

ROMANS 9-11 READING PLAN



Redeemer Community Church

SPRING 2022

Dear Redeemer Church Family,

We are so glad that you have decided to join us as we continue our study in Romans together. We love the book of Romans, and it is our heart's desire to help you glean as much from this precious book as you can.

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, called it “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, and John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, was converted reading Martin Luther's preface to Romans. The Lord used Romans 13:13 to bring the great Saint Augustine to Himself, and 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 in awe of 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.

Before you begin this study guide, we would love for you to read through “How to Approach the Bible” and “Using the HEAR Method to Study” in the Appendix. We encourage you to begin your time with the Lord by spending time prayerfully meditating through a Psalm, before you study the assigned passage on your own, perhaps using the HEAR Method. The questions provided in the following reading plan are merely meant to further your own personal study, not to uncover all the depths of the riches found in Romans.

We've designed this study to provide you with six readings a week, with one day for reflection or 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.

Lastly, we released study guides for Romans 1-4 and Romans 3-8 to coincide with our sermon series last year, and you can find those on our website. If you haven't yet spent time in those first few chapters, we'd encourage you to download those studies first, because it is only against the backdrop of the bad news of Romans 1:18-3:20 and the gloriously good news of Romans 3:21-8:39 that we can begin to understand the profound theological truths in Romans 9-11.

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 are **rescued** and **reconciled** to God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 2:4-5
4. 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 forever; 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 (Acts 20:2-3). While he had traveled the world extensively, Paul had never before visited Rome, and so this letter is meant to serve as a sort of introduction and encouragement to the church before he visits on his way to Spain.

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, but by the time of Paul's writing, it seems that the church had become majority Gentile (1:5f, 13; 11:13), which gave rise to some of the tensions addressed in Paul's letter, particularly the apparent growing tensions between the law-observing Jewish Christians and the Gentile believers, who didn't live by the Mosaic law.

While Jewish and Gentile believers may have struggled for unity within the church, they were equally persecuted under Roman rule. Emperor Nero began to reign in 54 A.D. By all accounts, Nero was a despicable, violent, and likely mentally-disturbed man. Before too long, Nero began to use Christians as a catch-all scapegoat for his and Rome's troubles. Towards the end of his reign of terror in 68 AD, Nero began to capture Christians, dip them in pitch, and use them as torches to light up his gardens at night. The Apostles Paul and Peter both would be killed under Nero's rule.

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

“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 just how Christianity is different from every other religion. While other religions may give instructions for its followers to obey so that they may merit salvation, achieve nirvana, or reach some other desirable eternal state, Romans teaches us that our God operates in *exactly* the opposite way, as Paul writes, 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, 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 owes to God that we could never repay, and therefore, each of us- the immoral and supposedly moral alike- stand 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, His perfect justice 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 unimaginably good news. 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 was. Justification by faith means that we are now therefore *in Jesus Christ*, and 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.

In Romans 9, we begin to see that this has always been God's sovereign plan. From the beginning, God has been at work to bring to Himself all those whom Jesus purchased with His redeeming blood - Jew and Gentile alike. Everyone everywhere 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 true Israel, to proclaim the good news of God's glorious grace to the ends of the earth. As we go into the world as God's heralds, we are to give our lives in worship by offering up our gifts to build up the church and by living 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.

How long shall we do this? Paul assures us that God will soon crush Satan crushed under our feet, and all the earth together will sing, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

PREPARING FOR ROMANS 9-11

"Many people see almost no relationship between chapters 9 through 11 and the previous eight, or the subsequent five. The first eight chapters are about how we are made righteous, and how God works in and for his righteous people; the last five detail how righteous people live. But in between come three complex, difficult chapters that can be seen as a long diversion from the letter Paul sat down to write (and, we think, should have written!), in which 8:39 is followed by 12:1. Why are chapters 9-11 in the book of Romans at all?

