

Romans

Romans may be the most important letter you will ever read. It is Paul's masterpiece, the clearest and fullest explanation of the gospel in the Bible. John Calvin said that "if a man understands it, he has a sure road opened for him to the understanding of the whole Scripture." William Tyndale, the father of English Bible translators, believed that every Christian should learn it by heart. "The more it is studied," he wrote, "the easier it is; the more it is chewed, the pleasanter it is" (Prologue to Romans in his 1534 English New Testament).

But watch out! Those who study Romans are rarely the same afterward. For example, in the summer of A.D. 386 Augustine sat weeping in the garden of his friend Alypius. He wanted to begin a new life but lacked the strength to break with the old. Taking up a scroll of Romans, he read the words, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." "No further would I read," he tells us, "nor had I any need; instantly at the end of this sentence, a clear light flooded my heart and all the darkness of doubt vanished away."

In 1515 Martin Luther began to teach the book of Romans to his students. He wrote, "Night and day I pondered until...I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole scripture took on new meaning, and whereas before the 'righteousness of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage in Paul became to me a gateway to heaven." Two years later he nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle church in Wittenberg, and the Protestant Reformation began!

The evening of May 24, 1738, John Wesley "went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine," he wrote in his journal, "while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken *my* sins away, even *mine*; and saved me from the law of sin and death." This event in Wesley's life helped to launch the great Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century.

We need to grasp the message of Romans in our day as well. Many are preaching a gospel which lacks clarity and substance. People are told to "invite Jesus into their heart" or simply to "follow Christ" without understanding the meaning of his death and resurrection.

We cannot correct this problem merely by memorizing gospel outlines or canned presentations. We need to immerse ourselves in Scripture through diligent study and thoughtful reflection. Only when the gospel grips us as it did Augustine, Luther and Wesley,

will we realize why "it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16).

Romans is different from most of Paul's other letters. He did not found the church in Rome; in fact, he had never even been there. It has been suggested that the church in Rome was founded by some of those who were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). However, Paul had met some of the Christians in Rome, such as Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16), during his missionary journeys to other cities.

Other letters were written to address specific problems within the churches. Romans seems relatively free of problems. Their only major "problem" was that they had never met the apostle. Therefore, he felt a need to fully explain to them in a letter what he normally would have said in person.

Paul probably wrote Romans between A.D. 57-58 while he was at Corinth in the home of his friend and convert Gaius. He planned to go first to Jerusalem to deliver a gift of money from the gentile churches to the poor in Jerusalem. Then he hoped to visit Rome on his way to Spain. His hopes were later realized, but not as he had expected. When he finally arrived in Rome in early A.D. 60, he was a prisoner under house arrest (Acts 28:11-31).

1. Based upon the preceding text, what do you hope to gain from this study of Romans? Be as specific as possible.

What do you need to bring to this study to see that all can get the most from it?

What has hindered you in Bible studies in the past?

2. Look at the introductory material in your Bible over the book of Romans. What was the main purpose of Paul's writing this epistle?

How was Paul's relationship with the church in Rome different than his relationship with the church in Corinth or Ephesus?

3. Suppose that you won the Publisher's Clearinghouse sweepstakes or that your first child had just been born. What would you do?

It is only natural for us to want to share such good news with others, even strangers. How excited are you to share the good news of Jesus Christ?

Romans 1

1. Paul begins this epistle by introducing himself. From these opening verses, the church will form her first impressions about Paul. In verse 1, how does Paul introduce himself?

Why do you think the first thing Paul says about himself is that he is a servant or bondservant of Christ Jesus?

Jesus said that we were no longer slaves but fellow heirs with him. Why, then, does Paul refer to himself as a servant of Jesus? (See Ex 21: 2-6)

What does it mean to you for Paul to be called an apostle? How do we know Paul is not lifting himself by using this title?

What does it mean to you that Paul was "set apart" for the gospel of God? Set apart from what?

In what way or ways are you being set apart for the gospel of God?

Suppose God chose to send you to another body of believers and you were to write them a letter first. How would you introduce yourself to them? What would be the first line of your letter?

2. Beginning in verse 2, Paul introduces this gospel for which he has been set apart. What does Paul say about this gospel in verse 2?

Paul said that God promised this gospel before or beforehand? What does this mean? Promised before what?

How did God reveal this gospel? (What is meant by the Holy Scriptures?)

Paul was speaking to a "New Testament" church, and he refers to the prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Does this statement still hold significance for us? Please explain.

Can you point out any of these scriptures from the prophets that tell of Jesus Christ?

3. Verse 3 gives more information about the gospel that God promised before hand and the gospel that Paul is preaching. Paul says this gospel is about God's Son. In verses 3-4, what does Paul reveal about God's Son?

What does it mean to you that Jesus was a descendant of David and the Son of God?

These verses speak to the dual nature of Jesus. Why is this such an important aspect of the gospel that Paul puts it at the beginning of this letter?

4. Read verse 4 very carefully. Paul says that Jesus was declared God's Son through the Spirit of holiness, with power, and by His resurrection from the dead. This is the gospel in a single sentence. Explain what each of these means to you and why each is important.

What does it mean to you that Jesus was declared the Son of God by his resurrection?

What is the danger of leaving any one of these truths about Jesus out of our presentation of the gospel?

Has the church been faithful to present this gospel of God's Son to the world? Please explain.

5. In verse 4 Paul refers to God's Son as Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us look closely at each part of this name. What is the significance of "Jesus"?

Of "Christ"?

Of "Lord"?

What does it mean to you to call the Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord?

6. In verse 5 Paul adds a little more to his own introduction. Paul tells us that he received what from Jesus?

What is grace to you?

What was the purpose of Paul's apostleship?

We also learn another key truth about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to do more than see people saved. Paul said he was to call people from the Gentiles to a life of obedience that comes through faith. What does this mean to you?

According to this verse, to what type of life are we to call people?

How are we to do this?

How does this relate to James' statement that faith without works is dead?

Compare verse 5 to Acts 26:20.

7. Then in verse 6 Paul states that the Roman believers are among those called to belong to Jesus Christ. We can say the same thing about all of us. What does it mean to you that you belong to Jesus Christ?

What privileges does this entail for us?

What responsibilities does this hold for us?

8. Verses 1-6 contain Paul's introduction to the church in Rome. Based on these verses alone, what opinion would you draw about this man?

9. Paul is finished with his introduction and addresses the Roman believers directly in verse 7. How does Paul address them?

What does it mean when Paul says "grace and peace to you"?

What is the significance of Paul's saying "from God our Father" instead of "from God my Father"?

What is the significance of Paul's saying "the Lord Jesus Christ" instead of "our Lord Jesus Christ"?

What does it mean to you that you are called to be a saint?

How has this word been misused by the church?

10. Read vv. 8-10. This part of Paul's letter is actually a prayer and blessing. If you were a member of the church in Rome, how would these verses make you feel?

How could Paul say these things about people he had never met and mean it?

11. In verse 8 what is the first thing for which Paul thanks God through Jesus Christ?

What do you think Paul meant when he said their faith is being reported all over the world? How can faith be reported?

Is the faith of our church being reported around town? Please explain.

People are always watching us, especially because we say we are Christians. For what are they looking?

Read Eph 2:10 and Matt 5:16. What do these verses mean to you?

12. What is the significance of Paul's statement that he thanks God **through** Jesus Christ?

What does this say about our relationship with God?

13. In verses 9-10 Paul says that God is his witness concerning his prayers. Why would Paul say this?

Do we have a tendency to say we will pray about something or for someone only to forget after a time? If so, how would remembering that God is our witness help us?

About what two things did Paul pray concerning the church in Rome?

How did God answer Paul's repeated prayers that he be allowed to visit Rome?

How important was prayer to Paul? Please explain.

What can we learn about praying for others and for other churches?

14. Paul also tells us that he serves God with his whole heart in preaching the gospel of His Son. What does this mean to you?

How is this a reflection of the greatest commandment?

How is this related to Paul's opening statement that he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ?

Please share a time when you felt compelled to share the gospel.

15. Read carefully verses 11-13. Paul gives three main reasons why he wants to visit the church in Rome. What are they?

What do you think about these reasons?

16. Paul states one of his reasons for wanting to visit the church in Rome in verses 11-12. What spiritual gift do you think Paul wants to impart?

What does it mean to impart a spiritual gift?

Are you more conscious of receiving spiritual gifts or imparting them? Please explain. Explain why both are important.

Are you aware that you have spiritual gifts to impart to others? Please explain.

17. The church in Rome has been established and apparently successful. How would Paul's impartation help them? (See v. 11)

In verse 12 Paul states that he hopes they will be mutually encouraged by his visit. What does this mean to you?

Can you remember a time when you ministered to someone and in turn were encouraged? Please share the experience that you might encourage someone else.

What does this teach us about the body of Christ?

18. In verse 13 Paul states that he planned many times to come to them but was prevented from doing so. Who or what do you think prevented him?

Read Prov. 16:9 and 19:21. How do these verses apply to Paul's statement?

What meaning do they hold for us? (Do these verses mean that we are not to plan anything?)

19. Paul also states in verse 13 that he wants to visit Rome so that he might have a harvest or some fruit among them. What does Paul mean?

Is this a selfish motive? Please explain.

Are we to have the same mindset as Paul? If so, what should we be doing?

Again, how is Paul's desire related to his being a bondservant and steward of Jesus?

20. In verse 14 Paul states that he feels obligated or indebted to Greeks and non-Greeks (or barbarians). What does Paul mean?

Why is he obligated?

Are we to feel the same obligation? Please explain.

What does Paul mean when he mentions Greeks and non-Greeks or barbarians?

21. This obligation did not weigh Paul down. Instead, in verse 15 he states that he is ready, even eager, to preach the gospel. How do you explain this eagerness?

Do you feel an eagerness to share the gospel? Please explain.

What are some of the ways in which we can share the gospel?

Paul has been preaching the gospel for many years; yet, he is still eager to share the good news about Jesus Christ. How can we ensure that our eagerness does not diminish or grow cold?

22. Read very carefully verses 16-17. Many commentaries say these verses contain the theme of Romans. Paul begins these verses by stating that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Why do you think Paul began this section with this statement?

What do you think it means to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ?

Also notice that Paul clearly identifies the gospel he is preaching. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why might some be ashamed of the gospel of Christ?

What other gospels are there?

Without bringing any condemnation on anyone, can you remember a time when you were "ashamed" to share the gospel of Christ?

What can we do to see that we are not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

Think of what this statement means: not to be ashamed of the gospel. How might such a person appear to the world and why might this bring that person persecution?

Can you think of someone you have met or seen or heard who, like Paul, is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ?

Why does it take courage and boldness to share the gospel?

23. Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel?

What does it mean to you that the gospel of Christ is the power of God?

Now we come to Paul's central theme. The gospel of Christ is the power of God for salvation. What does it mean to you to be saved?

Why does it take the power of God to save us?

When have you witnessed this power of God? If so, please be willing to share without mentioning other people's names.

For whom is this message intended? What part do we play?

Think of some of the opportunities we face today in bringing the gospel of Christ to all those around us. How can remembering that the gospel of Christ is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes both help and challenge us?

Why do think Paul mentions the gospel of Christ instead of the gospel? What significance does this hold for us?

24. Why do you believe Paul stated that the gospel of Christ was for the Jew first and then for the Greek or Gentile?

What does it mean that there is only one gospel for all people, Jew and Gentile alike?

25. In verse 17 Paul talks about another aspect of the gospel. He says that the gospel reveals a righteousness from God. What does it mean to you that the gospel reveals this righteousness from God?

How would you define this righteousness from God?

What is the relationship between salvation and this righteousness from God?

What does it mean to you that this righteousness is from faith to faith or from faith from first to last?

What is faith to you?

Next, Paul states that the righteous or just will live by faith. (See Hab. 2:4) What does this mean to you?

26. In your own words, restate verses 16 & 17.

27. Paul now moves from the revelation of God's righteousness to the revelation of God's wrath. What is God's wrath?

How is it revealed? In other words, what form might God's wrath take?

God's wrath is being revealed against whom or what?

What does it mean to you that someone suppresses the truth?

How are people today suppressing the truth by their wickedness or unrighteousness?

28. Read verses 19 & 20. Paul states that the truth is plain to these people. What does he mean that the truth is plain?

How has God made this truth plain to all of us? Give some examples.

What implication does this hold for us?

Is Paul saying that all we need is nature and not the gospel? Please explain.

29. Verse 20 talks about God's invisible qualities. Paul says that since the beginning of creation these qualities have been clearly seen. What are some of these invisible qualities?

How have these invisible qualities been made clearly visible?

Paul says that we are without excuse? What does he mean and why are we without excuse?

If these invisible qualities are clearly seen, why do some not "see" them? How do they explain these qualities?

Creation is meant to reveal God; it is not meant to be worshipped. What should be our responsibility to nature?

30. Read verse 21. What do you think it means that these people "knew" God?

How would you define God's wrath?

This verse lists two actions that can bring down the wrath of God. What are they?

What are the results of these actions?

Can you see evidence of these results in our world? Please explain.

31. Verse 22 states that these people professed or claimed to be wise when in truth they were fools. What is a fool according to the scriptures?

How can people believe they are wise when they are not?

Give some examples of those who profess their wisdom or truth when they are actually fools.

32. According to verse 23, what is the major result of foolish people who think they are wise?

Can you give some examples of idolatry in today's world?

Why would this action bring about the wrath of God?

33. Notice the progression in these verses. First, men knew God but did not glorify Him or thank Him. Then, they exchanged God's truth for their wisdom. Finally, they exchanged the glory of God for idols. As a result, verse 24 says that God gave them up or gave them over. What do you believe this means?

When God gave them up, what took control of their lives?

Is this consequence still applicable to us today?

How would you respond to people who say God is being cruel for giving up people?

