Spirit convicted you over these two chapters? Take some time to ask the Spirit for the strength to follow in obedience.
6. How might these chapters shape your prayer life?

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**


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# WEEK SIXTEEN

## ROMANS 7

Take some time each day to work on memorizing **ROMANS 7:24-25**

### Day 1: Romans 7:1-6

In order for us to understand what's happening in this chapter, we must pay close attention to verse 1 and remember that Paul is talking to an audience who know God's Law very well. Everything he writes about the Law's inability (on its own) to bring about obedience is meant to stir something in the Romans' hearts- and ours.

1. How do these verses continue to answer Paul's question in Romans 6:15?
2. What does Paul's illustration teach us about how we related to the Law and how we now relate to Christ?
3. In verse 4, Paul says that we must be "dead to the law" in order that we might "bear fruit for God." What's the connection between being "dead to the law" and living a holy, obedient life?
4. According to verse 4, what are some of the purposes of our salvation?
5. What is this good fruit (Galatians 5:22-23)? What does it look like to offer this good fruit to God (Matthew 5:21-40)?
6. What does Paul mean in verse 6 when he writes that we "serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code?" To put it another way, how can we bear good fruit for God (John 15:4-5, 9-10, 12-14; 1 John 4:13-17)?

*"Is the law still binding on the Christian? The answer to that is 'No!' and 'Yes!' 'No' in the sense that our acceptance before God does not depend on it. Christ in his death fully met the demands of the law, so we are delivered from it [as a means of salvation]. It no longer has any claims on us [to condemn us for sin]. It is no longer our lord. 'Yes' in the sense... we still serve... But the motive and means of our service have altered. Why do we serve? Not because the law is our master and we have to, but because Christ is our husband and we want to. Not because obedience to the law leads to salvation, but because salvation leads to obedience to the law. The law says, 'Do this and you will live'. The gospel says, 'You live, so do this.' How do we serve? Not in oldness of letter, but in the newness of spirit. That is, not by obedience to an external code, but by surrender to an indwelling Spirit." - John Stott (1921-2011)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 2: Romans 7:7-13**

1. Read Exodus 20:1-17. Now, according to verse 7, what is one of the main purposes of the Law? How does the Law accomplish that purpose?
2. Can you think of a time when your parents - with your best interest in mind - told you not to do something as a child, and then you wanted to do that forbidden thing even more? In light of verses 7-8, was it your parents' fault that you wanted to disobey them more after they told you not to do something?
3. What does Paul mean when he describes sin as "seizing an opportunity" (look back at 7:5 for more insight)?
4. Since Paul had grown up in a Jewish household and was, therefore, always around God's law, what do you think he means when he says, "I once was alive apart from the law?"

*"When the commandment 'came' it killed forever the proud Pharisee thanking God that he was not as other men and sure of his merits before God. It killed off the happy sinner, for it showed him the seriousness, not so much of sin in general as of his own sin. The 'coming' of the law in that sense always kills off our cheerful assumption of innocence. We see ourselves for what we really are, sinners, and we die... It marks the end of self-confidence, self-satisfaction, self-reliance. It is death." - Leon Morris (1914-2006)*

5. Looking over verses 9-10, has there ever been a moment where God has revealed to you that you were not as righteous as you once thought? What happened and what was that experience like? What did the Lord teach you in those moments?
6. Take a minute to pray, asking God to help you obey Him by loving others with His love, acknowledging your rebellious nature and inability to obey apart from Him.

**Day 3: Romans 7:14-20**

1. Beginning in verse 14, Paul shifts from using the past tense to the present to talk about his ongoing battle with sin. In your walk with Christ, have you ever experienced what Paul is describing in this passage?
2. In light of this passage, what would you say if someone asked you, "Will we ever be completely free from sin in this life?"
3. In verse 20, how can Paul say, "It is no longer 'I' who do it?" What has changed about his identity that enables him to say this (look back at Romans 6:1-5)?

4. When you recognize your sin, how do you typically respond? Why do you think that is?
5. Look at how Paul describes his desires in verses 15 & 19. Where do you think those desires came from? While we may often be tempted to discouragement in our fights against sin, what hope and encouragement can we draw from having desires like Paul?

*"True Christianity is a fight... Do we find in our heart a spiritual struggle? Do we feel anything of the flesh lusting against the spirit and spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things we would? (Gal.5:17) Are we conscious of two principles within us, contending for the mastery? Do we feel anything of war in our inward man? Well, let us thank God for it! It is a good sign. It is strongly probable evidence of the great work of sanctification. All true saints are soldiers. Anything is better than apathy, stagnation, deadness, and indifference... The children of God have two great marks — they may be known by their inward warfare as well as by their inward peace" - J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), Holiness*

**TAKE NOTES**

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**Day 4: Romans 7:21-8:17**

1. Throughout church history, some have argued that Romans 7:14-25 describes Paul looking back to the time when he was an unbeliever. How does Romans 8:7 demonstrate that 7:22 (as well as 7:15, 19) cannot be the words of an unbeliever?
2. Read Psalm 1. What does it mean to delight in the law of the Lord? What are the results of delighting in the law of the Lord according to Psalm 1? How do you serve the Law of the Lord with your mind? Where would the desire to delight in the law of the Lord come from?
3. How have you seen “evil lie close at hand” when you try to do right or where do you see “another law waging war” against the Spirit in you? In your walk with Christ, where are you most often tempted to fall back into patterns of lies and sin?
4. Verse 24. How long does Paul stay in despair? How does verse 25 and 8:1 serve as an answer to Paul’s question in verse 24?
5. Martin Lloyd-Jones said that “to end a reading of Romans 7 in a depressed condition is to fail to understand it,” arguing that Romans 7-8:17 is one long chain. Take a slow read from Romans 7:21-8:17. What hope can you hold onto from Paul’s words here?

