

**The Way**  
Maturity of the Church  
Lesson 17: Paul Informed Roman Believers He Desired to Visit;  
He was Devoted to the Gospel

*\*We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons\**

### Review (Where We've Been)

How were people able to study, live, and grow in God's ways? *He often had human authors (moved along by the Holy Spirit) write letters.*

Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Rome and here are his introductory words...

**Romans 1:7 (ESV)** To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*These opening words helped the Romans understand...*

- They were loved by God (God loves them as they are)
- They were saints (at the moment of salvation; no effort of their own)
- They were recipients of grace and peace (undeserved favor; peace with/from God)

### BIG Idea

We will begin getting the picture that Paul had a God-given love for a people he had never met.

Paul's continued introductory words will show us how God cares not only about a person's acceptance of the Gospel, but also their growth in it.

There was not a singular focus on just evangelism, but an ever-growing faith that leads a person to live out their faith in daily life.

### Information (What You Need to Know)

*As we chart a course through Romans, Paul builds a logical thought process...*

- **Condemnation** - You are far from God (Romans 1-3)
- **Justification** - You are made right with God through faith (Romans 4-5)
- **Sanctification** - You are free from the power and penalty of sin (Romans 6-8)
- **Restoration** - You are restored to God (Romans 9-11)
- **Transformation** - You are to live in obedience to God (Romans 12-16)

## **Paul wrote about his desires for the Romans...**

### ▪ **Paul had a desire to know them**

“Neither Paul nor Peter established the church in Rome. Romans is written to an existing church that Paul did not plant, and the letter contains no reference to the Apostle Peter. It’s likely that the "visitors from Rome" who heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) planted the church in Rome, and the two Apostles only later had any association with the congregation there” – R.C. Sproul

✓ **Thankful** for what he had heard about their faith (from Jew to Gentile)

**Romans 1:8 (ESV)** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

✓ **Prayerful** for their eventual meeting together

**Romans 1:9 (ESV)** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

✓ **Hopeful** that they could be mutually strengthened by each other

**Romans 1:11 (ESV)** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— **12** that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.

- Are you in mutually beneficial relationships where each is helping the other?
- Are there some who have left the fellowship that you should invite back in?
- Are we placing ourselves in accountable relationships for spiritual growth?

There is a movement by people who love Jesus but hate the church (the actions of the people). However, the local church is God’s plan for us, even when people disappoint us. Jesus said, “I will build My church.” Acts teaches us that God birthed the church and uses the church to proclaim the Gospel. Every New Testament letter was written to or about a church. We can’t love God without loving and participating with His church.

### ▪ **Paul had a desire for people to be saved and mature in Christ**

✓ All people deserve to hear the Gospel (and an opportunity to receive it)

**Romans 1:14 (ESV)** I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

✓ All people deserve to mature in the Gospel

**Romans 1:15 (ESV)** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

*Why would Paul preach the gospel to those who were already Christians?*

“Christianity teaches something fundamentally different than every other religion. Every other religion says that *if* you change, you will be accepted. But Christianity says that *because* you have been accepted, therefore change. Christianity doesn’t proclaim *good advice*, but *good news*. And that good news transforms us from the inside out.” – J.D. Greear

**Matthew 28:18 (ESV)** And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*”

▪ **Paul had a desire to declare the power of the Gospel**

✓ Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel’s message

**Romans 1:16 (ESV)** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Interestingly, Paul used *power*, considering that Rome was the world power.

**1 Corinthians 15:3 (ESV)** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that **he was buried**, that **he was raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures...

✓ Paul knew that the Gospel also gives power to live by faith in our daily life

**Romans 1:17 (ESV)** For in it [*the Gospel*] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” “The only way God could remain righteous but still save sinners was if Jesus came and paid the price for sin [death]. Because He did, God is able to forgive all who trust only in Him. God can accept all of us who trust in Jesus as perfectly righteous because we’re covered with His righteousness.” – Firm Foundations

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)** For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

**Application (What You Need To Do):**

*How did God did make us fully acceptable to Him?*

- God sent Jesus into the world to become our Savior
- God took our sins and put them on Jesus
- God punished Jesus in our place
- God raised Jesus from the dead
- God led us to put our faith in Jesus alone as our Savior