34. Verse 25 states that these people exchanged the truth of God for a lie. What is the truth they exchanged?

What is the lie they received in exchange for the truth?

How does this exchange of the truth for a lie affect our worship?

Can you think of examples where man worships the creation instead of the Creator?

Paul ends this verse by saying the Creator is to be praised or blessed forever. Why do you think Paul inserted this statement at this point? What does it mean to you to praise or bless God?

35. Read verses 26 and 27. These verses state a further consequence of not glorifying God and exchanging the truth for a lie. Without going into detail, what are the shameful lusts to which these verses refer?

Why do you believe Paul specifically mentions women and men?

Read Lev. 18:22. How does your Bible read?

Why do you believe Paul specifically mentions this sin in detail?

Based on these verses, how do you explain that some churches are teaching that homosexuality is not a sin but a lifestyle?

36. Read verse 28. What happens to a person when he or she chooses not to retain the knowledge of God?

What is a depraved or reprobate mind?

When God turns these people over to a depraved mind, these people do things that they should not. What are some of these things? (See verses 29-31)

Look carefully at this list of sins. What do you notice about this list?

How has our world justified these sins such that they become acceptable?

37. According to verse 32, these people know the result of their actions is what?

If they have rejected the knowledge of God, how can they know this?

Not only do they continue to sin, Paul says they approve of or find pleasure in those who practice them. What does this mean to you?

Can you give examples of people who find pleasure in the practice of such sins?

38. Once again we see a progression into depravity. It begins with a knowledge of God that is rejected. Then we see people replace that knowledge with their own understanding. As they do this, they sink into sin against themselves. Left unchecked, this sin then turns against others. Based upon Paul's statement that these people knew God yet rejected Him, what conclusions can you draw from this progression?

Why do you believe Paul is so specific about sin and its consequences so early in this letter to the Romans?

Is the church today this "blunt" or bold about sin and its consequences? Please explain your answer.

Romans 2

In Romans 1 Paul addresses the fate of the unbeliever. He talks about their progression from not acknowledging God to their descent into depravity. Paul then changes his focus because Paul realized we have a tendency to see other people's faults but not our own. The Jew looked at all Jews as chosen and all Gentiles as pagans. Even in the church this "division" exists. Now imagine the Romans "pointing out the spec" in others' eyes but not noticing the log in theirs.

1. Do we have a tendency to think of some sins as "more acceptable" or not as bad as others? In other words, do we, as believers, say, "Thank God I am not a sinner like that"? Please explain.

Do we use this "logic" (at least I don't lie, steal, get drunk, murder, etc.) to justify our condition?

How does this thinking keep us from seeing our need to change?

2. Paul now turns to the Roman believers and to us. Paul says there is only one righteousness that applies to all people. This righteousness is available to all through Jesus Christ. We have talked about this some before, but this is not a universal doctrine in the church. Why is such dangerous teaching?

What can you do about it?

What does this truth mean to us and to the church?

3. Who is the "you" Paul is addressing in verse 1?

How would you react if this part of the letter were addressed to you?

4. Paul writes that they are without excuse. What does this mean to you?

5. Carefully read verse 1 again. What does it mean to you?

How does one condemn himself?

Why do you believe Paul is being so blunt?

How do you think people in the church today would react to such blunt words? Please explain your answer.

6. Read verse 2. Paul says that God's judgment is based on truth. What does this mean to you?

Paul seems to be reminding his audience that God's judgment is the same for all people, Jew and Gentile alike. Do we still need to hear this truth? In other words, do some in the church believe they hold a "special" position with God?

7. Are there still people who believe they will "escape" God's judgment because of works or position? Please explain.

How would you address this belief?

Is Paul saying that our relationship with God will not save us from judgment? Please explain.

How do you think the Jewish believers would react to these statements?

8. In verse 4, Paul states that we can react to the riches of God's kindness, tolerance, and patience in different ways. What are these ways?

How does one show contempt for God's kindness?

According to Paul, what is the purpose of God's patience, tolerance, and kindness?

How is it possible that we could mistake God's patience and kindness for God's approval?

Can you think of an example or examples of people mistaking God's patience for His acceptance such that they see no need for repentance?

Can you think of a time when God's patience, kindness, and tolerance did lead to true repentance?

9. Is God ever indifferent to sin? Please explain.

What are the implications of this truth for all of us?

10. In verse 5 Paul mentions the day of God's wrath. What does this mean to you?

Paul also says that those who remain stubborn and unrepentant will store or treasure up wrath against themselves. What does this mean?

Therefore, we can conclude that all people are storing up for God's day of wrath. God says we will be storing up either treasures that cannot be destroyed or wrath that cannot be ignored. How do you think this message would be received in most churches today? Please explain.

How can we store up treasures instead of wrath?

On this day of wrath the world will see God's righteous judgment. What is God's righteous judgment?

11. In light of these scriptures, how would you go about explaining to a person who is good and moral and just and loving and caring that he/she still needs God's forgiveness?

How would you explain that he/she is storing up God's wrath even while being a good person?

Read Matthew 7:22-23. What does this verse mean to you? How could people do these good deeds yet still be practicing lawlessness?

12. What does verse 6 mean to you?

How would you reconcile this verse with the one that says we are not saved by works?

Read Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12. What do these verses mean to you?

What impact do these verses have on your relationship with Jesus Christ?

13. Read carefully vv. 6-8. Paul gives us only two courses in life. What are they?

At first reading it would seem that these verses teach salvation by works instead of salvation by faith. Yet, in his other letters Paul clearly tells us that salvation is a gift of God and only comes through faith. How, then, do you explain Paul's statement in verse 7?

What does it mean to you to persistently seek to do good?

Why do we need to seek to do good?

What do Paul's words have to do with faith?

14. Verse 8 goes into the other choice. It talks about people who are self-seeking or contentious. How would you describe a self-seeking or contentious person?

Could you have ever been described as a contentious person?

What changed you?

What will happen to those who reject the truth?

At this early stage in his letter, what point do you believe is wanting to make?

15. Read vv. 8-10. Paul says that all our works will result in a response from God. What will be God's response for those who persist in doing evil?

What will be God's response for those who persist in doing good?

What does it mean to you to persist in doing something?

Now, after reading vv. 9 & 10, we learn that the Jew will be punished first and rewarded first. What does this mean to you?

Why do you believe this to be true?

What does this mean for the church?

16. Still addressing the Jews, Paul states in verse 11 that God is not a respecter of persons or God does not show favoritism. Why do you think Paul makes this statement?

Do you believe the church has shown favoritism in the past? Please explain.

Do you believe the church still does? If so, in what ways?

Jesus is the head of the church, and if Jesus does not show favoritism, what should our attitudes and responses be?

What steps can we take or should we take to remove favoritism from the church?

Based upon this truth, what does the Christ's church look like?

17. Read carefully vv 12-15. Again Paul mentions two groups of people. Explain verse 12 as you understand it.

Keeping in mind that God does not show favoritism, are those who know the law going to receive special treatment over those who do not know the law? Please explain.

To the Romans, who were the ones with the law? The ones without the law?

No matter in which group one falls, all are answerable to whom?

Paul says that the Gentiles will be judge not because they don't have the law but because they have sinned. Therefore, we can say that God's judgment is based upon what?

How might this distinction cause the Gentiles to think more highly of themselves than of the Jews?

18. Verse 13 tells us whom God will declare righteous. According to Paul, whom will God declare righteous?

How do you believe the Jews reacted to this statement?

Applying this verse to the church today, what do we have to do to be declared righteous in God's eyes?

Reread your answer. Are we advocating a righteousness that can be earned? Please explain,

Paul closes many doors that appear to lead to God and opens only one. What door does Paul open?

How would you answer someone who believes there is more than one way into heaven?

19. Verses 14-15 are very interesting. Paul states that Gentiles do not have the law; however, this does not prevent them from obeying the law. Please explain what Paul means?

Explain how people who do not know God's law can, by nature, keep that law. Can you give any examples?

According to Paul where can these Gentiles find the law?

What "bears witness" to God's law? What accuses or excuses them?

Now, apply these verses to your life before you accepted Jesus as your Savior. Can you think of a time when your conscious bore witness to God's law written on your heart?

If this is true, is Paul saying that we have no need of the church? Of the Bible? Of Jesus? Please explain.

Is Paul saying that "being good" will result in salvation? Please explain

20. In these verses, Paul talks about a universal law established by God. What would you say are some "universal" do's and don'ts?

How would you explain what our conscience is? What causes us to ignore our conscience?

Can you remember a time when your conscience kept you from doing something wrong? Would you mind sharing that?

21. Verse 16 states that God not only judges our actions but also the secrets of all mankind. What does this mean to you?

What is a secret life?

What does God say about doing things in secret? (See Matt. 6:3-4, Mark 4:22 and Ecc. 12:14.)

Have you ever tried to keep something secret from God? If so, how did that go?

Paul makes it very clear that all people will be judged. However, he adds "through Jesus." What does it mean to you that we will all be judged through Jesus Christ?

For both Jew and Gentiles, Paul says that we will all stand before God as equals. We will be equally REWARDED or equally JUDGED. How do you believe the Jews reacted to this idea? Please explain.

How do you think the Gentiles reacted?

Do you think there is still the belief in the church that some will be rewarded more than others because of their beliefs or deeds or because they attend a particular church?

How do these scriptures address this belief?

How do you feel about being judged equally with people like Hitler, bin Laden, or ISIS soldiers?

What standard will God use to judge our hearts?

22. What does it mean to you to be called a Christian?

Verses 17-23 present an if-then argument. Restate this argument in your own words.

Now, replace the word "Jew" in verse 17 with "Christian" and tell what these verses mean to you?

Verses 18-23 list Paul's "if" arguments. Each "if" statement can be viewed as a responsibility God gave to the Jews. What were and are those responsibilities?

Do these responsibilities apply to us? Please explain.

What are the implications of the question Paul asks in vv. 21-23?

23. What does it mean to you to teach someone?

Can we effectively teach what we do not practice? (Read Matt. 23:2-3.) Please explain.

According to Paul's admonitions, who would make the best teacher?

Do you fit into this category? Why or why not?

24. According to God, why is His name being blasphemed in the world?

Please explain how and why this is true.

What does it mean to you that God's name is blasphemed among unbelievers because of the Jews and because of us?

Can you remember a time when your actions and words might have caused others to blaspheme God's name?

25. In verse 25 Paul turns to the covenant of circumcision. What is a covenant?

What can you learn about the covenant of circumcision?

Why was and is circumcision so important to Jews?

Paul says that circumcision has value ONLY if one observes the law. What does this mean to you?

Why do you believe Paul made this statement to the Jews in Rome?

What can we learn from Paul's statement?

26. Paul goes even further. He says that an uncircumcised person who keeps the law will be considered as one being circumcised. What implications did this hold for the Jews? For the Gentiles?

Why do you think Paul is mentioning circumcision at this point in his letter?

According to verses 25-26, what is more important to Paul, circumcision or obedience? Please explain.

Read Proverbs 21:3. How does this verse relate to what Paul is saying about circumcision?

27. Read verse 27 very carefully. What does it mean to you?

How could an uncircumcised Gentile "condemn" a circumcised Jew?

What does this mean for us as believers?

28. Who or what is a Jew?

Read vv. 28-29. According to Paul who is a Jew?

Do we attach certain religious rites to define a Christian? Please explain.

According to Paul, true circumcision is circumcision of the heart. About what is Paul talking?

How is one's heart circumcised?

29. Paul ends this section of his letter by saying that we can receive praise from God or from man. Can we receive praise from both? Please explain.

Whom does God praise?

What does it mean to you to be praised by God?

What do we have to do to be praised by God?

Can you give an example from the scriptures of someone who was spiritually circumcised but not physically circumcised?

Briefly summarize these opening chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans. What are his major points?

Would such a letter be offensive to you if you had been part of the Jews in Rome?

Romans 3

Lest anyone mistake Paul's intentions, Paul wants to make one thing very clear. He contends that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, stand guilty before God. However, he is not saying that there is no benefit to being a Jew. He does not want the Jews to renounce their heritage or the Gentiles to think they have replaced the Jews. Instead, he wants all believers to recognize their proper place in the kingdom of God. So, Paul now asks some interesting questions.

1. Imagining that at this time the Jews might be wondering what is the advantage of being born a Jew, Paul addresses that very question. In doing so, Paul presents an interesting witnessing technique. He anticipates the listeners' questions and answers them. When witnessing to someone about Jesus, what questions usually arise that we should "answer" in our witness?

Do you feel confident in answering the questions of others? Please explain.

Paul is very direct and asks, "What is the advantage of being a Jew?" and "What is the value of circumcision?" We can be sure Paul has heard these questions before. What is his answer?

Does this answer still hold true today?

What are some other advantages of being a Jew? (See Romans 9)

What impact do these truths have on you? What impact should they have on the church, if any?

2. What are some of the advantages of being a Christian? Which one or ones mean the most to you?
3. In verses 3 & 4, Paul addresses another issue that is still discussed today. What does he admit about the Jews in verse 3?

What affect did this behavior have on God?

Can you remember a time when you lacked faith but God still proved faithful?

What does it mean to you that our lack of faith (or unbelief or unfaithfulness) will not nullify God's faithfulness?

Can you site some examples from the Bible to prove this very important aspect of God's nature?

4. What does verse 4 mean to you?

Paul quotes scripture once again. Who first said this and what were the circumstances?

In light of the entire Psalm, what did Paul mean in reciting this verse?

5. Now Paul goes into a very logical discourse on sin, God's righteousness, and judgment. Read verse 5 very carefully, and, if possible, read several different translations. Paul is addressing an argument that he has obviously heard before. How would you explain or restate verse 5?

It seems that people were using this argument not to disprove God existed but to question whether God would truly punish them. What are some of the arguments people present today to convince others that God will not really punish sin? (Notice Paul's statement at the end of verse 5)

6. Paul answers these human arguments very clearly. What was Paul's answer to these arguments God was not righteous or fair?