*“All growth and progress are a growth in faith, which in the changing circumstances of life grasps Christ and what God has done in him ... Christian faith, by virtue of its confession of Christ, remains sober and realistic about the limits of progress. We are called to reject all idealistic fantasies and to accept the painful and humbling truth that we—both individually and corporately—remain sinners so long as we remain in this body and life. Indeed, we must delight in being sinners: not sinning, nor in being sinners per se, but in the painful yet joyful confession of being sinners who live under the saving lordship of Christ. Our weakness is more than matched by Christ’s strength. Progress in Christian living is thus paradoxical. We go forward by ever going back to Christ crucified and risen for us... All progress is a return to the beginning of the Christian life, where it enters more deeply into the wonder of God’s love in Christ in the face of our sin and misery. The “flesh” can neither be reformed nor rehabilitated. It must be crucified” –Mark Seifrid, Perspectives on Our Struggle with Sin: Three Views of Romans 7*

**Day 5: Romans 6 & 7**

1. Looking back over these two chapters, what are the major themes you see?
2. What has changed about your perspective on the Law and your struggle with sin?
3. In our fight against sin, we fight from victory (Romans 6), not for victory. How does this affect our struggle with sin?
4. How should these chapters shape our prayers? Are there truths you can rejoice in, sin you can repent of, or request?

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK SEVENTEEN

## ROMANS 8:1-11

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 8:1

### Day 1: Romans 8:1-2

1. Before you begin, take a few minutes to re-read Romans 1:1-6, 16-17 & 16:25-27 to remind yourself of Paul's major emphases in this letter. What are the main arguments he is trying to make? How does Romans 8:1 fit into Paul's larger themes?
2. Have you ever felt like there was no way God could love you or that God must be ashamed of you because of your remaining sinfulness? Are you ever burdened by a deep sense of guilt and shame? Now think about the implications of there being "no condemnation" for anyone in Christ, and write out those implications on your personal sin and shame.

*\*Condemnation: the expression of very strong disapproval; censure.*

3. Is there any condemnation left for you? What if you miss a quiet time? Speak ill of another person? Consume porn? Sleep with your boyfriend/girlfriend?
4. When all guilt, shame, and condemnation between you and God is gone, what's left?
5. Look back at Romans 6:1-5. What does it mean to be "in Christ Jesus?" How does being "in Christ Jesus" give us assurance that these verses are true?

*"We can put it in the form of an illustration. The difference between an unbeliever sinning and a Christian sinning is the difference between a man transgressing the laws of... any State, and a husband who has done something he should not do in his relationship with his wife. He is not breaking the law, he is wounding the heart of his wife. That is the difference. It is not a legal matter, it is a matter of personal relationship and... love. The man does not cease to be the husband [legally in that instance]. Law does not come into the matter at all... In a sense it is now something much worse than a legal condemnation. I would rather offend against a law of the land objectively outside me, than hurt someone whom I love... You have sinned, of course, but you have sinned against love... You may and you should feel ashamed, but you should not feel condemnation, because to do so is to put yourself back 'under the law'" - Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)*

### Day 2: Romans 8:1-2

1. Why would it be important that the action of this verse is in the past tense (6:7)?
2. What is "the law of the Spirit of life" (7:4-6)? What is the "law of sin and death"?
3. Read Luke 23:32-43. What good works could that thief bring to the table? What did Jesus promise Him?
4. Having been set from the law as means of being justified before God, how has the Spirit freed you to use the Law (Romans 13:8-10)?
5. Spend some time in prayer and meditation to let this verse speak into the darkest parts of your heart and pray for the Spirit to give you the grace to believe these words.

*Christ's "own joy, comfort, happiness and glory are increased and enlarged by his showing grace and mercy in pardoning, relieving, and comforting his members here on earth" -Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Romans 8:3-4**

1. What do we learn about God the Father in these verses? What does this reveal about His heart towards humanity? How do His actions reveal His commitment to you (Romans 5:6-8)?
2. What could the law not do (Romans 7:10-13)?
3. Imagine someone asked, "How can Paul say there is no condemnation for us when we keep on sinning?" How do verses 3-4 start to answer that question?
4. Why was it necessary that Jesus come "in the likeness of sinful flesh," that is, as a human (Hebrews 2:14-18)?
5. How is the righteous requirement of the fall fulfilled in us through God condemning Jesus as a sin offering ("for sin")?
6. What does it mean to walk "according to the Spirit" (Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 1:5; 1 John 3:9)?

*"But the debt was so great that while man alone owed it, only God could pay it, so that the same person must be both man and God. Thus it was necessary for God to take manhood into the unity of his person, so that he who in his own nature ought to pay and could not should be in a person who could." - Anselm of Canterbury in "Cur Deus Homo"*

**Day 4: Romans 8:5-8**

1. Verse 5. How does the Spirit help us take hold of and apply the truths of the gospel?
2. Verse 6. What are some practical ways in which setting your mind on the Spirit leads to life and peace while failing to set your mind on the Spirit leads away from peace and towards death?
3. Verse 8. What is Paul saying here about non-Christians who do good works (Isaiah 64:6)? How would you explain this idea to a non-Christian?

*"The key to subduing the downward drag of sin in our lives is to know the impulse of gratitude that follows the experience of forgiveness and reconciliation. Law-keeping out of love is the true path of holiness" - Derek Thomas*

**Day 5: Romans 8:9-11**

1. What's the importance of the resurrection in our salvation and sanctification (look back at Romans 4:25; 5:17, 21; 6:4-5)?