Romans 8 ends in a tremendous crescendo of confidence, as Paul explains that God guarantees our final perseverance because our salvation is not based on our will and strength. Rather, God has called us, opened our minds to the truth, and now carries us on to final glory. 'Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified' (8:30). But now Paul can imagine someone coming and saying: *Hold on, Paul! You say that when God calls someone, he always brings them all the way home. But what about the Jews? God called them and came to them but most Jews have rejected Christ at the present time. So maybe God's calling and purpose can be rejected! If God promised that Israel would be his people, yet the majority did not believe in Christ, does that mean God's promise, power, or mercy is failing?*

So the question of Jewish unbelief is of vital importance not only to first-century churches containing both Jews and Gentiles, but for us, too. It takes us deep into who God is, and how he works"

- Tim Keller, Romans 8-16 For You, p. 57

ROMANS 9:1-13

Take some time each day to work on memorizing **ROMANS 9:6**

In Romans 6-8, Paul has labored to highlight the faithfulness, truthfulness, and righteousness of God in His salvation of sinners, but in Romans 9, he begins to address one key Jewish objection: what about the Jews? Can we truly say that God has been faithful to keep His promises to His people when so many Jews continue to reject Christ?

Day 1: Romans 9

1. What are the main things that stick out to you as you read over Romans 9?
2. What questions does Paul seem to be addressing and how does he try to answer them?
3. What questions or objections do you have after reading it?

Day 2: Romans 9:1-3

1. Read back over Romans 8:30. What confidence does Paul say we should have in God's faithfulness to save us?
2. Read Acts 17:1-9; 18:12; 20:3; 21:27. How would you describe the Jews treatment of Paul? Now, look at Romans 9:3. How would you describe Paul's heart towards the Jews? Try to put Paul's words in your own words.
3. Have you ever felt that way or prayed in such a way for someone? Spend some time praying for those in your life who do not yet know Christ (especially those who have grown up in the church and are presently rejecting Jesus).
4. What's the significance of Paul saying "I *could* wish" instead of "I wish" (see Romans 8:35)?

Day 3: Romans 2:28-29; 3:1-2, 29-30; 9:4-5

1. According to these verses, what advantages are there to being a Jew? In what sense is being a Jew "to no advantage?" How does Romans 9:4-5 continue Paul's argument?
2. What do Romans 2:28-29 & 3:29-30 teach us about who "true Israel" is?
3. Paul highlights the privileges and promises of Israel to illustrate how tragic it is that most of Israel don't

presently believe in Christ. According to Paul, who do the privileges and promises presently belong to? Why don't they belong to all of ethnic Israel now?

4. What can this passage teach us about trusting our present understanding of reality versus trusting God's promises?

Day 4: Romans 9:6a; Isaiah 55:6-11

1. What does it mean that God's Word has not and cannot fail?
2. Why is that so important?
3. How should that knowledge shape your life and faith?
4. What does it mean that God promises He will "freely pardon?"

Day 5: Romans 9:6-8

1. Who, according to Paul, are the "children of Abraham" (read Romans 4:16-17)? Are all Jewish people included? What about the Gentiles? What does that mean about you?
2. How much does someone's pedigree, ethnicity, and heritage play in their salvation (see also Philippians 3:1-9)? Why is that important?
3. When you are tempted to wrestle with doubt and/ or question your salvation, how do these verses help anchor you and redirect your gaze?

"My feelings are important for many things. They are essential and valuable. They keep me aware of much that is true and real. But they tell me next to nothing about God or my relation to God. My security comes from who God is, not from how I feel"
- Eugene Peterson (1932-2018)

Day 6: Romans 9:9-13

1. What do you remember about Jacob's faith and life? What character traits would you use to describe him?
2. Is there anything about Jacob that would explain God's choosing him over Esau?
3. What does verse 11 teach you about why God chose to

save you? How does that shape your understanding of your own salvation and security?