Should our answer be any different today? Please explain.

Before we leave this point, we need to realize that this is a popular argument. If God is not a just God, then He cannot judge the world justly. How would you counter this argument?

7. In verse 7 Paul continues the discussion and raises another issue. Notice, this question again is an attack on God's character. What issue is raised in verse 7?

How does Paul respond to this argument (see v. 8)?

Paul says that he has been accused of saying that people should do evil that good may result. How could Paul be accused of preaching such a thing? (Think carefully about Paul's teaching on grace.)

Do you believe some people still think this way? What does Paul say should happen to them? (V. 8)

8. In verses 9-20, Paul reviews the major points made so far in the letter. He now asks, "So, what are we to conclude?" What is the first conclusion that Paul and we are to reach? (see v. 9)

We can learn a very important point from Paul. He supports his conclusions with scripture. We must be careful about those who reach conclusions about God but use no scripture or only part of the scripture to support their views. Can you think of any modern day conclusions that are based on faulty scriptural reasoning?

Read vv. 9-12. What do these verses mean to you and how do they support Paul's conclusion?

Paul is quoting what scriptures? Is he taking these verses out of context and making them say something different?

Read vv. 13 & 14. These are taken from Psalms 5, 140, and 10. Read these Psalms. About whom were these passages referring in the original Psalms? Paul now uses them to refer to whom?

9. Do what does Paul compare the heart and throat and tongue?

Are these comparisons accurate? Please explain.

In verse 14, Paul says our mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. What does he mean?

10. Read vv. 15-18. Summarize these verses.

Again Paul is quoting scripture. What are the references for verses 15-18?

What is the way of peace that men do not know in verse 17?

What is the evidence that people today do not fear God?

11. Before going any further, let us look once again at Paul's conclusion. All of us, Jew and Gentile, male and female, rich and poor, have sinned and have fallen short of God's glory. Paul is talking about original sin and its affect on all of humanity. What was the original sin?

What was the affect of this sin on humanity, on you and me?

This understanding is central to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why?

The world and the church have “combated” this truth with self-improvement lessons that aim to make us feel better about ourselves. They urge us to compare ourselves to others and to look inside ourselves for answers. They teach that you are OK and I am OK. What is the true danger in this philosophy?

Think carefully. Where does Jesus, the Messiah, fit into this type of reasoning?

God is our loving Father. He is slow to anger and filled with compassion. Yet, His views about sin have and never will change. How does God view the condition of man?

What did God do because we are a fallen people?

12. In verse 19 Paul returns to the subject of the law. What does verse 19 mean to you?

What does it take to “silence” people?

13. In verse 20, Paul comes right to the point. He says that no one will be justified by observing the law.

What does it mean to you to be justified?

What does Paul say is the purpose of the law?

Give an example of this truth.

14. About this time, Paul’s audience (including ourselves) should begin to feel convicted. If all Paul is saying is true, then what is our hope? If the law is only good for revealing sin and not justifying us, what is the point of living for God? Well, Paul, not wanting to remove hope (only pride and favoritism) gives us that hope. In verse 21, Paul talks about the righteous of God or, more accurately, a righteous from God. What does it mean to you that righteous is from God?

Paul also says this righteous is "without the law" or "apart from law". What does this mean to you?

However, to show that Paul is not preaching a new religion or a new doctrine, he says that the Law and the Prophets testify or witness this righteous is from God. What does the word "Law" mean to you?

What does it mean to you that the Law and the Prophets testify to this righteousness?

15. Paul continues to bring the reader to a new hope. Once we realize our true condition, Paul shows us the way to God. After showing we cannot gain righteousness through observance of the law, Paul tells us that there is a way to receive this righteousness. According to verse 22, how do we receive this righteousness from God?

What does it mean to you that this righteousness is available to all who believe through faith in Jesus Christ?

Why do you think that righteousness by law can be more appealing to man than righteousness by faith?

16. We often quote verse 23 by itself. Yet, to understand its full meaning and impact, we need to read vv. 22 - 24 together. After reading them together, what is Paul telling all of us?

What does it mean to you that everyone falls short of the glory of God?

How do these verses give you hope?

17. Verse 24 contains three words that need further examination. Paul tells us that all are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption of Christ.

What does "justified" mean to you?

What does "grace" mean to you?

What does "redemption" mean to you?

Rewrite verse 24 based on your understanding of these three words.

Based upon the picture of mankind Paul presents in Chapters 1-3, how do you explain God's willingness to give to us this gift of righteousness?

For Jew and Gentile alike, where does our hope lie?

18. There is a saying that nothing is free. Paul tells us in verse 24 that we are freely justified. Read verse 25. Why is our justification free?

What does it mean to you that Jesus is our atonement or propitiation?

Now, let's go back to chapter 2 where we read that because of sin, we are storing up God's wrath, a wrath that is justified and that cannot be ignored. What has happened to that wrath?

19. Paul states that God presented Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins to demonstrate or to declare two things. Read vv. 25 & 26. What two things does Christ's sacrifice demonstrate or declare about God?

Read several different translations. Explain in your own words what these two truths are and mean.

Based upon the condition of the Church world wide, are these two truths still being taught and believed? Please explain.

According to these verses, how would you describe God's justice?

20. Read vv. 27-31. What does it mean to you to boast?

To whom is Paul addressing in these verses?

Why do we have no reason to boast?

21. There is a theology that is prevalent in the church today called replacement theology. It states that the church has replaced Israel. Therefore, whenever Israel is mentioned in the New Testament, we are really talking about the church. How do you feel about this?

Now let's restate verse 29. Is God only the God of the Gentiles? Is He not also the God of the Jews? How would you respond to this?

22. This chapter concludes with a statement about faith. Paul says that both circumcised and uncircumcised will be justified by faith. He also says that instead of nullifying the law, this faith actually upholds the law.

About what law is Paul speaking?

Please explain how this faith upholds the law.

Romans 4

Paul continues his argument that we are saved not by works but by grace. He had been accused by some of teaching a new doctrine and changing the Law of Moses. Therefore, Paul turns to the books of Moses to show that this doctrine of grace was not new.

1. Why do you think Paul decides to bring Abraham into the picture?

How did the Jews view Abraham?

2. Because Abraham was the father of the Jews and not the Gentiles, this could be a divisive point. However, in verse one Paul refers to Abraham as the Jew's forefather or as their father in the flesh. Why do you think Paul included this designation?

Did the Jews and the Gentiles have another father? If so, who?

What was the implication for the church in Rome? For us?

3. In verse 2 Paul talks about being justified. What does it mean to you personally to be justified?

What does it mean to be justified by works?

Why would this give us reason to boast?

4. Now Paul brings in a powerful word. He returns to the scriptures and asks a question. What was that question?

Do we ask this question enough today? Please explain.

What made this such a powerful question was the fact that Paul knew there was only one answer. However, when we ask this question today, do we still hear only one answer? Explain.

How do you view the scriptures?

5. What does the scripture say about Abraham?

Where can we find this scripture?

6. The scripture tells us that Abraham believed God. This may seem a simple question, but what does it mean to you that Abraham believed God?

Next, we read about Abraham's righteousness. Some versions use the words reckoned, credited, imputed, and counted. What does it mean to you that righteousness was imputed to Abraham?

Many of the Jewish leaders used Abraham as an example of one who was justified by works. How might this have been possible?

Once again, read this verse about Abraham. How does this verse relate to Paul's contention that we are saved by grace and not by works?

7. In verse 4, Paul continues with his argument that all people, including Abraham, are saved by grace. What does Paul mean that our wages are an obligation?

Following this line of reasoning, what is Paul saying to those who believe that they can be justified through works?

What would it mean that God is obligated to us or that God owes us justification?

8. Read verse 5. How would you describe a "man who does not work?"

What does Paul say about the person who trusts God? (See v. 5)

What does it mean to you that God justifies the wicked?

How can this statement bring all people hope? In other words, what would you say to a person who felt he or she was too bad to be saved?

Read verse 5 again. What part does faith play?

How would you answer someone who wanted to know how much faith was enough?

9. Before we go any further, explain the relationship between faith and works. Using Abraham, illustrate this relationship, remembering all Paul has said about both.
10. In verse 6, Paul mentions another figure from Israel's past, David. Why do you believe Paul mentions David? (Look carefully at David's life.)

Paul says that David was saying the same thing that he is saying: men are justified by faith apart from works. What kind of person is Paul talking about in verse 6?

Then Paul quotes from Psalm 32:1-2. According to these two verses, who are the blessed that David mentions?

What does it mean to you to have your transgressions forgiven and your sins covered?

Who is the man who will never have his sins counted against him?

Why do you think David wrote this psalm?

11. Now read the entire Psalm. What happened to David when he did not confess his sins but tried to hide them?

What happened when David confessed his sin?

What is David's advice to all of us?

In verses 8-10 God speaks. What does God say to us?

In the last verse, David addresses the righteous. Who are the righteous?

Is this what Paul is teaching in his letter to the Romans? Please explain.

12. What is the "blessedness" mentioned in vv. 6-9? Explain.
13. Read vv 9-12. Paul again wants to address an issue that had separated the Jews and the Gentiles: circumcision. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham. Thus the Jews believed that a person had to be circumcised in order to receive the blessings of God. This issue had been addressed by the church in Acts. Yet, it still remained a point of division in some areas. Some Jews were still maintaining that a person had to be circumcised in order to be saved. So, once again, Paul turns to Abraham. Paul has already established that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Paul asks an interesting question: when did

this happen, before or after Abraham was circumcised?

Again, find the scripture reference that tells us that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Then find the reference where God established circumcision as a sign of His covenant with Abraham and the Jewish people. Was Abraham circumcised when he was declared righteous?

What is Paul's point?

Let's look at this situation in a different light. Is baptism important? Please explain.

Is baptism necessary for salvation?

Notice, Paul is not nullifying circumcision or denying its importance. He is showing that God's grace and willingness to bless and forgive and save extends to the circumcised and the uncircumcised. What does this mean to you?

14. In these verses, Paul expounds on the theme that Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation. In verse 11 Paul says that Abraham is the father of whom?

In verse 12 Paul says that Abraham is the father of whom? Under what conditions?

What impact did these words have on the church in Rome? Please explain.

15. In verse 13 Paul talks about the promise given to Abraham. What was that promise?

How or why was this promise given to Abraham?

Therefore, how do God's promises come to you?

What are some of these promises?

16. Once again Paul mentions the law. He writes that if we become heirs through the law, then our faith has no value and the promise is worthless. Why is this true?

To help us understand this concept a little better, let's replace the word "law" with "rituals". In other words, we are not saved through our rituals but through faith. Since this is true, what place do rituals have in the church?

Can you think of examples where rituals or laws have replaced faith in bringing people to Christ?

17. In verse 16 Paul states his conclusion: the promise comes by faith. Therefore, what two things does Paul say are true about the promise?

Are you of the law or are you of the faith of Abraham? Please explain.

Notice that all believers fall into one of these two groups. Paul thus says that all are partakers of this promise. ALL believers. What does this mean to you?

18. What does it mean to you that Abraham is the father of us all?

What significance does this hold for the church today?

19. In verse 17, we read that God promised to make Abraham the father of many nations. How did God fulfill this promise?

Then Paul lists two attributes of God. What are they?

What do these two attributes have to do with the promise God gave Abraham?
What does it mean to you that God calls things that are not as though they were?

20. Verse 18 begins with the phrase "Against all hope, Abraham in hope...." Other versions read, "Who against hope believed in hope," or "In hope he believed against all hope...." What does this phrase mean to you?

Again we see the importance of believing God. Abraham believed God. How would believing God change your life?

How does Abraham's condition parallel man's condition today?

21. Let's look a little more closely at the promise God gave Abraham. Why was and is this promise so important to both Jew and Gentile?

In what way are all nations of the world blessed through Abraham?

22. In verses 19-21 we gain a little more insight into Abraham's life. We read that without weakening his faith or without losing his faith, Abraham faced certain facts. What were the facts that Abraham faced?

How might these facts cause one to "lose" or "waver" in one's faith?

Why did Abraham not waver in his faith?

What causes our faith to waver?

What situations are you facing where the facts seem to defy the promise of God?

How can these verses serve as an encouragement for us?

23. Verse 20 states that Abraham was strengthened in his faith. How can we strengthen our faith?

What can you do to strengthen other people's faith?

24. Verse 21 is a powerful verse. Restate it in your own words.

What does this verse mean to us today?

25. What can we do so that God will credit to us righteousness?

Is this a works' oriented line of thought? Please explain.

26. Paul concludes this chapter by returning to the central point of his letter: Jesus Christ. Only those who believe in Whom will be credited with righteousness?

What truth or truths about Jesus Christ is (are) central to our belief in God?

Once again Paul returns to his main point. What is it? (See 5:1)

27. Paul has used Abraham as an example for us. What have you learned from Paul's discussion on Abraham?

What spiritual truths can we glean from this chapter? Remember, spiritual truths are true for everyone for all time.

28. Do you ever think of God's using your life as an example for others?

What could we learn from you?

Romans 5

1. Chapter 5 begins with the word "therefore" and points to Paul's conclusion. This word connects Paul's present argument with what he has said in previous chapters. He has given the evidence and now reaches a conclusion. Briefly summarize the evidence that Paul has presented in the previous chapters.

What is Paul's conclusion in verse 1?

Has Paul proven his point that we are indeed justified through faith? Please explain.

2. Read verse 1 carefully and notice what follows the "therefore" clause. Since we have been justified through faith, what can we expect?

What does it mean to you to be at peace with another person?

What does it mean to you to be at peace with God?

How is this peace made possible?

How would you describe this peace?

Where are we if we are not at peace with God? (See v. 10 and Romans 8:6.) Please explain.

3. Verse 2 continues Paul's discussion. Paul talks about gaining access to God's grace. What does this mean to you?

According to Paul, how do we gain this access?