2. Which members of the church at Rome is Paul writing to (1:7)? Which members of the church, then, have the power of the Holy Spirit living inside them?
3. How have you seen the Spirit change your heart, actions, and desires since coming to faith?
4. Notice here that Paul sometimes refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of God" and sometimes as the "Spirit of Christ." What does that teach us about the Holy Spirit and the Trinity?

*"Paul is not saying here that the Spirit is Christ but is showing rather that anyone who has the Spirit has Christ as well. For where the Spirit is, there Christ is also. Wherever one person of the Trinity is present, the whole Trinity is present too. For the Trinity is undivided and has a perfect unity in itself" - John Chrysostom (347-407)*

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK EIGHTEEN

## ROMANS 8:12-17

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 8:14-15

### Day 1: Romans 8:12-13

1. In what sense are we “debtors?” If our debt has been paid by Jesus on the cross, what debt do we now owe (Mark 8:34)?
2. In light of all that Paul has said from Romans 8:5-14, what does it mean to be “led by the Spirit of God in this passage?” What is the hallmark of being led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18)?
3. Romans 3:24 tells us that we “are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”- that our justification before God is solely by Jesus’s work, not our own. What do these verses teach us about the Spirit’s role and our role in our sanctification? How do we put to death the works of the flesh by the Spirit?
4. Is there any sin in your life that keeps rearing its head? What would it look like to practically seek to put it to death? Are there any practical steps you can take now or any people that you might ask to help your burdens with you (Galatians 6:2) to see your sin put to death? Take some time to pray that the Spirit would give you the strength to obey and follow Jesus into freedom and holiness, and then immediately text whoever the Spirit laid on your heart to invite them in.

### Day 2: Romans 8:14-15

1. Especially during seasons of doubt, discouragement, or moral failure, many Christians may wonder whether or not they truly know God. If there is even a hint of desire to know God or to obey God in your life, how does verse 14 speak a word of comfort?
2. Is every human being a “child of God?” Why or why not?
3. In his book Knowing God, J. I. Packer wrote the richest answer to the question, “What is a Christian?” is “one who has God for his Father.” What does it mean for us to have God as our Father?
4. Take some time to slowly unpack the following question: how does viewing God as our Father transform the way we think about our prayers, our sorrows, our sins, our needs, and our futures? What are some other privileges that come from being God’s child?

5. Why do you think it’s so hard for us to live in light of God being our Father?

*“We have received the Spirit to enable us to know the one to whom we pray, our real Father, the one and only Father of all, that is, the one who like a Father educates us for salvation and does away with fear” - Clement of Alexandria (150-215)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Galatians 3:15-4:7**

1. Verse 18. What’s the difference between receiving something as a promise and receiving something “by the law?”
2. Look back at Genesis 15:9-21 and your notes from Romans 4 & 7. Why was the law not able to set aside or add to God’s promises to Abraham?
3. What do we learn about our adoption into the family of God in 3:26-4:2? What are the implications of being God’s child?

*“The Greek word used for “sons” is a legal term used in the adoption and inheritance laws of first-century Rome. Here and elsewhere in Paul’s letters (compare 4:5-7; Rom. 8:14-16, 23), this term refers to the status of all Christians, both male and female. Having been adopted into God’s family, they now enjoy all the privileges, responsibilities, and inheritance rights of God’s children” – The ESV Study Bible*

4. What did Jesus accomplish by coming to earth according to 4:4-5?

**Day 4: 1 John 2:28-3:10**

1. According to these verses, what are some of the ways that Jesus’s Second Coming should affect our lives today?
2. Eugene Peterson captured the spirit of 1 John 3:1 in The Message, writing, “What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it - we’re called children of God!” When you think about God’s love for you, is there (or has there ever been) a sense of awe or wonder?
3. If God is our Father because of His love for us, do we live righteously in order that God would love us or do we live righteously because God loves us? Why would that distinction be important?
4. Look back at 1 John 1:9-10. If John says that if anyone says they are without sin, they are deceiving themselves, what could he possibly mean in 3:6?

**Day 5: Romans 8:16-17**

1. Read over 8:14-17. How does Paul describe the identity of those who are in Christ?
2. According to these verses, what is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit? How have you seen the Spirit do this in your own life?

*“Sometimes our spirits cannot stand in trials. Therefore sometimes the immediate testimony of the Spirit is necessary. It comes in saying, ‘I am thy salvation!’ and our hearts are stirred up and comforted with joy inexpressible. This joy hath degrees. Sometimes it is so clear and strong that we question nothing — other times doubts come in soon” – Richard Sibbes (1577-1633)*

3. Look back at Romans 5:3-5. What is the connection between suffering in this life and glory in the next (2 Timothy 2:12)?
4. When His kingdom comes in all its fullness, what will Christ inherit? What is verse 17 saying about you and your future? Take a moment to meditate on this verse and pray with joyful hope about that coming day.
5. Read back over Romans 8:1-17. How does this passage encourage you in your day-to-day walk with God?

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK NINETEEN

## ROMANS 8:18-30

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 8:26

### Day 1: Romans 8:18

1. What ultimately awaits the children of God (2 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)?
2. Read over Isaiah 65:17-25. What will the new heavens and earth be like? Dream for a moment. When that day arrives, what will you think? What will you feel? What will you say?
3. How can Paul say that our sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed?