4. What role does your “goodness” or “badness” play in God’s salvation?
5. Read John 3:16-17; 6:36-39, 44; 10:25. What does Jesus teach us in John 3 about who *can be* saved? What does Jesus teach us in John 6 & 10 about who *will be* saved?

“So let me put the teaching to you like this: If anyone is saved it is entirely because of the mercy and choice of God ... but I add this: if people are lost, it is entirely their own responsibility.” – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

Day 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up

1. What are some of the biggest lessons you’ve learned from Romans 1-8?
2. How should those lessons continue to shape your life?
3. How should they transform your prayers?
4. Who can you share these things with? When will you share them?

TAKE NOTES

ROMANS 9:14-33

Take some time each day to work on memorizing **ROMANS 9:16**

Day 1: Romans 9:14-16

1. How would you answer Paul's question, "Is there injustice on God's part?"
2. Why is it good news that salvation "depends not on human will or exertion?"
3. Is there a sense in which God may be *just* but not *fair*? If so, how?

"Here are five people who are planning to hold up a bank. They are friends of mine. I find out about it and I plead with them. I beg them not to do it. Finally, they push me out of the way and they start out. I tackle one of the men and wrestle him to the ground. The others go ahead, rob the bank, a guard is killed, they are captured, convicted, sentenced ... The one man who was not involved in the robbery goes free. Now I ask you this question: Whose fault was it that the other men died? ... Now this other man who is walking around free—can he say, 'Because my heart is so good, I am a free man? The only reason that he is free is because of me; because I restrained him. So those who go to hell have no one to blame but themselves. Those who go to heaven have no one to praise but Jesus Christ. Thus we see that salvation is all of grace from its beginning to its end.'" - D. James Kennedy (1930-2007)

Day 2: Exodus 7:1-5, 23; 8:15-19, 32; 9:13-21; 10:20

1. At the time, Egypt was the most powerful nation in the world. What do we learn from these passages about God's power?
2. What do you learn about God's commitment to His people?
3. Look back at each passage and note who hardened Pharaoh's heart. Who was responsible for Pharaoh's heart being hardened? What do you make of that?
4. How did Pharaoh treat the people of Israel? What does Exodus 9:16 say about God's relationship to Pharaoh? What do we learn from that and what questions and tensions does that raise?

Day 3: Romans 1:21-28; 9:17-24

1. In light of these verses and your reading from yesterday,

- what does it mean for God to harden someone's heart? What does it mean for someone to harden their own heart? How are the two related?
2. Before reading over verses 20-24, how would you personally answer Paul's question in verse 19?
3. What does it mean that God "endured them with great patience?" How has God done the same for you?
4. What is under God's ultimate control (see also Proverbs 16:33 & Amos 3:6)?
5. Why should the doctrine of election lead us to deep humility?

While a tension seems to exist between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, J.I. Packer (1926-2020) argues that this is not a "paradox," but an "antinomy," which Packer describes as "a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable." J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) puts it this way, "[God] brings to pass the actions of personal beings in a way that preserves their freedom and their responsibility to the full. [Is that] inconceivable? We persuade our fellow men, yet their freedom is preserved when they do what we persuade them to do of their free will. Shall not then God be able to do with certainty what we with our little power do with uncertainty? Does not God who made the soul know how to move it in accordance with its own nature so that its freedom shall not be destroyed?"

Day 4: Romans 9:17-24 (again)

1. Read over Ephesians 1:11 & 2:1-8, and then look back at Romans 9:17-24. Notice that Paul doesn't try to answer our potential objections here, but instead he points emphatically to God's sovereignty. How do you feel about his response? Why?
2. How does God's sovereignty shape the way you think about Him and your salvation?
3. What comfort could this doctrine be to those who believe?
4. Think back over what we've read in Romans so far. What would you say to the objections, "What about the innocent man or woman on some remote island who has not

heard the gospel?” or “What if there is someone who desperately wants forgiveness and God doesn’t give it to them?” (look back at Romans 1:18-20 & 3:11 for help).