What does it mean to you that you have access to God's grace through Jesus Christ?

What does it mean to you to stand in God's grace (see the last part of verse 2)?

As a result, in what does Paul rejoice?

4. We need to take a look at life during Paul's time. For the Jew, having access to God was unthinkable. God told Moses that no one could see Him face to face and live. Gentiles were allowed in the outer court of the temple and no further, so having access to God was an amazing statement. Women could go a little further than the Gentiles, but then they, too, had to stop. Keeping this in mind, what impact do you believe Paul's statement about having access to God's grace had on the church in Rome?

5. It is also important to remember at this time Paul's central argument: we are saved by grace and not through the law. Therefore, Paul is telling us that no one can earn the peace of God. No one can make a treaty with Him. We enter into this peace by faith in Jesus Christ. How does it make you feel to know that you are at peace with God and that this peace is a gift paid for by Jesus Christ? Please explain.

6. In verse 3 Paul makes an interesting statement. He is talking about rejoicing in our sufferings. Please note that Paul does not say rejoice for our sufferings but in our sufferings. What does it mean to you to rejoice?

What does it mean to you to rejoice in our sufferings?

Please note. These sufferings are not the sufferings that come to all people. These sufferings are those that come to believers because they follow Christ. What might some of these sufferings be?

What do we usually do in the midst of our sufferings?

Lest we forget what life was like for the Roman believers, what can you learn about their sufferings?

What can you learn from the Bible about suffering for Christ's sake?

7. Paul now takes us on a journey, a journey that begins with sufferings. Paul says we should rejoice in our sufferings because they produce what in us?

How can sufferings produce perseverance? What exactly is perseverance?

Can you give an example, either from the Bible or from your life, where suffering produced perseverance?

8. Paul continues by saying perseverance produces character. What is character? Please explain in detail.

How does perseverance produce character?

Then, Paul says that character produces hope. How?

9. What does Paul say about hope in verse 5?

Do you agree with Paul that hope does not disappoint or put us to shame? Please explain.

What does it mean to you that God has poured out His love? How has He done this?

We need to remember that verse 5 is a result of a chain of events that began with sufferings. Verses 3-5 have been said to describe the process of maturing in the faith. Do you agree? Please explain your answer.

How does knowing this "process" help you in your walk with the Lord?

How can it help you minister to others?

10. Verse 6 states that when we were utterly helpless, weak, or without strength, God came to our aid. What does it mean to you that we were utterly helpless?

With all of our advancements in technology, medicine, and science, how would you explain this idea to the world today?

Paul goes on to say that at just the right time or in due season, God acted. What does this phrase "at just the right time" mean to you?

What can we learn from this about our timing versus God's timing?

At just the right time, what did Christ do?

11. In verses 7 & 8, Paul explains to us what true love is. He says that it may be possible to find someone who will die for a good person. It may be possible. However, God not only declares His love for us, He demonstrated His love for us. How?

What does it mean to you that while you were still a sinner and an enemy of God, Jesus died for you?

In what ways can you demonstrate your love for Christ?

12. We have spoken before about justification. In verse 9, how are you justified?

We have not earned this justification. It came to us from God through Jesus because He loved us. All who believe are thus justified. Yet, Paul states that we receive another benefit as well. Of what else can we be assured of?

After reading these verses, what does it mean to you to be saved by the blood of Jesus?

13. Verse 10 states the same idea as verse 9 but in a different way. We can read quite clearly that God acted on our behalf when we were His enemies. Therefore, since this is true, what else must be true?

14. Paul begins verse 11 by telling us that there is more good news. What is it?

What does it mean to you that you have received the reconciliation?

Now read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. What do these verses mean to you?

15. In verse 12, Paul tells us that sin entered the world through one man. What does this tell us about sin?

What entered the world through sin?

Based upon this statement, what was God's original intention for His creation?

Why has death come to all men?

Some people might wonder how they could be considered guilty because of what Adam so long ago. Many feel this is not fair. How would answer these concerns?

16. How would you define sin?

Which came first, the law or sin? What is the significance Paul's statement?

What does the last part of verse 13 say about the relationship between sin and the law?

Based upon this truth, what is the purpose of the law?

17. What does Paul mean in verse 14 when he says that death reigned from the time of Adam until the Moses?

According to this verse, what was Adam's sin?

Paul tells us that there are those who sin by not breaking a command of God. Can you give some examples?

In what way was Adam a pattern of the one who was to come?

18. Paul tells us that the sin of one man (Adam) has affected every person. This illustrates the devastating affect of sin. Can you think of examples where the sin of one person affected others?

19. What is the gift mentioned in verse 15?

How did we receive this gift?

In what way or ways is the gift not like the trespass?

How would you restate verse 15?

20. In verse 16, Paul states one of the main differences between the gift and the trespass. What is this difference?

Why is it important for us to know that the gift followed many trespasses?

21. Adam's trespass allowed death to reign? What does this mean to you? What does reign mean?

Paul says that because this is true, that death was allowed to reign, we have another truth. What is this other truth?

Paul talks about those who receive from God. According to verse 17 what two things can we receive from God?

What is the result of this abundant provision?

22. Read vv. 18-19. What was the result of Adam's trespass?

What was the result of Christ's act of righteousness?

Paul wants to make sure we understand this simple but important truth, so he restates in verse 19. What does this verse say?

According to these verses, we have only two choices. What are they?

23. Paul says that the law was added that trespass might increase. Does this mean that there would not be as much sin if we did not have the law? Please explain.

What else increases as sin increases?

Do these two things increase at the same rate or in the same amount? Please explain.

24. Verse 21 begins with "so that" meaning Paul is going to give us the result of verse 20. Because grace increases all the more as sin increases, what is the result?

What does it mean to you that grace reigns through righteousness?

What is the result for all who believe of grace's reign through righteousness?

25. In this chapter, Paul goes to great lengths to show that sin came into creation through one man. Because we are all descendants of Adam, we are all sinners. Paul also tells us that sin reigned, and the law simply reveals the depth of our sin. Yet this is not Paul's main message. State in your own words the good news for all who believe?

Romans 6

1. Once again Paul anticipates a dangerous line of thought. If God is so loving and His grace abounds, then why should we stop sinning? In other words, if God loves to forgive us, then why should we stop sinning? How would you respond to such arguments?

How does Paul respond?

Have you ever encountered this type of reasoning? If so, how did you respond?

What is the danger of this type of thinking?

2. In verses 3 & 4 what does Paul say happens to us during baptism?

What does it mean to you to be baptized "into Christ"?

During Paul's ministry, the church used immersion as the usual form of baptism. How does this symbolize being buried?

What does the coming out of the water symbolize?

According to Paul, what is the result?

If someone asked you, "Why should I be baptized?" what would you answer?

What did your baptism mean to you?

3. What does it mean to you to be "planted" or "united" with Christ in death? To what death is Paul referring?

Have you experienced this "death" in your life? If so, what were some of the changes?

Paul presents verse 5 as an if-then statement. If we are united with Christ in death, then what else must be true?

In what way or ways have you experienced a "resurrection" in Christ Jesus?

4. What does verse 6 says has happened to our old man?

How would you explain what Paul means when he talks about the "old man" or the "old self"?

What does it mean to you that this old self or nature was crucified?

What does it mean to you that someone is a slave to sin?

Why did our old nature have to be crucified?

5. According to verse 7, what happened when we died with Christ?

If our old self is dead and we have died to sin, then does this mean we will never sin? Please explain.

Keeping in mind that Paul says we have died with Christ, why then are we instructed to pick up our cross daily (see Luke 9:23)?

Some people, when they encounter sin in the church, are turned off and say Christians are nothing but hypocrites. How would you respond to them using these opening verses in chapter 6?

6. We live in a world that calls sin a "choice" and that believes morals are relative. How do you think these people would respond to Paul's assertion that are slaves to sin and not truly free?

How can we as the church bring this truth to the world?

Also, we cannot end with the explanation only. We must also include verse 7, which says that we must first die to self before we can ever be free. How do you believe this truth will be received?

What made you believe it to be true?

7. In verse 8, Paul tells us that this death to sin is not the end, but the beginning. In what way is it a new beginning?

What does it mean to you to live with Christ?

Paul gives greater meaning to this truth by pointing out that since Christ died once, He will not die again. What does this mean for those who die to sin and live with Christ?

To help us gain a different perspective on these verses, let us look at the drug campaign started several years ago in schools. Its motto was "Say No! to drugs." After looking closely at the results, some experts voiced concern about its effectiveness. They said the program taught children to say no to drugs, but it did not teach them to say yes to anything else. In other words, it was not enough that they "die" to drugs; they had to "live" to something else. How do these verses address this issue?

Now, how would you respond to someone who feels church is too restrictive to have any fun?

8. In verses 11 & 12, Paul once again makes it clear that all people fall into one of two categories. What are the two categories mentioned in these verses?

What does it mean to you to be dead to sin but alive to Christ?

Would you share an example of this truth operating in your life?

For example, suppose someone in the church offends you...truly offends you. Keeping in mind that you are dead to sin but alive to Christ, how should you respond?

In the NIV version, verse 12 begins with "therefore", signaling Paul is going to conclude an argument. What is Paul's conclusion?

9. Verse 13 is a very interesting verse considering the world in which we live. It begins by saying we are not to yield or offer parts of our body. What does it mean to you to yield?

What evidence do you see around you that people are yielding or offering their bodies as instruments to unrighteousness?

Paul says that we should, instead, offer ourselves to whom? For what purpose?

What does it mean to you to offer your members as instruments of righteousness?

Read Romans 12:1. How does this verse parallel what Paul is writing in this chapter?

What does it mean to you to offer yourself as a living sacrifice? How can one do this and how often should we do this? (Remember, we are living sacrifices.)

10. According to verse 14, why is sin no longer our master?

Again, Paul reminds Jew and Gentile believers alike that they are not under the law but under grace. What does this mean to you?

11. With verse 15, Paul returns to his previous argument that grace is not an excuse to keep on sinning. Paul does not want anyone to mistake God's grace as an excuse to sin. Grace should never negate one's fear of the Lord. Therefore, Paul again emphatically tells the Romans and us that we are not to continue sinning. Why do you think Paul returns to this issue?

Since Paul is revisiting this issue, then let us. In what areas have Christians used grace as an excuse to continue sinning? For example, consider gossip, unforgiveness, coarse joking, favoritism, etc.

12. Paul argues his point using the institution of slavery, something Paul's readers would immediately understand. What does it mean to you to be a slave?

Paul says that every person is either a slave to sin or a slave to obedience. What makes one a slave to sin?

What makes one a slave to obedience?

What is the difference between being a slave to sin and a slave to obedience to Christ?

13. In verse 17 & 18 Paul reminds us that we owe our freedom from sin to Whom?

What did God do for all of us through His Son Jesus Christ?
In these verses what act on our part sets us free from sin and makes us slaves to righteousness?

14. Why did Paul say he used the previous argument between slaves and masters to explain our relationship with Christ?

Christ often taught using parables and stories to explain the mysteries of God. How have His parables helped you understand these mysteries?

Do you have a "favorite" parable? If so, would you share it and explain why it means so much to you?

Have you ever been asked a difficult question about the Bible only to find yourself at a loss as to how to explain it? Has the Holy Spirit ever given you a "human" explanation that helped the other person understand?

Paul uses the analogy of slavery because he knows his listeners know what that entails. Therefore, Paul again reminds us that we all know what it was like to offer the parts of our body to sin. Therefore, we should know what it means to offer ourselves to Christ. Do you agree with this analogy? Please explain.

15. In verse 20 Paul asks us what we gained by serving sin. How would you answer this question?

According to Paul, what do we gain from being slaves to sin?

What do you think Paul means when he says that the result is death?

But now that we are slaves to God, what will we reap?

16. This chapter ends with one of the most often quoted verses. How does this last verse summarize Paul's argument in this chapter?

Why does sin result in death?

Because this is a truth that cannot be ignored, then the wages of our sin had to result in death. Who paid this price for you?

According to Paul, what do we gain from being slaves to sin?

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16. This chapter ends with one of the most often quoted verses. How does this last verse summarize Paul's argument in this chapter?

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Because this is a truth that cannot be ignored, then the wages of our sin had to result in death. Who paid this price for you?

Romans 7

Paul continues his discussion on the law. We must remember that the Jews have been under this form of religion for centuries. It is not easy to initiate change.

1. What argument would you use to convince someone who only knew adherence to the law that he was saved by grace?
2. What does Paul mean that the law only has authority over a man as long as he lives?

What is Paul's point?

3. What does the law say about a man and a woman united in marriage?

According to the law, what is the only way a woman could be released from her husband?

4. Therefore, according to Paul, only death can set us free from the law. What is Paul's point?

According to verse 4, what "death" has set us free from the law?

5. What did God command Adam and Eve upon their marriage? (See Genesis 1:28.)

What are the fruits of our relationship?

6. Read verse 5 carefully. What are some examples from the world around us that some are still controlled by the sinful nature?

Can you give an example where the law actually gives rise to sinful passions? In other words, can you think of a time when someone told you not to do something only to create in you the desire to do just that?

7. Is the law a hindrance to the Spirit? Please explain.

8. Lest we miss Paul's point, we need to understand that Paul is addressing the Jews, but he is talking about the danger of any law. What are some of the laws you see operating in the church today that could actually hinder our relationship with Jesus?

9. In verse 7 Paul emphatically states that the law is not sin. What is one of the benefits of the law?

10. What does Paul mean in verse 8 when he talks about the opportunity afforded to sin by the commandment?

How can the law that commands us not to covet or gossip actually create in us a desire to covet or gossip? What does Paul mean?

What does Paul mean when he says, "Apart from the law, sin is dead" ?