*"I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a pitiful mirage... that in the world's finale, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood they've shed; that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened with men" -Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881), The Brothers Karamazov*

### Day 2: Romans 8:19-21

1. What do we learn about Creation in these verses? What has happened to the world as a result of our rebellion?
2. Our bodies are a part of God's Creation. How did the Fall affect our bodies and our minds? How could these verses shape our understanding of physical sickness and mental health?
3. Verse 20. The word translated "futility" here is the same word translated "vanity" in Ecclesiastes (see Ecclesiastes 1:1-8), but, according to these verses, the pattern of futility will be broken. What does it mean that the creation has been subjected "in hope?"
4. When Christ's kingdom comes in all its fullness, what will happen to the world itself? How should that future reality shape how we view the world now?

*"Paul means by this that the creation became corruptible. Why and for what reason? Because of you, O man! For because you have a body which has become mortal and subject to suffering, the earth too has received a curse and has brought forth thorns and thistles... The creation suffered badly because of you, and it became corruptible, but it has not been irreparably damaged. For it will become incorruptible once again for your sake" -John Chrysostom (347-407)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 3: Romans 8:22-25**

1. Verse 22. What is Paul trying to explain about Creation’s futility and redemption through the image of childbirth?
2. What are the “firstfruits of the Spirit” that we now have? Looking back over Romans 8 so far, what role does the Holy Spirit have in our lives now?
3. Do you “groan inwardly” as you await this day? If so, what aspects of that day most capture your heart? If not, why do you think that is?
4. Verse 24. Look back at Romans 5:1-5 and your notes. What’s the nature of this hope in which “we were saved?”
5. How can we express this kind of hope in our lives and relationships today?

*“If we let Him... He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said” – C.S.Lewis (1898-1963)*

**Day 4: Romans 8:26-27**

1. How does the Spirit help us in our prayers? Can you think of a time when you’ve experienced the Spirit working in this way in your life?
2. How might these verses be a comfort to you in seasons of doubt, dryness, or struggle with sin?

**Day 5: Romans 8:28-30**

1. Verse 28 does not say “all things are good,” but “all things work together for good.” Why would such a distinction be important?
2. What does verse 29 reveal about the “good” God is working all things together for in verse 28?
3. How do we sometimes misinterpret verse 28?

*“Everything is necessary that he sends; nothing can be necessary that he withholds” –John Newton (1725-1807)*

4. How should these verses shape the way we think about our past, our present, and our future?

5. What does verse 28 imply about the effect of “all things” on those who don’t love God?
6. Verse 30 (See Ephesians 1:5-14). The word “predestine” (προορίζω) occurs seven times in the Bible and means to “decide beforehand.” What does this teach us about God’s grace towards us? What assurance should this give us?

*“Christ did not win a hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers, a mere possibility of salvation for any who might possibly believe, but a real salvation for his own chosen people” –J.I. Packer (1926-2020)*

7. Look at Hebrews 10:14 and interpret verse 30 in light of it. Notice that all of these verbs signify completed action. What does that mean about God’s plan, God’s power, and your security?

**Day 6 & 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up**

1. What has God taught you this week in His Word?
2. What were you convicted by?
3. What are you praying for?

**TAKE NOTES**

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# WEEK TWENTY

## ROMANS 8:31-39

Take some time each day to work on memorizing **ROMANS 8:32**

### **Day 1: Romans 8:31**

1. Read Psalm 115:1-3 & Daniel 4:35. How would you describe God's power? What restraints are on Him? Whose advice does He need?
2. What does this mean for times of suffering or trial in your life?

### **Day 2: Romans 8:32**

1. In verse 32, Paul is trying to make an important logical argument here, from greatest to least. Put in your own words what he is trying to say.
2. What are the implications of this truth?

*“Would God give us the greater thing but not the lesser? Would he sacrifice his Son but withhold possessions from us?” -Theodoret of Cyr (393–458)*

### **Day 3: Romans 8:33-34**

1. Look back at Romans 3:26. If God is just, the judge, and our justifier, what possible charge could possibly be brought against those who are in Christ?
2. How does verse 34 serve as an answer to the question, “How could there be no condemnation for those who are in Christ?”
3. In many ways, the second verse of the hymn “Before the Throne” by Charitie Bancroft is an application of these verses: “When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see Him there who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free; for God the Just is satisfied to look on Him and pardon me.” When are you most tempted to despair in guilt? What do you do in those times? Read over 1 John 3:20, and then take a moment to write out and “preach the gospel” to yourself as Charitie did in this hymn.
4. Imagine: Jesus Himself is praying right now for you. What does that make you think? How does that affect your heart?

*“Paul says that we cannot accuse God, because he justifies us, nor can we condemn Christ, because he loved us to the point of dying for us and rising again to intercede for us with the Father. Christ’s prayers on our behalf are not to be despised, because he sits at God’s right hand, that is to say, in the place of honor, because he is himself God. So let us rejoice in our faith, secure in the knowledge of God the Father and of his Son, Jesus Christ” -Ambrosiaster (written between 366 and 384 AD)*

### TAKE NOTES

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**Day 4: Romans 8:35-37**

1. Is there anything- anything at all- that can separate a believer from Jesus's love?
2. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:57 & John 16:33. In the face of tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword, how do we conquer?
3. What are the rewards for the one who conquers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:12, 21; 21:7)?

*"If I suffer persecution and confess Christ before men, I am certain that he will confess me also before his Father, who is in heaven. Famine cannot disturb me, for I have the bread of life which comes down from heaven and refreshes weary souls... nakedness does not confound me, because I am clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ... I shall not fear peril, because 'God is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?' The earthly sword cannot frighten me because I have 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God'" -Origen (184-253)*

**Day 5: Romans 8:38-39**

1. Take a look back at your notes from Romans 5:1-11. What themes do you see repeated and developed in Romans 8:18-39?
2. Is there anything you worry that would separate you from God's love? What would this passage have to say to that fear?
3. Notice that Paul says that things present can separate us from the love of God *nor things to come*. What does that mean?