“[Many think] God deliberately made some people that they might go to hell. That is a lie! It is not taught anywhere in the Scripture ... God created all things good. No one has ever been forced to sin. [Humanity] rebelled against God and sinned ... And what the Apostle is dealing with here is what God does with humanity in the light of that, and he says he has an absolute right to do as he wills in his own sovereign will and Lordship. With such a hopeless mass, which could be all consigned to perdition, he has nevertheless, because of his grace and glory and his purpose, chosen and elected and formed some out of that mass unto glory and honor ... What we all want to ask at this point is: ... Why [and] how does God decide to make one unto honor and one unto dishonor? There is only one answer to that—I do not know! Nobody else does ... I cannot go beyond the Scripture, and all the Scripture tells me is that God does that and that he has a right to do it, and that if I raise the question ... I am trying to contend with my Maker ... So let me put the teaching to you like this: If anyone is saved it is entirely because of the mercy and choice of God ... but I add this: if people are lost, it is entirely their own responsibility.” – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

5. Verse 23. What does Paul’s use of the words “beforehand” and “for glory” teach us about grace and the scope of God’s sovereignty?
6. What is the relationship between God’s sovereignty and our responsibility (see Mark 1:15; Luke 7:27; Acts 2:23; Romans 9:16, 31-32)?

“If [man] is lost at last it will be his own fault, and his blood will be on his own head... ‘Why will ye die, O house of Israel?’ – ‘Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.’ – ‘This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil’ (Ezekiel 18:31; John 5:40; 3:19). The Bible never says that sinners miss heaven because they are not elect, but because they ‘neglect the great salvation,’ and because they will not repent and believe... it is... the love of sin, unbelief, and unwillingness to come to Christ, which ruins the souls that are lost” – J.C. Ryle (1816-1900) Old Paths, p. 468

Day 4: Hosea 2

1. According to verse 1, who is supposed to say these things? Who is he supposed to say them to?
2. What seems to be the main point of verses 1-13?
3. What was Israel guilty of? What do we learn about the nature of sin from this?
4. How does God say He is going to respond to His people’s sin?
5. What does that teach us about the seriousness of sin?
6. What does that teach us about the nature of God’s love and character?

Day 5: Romans 9:22-29

1. Read back over Romans 9:1-29. According to Paul’s logic, why is anyone saved?
2. What do you think Paul is hoping to demonstrate by quoting the ancient prophets Hosea and Isaiah here?
3. According to Paul, who are those who were “not my people” who have become God’s people?
4. Look back at any notes you have from Romans 4 and Genesis 12:1-3. How has Paul demonstrated that this has been God’s plan all along?
5. How do God’s mercy and judgment work together according to 9:14-29?

Day 6: Romans 9:30-33

1. According to these verses, why is anyone condemned?
2. How does this compare to what Paul says in 9:14-18? Is Paul contradicting himself? Why or why not?
3. Why do people stumble over Jesus?
4. Why is it often more difficult for “religious people” to truly grasp the gospel (see Luke 5:31)?

“We all automatically gravitate towards the assumption that we are justified by our level of sanctification... we start each day with our personal security resting not on the accepting love of God and the sacrifice of Christ but on our present feelings or recent achievements... since these arguments will not quiet the human conscience, we are inevitably moved... to a self-righteousness which falsifies the record to achieve a sense of peace” – Richard Lovelace, Dynamics of Spiritual Life, 211

Day 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up

ROMANS 10:1-13

Take some time each day to work on memorizing **ROMANS 10:14**

Day 1: Romans 9:30-10:3

1. Consider once again the persecution Paul had experienced at the hand of his Jewish brothers, and then reflect on Paul's heart for his kinsmen in 10:1. How would you describe his heart (look back at 9:1-3)? How can you cultivate a heart like Paul's towards others?
2. Notice that Paul's belief in God's sovereign power *leads* him to pray. Rather than God's sovereignty making prayer unnecessary, how does such a belief give prayer meaning and hope?
3. There are many people today who might say, "All religions are basically the same, so it doesn't really matter what you believe, just as long as you're sincere." How do you think Paul would respond to that statement?
4. According to this passage, why didn't many Jewish people accept the gospel?
5. If this is the case, why does God find fault with them (consider again what we've studied in Romans 1:18-3:20)?