11. Imagine you are on vacation in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. You are thirsty and find yourself by a beautiful, clear, bubbling spring, so you take a drink. You travel a little farther and take another drink. Everything is great. Then you come upon a sign that warns you that, despite the apparent purity of the water, it is really polluted. The sign warns you not to drink the water. How would you react?

Is the sign to blame for "ruining" your drinking water? Do you think you might find yourself thirstier? Please explain.

Can the sign make the water pure?

12. In verse 9 Paul tells us that he once was alive apart from the law. What does he mean?

What happened when Paul heard of God's commandments?

13. In verse 10 Paul says that the law that was meant to bring life, brings death. Explain.

14. What do you think Paul meant in verse 11 when he said that sin seized the opportunity afforded by the law?

In this way, what God meant for good (the law) appears to be bad for us. Can you give an example of what Paul is talking about?

15. Remember, Paul is speaking to the Jews, to whom God gave the law. Lest anyone think Paul is denigrating the law, Paul makes his position very clear. What does Paul say about the law in verse 12?

Can you think of an example where someone blamed the law, spiritual or secular, for their situation instead of blaming themselves? In other words, if there had been no law, there would be no sin. (I remember a story about a man at a football game. He threw a snowball from the upper deck and hit someone, causing serious injury. When interviewed, he stated that if it hadn't snowed, he would not have been able to throw the snowball; therefore, it was not his fault.)

16. Read verse 13. What is the relationship between sin, death, and the law?

17. What does Paul mean when he says in verse 14 that the law is spiritual?

What does he mean when he says he is unspiritual or carnal or of the flesh?

What conflict does this cause for us?

18. Beginning with verse 15, Paul begins to explain the results of an unspiritual person trying to keep spiritual laws. He begins by stating that he does not understand what he does. Can you relate to this sentiment? In other words, can you remember doing something only to look back on it and wonder why you did it?

What is Paul's predicament in verse 15?

19. According to verse 16, how does Paul know that the law is good?

Please explain how Paul arrived at this conclusion.

20. We need to be very careful with verse 17. Who or what is responsible for Paul's doing the wrong thing?

Some people do use the excuses, "Well, I just couldn't help myself," or "That's just the way I am." How would you respond to these excuses?

21. Paul now talks about basic human nature. What does Paul say about himself in verse 18?

What is Paul saying in verses 18 & 19?

What does it mean to you that Paul, one of the Lord's greatest apostles, struggled to do what was good and often failed?

22. Paul again tells us that he is not the one doing this, but it is the sin living in him. So, what law is at work?

Paul continues to paint a very bleak picture. In his inner being he loves God's law. But, what other law is at work in Paul and in us?

What is the war that is raging in Paul?

23. If we were to stop now, we would lose all hope. As a matter of fact, what does Paul say about himself in verse 24?

24. Now we come to the climax of this section of Paul's letter. Who can rescue us from this terrible situation?

Why is it important for us to know that only Christ can rescue us from this situation?

What is Christ able to do that the law cannot do?

Romans 8

1. Briefly, what is this struggle that all Christians face as outlined in chapters 1-7?

Why would this struggle make people feel condemned?

How would this interfere with your serving Christ?

2. In verse 1, according to Paul, why is there **NOW** no condemnation for those who are in Christ?

Why did Paul include the word "now" in this verse?

When Paul says that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ, is he saying that we can do what we want? Please explain.

3. In verse 2, we see that one of the powerful ministries of the Holy Spirit is to set us free from sin and death. How has this freedom impacted your life? In other words, what have you done with this freedom?

How does this free us from condemnation?

4. Summarize verses 3 and 4.

What does it mean to you that Christ was sent "in the likeness" of a sinful man?

How did Jesus take away our condemnation?

It is important for us to understand that God could not do away with His law or ignore it. Knowing our weakness, God chose the only way to fulfill the requirement of the law without condemning us. What does this reveal about God's nature?

5. What two groups are mentioned in verse 5?

What characterizes each group?

What does the sinful nature desire?

What evidence of this do you see in the world around us?

What does the Holy Spirit desire?

6. In verse 6 & 7, Paul goes into more detail about these two groups. What else does Paul say about the mind of a sinful man?

Why is it impossible for the mind of a sinful to please God?

7. Does having a mind controlled by the Spirit mean we will never sin? Please explain.

What does it mean to you to have your mind set on the things of the Spirit?

8. Notice in these verses that Paul does not say that the mind of a sinful man **leads** to death or the mind controlled by the Spirit **leads** to life and peace. Instead, what does Paul say?

What does this mean to you?

9. What does verse 7 say about the sinful mind?

What does it mean to you for someone to be hostile to God?

Can you think of any examples where this type of hostility is visible? If so, please explain.

10. What does it mean to you to please God?

In what ways can a husband please his wife or a wife please her husband?

In what ways can we please God?

Why can those who are controlled by the sinful nature or by the flesh NOT please God?

Who or what enables us to be able to please God?

11. Verse 9 can be read as a word of encouragement and as a reminder. Please explain.

Paul is very clear in this verse; we are either controlled by the flesh or by the Spirit. How can we tell the difference?

We are controlled by the Spirit if what is true?

What does it mean to you to have the Spirit of God living in you?

In the last part of this verse, what does Paul say about those who do not have the Spirit?

If you walked into most churches today and made the statement, "If you do not have the Spirit of Christ living in you, then you are not a Christian," what do you believe would be the reaction?

What is the evidence of a life that is controlled by the Spirit?

12. How would you explain verse 10 to someone who was new to the church or who was just interested in knowing more?
13. In verse 11, what is the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in this verse?
19. What does it mean to you to be obligated?

According to verse 13, if we have the Spirit living in us, what will we do?

20. What does it mean to be led by the Spirit of God?

What is a Godly decision and how can we make Godly decisions?

If God's children are led by the Spirit, then how do you explain the unwise decisions we sometimes make?

21. How can we be led by the Spirit in a world that seeks to remove the Spirit from life?
22. Verse 15 uses the word "Abba" to refer to God. What can you learn about this word?
23. What does Deu. 17:6 say about witnesses? In verse 16, who are the witnesses to our being God's children?

24. What does verse 17 mean to you personally?

What "condition" does Paul place on our being co-heirs with Jesus?

What do we stand to inherit as God's children? (See Gal. 3:26 and 4:7; Eph. 1:14)

25. What does it mean to you that we have been adopted into God's family?

According to Roman law, a father's rule over his children was absolute. If he was disappointed in his natural sons' skill, character, or any other attribute, he would search diligently for a boy available for adoption who demonstrated the qualities he desired. If the boy proved himself worthy, the father would take the necessary legal steps for adoption. At the death of the father, a favored adopted son would sometimes inherit the father's title, the major part of the estate, and would be the primary progenitor of the family name. Because of its obvious great importance, the process of Roman adoption involved several carefully prescribed legal procedures. The first step totally severed the boy's legal and social relationship to his natural family and the second step placed him permanently into his new family. In addition to that, all of his previous debts and other obligations were eradicated, as if they had never existed. For the transaction to become legally binding, it also required the presence of seven reputable witnesses, who could testify if necessary, to any challenge of the adoption. How does this description help us understand this verse about "sonship?"

Had you been a Jew reading Paul's letter, how might you have reacted to this declaration that Gentiles have been adopted into God's family and were equal heirs with the Jews?

26. According to verse 18, what helps Paul with his present suffering?

27. Beginning in verse 19, Paul tells us that we are not the only ones waiting in expectation. Paul tells us that creation waits with eager expectation because it, too, is suffering. What words does Paul use in verses 19-22 to illustrate the sufferings of creation?

In what ways can we still witness the suffering of creation?

28. Who else is "groaning" with the pains of childbirth in verse 23?

How does 2 Cor. 1:21-22 relate to this verse?

29. Verse 25 is an important verse. What does it mean to you? How have you seen this displayed in your life?

How does the Spirit help us in our weakness?

This verse is often used to explain "speaking in tongues." How do you feel about that?

What is intercessory prayer?

30. Verse 28 is one of the most oft quoted verses. Why?

How can this verse be misused?

What does it mean?

Romans 9

Sometimes we can become so engrossed or driven by our witness or desire to see others come to Christ that our relationship with them can suffer. Paul understands that some of his words might be difficult for his fellow Jews to assimilate. Paul wants all to know, Jew and Gentile alike, that he in no way looks down upon the Jews nor does he separate himself from them.

1. Can you think of a time when your desire to witness to someone close to you actually caused you to lose patience with that person?

This may seem a simple question, but how important is maintaining your love when introducing others to Christ? Please explain.

2. Verse 1 begins with Paul's words, "I tell you the truth in Christ...." Why do you believe Paul begins with this phrase?

Have you ever used a phrase like this when speaking about Jesus? Please explain.

It is common for someone to say, "Honestly," or "I'm telling the truth." Yet Paul adds the phrase "in Christ" to his statement. What does it mean to you to tell the truth in Christ?

What does it mean to you to tell the truth "outside of Christ?"

Does the world recognize more than one truth? Please explain.

Can you give an example of conflicting truths in our world today?

3. Paul also says that his conscience confirms this truth in the Holy Spirit. What does this mean to you?

Can you think of a time when the truth was confirmed by your conscience in the Holy Spirit?

How did this confirmed truth affect you?

Who or what do you think led to this confirmation?

4. What does verse 2 tell us?

Is there anything in the world that causes you unceasing anguish? If so, why?

Why do you feel Paul feels such sorrow and anguish?

How would such feelings affect your relationship with Jesus? Your prayer life?

5. In verse 3, Paul reveals his wish. What is it?

Who are his brothers?

What does this wish tell you about Paul? About his brothers?

How would you describe the spiritual condition of your nation at this time?

Who are our brothers and sisters?

What does "cut off from Christ" mean to you?

Do you think Paul is serious when he says this? Please explain.

Can you remember a time when you passionately wanted a loved one to come to know Christ? What were you willing to do to help that person?

Can we "save" another person? Please explain. (See Acts 4:10-12.)

How would you respond to those who believe that there are alternate ways to be saved or that God would not send good people to hell?

6. Paul considers all believers, both Gentile and Jew, his brothers. Specifically, about whom is Paul speaking?

There is an old belief in the church that is called "replacement theology." It states that because of Israel's sins, God has replace Israel with the church. How would you respond to this idea?

Looking at Paul's words, how can we tell that Paul does not believe God has forgotten the Jewish people?

In verses 3 and 4, Paul tells us what is unique about the Jewish people. What are these "advantages" that Paul lists?

What is a covenant?

What is the difference between a covenant and an agreement?

What are some of the covenants that God made with Israel?

Are these covenants still valid? Please explain.

In what way or ways have we entered into a covenant with God?

What does it mean to you that Israel has received the adoption as sons? (See Due. 7:6.)

7. Who are the patriarchs Paul mentions in verse 5?

What does Paul say about Christ?

What covenant did God make to Abraham? (See Genesis 12:2-3.)

Do you still believe this covenant exists? Please explain.

If so, what implication does that hold for us?

Where or how does the church fit into this covenant with Abraham? (Look ahead to Romans 11:16-18.)

8. What does Paul tell us in verse 6?

Can God's word ever fail? Please explain.

Read Numbers 23:19. What does that verse mean to you?

What does it have to do with Paul's words in verse 6?

We are living in a time when some believe that God's word has "failed." The creation is only a myth. The flood is just a story to teach us certain lessons. Hell is not forever. Jesus is only one way into heaven. How would you respond to this belief that God's word fails or changes?

If not everyone who is descended from Israel (Jacob) is Israel (the nation), then who are Israel?

How would you define a Jew? (See Romans 2:28-29.)

9. Verse 9 talks about the promise given to Abraham. What was that promise?

Who was the child of that promise?

Who were Rebekah's children?

What is the significance of their having the same father?

According to verse 11-12, what did God decide?

Upon what did God base His decision?

If you were asked why some people are chosen for greater works, how would you answer?

Does this mean God loves some more than others? Please explain.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. How do they relate to these verses concerning the promise?

Why is it important that we cannot gain God's favor or promises through works?

10. What does verse 13 tell us?

This can be a difficult verse to understand. Verse 11 stated that God chose Jacob before either Jacob or Esau was even born. So, how do you explain that God loved Jacob but hated Esau?

To better understand this verse, look at Malachi 1:2-3. What does God say in these verses?

In Malachi, to whom does Jacob refer? To whom does Esau refer?

Paul is not referring to Jacob and Esau as individuals but as nations. What nation sprang from Esau? (See Malachi 1:4).

Why did God "hate" Edom?

11. Paul, anticipating questions about God's fairness after his statement about God's hating Esau, asks a question. What does he ask?

Have you ever felt that God acted unjustly? Please explain.

Is it possible for God to be unjust? Please explain.

If it is impossible for God to be unjust, how do we approach verses like verse 13 that seem unjust?

How does Paul answer this accusation against God? (See verse 15.)

What does God's statement mean to you?

Is it unfair of God for God to exercise His divine right to show mercy or not to show mercy? Please explain.

Can you think of a time when God showed mercy to Moses? When God did not show mercy to Moses?

According to verse 16, upon whom or what do God's decisions rest?

Would you like it better if we could earn God's mercy or compassion? Please explain.

12. Now Paul touches on a subject that has led to many conversations. According to verse 17, why did God raise up Pharaoh?

What does Exodus 9:12? Does this mean Pharaoh had no choice?

Therefore, what does Paul conclude?

In verse 19, Paul addresses a question that has been asked for ages. Why would one think that God was not being fair?

How would answer someone's claim that God is blaming us?

13. Is it wrong to question God? Please explain.

What is the difference between questioning God and talking back to God?

How do you react to verses 20 - 21?

How does it make you feel to be referred to as a "lump of clay"?

Look at Psalm 8:4-5. How does this fit with the "lump of clay" statement?

Some are made for noble purposes and some for common. Does this mean some are more important than others?

14. Who are the objects of wrath in verse 22?

How did God's showing patience with them demonstrate His power?

Who were the objects of mercy?