*"The question the gospel of grace puts to us is simply this: Who shall separate you from the love of Christ? What are you afraid of? Are you afraid that your weakness could separate you from the love of Christ? It can't. Are you afraid that your inadequacies could separate you from the love of Christ? They can't. Are you afraid that your inner poverty could separate you from the love of Christ? It can't. Difficult marriage, loneliness, anxiety over the children's future? They can't. Negative self-image? It can't. Economic hardship, racial hatred, street crime? They can't. Rejection by loved ones or the suffering of loved ones? They can't. Persecution by authorities, going to jail? They can't. Nuclear war? It can't. Mistakes, fears, uncertainties? They can't. The gospel of grace calls out: Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*You must be convinced of this, trust it, and never forget to remember. Everything else will pass away, but the love of Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Faith will become vision, hope will become possession, but the love of Jesus Christ that is stronger than death endures forever. In the end, it is the one thing you can hang on to" -Brennan Manning (1934-2014), The Ragamuffin Gospel*

**Day 6: Romans 8**

1. What were the biggest encouragements you received from your time in Romans 8?
2. What do you hope to remember for the rest of your life?

**Day 7: Romans 6-8**

1. What are the major themes you see running through these chapters?
2. What are your main encouragements and takeaways?
3. Are there any specific changes you want to make in your life in light of these things?

**TAKE NOTES**

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## WHAT'S NEXT?

We will be taking a break from Romans for our Advent season, but we'll plan on picking our study back up in the new year. We encourage you to spend the Advent season with Sound and Season, reading through the prophecies and the miraculous birth stories of our great God made flesh.

## HOW TO APPROACH THE BIBLE

At Redeemer, we believe that the Holy Scriptures are the unfolding revelation of the greatness and graciousness of the Triune God, they declare the covenant promises of His Kingdom and His people, and they instruct from generation to generation the great deeds of the Lord.

Despite the fact that the Bible was written by 40 authors on 3 continents over thousands of years, it tells one coherent story. From beginning to end, the 66 books of God's Word tell the story of our all-powerful and loving King and Rescuer. This King made us in His image, but we, desiring to take His place, rebelled and incurred his just and holy wrath- but far from that being the tragic end to the story, it was merely the title page. For thousands of years, God's foreordained, perfect plan was coming to fruition. God Himself would come to earth- to live the life required of us, die the death that we deserved, and reconcile us to Himself by His own blood.

The Scriptures are one of God's means of grace to us, written under the inspiration of His Spirit so that we might know Him and enjoy Him forever. As J.I. Packer has written, "The word which God addresses directly to us is an instrument not only of government but also of fellowship. He made us with the intention that we might walk together forever in a love relationship. But such a relationship can exist only when the parties know something of each other. God, our Maker, knows all about us before we say anything; but we can know nothing of him unless he tells us. Therefore, God sends his word...to woo us as well as to instruct us."

This means that the Bible cannot merely be read merely intellectually. There is nothing given to us in the Bible simply to be known. His Word has been given to us that we might know Him through it, and, by the power of His Spirit, be changed into His likeness by it. His Word is a vehicle for your communion with the thrice-holy, living, gracious God, given to you because God wants you to know and love Him, even as He knows and loves you.

# THREE MAIN PRINCIPLES

## 1. READ IT PRAYERFULLY.

As you prepare to read, slow down your thoughts and prayerfully remember what you are coming to do: meet with the God who loves you. Begin by asking Him to speak to you, acknowledging that, apart from the power of His Holy Spirit, everything you read will be mere words on a page.

One of the best ways to prepare your heart to meet with the Lord is to begin your time by reading and praying through a Psalm, slowly and meditatively using the verses as a launching point for your prayers.

As Eugene Peterson explained in his book, *Answering God*, left to ourselves, we will always fashion a god after our own image. Unless our prayers are grounded in the Scriptures themselves, we will inevitably focus on the facets of God's character that we most appreciate or that we manage to understand, but in order for us to grow in our relationships with God, we must engage with the fullness of who God is and what prayer is for. The Psalms train us in that conversation, so that we come prayerfully before the Lord as we read.

Coming prayerfully also means coming humbly, remembering the gap between who God is and who we are. We are not communing as equals; it should strike us with wonder that the King of the universe has stooped down to spend time with sinners like us.

Coming humbly entails a willingness to submit in faith and obedience to all of the Bible's declarations- even the ones we don't like, are confused by or would rather ignore. Since we believe that the Scriptures are trustworthy, complete, and the primary source for equipping the Christian in faith and service to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), everywhere the Spirit leads a Christian today is in perfect harmony and unity with

the Scriptures- even when it could get us into trouble- because the humble obedience to God's Word is what it looks like to submit ourselves to the Lordship of Christ.

## 2. READ IT PATIENTLY.

Imagine that you went on a date- but it only lasted five minutes, and during that brief time, your would-be date only talked *at* you and never let you respond. Doesn't sound great, right? What about a date where the other person was constantly on their phone, checking their messages or the latest score? It's hard to develop a relationship in a context like that!

Far too often, we fail to remember that God is a *personal being*, and we come to "meet with Him" in a manner that we would find dreadful on a date. ways that, if a would-be date. Instead, wherever you are in your relationship with God, commit to carving out increments of undistracted time, where you can pour out your heart to Him and where you are quiet long enough to hear from Him, trusting that as you draw near to God, He will draw near to you (James 4:8).

## 3. READ IT PERSISTENTLY.

Just like learning to play the piano, there is no substitute for the regular "work" of meeting with God in His Word and prayer. You may not notice your own spiritual growth in a day or even a month, but like children growing into adults, over the course of time, by regularly meeting with the Lord, a genuine, general pattern of growth will emerge. Take heart and take the long view- you literally have an eternity to grow in intimacy with God.