"Jesus Christ came to blind those who saw clearly, and to give sight to the blind; to heal the sick, and leave the healthy to die; to call to repentance and to justify sinners, and to leave the righteous in their sins; to fill the needy, and leave the rich empty" - Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

Day 2: 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. Read 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 that is true, how can God remain just and still credit us as righteous (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)?

Day 3: Romans 10:4

1. What does it mean for us that Christ is the end of the law (5:21)?
2. In what sense has Christ *not* put an end to the law (look ahead to 12:1-2)?
3. How can we be deemed righteous before God (look back at 1:16-17 & 3:21-26)?

"Christ furnishes believers with holy righteousness, because he is 'the end of the law,' and the law prepared the way for Christ by showing that he was the fulfillment of it, the salvation of mankind" - Apollinaris of Laodicea (d. 382)

"The first step to obtaining the righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness" - John Calvin (1509-1564)

Day 4: Romans 10:5-8

1. How does Paul use the Old Testament to show that the Jewish people should not have been "ignorant of the righteousness of God?"
2. How do Moses's words from Leviticus 18 demonstrate our own weakness to obey the law (see Romans 8:3-4)? How do they magnify Christ's fulfillment of the Law?
3. Read Deuteronomy 30:1-14, which Paul alludes to in this passage. According to Moses, what must happen before anyone can obey the law (look especially at 30:6)? How does that align with Paul's message in Romans?
4. What's the main point Paul is trying to make in verses 6-8?
5. Where have you looked to build your own righteousness? When you see yourself falling back into those patterns, how should you respond?

“Here we have to bear in mind the important distinction between what is possible in theory and what is realized in practice... Christ, who is the Word of God, is potentially near us and near everyone, but this is only realized in practice when I confess with my mouth that Christ is Lord and when I believe in my heart that God has raised him from the dead” -Origen (184-253)

“There is no need to travel to heaven to bring Christ to earth, for God has already sent him into the world. Nor should anyone think they must bring Christ up from the realm of the dead, for God has raised Christ from the dead. What God requires is not super-human works but faith in the gospel” - ESV Global Study Bible

Day 5: Romans 10:9-10

1. According to these verses, what must happen for someone to come to saving faith in Christ?

“The parallelism is reminiscent of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament, and the two clauses... are to be held together rather than separately. Thus, there is no substantive difference here between being ‘justified’ and being ‘saved.’ Similarly, the content of the belief and that of the confession need to be merged” - John Stott (1921-2011), The Message of Romans, 283

2. What are some of the non-negotiable doctrines of the Christian faith that you notice highlighted in this passage?
3. If you do not believe that Jesus is God or that He rose bodily from the grave, can you be a Christian? Why or why not?

“With these twin trumpets of heart and mouth we arrive at that holy land, viz., the grace of resurrection. So let them always sound together in harmony for us, that we may always hear the voice of God. Let the utterances of the angels and prophets arouse us and move us to hasten to higher things” -Ambrose (339-397)

Day 6: Romans 10:11-13

1. What comfort can you draw from the promise that “everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame” (see Romans 5:1-5) in times of distress, suffering, or doubt?
2. What does Paul mean (and what does he *not* mean) when he says that there is no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile?