How did this event demonstrate God's mercy and riches?

How does Paul's argument show that God's wrath and/or mercy is never arbitrary?

15. Paul is speaking to the Jews who did not like the idea that Gentiles were saved by grace. They felt the Gentiles would shame the Jews because the Gentiles knew so little. How does Paul's example of Pharaoh and Israel address this issue?

Can you think of another example when God's mercy was made evident by a demonstration of His wrath?

In verse 23, Paul talks about those whom God prepared in advance for His glory. Is this predestination? Does it mean that we have no choice in who is selected for glory?

Because the Jews reacted negatively to the Gentiles' being saved by grace, God's grace actually became a stumbling block to the Jews. Can you think of any personal examples where you have experienced His grace being a stumbling block?

Read verses 23-24 carefully. Who is the "us" to whom Paul refers in verse 24?

16. Paul refers to Hosea to show that he was not preaching a new doctrine. Why is it important to know the Scriptures, both Old and New?

What does God say to Hosea?

Who are the ones God refers to as "not my people" and "not my loved one"?

What will God say to them?

What did this mean to the Jew? To the Gentiles? To us?

17. Now look at verse 26. Paul is referring to Hosea 1: 9-10. What do those verses say?

What do they have to do with Paul's present argument?

What do these verses mean for us today?

What did Israel or any of us do to earn God's favor, grace, or love?

18. Now comes a difficult truth. What is the implication of verse 27?

This verse also addresses the question that many ask about life before Christ was born. According to Isaiah, who is the remnant that will be saved?

Look at Matthew 7:21. How do Jesus' words to us mirror Isaiah's words?

How is it possible to know the law as the Pharisees did yet not do the will of the Father?

Verse 28 talks about God's acting with speed or without delay and with finality or certainty. What does this mean to you?

19. Again, Paul refers to Isaiah. What truth does Paul state in verse 29?

Isaiah, and thus Paul, are referring to the Jews as God's descendants. Are the Gentiles also God's descendants? If so, what meaning does this hold for the church?

According to verses 30-32, how did the Gentiles obtain God's righteousness? What kept the Jews from obtaining that righteousness?

Why do you think people still try to obtain this righteousness through the law or legalism?

How would you explain the difference between knowing the law and knowing Jesus?

20. Read Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16. What was Isaiah saying?

How is Jesus still causing people to stumble?

What does Jesus promise those who trust in Him?

Romans 10

1. How can you tell when someone is being sincere?

To many of the Jews, it may appear as if Paul is attaching everything they hold dear, which would make it easy to misinterpret Paul's motives. Therefore, what assurance does Paul give them?

How do we know Paul is sincere?

Do you believe it is possible for an entire city or people to be saved? How do you react when someone says that all of Coalgate will be saved?

Why do you think Paul makes this statement at this time?

2. What does it mean to have zeal?

About what are you zealous?

What does it mean to you that the Jews were zealous for God?

Can people say that about you?

Read Isaiah 9:7 and John 2:16-17. What can these verses teach us about zeal?

However, what does Paul say about the Jews' zeal for God?

If their zeal was not based upon knowledge, upon what was it based?

Paul knows a great deal about zeal without knowledge. How?

Can you think of any current examples where people's zeal for someone or something is not based upon knowledge?

What is the result of zeal that is not based upon knowledge?

3. In verse 3, what reason does Paul give for their "zeal that is not based on knowledge?"

What is the knowledge upon which we should base our zeal for the Lord?

The Jews ignorance of God's righteousness and salvation led to their present condition. Is ignorance of God's ways a good excuse? Please explain.

Look at Acts 17:30, Eph. 4:18, and 1 Timothy 1:13. What do these verses tell us about ignorance?

What is the result when people try to establish their own righteousness?

Are people still trying to do this today?

4. In verse 4 what does Paul mean when he says that Christ is the end (the completion, the fulfillment) of the law?

What, then, was the purpose of the law?

According to Paul, what did Moses say about righteousness that is by the law?

What does Moses' statement mean to you? How does it relate to Paul's previous statement that Christ is the end of the law?

5. According to verses 6 & 7, what does righteousness by faith say?

What does it mean to you to bring Christ down? (Look at Deut. 30:12.)

What are some ways that people try to bring Jesus down?

Why do you think some think that it is difficult to understand the Bible?

Paul answers that concern in verse 8. What does he say?

In what way is the word always near us?

6. Next come some of the most quoted verses. What does it mean to be saved?

In this process, why is important for us to speak what we believe?

Why is it important for us to believe in our hearts?

How did you feel when you learned that being saved was so "easy"?

7. Paul continues to state the benefits of accepting Jesus as our Savior. What does he say in verse 11?

What does it mean to trust in someone?

Paul then returns to one of his major themes. What does he say in verses 12-13?

Does this mean the Jews are not important? Please explain.

8. In verse 13 Paul is quoting from the book of Joel. Read Joel 2:28-32. What do these verses mean to you?

Paul quotes v. 32. Joel speaks of a time yet to come. Paul speaks of a time that has come. What does it mean to you to see a prophecy fulfilled?

Does verse 13 still hold true for us today?

9. Paul now asks a series of questions. He begins with Joel's statement that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. What is Paul's first question?

What is his second question?

Third? Fourth?

How would you answer these questions?

Why do you think Paul ends this section with the statement, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news"?

For the full context of this statement, look at Isaiah 52:5-7. What do these scriptures mean to you?

Who are the ones who bring the good news and peace?

10. What statement does Paul make in verse 16?

Does that statement apply to Gentiles as well? To our generation?

Why would the Jews (or anybody) not accept the good news?

Paul once again quotes Isaiah. What does Isaiah 53:1 say?

What does that prophetic message from Isaiah mean for the Jews and for us?

Some versions read that few have accepted the good news, yet Paul continues to proclaim the good news. How do you think he keeps from becoming discouraged?

What is the message for us?

11. State verse 17 in your own words.

This verse states a truth that we cannot escape. According to this verse, what is our responsibility?

Some would argue that if they do not hear the word, then they cannot be saved. Therefore, if they don't hear, they cannot be held accountable. Paul responds to this reasoning with a rhetorical question. What is that question in verse 18?

Paul refers to Psalm 19:4. Read Psalm 19:1-4. How do these verses "answer" the premise that people have not heard the good news?

12. Do you think it is important for us to study the Old Testament? Please explain.

The Jews argued that they should be held accountable because the good news could not be found in the Old Testament. In other words, the good news the Gentiles had heard was a new gospel; therefore, the Jews should not be held accountable. How does Paul address this argument?

God is speaking in verse 19. To whom is God speaking?

Who are the people who are not a nation?

What does God say to the Jews?

How is God going to make them angry?

Have you ever witnessed or felt the anger of some believers who were offended by the actions of new believers?

13. What else does God say through Isaiah in verse 20 (Isaiah 65:1)? About whom is God speaking?

What does God say about Israel in verse 21 (Isaiah 65:2)?

What does it mean to you that God held out His hands all day long?

For whom did He do this?

Why would or does God hold out His hands to those who are disobedient?

14. Paul uses the ancient texts in his present discussion with the Jews. Why is it important for us to know AND understand the Old Testament?

How can understanding these prophecies from Isaiah help us understand our present times?

Romans 11

1. In verse 1 Paul addresses an issue that is still an issue. After going to great lengths to show that the law cannot save us, Paul anticipates the conclusion reached by many: has God rejected the Jews. What is Paul's answer?

Paul uses himself as a way of proving that God has not rejected them. How does he do this?

What does Paul say about himself?

Read 1 Samuel 12:22 and Psalm 94:14. What do these verses say about this issue?

How would you respond to someone who believes that God replaced the Jews with the church?

Why do you think this is still a belief today?

2. Paul gives us another reason why we need to know the scriptures. He pointedly states that God did not reject His people. What does Paul use as proof?

What is the significance of God's reserving the 7,000 that did not bow to Baal? (See v.5.)

What is the significance of this remnant's not bowing a knee?

How has God chosen this current remnant?

3. Paul gives us an excellent picture of grace in verse 6. According to this verse, what is grace?

How do "words" negate grace?

What was Israel seeking in verse 7?

Why did they not obtain it even though they sought it earnestly?

How did the elect obtain it?

4. What does Paul say about those who tried to obtain favor through the law? (See vs 7-8)

What hardened them?

What is a spirit of stupor?

Why would God give them a spirit of stupor?

Does this verse mean that God prevented Israel from "seeing" and "hearing"?

What are we to learn from these verses?

What might keep people from "seeing" and from "hearing"?

5. Paul quotes David in verse 9. What does David pray? (See Psalm 69:22-23.)

What does this mean to you?

Why would David pray this?

Why would God answer such a prayer?

6. Why do people jump to conclusions?

Once again, to curb people's tendency to jump to conclusions, Paul uses another question in anticipation. What question does Paul use?

What does this question tell us about what the people were likely to think?

Also, again, Paul emphatically answers, "Not at all," to the false conclusion that Israel has fallen beyond God's reach. However, how did God use the Jew's transgression?

How does it make you feel that we (Gentiles) came to salvation through Israel's transgression?

Does this mean that if the Jews had not transgressed and had accepted Jesus that the Gentiles would not have known salvation? Please explain.

Can you think of a bad situation that resulted from a grievous sin that God used for good?

7. Paul next speaks to a future event in verse 12. What is that future event?

If the world came to salvation through Israel's transgression, what will be the result when Israel accepts Christ and comes into her fullness?

According to Paul's reasoning, how should the Gentile church feel about the salvation of Israel?

How do you explain the rise of anti-Semitism considering Paul's words?

8. For most of his letter, Paul has been speaking directly to the Jews. In verse 13, he now turns to the Gentiles. Why does Paul address this last argument to the Gentiles?

Could Paul still be addressing the church today?

Why does Paul refer to himself as the Apostle to the Gentiles?

What does Paul mean when he says, "I make much of my ministry (to the Gentiles)"?

Why should we all "make much of our ministry"?

What does Paul hope in addressing the Gentiles? (See verse 14.)

Of what does Paul hope the Jews will be jealous?

Does your life with Jesus spark others to jealousy?

9. How would you answer the question in verse 16?

So far it would seem that Paul has been focusing on Israel's failure to accept Jesus and, thus, their fall. However, Paul is really addressing the restoration of Israel. What does it mean that God can restore nations and us?

If we reject God's willingness to restore Israel, what are we saying about ourselves?

What are firstfruits? (See Exodus 34:26 and Numbers 18:12-13.)

In verse 16, who is the part of the dough that was offered as firstfruits?

Who or what is the dough?

If the firstfruit is holy, then what about the rest of the dough?

10. Paul next turns to one of the most commonly used metaphors in Bible: the olive tree.
Why do you think this was such a common image?

Paul states that if the root is holy, then the branches are holy. Who are the roots? Who are the branches?

What is entailed in grafting a branch onto a tree?

Who or what is the wild olive tree? What does the "wild" denote?

Verse 17 sums up the Gentiles relationship with Israel and God. How would you paraphrase this verse?

As a Gentile, how does this make you feel?

Why would the Gentiles be boasting? Why does the church boast today?

According to Paul's explanation, why is it foolish for the Gentiles to boast and feel superior to the Jews? (See verse 18b.)

How does the root support the Gentiles? The Church?

11. Earlier Paul was telling the Jews not to boast. Now he says the same thing to the Gentiles. About what would the Gentiles boast?

Why does he tell the Gentiles not to boast?

If God broke off the natural branches because they did not produce good fruit, then what is the implication for the branches that have been grafted in.

Does Paul's warning still apply to us today?

According to verse 20, why were the natural branches broken off?

On what are the Gentiles and we to stand?

What would make Christians arrogant?

Of what were the Gentiles to be afraid?

Had the natural branches not been broken off, would the Gentiles still be grafted into the vine? Please explain.

What is the implication of verse 21 for the Gentiles?

Using Paul's argument to the Gentiles, what should be our relationship with Israel?

12. In verse 22, what two characteristics of God does Paul list?

In what way has God shown His kindness? His sternness?

How do these two characteristics work together?

What is the danger of focusing one without the other?

God never removes hope from us. Therefore, what does Paul say in verse 24?

13. What does the Bible say about ignorance? (See Hosea 4:6; Acts 17:30-31; Eph. 4:18.)

Of what does Paul not want them to be ignorant?

What is a mystery?

What is the mystery?

What does Paul mean by "the full number of the Gentiles has come in"?

14. What does Paul conclude in verse 26?

What does he mean that all Israel will be saved?

What "proof" does Paul give for this conclusion? (See Isaiah 59:20-21; Jer. 31:33-34.)

What is a covenant?

Why do you think someone would not want to enter into this covenant?

15. Verse 28 is interesting. What does it mean when Paul states, "As far as the gospel is concerned...?"

According to the gospel, what conclusion does Paul reach about the Jews?

As far as their election is concerned, what is Paul's conclusion?

Despite their rejection of Jesus, why are the Jews still loved?

According to the gospel, what conclusion can we reach about people today?

16. Verse 29 is another verse that is often quoted by itself. People often use this verse in reference to the church. We tell people that no matter what they have done, the gifts God gave them and His call on their lives are irrevocable. While this is applicable, it sometimes obscures Paul's original meaning. This verse comes at the end of Paul's reasoning that God has not rejected the Jews. How would you paraphrase this verse?

What is meant by the "call of God"?

What does Paul say about the Gentiles in verse 30?

Therefore, because verse 30 is true, what does Paul conclude in verse 31?

Is Paul's reasoning still sound today?

What is Paul's final conclusion in verse 32?

17. Verses 33-36 are often labeled in Bibles as the "Doxology." What is a doxology?

Why do you think these verses are called a doxology?

What does each verse reveal about God?

How or why are these verses consider worship?

Romans 12

1. So far in his letter, Paul has focused on supporting his argument that both Jews and Gentiles need Jesus, that works cannot replace grace, and that both have a place in God's plans. Now, Paul moves to the application of his argument. Is it difficult for you to put into practice what the Bible explains? Please explain.