# A FEW IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES WHEN APPROACHING A PASSAGE

## 1. CONTEXT IS KING

The most helpful tool you have in interpreting the meaning of a passage is its *context*. Begin with the question, “How do the surrounding verses give insight into what this passage seems to be saying?” and then, “How does this passage fit into this book as a whole?” Having a good study Bible to read about the author, the audience, and the setting is incredibly useful as well. It is important for us to realize in interpretation that a passage will never mean something for you that it never could have meant for its original hearers.

## 2. THINK “READING COMPREHENSION 101.”

Before you spend time on the pieces that are most interesting or confusing to you, first seek to answer the question “What’s the main point of this passage?” and try to explain it in your own words.

## 3. INTERPRET SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE.

In addition to our other context questions, we can ask, “How does it fit into the Scriptures overall?” If you have a study Bible, the cross references listed will point you to other verses in Scripture that speak to similar themes or use similar words.

## 4. COMMUNITY.

At Redeemer, we often say “theology is best done in community.” Therefore, we encourage you to read and interpret as you study alongside mentors, friends, and believers throughout history.

# THE HEAR METHOD

Above anything else, the most important thing you can do in beginning Bible study is simply to come before the Lord prayerfully, patiently, and persistently. However, whether we realize it or not, each of us has a “method” to how we approach God’s Word, and, as you may well imagine, some methods are more helpful than others. The HEAR Method was developed by Robby Gallaty<sup>1</sup>, and we have found it particularly useful, because it’s easy to understand, useful for any passage, and it provides the tools necessary to mine a spiritual gem in 10 minutes or to dig deep into a text for an hour.

## Highlight, Explain, Apply, Respond.

### Highlight:

What is the main point? Is there a verse or phrase that captures it?

### Explain:

What does this passage mean? Try to write to summarize its meaning in your own words. A proper interpretation of any passage must:

- Be clearly reflected in the text
- Correspond to the teaching of rest of Scripture
- Be timeless (i.e. relevant both to the Biblical audience as well as a contemporary audience)

### A Few Questions to Ask to Uncover the Meaning of a Passage

- What do the key terms mean?
- How do the verses or phrases relate to each other?
- How does this passage fit into the larger story of the book it is in?
- How does this passage relate to the story of the Bible as a whole?
- What does this passage teach us about God, man, our need, Jesus, our response, etc.?

### Apply

How should this passage apply to my life today?

- Is there an application already in the text?
- Is there sin to confess, promise to claim, command to obey?
- What would the application of this verse practically look like in my life today?

### Respond

Is there anything I need to remember, rejoice in, request, or repent of?

- How does this show me something about the character of God for which I can praise him? (What happens in my life when I forget this?)
- How does this show me something wrong with me—some sin of which this convicts me—for which I can repent? (How does my faith and salvation in Christ help me escape this?)
- How does this show me something that I need that I should be petitioning God for? (What do I lack in my life that I should seeking?)



# WHY MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE?

John Piper – *Desiring God* – September 5, 2006

First, a few testimonies: I have it third hand that Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Seminary once made the statement (and I paraphrase) that if it were his decision, every student graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary would be required to learn one thousand verses word perfect before they graduated.

Dallas Willard, professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, wrote, “Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth. That’s where you need it! How does it get in your mouth? Memorization” (“Spiritual Formation in Christ for the Whole Life and Whole Person” in *Vocatio*, Vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, 2001, p. 7).

Chuck Swindoll wrote, “I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture... No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified” (*Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], p. 61).

One of the reasons Martin Luther came to his great discovery in the Bible of justification by faith alone was that in his early years in the Augustinian monastery he was influenced to love Scripture by Johann Staupitz. Luther devoured the Bible in a day when people earned doctorates in theology without even reading the Bible. Luther said that his fellow professor, Andreas Karlstadt, did not even own a Bible when he earned his doctor of theology degree, nor did he until many years later (Richard Bucher, “Martin Luther’s Love for the Bible”).

Luther knew so much of the Bible from memory that when the Lord opened his eyes to see the truth of justification in Romans 1:17, he said, “Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory,” in order to confirm what he had found.

So here are a few reasons why so many have viewed Scripture memorization as so essential to the Christian life.

## 1. CONFORMITY TO CHRIST

Paul wrote that “we all, . . . beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18) If we would be changed into Christ likeness we must steadily see him. This happens in the word. “The Lord *revealed himself* to Samuel at Shiloh *by the word* of the Lord” (1 Samuel 3:21). Bible memorization has the effect of making our gaze on Jesus steadier and clearer.

## 2. DAILY TRIUMPH OVER SIN

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. . . . I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalms 119:9, 11). Paul said that we must “by the Spirit . . . put to death the [sinful] deeds of the body” (Romans 8:13). The one piece of armor used to kill is the “sword of the Spirit” which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17). As sin lures the body into sinful action, we call to mind a Christ-revealing word of Scripture and slay the temptation with the superior worth and beauty of Christ over what sin offers.

## 3. DAILY TRIUMPH OVER SATAN

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness he recited Scripture from memory and put Satan to flight (Matthew 4:1-11).