3. How does verse 12 help us interpret verse 13? What are the global implications of these verses?

“Paul says that in general everyone is lumped together because of unbelief or else exalted together because of their belief, because apart from Christ there is no salvation in God’s presence, only punishment or death. For neither the privileges of their ancestors nor the law can do the Jews any good if they do not accept the merit and promise made to them. Neither do the Gentiles have anything to boast about in the flesh, if they do not believe in Christ” - Ambrosiaster (written between 366 and 384 AD)

Day 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up

1. What are some of the biggest lessons you’ve learned this week?
2. How should those lessons continue to shape your life and prayers?
3. Who can you share these things with and when?

TAKE NOTES

ROMANS 10:14-21

Take some time each day to work on memorizing **ROMANS 10:9-10**

“Understanding the background of Isaiah helps us understand Paul’s message in Romans 10:14–11:10. Isaiah was a book that addressed the nation of Israel at a time when they struggled to believe that God would save them. Isaiah implored his kinsmen to have faith, especially in God’s future salvation. But many of Isaiah’s contemporaries did not believe, and it was disastrous for them. So, Isaiah responded by predicting how God would save in the future, through a suffering Messiah (Isaiah 7, 9, 11, and 53), then restore his people, and finally create a new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65–66) where his people would flourish. Paul took comfort in Isaiah because of this great vision of salvation, and Paul would even see the suffering Messiah—Jesus—with his own eyes (Acts 9). Paul also took comfort in the fact that Isaiah’s message was rejected at first, just like what was happening to him. Both Isaiah and Paul had a vision of God’s glorious salvation, and they knew it would overcome unrighteousness and unbelief.”

*In addition to Isaiah, Paul also cites other passages from the major sections of the Old Testament in Romans 10:14–11:10. This arrangement of references is not a coincidence. Paul does all of this in such a short section of Romans to make an important point: *“The entire Old Testament points to salvation in and through Christ”* –The Summit Church, *The Book of Romans Small Group Study 3: Romans 9–11**

Day 1: Romans 10:13-15

1. In light of what we learned in Romans 9, how would Paul answer the objection, “If God is sovereign over our salvation, why should we share our faith?”
2. How do people come to call on the name of the Lord?
3. In light of this passage, how would you describe our responsibility to share with others?
4. Is there anyone in your life that the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to share the gospel with but you’ve been putting it off?
5. Take some time to pray for those people, asking the Lord for humility, boldness, winsomeness, opportunity and the simple discipline to share with them.
- 6.

“It is clear even from the prophets that it is impossible to believe if nobody preaches the gospel” – Apollinaris of Laodicea (d. 382)

Day 2: Romans 10:15-17

1. In our earlier studies, we highlighted Romans 1:1-5 & 1:16-17 as two key thematic passages for the book of Romans. Look back at those passages and write out how you’ve seen these themes developed throughout the book thus far.
2. Many of us might have expected the word “believed” to be present instead of “obeyed” in verse 16. What does that show us about the connection between belief and obedience (see 1:5; 2:8; 6:17) and how should that shape our lives and witness?
3. According to verse 17, what is necessary for someone to come to faith?
4. In light of this, how important is it for each of us to pray for others and practice the discipline of sharing our faith?

Day 3: Psalm 19

1. Think of a time when you saw a beautiful sight in nature. How did that moment teach you about God’s nature? Spend a few moments and thank God for His creative work in making all things.
2. Read verses 12-13 and then turn them into a personal prayer. How has God helped keep you from sin?
3. What do verses 7-11 teach about reading the Word?
4. What do verses 12-13 teach us about our sinfulness? What two types of sin are mentioned?

Day 4: Romans 10:15-18

1. Do you consider it a privilege to be a means by which God saves people? Why or why not?
2. In what sense did the Jewish people “hear?” How does Paul use Psalm 19 to answer that question (look back at your notes from yesterday)?
3. Have you ever found yourself making excuses for otherwise “good people” who don’t believe in Jesus? Why do you think that might be and how might Paul respond?

Day 5: Isaiah 65

1. What attributes of God can be seen in verses 1-7?
2. What can we learn about God's patience from this passage?
3. Read verses 17-25 and Revelation 21:1-4. What are some of the characteristics of the New Jerusalem and New Heavens and New Earth?