Why is it important to put into practice what God says? (See Matthew 7:24-27.)

Why do you think it is difficult for people, both then and now, to put God's word into practice?

2. In verse 1, Paul urges his brothers to do what?

What can we tell about Paul that he used the word "urge"?

What does it mean to you that we are to be living sacrifices?

What type of sacrifices do you feel would be pleasing to God? (See Proverbs 21:3, Matthew 9:13, Romans 6:13.)

3. What does it mean to conform to a pattern or an idea?

In what ways does the world try to get us to conform to its ideals and behaviors?

How does Paul tell us to avoid conforming to the pattern of the world?

What is the difference between "conform" and "transform"?

According to Paul, who or what is responsible for the conforming to the world?

Who or what is responsible for the transforming of our minds?

What is the significance in Paul's statement that transformation comes from the renewing of our minds?

Are you good at determining what is God's "good, pleasing, and perfect will"?

Can you give examples of Christians conforming to the pattern of the world?

Can you remember a time when you were transformed by the renewing of your mind?

4. Continuing to speak to both Jews and Gentiles as one, Paul states that he speaks because of the grace given to him. What does this mean?

What does Paul admonish us not to do?

Instead, what are we to do?

What standard are we to use when thinking or measuring ourselves?

How does Paul's advice help unify the Body of Christ?

5. Verse 5 begins one of Paul's most vivid examples. What does Paul say about our physical bodies?

How does this analogy apply to the Body of Christ?

In what way do the parts of the body belong to each other?

When have you witnessed the Body of Christ being the Body of Christ?

6. Paul next talks about spiritual gifts. How would explain spiritual gifts to a new Christian?

When did you realize you had a spiritual gift?

What are some of the gifts Paul lists in vs. 6-8?

Why do you believe people have such a difficult time identifying their gifts?

7. Paul goes into more detail about spiritual gifts in his letter to the church in Corinth. However, Paul does not want the emphasis to be on the gifts alone. Why?

In verse 9, Paul shifts from spiritual gifts to love. Why do you believe he did this?

What does this mean for us?

What does Paul say about love?

Where or how might we encounter a love that is not sincere?

What does it mean we are to hate what is evil?

Why do we have to cling to what is good?

Can you give an example of a time when you had to cling what is good?

8. Paul continues to detail how we are to live as the Body of Christ. What does he instruct us to do in verses 9-13?

How does these instructions help us to live as one body united in Christ?

Which of these stand out to you for one reason or another?

In view of how the Jews and the Gentiles viewed each other and in view of how people treat each other today, verse 14 can be especially challenging. How can we bless people who persecute us?

How do we curse people?

Why is blessing those who persecute us such an important concept?

Do you see a relationship or correlation between verses 9 and 14? Please explain.

When have you "cursed" instead of "blessed" someone?

When have "blessed" someone?

9. Paul continues pointing out how we are to put Christ's words into actions. What does Paul tell us in verses 15-16?

How do we live in harmony each other? Does this also include those in the world?

What is one way we can avoid pride?

Whom would you consider "people of low position"?

What might lead us to become conceited?

10. Verses 17 and 19 could be sides of the same coin. In verses 17, what does Paul instruct us not to do?

If we repay someone evil for evil, are we seeking revenge? Please explain.

Why are we not to take revenge?

Paul states that we are to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. Are there some things that everyone thinks is right? What are some?

Why do you think Paul added "if it is possible" to the beginning of verse 18?

According to verse 20, how are we to treat those who are evil?

What does it mean that being kind would heap burning coals on his head?

11. Verse 21 concludes this chapter. It is very clear. What does it mean to overcome something?

According to God's word, the only way to overcome evil is with good. If we react to evil with evil, what will be the outcome?

Taking all Paul has said in this chapter, some might now debate what is evil and what is good. How do we tell the difference?

It seems we can apply this verse every day. It is not easy to put into practice. Yet, it is not optional. How, then, can we consistently overcome evil with good?

12. The way Paul states these ways we are to live our faith points out that they are all a result of our choice and not a result of how we feel. Why is this important?

What can happen when we act based upon our emotions?

How can we consistently make these choices in a world that is so hostile to Christ and us?

Romans 13

1. What does it mean to you to submit? Do you have a positive or negative reaction to the word?

What does it mean to you to submit to Christ?

How does Paul open this chapter?

According to Paul, why are we to submit to the governing authorities?

How would you define our "governing authorities"?

2. Paul is very clear. He says that everyone **MUST** submit. Can we be obedient to Jesus if we do not submit to our governing authorities? Please explain.

What is civil disobedience? Is practicing civil disobedience in conflict with Paul's statement? Please explain. (Look at Acts 5:25-29; Daniel 3; Exodus 1:15-22)

Is obeying this command an issue for us today? If so, why?

What is the implication for us that all authorities that exist have been established by God?

3. Therefore, according to verse 2, what are the consequences of rebelling against the authorities?

Would you every consciously consider open rebellion against God? Can you think of examples from the Bible of how God deals with such rebellion? (See 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Numbers 20:10-13.)

What is the result of such disobedience or rebellion?

What do you believe Paul meant by his statement that rebelling against authorities will bring judgement?

Applying Paul's statement to our present situation, what should be Christians' relationship to whomever or whatever party is in charge?

What are our responsibilities when that government institutes policies that conflict with God's "policies"?

4. In verse 3 Paul gives us a very simple reason for submitting to authorities. What is that reason?

When has the "fear" of authority kept you from doing wrong?

What does it mean to you to live in the kingdom of God? (See Matthew 6:31-33.)

What can you learn about Nero Caesar and his rule over Christians? (If you have access to the Internet, look at <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/623-nero-caesar-and-the-christian-faith>)

Remembering what type of person Nero was, now how do you view Paul's statement in verse 1?

5. According to verses 4 and 5, all those in authority are servants of whom?

Therefore, why does Paul tell us that we are to submit to the authorities?

What are the authorities over you?

Many feel that politics and religion should not be mixed. Thus, we should not bring politics into the church. How do you feel about this issue and why?

How do you think Paul would feel about that belief?

6. How would you explain the phrase, "listening to one's conscience"?

How has listening to your conscience kept you from doing wrong?

Do you believe God uses our consciences to speak and guide us? Please explain.

7. Why should we pay taxes? (See Matthew 22:19-21)

Looking at verse 7, what should be our attitude about paying taxes?

Paul says that we should give to everyone we owe, but Paul is talking about more than money. According to this verse, what are some of the other things we can owe?

To whom do we owe a debt of respect? A debt of honor?

To whom do you owe a debt of respect or honor?

8. In verse 8, Paul says we should have no outstanding debt. Does this mean we are not to borrow money? Please explain. (See Matthew 5:42.)

Why should we not have outstanding debts, especially monetary? (See Proverbs 2:7; Psalm 37:21.)

Thus, we are also to pay our debts of respect and honor. How do we pay debts of respect? Of honor?

According to verse 8, we are to have only one outstanding debt. What is that debt?

Why is the debt of love a continuing debt?

To whom do we owe this debt of love? (See last part of verse 8 and Matthew 22:36-40.)

How prompt are you in paying this continuing debt of love?

9. Paul paraphrases Jesus' answer about the greatest commandment in verses 9 and 10. How are all the commandments summed up in the one rule: Love your neighbor as yourself?

How would this one commandment keep us from committing adultery, murder, stealing, covetousness, etc.?

We need to remember that Paul was addressing both Jews and Gentiles, two groups that had nothing to do with each other, which gives this command added meaning. How are we to apply this command in our lives?

Where can we see the effects of the lack of this love in our world today?

Verse 10 gives us the simple yet profound reason that love is the greatest commandment. How would love quell the serious divides in our nation?

What can we do as believers in Jesus to spread this truth?

Look at 1 John 4:7-9, and 19-21. How would you explain these verses to another?

10. To whom is Paul speaking in verse 11? To whom would he be addressing if he were speaking today?

What does Paul say?

Paul's words are still timely today. Understanding the present time, it is time to wake from our slumber. What does this mean?

What does it mean to you that we are to remain awake? (See Matthew 25:1-13. How do you interpret this parable?)

11. What does Paul mean that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed?

What does Paul mean by "the night is nearly over; the day is almost here"?

What are the deeds of darkness?

What does it mean to put on the armor of light?

12. Verse 12 in the NIV reads, "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime." Other versions read, "Let us behave honestly, properly, or becomingly." How would you explain this statement to a new Christian?

What are some of the activities that are done in the "darkness"?

Why do you think Paul lists strife and jealousy in the same category as sexual promiscuity?

How do we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

How would you tell the difference between one who was clothed in Christ and one who was clothed in the flesh?

13. We often hear people say they fear Christians being elected to public office because they fear that Christian beliefs would get in the way. Using what Paul states in this chapter, how would allay that fear or concern?

Romans 14

1. What does it mean to you that the Body of Christ is to one?

Look at Psalm 133:1; Gal. 5:25; Eph 4:1-3. Why do you think the Lord places such value in unity?

What would this unity look like?

What is our individual responsibility in maintaining this unity?

Are we able to reach this unity on our own? Please explain.

Are disagreements necessarily a sign of disunity? Please explain.

What do you believe are the main causes of disagreements in the Body of Christ?

How are Christians to handle disagreements when they arise?

2. Is there a difference between someone with weak faith or one who is weak in the faith? Please explain.

Can you remember a time when you weak in your faith? If so, who or what helped you strengthen your faith?

Why is it important for us to accept those whose faith is weak?

Paul says that we are to resist passing judgment on disputable matters (some versions read "opinions"). What do you think are some "disputable matters" we face today?

What is the danger of passing judgement on these issues?

3. In verses 2-3, Paul addresses one of these issues facing the church in Rome: food. Paraphrase Paul's argument.

How does his reasoning apply to us?

What does verse 4 mean to you? Again, how are we to apply this truth?

Remembering that Paul is addressing Jews and Gentiles. God commanded the Jews to keep the feasts; therefore, these were very special days to them, but this was not so for the Gentiles. Do you think the Gentile church should observe the feasts, such as Passover and Feast of Tabernacles? Please explain.

Should Christians participate in Halloween? Please explain.

The church in Rome was dealing with the same issues concerning "special days." What advice does Paul give in verses 5-6?

4. What is the implication of verse 6 for us?

Read Colossians 3:17. How does this verse mirror Paul's words to the Romans?

What does Paul mean when he says in verse 7 that none of us lives to himself or herself?

For whom, then, are we to live?

How would this help remove arguments and disunity from the church?

What does it mean to you to "live to the Lord"?

What are some other objects or persons for which people can live?

Many people will say that their children are the most important people in their lives and they live for them. How do you think Paul would respond to that statement?

How would you explain verse 8 to a new Christian?

5. How would you answer the question, "Why did Jesus die on the cross?"

What does it mean that Christ is Lord of the living and the dead? (See Matthew 12:28-27.)

What is the implication of this truth?

6. Read carefully verses 10-13. Why were the "brothers" Paul mentioned?

Why were the Jews judging their brothers?

Why might the Gentiles look down on their Jewish brothers?

According to Paul's recent statements about Christ, why is such behavior so displeasing to God and so disruptive to the church?

Do we still have problems with this area today? Please explain.

Verse 11 is often quoted by itself. Paul gives it as a response to verse 10. Why does Paul quote this verse here?

When quoted, this verse is often used to refer to unbelievers that they will eventually bow their knees to God. While that is true, Paul quotes it to Jews and Gentile believers. Therefore, what is the message for the church?

What is involved when kneeling before the Christ?

If you and an "enemy" were both kneeling before Jesus, how would that affect the relationship between you both?

7. What does it mean to give an account of ourselves?

What do you think will be involved when we have to give an account of ourselves before God?

Notice, Paul says we will give an account of ourselves and not of someone else. What does this mean?

Read Matthew 6:14-15. How do these verses relate to Paul's statement that we will all have to give an account of ourselves?

8. The word "therefore" is used to denote a "logical consequence" to what has come before. Note, it is a logical, not emotional, consequence. Briefly restate Paul's reasoning in the last few verses.

Therefore, because of those points, what does Paul say should be the consequence?

If we pass judgment on another, what will be the consequences for us?

These are God's words to the church as given by Paul. Why, then, do we still have problems with this judgmental attitude?

What is a stumbling block?

Are all stumbling blocks sin? Please explain.

What are some stumbling blocks that we can put in our brothers' or sisters' way?

Has the Lord ever placed in on your heart that your actions, attitude, or words were a stumbling block to other believers? If so and if you feel comfortable sharing, how did you respond?

Paul gives us an example of such a stumbling block in verses 14-15. Why was food such a divisive topic between Jews and Gentiles?

9. Can you give an example of how something that is good could be considered evil?

Paul states that it is our responsibility if someone sees our "good" as "evil." Do you agree?

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask for God's kingdom to come so His will, will be done on earth just as it is in Heaven. How would define the Kingdom of God?

Sometimes, we can describe something by telling what it is not. Paul does that in verse 17. What is the Kingdom of God not? What does this tell us about God's Kingdom?

How does Paul describe what the kingdom is?

Paul adds the phrase "in the Holy Spirit" at the end of his statement. Why?

10. Do you always make every effort to love in peace with others? Please explain.

Is Paul saying that as Christians we are to let others "walk over us?" Please explain.

How are to apply verse 19 to our lives?

If we took this one verse to heart, how do you think it would change our world?

How could one "destroy" the Kingdom of God for the sake of food? For the sake of music? Of clothing?

Read what Jesus said in Mark 10:41-45. What is Jesus saying to you? To His church?

11. In verse 23 Paul states that we are to treat those who have doubts carefully. Why?

Can you remember a time when you had doubts about the faith and about living that faith?