#### **4. COMFORT AND COUNSEL FOR PEOPLE YOU LOVE**

The times when people need you to give them comfort and counsel do not always coincide with the times you have your Bible handy. Not only that, the very word of God spoken spontaneously from your heart has unusual power. Proverbs 25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” That is a beautiful way of saying, *When the heart full of God’s love can draw on the mind full of God’s word, timely blessings flow from the mouth.*

#### **5. COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL TO UNBELIEVERS**

Opportunities to share the gospel come when we do not have the Bible in hand. Actual verses of the Bible have their own penetrating power. And when they come from our heart, as well as from the Book, the witness is given that they are precious enough to learn. We should all be able to sum up the gospel under four main headings (1) God’s holiness/law/glory; 2) man’s sin/rebellion/disobedience; 3) Christ’s death for sinners; 4) the free gift of life by faith. Learn a verse or two relating to each of these, and be ready in season and out of season to share them.

#### **6. COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE ENJOYMENT OF HIS PERSON AND WAYS**

The way we commune with (that is, fellowship with) God is by meditating on his attributes and expressing to him our thanks and admiration and love, and seeking his help to live a life that reflects the value of these attributes. Therefore, storing texts in our minds about God helps us relate to him as he really is. For example, imagine being able to call this to mind through the day:

*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions*

*from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:8-14)*

I used the word “enjoyment” intentionally when I said, “communion with God in the enjoyment of his person and ways.” Most of us are emotionally crippled—all of us, really. We do not experience God in the fullness of our emotional potential. How will that change? One way is to memorize the emotional expressions of the Bible and speak them to the Lord and to each other until they become part of who we are. For example, in Psalm 103:1, we say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” That is not a natural expression for many people. But if we memorize this and other emotional expressions from the Bible, and say them often, asking the Lord to make the emotion real in our hearts, we can actually grow into that emotion and expression. It will become part of who we are. We will be less emotionally crippled and more able to render proper praise and thanks to God.

There are other reasons for memorizing Scripture. I hope you find them in the actual practice.

# HOW DO YOU MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE?

*John Piper – Desiring God – September 5, 2006*

First of all, by praying for discipline and setting aside time.

I set aside a block of time in the morning (an hour or so) to be with God alone, reading my Bible, praying for my family, praying for the church, and praying for my soul. And I can generally finish my four chapters or so of Bible reading in about 20 minutes, depending on how long I pause and contemplate. And my prayers may extend for 20 or 30 minutes. So I've got 5 or 10 minutes in that hour.

If you decide to memorize Scripture for 5 or 10 minutes a day, you can memorize a lot of Scripture! I mean, it's incredible! And I put circles around the paragraphs or the verses, and I put a little "M" beside them if I worked on them so I can come back and review.

I got my help here from a little booklet\* about how to memorize long passages of Scripture. And basically he says to take your first verse, read it ten times, and then close your eyes or shut your Bible and say it ten times. And that's the end for that day. (I think if you do that you can memorize almost any verse in the Bible: ten times read, ten times said, and then you've got it.)

Then you come back the next day. You open your Bible up, and you say that verse again 5 or 10 times. If it's easy, just 5 times. And then you do the same thing with the next verse. And then you do them both together. And then you shut your Bible and you leave. Then you come back.

So basically, the answer is: repetition and review. Repetition and review.

Here's one other little tip that I use. If I pick a verse or a couple of verses or a paragraph, I'll put it on a piece of paper and I'll carry it here in my shirt pocket. And at little times during the day, I'll pull it out and read it for my soul. For my soul! I don't memorize verses that don't help my soul.

I'm not into mechanical memorizing. I'm into fighting the fight of faith. I want to memorize Scripture so that I can defeat the devil at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, that's why! It's so that I can minister to a saint in the hospital at 10 o'clock at night if I've forgotten my Bible. This is for our soul. So I carry it around and I review it. Review is so crucial.

So I would just encourage people to set aside 5 or 10 minutes, and then repeat, repeat, repeat. Read the verse 10 times, say it 10 times, close your Bible, and then review it during the day from a piece of paper.

*\*The booklet that Piper refers to is called "An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture" by Dr. Andrew Davis and is available for free at <http://www.fbcdurham.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Scripture-Memory-Booklet-for-Publication-Website-Layout.pdf>*

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Blaspheme/Blasphemy:** In the Old Testament, at least five different Hebrew verbs are sometimes translated as “blaspheme,” meaning “revile,” “despise,” or “curse.” Cursing God—which can be done by word or deed—is especially grave. In the New Testament, the word can be used to explain insults aimed at other people, but most often it refers to something that would be “insulting to God,” such as when Jesus declared the paralyzed man’s sins forgiven (Mark 2).

**Circumcision:** The act of circumcision served as a *sign and seal* of God’s covenant, a physical reminder for God’s people of God’s promise to care for them. The physical sign of circumcision (like the New Testament sign of baptism) doesn’t earn God’s favor or somehow make God’s promises more sure, because God’s promises can never fail. Instead, these covenant signs are intended to remind God’s people that God has chosen them by grace and given them the promise, “[I will] be God to you and to your descendants after you” (Gen 17:7; cf. Deut 7:7-9).

**Condemn/Condemnation:** A legal term, which describes the act of judging someone to be worthy of punishment, as in Romans 2. However, in Romans 5:16, 18 and 8:1 the word more explicitly refers to God’s judgment against sin. Its opposite is justification.

**Covenant:** As O. Palmer Robertson has written, a covenant “is a bond in blood sovereignly administered.” In the Ancient Near East, a conquering king would require his new subjects to enter into a formal oath (a “covenant”) with a regularly expected outline: (1) a declaration of the power of the ruler, (2) a recognition of the benevolence of the ruler, (3) obligations of the subjects, and (4) the consequences for those subjects, should they fail to fulfill their obligations. These covenants were then ratified by the vassal walking through the remains of a “cut” animal (the word “covenant” is connected to the word “cut”), essentially saying to the ruler, “Let the same be done to me if I fail to fulfill this covenant.”