Day 6: Romans 10:19-21

1. Why did Israel not believe?
2. How would you describe God's heart towards the Gentiles?
3. How would you describe God's heart to the Jews (see Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 2:4)?
4. Take a minute to thank God for the accessibility of the Gospel where we live and then spend a few moments praying for the unreached peoples around the world.

Day 7: Reflect, Memorize, and Catch Up

1. What are some of the biggest lessons you've learned this week?
2. How should those lessons continue to shape your life and prayers?
3. Who can you share these things with and when?

TAKE NOTES

ROMANS 11:1-36

Take some time each day to work on memorizing ROMANS 11:33-36

Day 1: Romans 11:1-6

1. Did God reject his people?
2. How does Paul use his own story to answer this question, and how might we do the same when sharing with others?
3. How does Paul appeal to the doctrine of election to answer the question, and what hope does this provide as we pray for and share with those who do not yet trust in Christ?
4. What's the purpose of Paul's appeal to the story of Elijah (1 Kings 19)?
5. How do verses 5-6 guarantee that there will always be a "remnant?" What hope can you draw from these verses?

Day 2: Romans 11:7-10

1. Do you think it is unjust for God to harden hearts? Why or why not, and what have you seen in Romans thus far that can help answer this question?
2. Look back at Romans 9:6 & 10:3-4. Where did ethnic Israel go astray? What does Paul mean in saying that "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel?"
3. Have you ever felt like God is so holy that you struggled to accept and believe his grace (v. 7)? How should we respond to ourselves or others when we feel this way?
4. In verse 8, Paul quotes Isaiah, who is himself paraphrasing Moses. What does this journey through Israel's history teach the Roman church and us about the nature and character of God?

"Behold mercy and judgment - mercy on the elect, who have obtained the righteousness of God, but judgment upon the others who have been blinded. And yet the former have believed because they willed it, while the latter have not believed because they have not willed it" -Augustine (354-430)

Day 3: Romans 11:11-16

"In the book of Acts, there is a repeated cycle: (a) the gospel is preached in a synagogue; (b) the Jewish community is fractured, with some believing but many becoming hostile; © as a result, the

*preachers turn to the Gentiles in town and find many converts there; (d) finally the church is multi-ethnic, with both Jews and Gentiles" -Tim Keller, Romans 8-18 for You, p. 89*ing all things.

1. How has God used the widespread Jewish rejection of Jesus for good?
2. How might ethnic Israel's present jealousy of the Gentiles result in their good?
3. In what ways does our church display or fail to display the kind of community that God called Israel in the Old Testament to be?
4. How would Israel's repentance be a blessing to the whole world (12, 15)?

"Not all envy is tainted with selfishness, because it is not always either a grudging discontent or a sinful covetousness. At base, envy is 'the desire to have for oneself something possessed by another', and whether envy is good or evil depends on the nature of the something desired and on whether one has any right to its possession. If that something is in itself evil, or it belongs to somebody else and we have no right to it, then the envy is sinful. But if the something desired is in itself good, a blessing from God, which he means all his people to enjoy, then to 'covet' it and to 'envy' those who have it is not at all unworthy. This kind of desire is right in itself and to arouse it can be a realistic motive in ministry." - John Stott (1921-2011)

Day 4: Romans 11:17-24

1. The people of God being portrayed as an olive tree is a frequent image in Scripture (see Jeremiah 11:16-19, Hosea 14:6-7, etc.). How does Paul use this metaphor as a warning to Gentile believers, and what is he warning them against?
2. What does it mean to "continue in God's kindness," and how do we reconcile this warning with the gospel of grace? To put it another way, how do we reconcile Paul's declaration that some branches were "broken off" with verses like Romans 8:30-39 (See Hebrews 3:14-15 & 1 John 2:19)?

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 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. 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 Gallaty¹, 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 seek?)

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” ([Psalm 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>