Suppose that Phil is a mature Christian who has been tithing for many years. He has seen the truth of God's statement that we will be blessed if we tithe. Phil becomes friends with Sue and Sam, a couple who are new to the church. They know the Bible says to tithe, but they are having a difficult time making that decision. How could Phil's tithing become a stumbling block to Sue and Sam?

If you were Phil, how would address this situation?

12. In this chapter, Paul clearly tells us that we are to make others a priority. Does this mean we are to ignore our needs? Please explain.

Romans 15

1. How would describe someone who is "strong" in the faith?

What is the difference between someone who is strong in the faith and someone who is weak?

How does one become strong?

What can the church do to help you become a stronger Christian?

2. What does the word "indulge" mean?

What does Paul instruct us to do in verse 2?

How do we please our neighbors without indulging them?

Paul does put a limitation on our actions by saying we are to please our neighbor "for his good." What does that mean to you?

In what ways does Jesus please us for our own good?

Today, we are surrounded by people seeking to please themselves (see 2 Timothy 3:2). How difficult might it be to fulfill Paul's admonition?

Read Matt. 20:27-28. Why, if Jesus came to serve, did He receive insults?

Why did Jesus do this?

Since we are to follow in His steps, can we expect to receive the same treatment? Please explain.

3. How important is studying history to you? Please explain.

What does Paul tell us in verse 4?

Since everything in the past was written to teach us, how should we approach the Old Testament?

What would you say to someone who felt that because we are under the new covenant, we only need to study the New Testament?

What are some truths that you have learned from the Old Testament?

4. In verse 5, Paul tells us that God gives us endurance and encouragement. Why does He do this?

Can you remember a time when someone encouraged you? How did that affect you?

Why do Christians need endurance?

When exercising, we can train and raise our endurance level. Yet, here, Paul tells us that God gives us endurance. Why can we not gain it on our own?

Can you remember a time when you needed endurance to continue your walk with Jesus? If so, would you share it?

5. Remembering that Paul is speaking to both Jews and Gentiles, verse 5 takes on special meaning. According to Paul, why does God give us encouragement and endurance?

Does the church today speak with one heart and mouth? Please explain.

Paul tells us that we cannot achieve unity on our own. Unity stems from the Holy Spirit. However, this does not mean we have no responsibilities. According to Paul, what can we do to help the church have one heart and mouth?

How did Jesus accept you? Under what conditions?

Again, Jesus is our standard. Therefore, how are we to accept one another?

6. In verse 8, Paul explains how Jews and Gentiles are intertwined, but he begins with the Jews. Why?

Paul says that Christ became a minister or a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth. How would you react to being called a servant?

The word for "Jews" in verse 8 is the same word that means "circumcision." So, this verse could read that the Christ became a minister to circumcision or to the circumcised. Why would Paul use this word?

Paul tells the Jews that Jesus is the Christ, the longed-for Messiah. To the Jews, who or what did they expect from the Messiah?

How do you think the Jews would react to Paul's statement that their Messiah is to be a servant to them?

Paul makes this statement not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. What would this statement mean to the Gentile believers?

7. Paul continues with this argument by stating that Jesus came as a minister of the Jews for what reason? (See v. 9.)

Do you believe there are some in the church today who do not believe in the promises made to the Patriarchs?

Jesus' was to become a servant of the Jews to confirm the promises to the patriarchs. Who were the patriarchs? What promises were given to them?

For us to comprehend fully Paul's statement about the Messiah, we need to know the Patriarchs and God's promises to them. Why was it important for the Gentiles to understand that Jesus' was a confirmation of all the promises made to the patriarchs?

Paul next quotes several passages to show that God was always the God of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. From which books does Paul quote?

Thus, the Messiah came as minister of the Jews to show that He is the Christ for both Jews and Gentiles. What implication does this have for us today?

Are there some groups or people that you have difficulty believing that Jesus dies for them as well as for you? Please explain.

8. Paul has been very intense in his letter so far. Verse 13 signifies a shift in focus. How would you classify verse 13?

Do you believe Paul is sincere in this prayer? Please explain.

To whom is Paul speaking?

For what does Paul pray?

From where does true joy, peace, and come originate?

Paul sets an excellent example for us. When we are in a serious discussion with others, we should take time to pray for all involved and to seek God. How "easy" is this for you to do?

9. We seem to have a much easier time criticizing someone or something than pointing out the good. Do you agree? Please explain your answer?

What is the difference between encouraging and flattering someone?

Along with the correction, Paul wants to encourage the church in Rome as well. Of what is Paul convinced?

What traits are necessary for us to instruct each other? Why are these necessary?

As members of the Body of Christ, we should be able to correct and instruct each other. Why do you think we do not see more of this?

How might you react to being corrected and then instructed?

Do you believe anyone would ever reach the point where he or she is no longer in need of correction or instruction? Please explain.

10. In verse 15, Paul admits that he has written to the church quite boldly. Why do you think he was so bold?

Would you describe yourself as someone who proclaims the Word of God boldly? Why or why not?

Read Proverbs 28:1, Eph. 6:19, Acts 4:28-29, and Acts 4:31. What do these verses teach us about being bold?

Some can mistake boldness for arrogance. What is the difference?

According to Paul, what was the source of his boldness?

11. We all have a call on our lives. We all have been given spiritual gifts. Do you know what gift the Holy Spirit has given you? What is the call on your life?

What was the call on Paul's life?

Jews considered Gentiles unclean. Jews were not to enter the home of a Gentile or eat with a Gentile. To do so would make the Jew unclean. Yet, God called Paul to take the Truth to this unclean people. What would be your reaction if this were your call?

What can we tell about Paul in that he carried out this call with boldness and passion?

Why does Paul want to take the Gospel to the Gentiles?

What should be our motivation to spreading the Good News to all those around us?

12. Is there a difference between pride and being proud? Please explain.

What does the Bible say about pride? (See Proverbs 16:18, 18:12, and Romans 12:16.)

Paul states he glories or is proud of his service to God. How do you react to that statement?

Are you proud of your service to God? Please explain.

In verse 18, Paul clarifies this statement. Usually prideful people speak only of themselves. Paul says that he will only of one thing. What is that?

How often do you speak of what Jesus has accomplished through you?

What has He accomplished through you?

Do you feel like you are bragging about yourself when you answer the previous question? Please explain. Are you?

13. In verses 18-19, Paul tells us how he is able to lead Gentiles to obey God. How is he able to do this?

Paul tells us that he is a Pharisee of Pharisees. He has been taught by the best religious teachers of that time. He knows the law better than most. He was so zealous for the Lord that he persecuted Christians. Yet, these things do not give Paul the power or ability to bring people to Jesus. What enables him to do so?

Are we given the same ability through the power of the Holy Spirit? Please explain.

How comfortable are you with leading another person to Christ? Please explain.

Paul mentions that he has spread the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum. Locate these places on a map to see just how much area Paul covered.

Paul says that he fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. What does he mean by "fully"?

Is it possible to partially proclaim the gospel of Christ? If so, why would someone only proclaim part of the gospel?

Do you feel qualified to proclaim fully the gospel of Jesus Christ?

14. What is your ambition in life?

Paul states that he is an apostle to the Gentiles. What is an apostle?

As an apostle to the Gentiles, what was Paul's ambition?

Why did he prefer to go to places where Christ was not known?

Paul states that he was fulfilling a scripture from Isaiah, which he states in verse 21. How is he fulfilling that scripture?

Are all called to go into places where Christ has not been heard? Please explain.

Who might be called to "build on someone else's foundation?"

15. According to verse 22, why had Paul been hindered from coming to Rome?

Now that Paul has visited the other areas, he wants to visit Rome. He states that he had longed to go there. Why do you think Paul was so passionate about going to Rome?

Paul planned on visiting Rome on his way where?

How long was the journey from Jerusalem to Spain via Rome?

What are Paul's plans when he arrives in Rome?

Paul states that he wants to enjoy their company. Another way to state that would be that Paul wants to be filled and satisfied with their company. What does this tell us about Paul?

How important is fellowshipping with other believers to you? Please explain.

16. Do you see a difference between tithing and giving love offerings? Please explain.

Why do you think it is difficult for people to tithe?

In verse 25, where is Paul going?

Why is going there?

According to verse 26, how did the churches in Macedonia and Achaia give to the church in Jerusalem?

Some might ask, "Why give to the poor in Jerusalem when these churches probably have poor of their own?" How would respond to that question?

The churches in Macedonia and Achaia were Gentile churches. Why did Paul say these churches "owed" it to the church in Jerusalem?

Do you believe today's church has shared in the spiritual blessings of the Jews? Please explain.

Why do you think Paul told the church in Rome about the love offering for the poor from the Macedonian and Achaian churches?

How do you feel about giving to the poor?

Read Matthew 26:6-13. What does Jesus say about the poor?

17. Verse 28 gives a short look at Paul's itinerary. What were his plans?

Paul's says that when he arrives in Rome, he will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. Other translations read "the fullness of the blessings of Christ," "Christ's full blessings," and "fullest blessings of Christ." What does Paul mean?

What does it mean to you to bless someone? (Refer back to Romans 12:14.)

Meanwhile, until Paul arrives in Rome, what does he ask the church in Rome to do?

Do you pray regularly for those in leadership, both in and out of the church? Please explain.

Specifically, what does Paul ask them to pray?

Where was Judea?

Who were the unbelievers in Judea?

Why would they want to hinder Paul's ministry to the Jerusalem church?

Do we still face unbelievers who wish to hinder the church's ministry? If so, can you give examples?

What are we to do in the face of such opposition?

18. In verse 32, Paul says that he wants them to pray so that by God's will he would come to Rome. If it was God's will for him to come, then why pray?

What is the relationship between prayer and God's will?

From this we see that Paul, despite his personal desires, did nothing without first seeking God. How easy or difficult is that for you to do?

What does it mean to you to be refreshed?

What do you do or where do you go to be refreshed? (Notice, Paul went to other believers.)

How does Paul conclude this part of his letter?

How would you describe the peace of God?

How important is the peace of God to you? Please explain.

How do we walk in this peace?

Romans 16

1. Paul is finished with the main body of his letter to the church in Rome. In this last portion, Paul commends fellow workers to the Romans. Since this seems to be only a list of names, many do not see it as being that important. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does it say about the scriptures?

If we accept Paul's words to Timothy, then this portion of Paul's letter that lists names is God-breathed. Why do you think God had Paul include these names?

2. How do you feel about women serving in positions of leadership in the church?

Can you support your view with scriptures? If so, what are those scriptures?

In Jewish society during Paul's time, women were never seen in positions of authority when it came to worship. Some modern readers see this as proof that the Bible is sexist. How would you respond to this claim?

What does Galatians 3:28 say? What does this tell us about Jesus and the church?

3. Who is the first person mentioned?

How does Paul refer to Phoebe?

What would it mean to you if Paul had described you as his "sister"?

What does this tell us about Phoebe?

In the NIV, Paul also calls her a servant. The Greek word for servant is also the word for "deaconess." Therefore, other translations refer to Phoebe as a deaconess of the church at Cendhrea. What is a deaconess?

Such a designation shows us that Phoebe was in a leadership position. What can we learn about the early church from this?

4. What does Paul ask the Rome church to do?

What does it mean to you to receive someone "in the Lord?"

To you, what is a saint?

Read Hebrews 6:10, Romans 8:27, and 1 Corinthians 1:2. According to these scriptures who is a saint?

Why would Paul urge the church to receive her in a manner worthy of the saints?

From reading these verses about Phoebe, how do you think Paul felt about women in ministry? Please explain.

5. Paul continues with his introductions. Whom does Paul introduce next?

How does Paul describe this couple?

What do you know about Priscilla and Aquila? (See Acts 18: 2 & 26 and 1 Corinthians 16:19.)

What sacrifices was this couple willing to make?

Paul reveals that the church met in their house. What does this tell us about this couple?

Why would they meet in a house?

6. Who was Epenetus?

Next Paul mentions Mary. We know nothing about her or her ministry. What can we deduce from the fact that Paul mentions her in his letter?

Read Proverbs 22:1. What does it mean to you to have a good name?

How does one get a good name?

Who were Andronicus and Junias?

What is an apostle?

Do we still have apostles today? Please explain.

In verses 8-15, Paul continues the introductions. Look carefully at those names. Do any stand out to you? If so, why?

Imagine you ministered with Paul, and he included you in this letter. What would he say about you?

Imagine you are writing the letter, and you include all those in your Bible study. What would you say about them in their introductions?

7. What is a holy kiss as mentioned in verse 16?

Why do you think Paul encouraged the church to greet each other with a holy kiss? Do you think this would be an acceptable form of greeting today? Please explain.

8. Paul concludes his letter with a warning. What is it?

What does Paul say about those who cause divisions?

For what are those who cause divisions hungry?

Of all the problems and challenges facing the church, why do you think Paul mentioned this particular issue? (See Mark 3:24-25.)

Is this still a problem with the church today? If so, why?

How do those who cause division deceive naïve believers? (See verse 18.)

9. What instructions does Paul give in verse 19?

Why does it take wisdom to know good and evil?

Do we disagree today on what is good and what is evil? Explain.

Some issues sway from good to evil. For example, many in the church argue about whether believers can consume alcohol. Is drinking good or evil? Why do we need God's wisdom to discern this?

Can you give an example of our society calling something good, evil? Something evil, good?

10. What does Paul say in verse 20?

Why does Paul say the God of peace will soon crush Satan?

How can we overcome the schemes of the enemy?

11. Who was Tertius, who is mentioned in verse 22?

Why was he writing this letter for Paul?

In this verse, Tertius is speaking for himself. What does he say?

What type of person would you select to write such letters for you?

12. Paul's final words give glory to God. Who established believers?

Upon what are we established? (See verse 25.)

Why did God hide the mystery of the Messiah for so long?

How did God reveal the mystery to us so that we know it is true?

Therefore, we study all the scriptures to be established in Christ Jesus. Does this study do that for you? If so, how?