Covenants are the main way the Bible portrays how God relates to His people, but unlike the Suzerain treaties of the Ancient Near East, God shockingly sets no such conditions upon His promises. God creates the covenantal relationship, structures the relationship, and confirms the relationship— all on his own. This means that God’s covenants are not like contracts; they are by His grace alone.

The Bible could be rightly understood as an unfolding series of God’s undeserved covenants with His people— beginning with Adam in the Garden, to Noah in the Flood, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, culminating in the New Covenant in Christ—that reveal God’s plan to carry out His greatest promise, “They will be my people, and I will be their God.”

**Forbearance:** In other contemporary Greek writing, this word is used to describe a willful self-restraint, a holding back or delaying, but such definitions do not get to the heart of the matter— how is it possible that the infinitely holy God, whose eyes are too pure to look upon evil restrain Himself against immediately and justly punishing sin? Throughout Romans, Paul explains that God, who Himself created time, could look to the certain point in time when Jesus, His Son, would make a full payment for sin by dying on the cross.

**Justification:** The opposite of condemnation. This too is a legal term, referring to the act of God the judge declaring those who believe in Christ to be free from their guilt and sin and promising to treat them as *though they had been* perfectly righteous in regards to the Law’s demands. In answer to the question, “Are we saved by the Law or by grace?” the Christian may rightly answer, “Both.” We are saved by Jesus’s fulfillment of the righteousness requirement of the Law, which comes to us by grace through faith. Faith is the instrument by which a believe takes hold of Christ and His righteousness and is, therefore, justified in God’s sight.

In Romans 8, we will see the “chain of salvation,” the sequence of events that always transpires when God saves His people. Those whom God foreknows, He *predestines* for adoption. Those whom He predestines, He also calls. Those whom He calls, He justifies, and those whom He *justifies*, He will *sanctify*, and ultimately, *glorify*.

**Law:** In Romans, the Law typically refers to the written laws of the Old Testament that were given to the Jewish people, beginning with Moses at Mount Sinai.

**Propitiation:** The word propitiation carries the meaning of “placating anger.” Like the blood from an animal sacrifice poured on the mercy seat in the Old Testament (1 John 4:10), Jesus’s blood propitiated or “placated/satisfied” the very wrath of God, so that His holiness would in no way be compromised by His forgiving sinners. The idea of “satisfaction” is vital here, because Jesus’s willingness to offer Himself up as our substitute not only means that we can be *forgiven*, but that God’s just anger towards sin can, through Christ, be turned into *favor*.

**Reconcile/Reconciliation:** According to Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, “Reconciliation comes from the Greek family of words that has its roots in *ajllavssw*. The meaning common to this word group is ‘change’ or ‘exchange.’ Reconciliation involves a change in the relationship between God and man or man and man. It assumes there has been a breakdown in the relationship, but now there has been a change from a state of enmity and fragmentation to one of harmony and fellowship. In Romans 5:6-11, Paul says that before reconciliation we were powerless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies; we were under God’s wrath (v. 9). Because of change or reconciliation we become new creatures.... it is Christ through the cross who has made reconciliation possible... [and] it is the cross of Christ that reconciles both Jew and Gentile. They are brought near by the blood of Christ. Because of this, Jew and Gentile have access to the Father by one spirit. They are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God and members of the same household (Eph 2:11-22). Gentile and Jewish believers are reconciled to God and the middle wall of partition is broken down; both are brought near by the blood of Christ.”

**Redeem/Redemption:** The word carries the idea of slaves being set free by a purchase (Mark 10:45), and the idea reaches all the way back to the Passover in Exodus 12-15, where the people of God were redeemed by the Lord from slavery under

Egypt, spared from the curse of the death of the first born by the blood of a lamb. Ultimately, Jesus sets His people free from the bondage to sin and death by shedding His own blood on the cross (Colossians 1:14).

**Righteousness:** The word “righteousness” can carry several meanings in Scriptures. First, it can refer to God’s perfect character, which is most obviously demonstrated in his infinite holiness and unmatched justice. Second, “righteousness” can be a summary for all the virtues characterized by a godly, moral life lived in conformity with God’s law. Third, and importantly for Romans, God’s righteousness is demonstrated in His perfect work of saving sinners through the death of Jesus- maintaining His perfect character and transferring Jesus’s perfect record of righteousness to the account of sinners so that they might be legally deemed righteous under the Law.

**Sanctification:** According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 35), sanctification is “the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” In other words, sanctification refers to the process of progressive change worked in us by God, whereby we are gradually but increasingly free from our sinful habits and formed into the image of Christ.

**Transgression:** A specific subcategory of sin that involves a deliberate violation of a revealed command.

**Union with Christ-** Perhaps more than any other theological concept, union with Christ seems to be at the center of Paul’s theology and ministry. Pagans were told they could not have a relationship with the gods because they didn’t have anything in common with them, but Jesus came and had everything in common with us, so that we might have everything in common with Him. To be “in Christ” implies an *inseparable relational commonality* with Jesus Himself, so that when God looks at us, He looks at us as though we had perfectly obeyed- just like Jesus did- and it also means that every right and privilege that belongs to Jesus now and forevermore *also* belongs to us.

Union with Christ also means being united not only to Christ Himself but equally inseparably united to all others who are in Him.

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

## COMMENTARIES

*Romans 1-7: For You* by Timothy Keller

*Romans 8-16: For You* by Timothy Keller

*Romans for Everyone* by N.T. Wright

*The Message of Romans (The Bible Speaks Today)* by John Stott

## SERMON SERIES

*Romans: The Greatest Letter Ever Written* by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/series/romans-the-greatest-letter-ever-written/messages>