

Introduction to Romans

KEY VERSES

Romans 1:1-17

KEY THEMES

The power of God to save
The Gospel is for all people

TEACHING NOTES

Understanding the context

 Who & Where (Romans 1:6-7)

 Why (Romans 1:11-14)

 What (Romans 1:16-17)

INTRODUCTION INNOCEENCE CONSCIENCE HUMAN GOVT. PROMISE LAW GRACE



The power of God to save (Romans 1:16)



The Gospel is for all people (Romans 1:16)

Lesson Objective:

To see the purpose behind the book of Romans so we can apply its teaching to our lives

PERSONAL STUDY

Study 1

Prepare your heart and mind

Open your time with God by asking Him to help you focus on what He has for you. God desires that you would pursue Him personally.

Understanding the Bible

Whenever we read God's Word we need to strive to understand what God intended as He inspired the writers of the Bible. Below are a few things to keep in mind that will aid us in interpreting the scriptures. When we follow this process we have a better chance of gaining the spiritual truths and principles God has preserved in His Word.

Understand context

When reading the Bible try answering the following questions to get a more accurate interpretation of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15). Often a Study Bible or a commentary will have the answers to the following questions:

Who wrote the book and what role(s) did they have in God's history?

Who was this letter written to?

Who was this letter written about?

What can we learn from a Bible dictionary about the people or location addressed in this book of the Bible?

What key events have taken place or were taking place at the time the book was written?

Here are some online resources to help answer these questions:

www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible

www.biblegateway.com

www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries

Purpose and themes

Having a good understanding of the entire book is critical. It is necessary for gaining a better sense of what God is trying to communicate. One way to do this is to read through the whole book. Another way is to read a summary or outline of the book.

What is being accomplished or communicated through the book?

What are the major themes? (Key themes are often repeated for emphasis.)

Help from the Holy Spirit

One of the key roles of the Holy Spirit is to help a believer understand the truth found in God's Word. A good practice is to begin your Bible reading by asking the Holy Spirit to help shed light on God's Word and help you see what to apply to your life.

Introduction to Romans

As we prepare to study the book of Romans, let's put this study process into action.

Here is a link that you may find helpful in completing this section:

<http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-romans>

Context

Who wrote the book of Romans?

What are some significant things to know about Paul? (See the other Personal Study for an in-depth look on the life of Paul.)

Who is Paul addressing in Romans?

Are there any key events that had recently taken place or were happening at the time of Paul writing Romans?

Purpose and themes

What is the overall theme for the book of Romans (See Romans 1:16-17)?

What purpose(s) did Paul have for writing Romans?

**Read Romans 1:1-17**

As you begin to read through Romans, pause to ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply what you are studying.

Take note of how the writer starts out the book. Do we learn anything in the first chapter that we should keep in mind for the remainder of the book? Feel free to use the space provided to write down key truths, themes, and questions you may have as you read, or consider using a journal or notebook.

Key verse

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. (Romans 1:16)

Put to memory Romans 1:16. Place the provided scripture card somewhere you can see it throughout the day.

Prayer time

Close this study session with a time of prayer. Pray for this new round of *Equipping the Church* classes. Ask God to speak to you through His Word, the teachers, your small group, and these times of personal study. Thank Him for another opportunity to gather together with other believers. Pray that God would guide and direct the teachers as they prepare their lessons. Pray for the other participants and classes, especially those who are just starting their *Equipping the Church* journey.

Study 2

Prepare your heart and mind

As you begin this time alone with God, ask Him to help you focus. Thank God for the witness of faithful Christ-followers throughout history. The lives of people like Paul display the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Special note: to increase the readability of this biography of Paul, we have footnoted the scripture references.

Paul – the life of the Apostle to the Gentiles

Paul, the writer of much of our New Testament, was named Saul before conversion. Saul means “asked [of God],” referring to the first king of Israel, known for courage at the beginning of his reign¹. Like his namesake, Saul/Paul would be known for his courage. He was born around 1 AD in the coastal city of Tarsus. Tarsus was an important commercial center, university town, and a crossroads for travel. Growing up there, Saul received a first-class education under the great Jewish scholar, Gamaliel². In the first part of his life, Saul could be described as entitled, legalistic, and zealous. He wrote about his former life saying he was a Jew of Jews, circumcised on the eighth day, from the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, and a persecutor of the Church³. Furthermore, Saul was a Roman citizen⁴. Things changed for Saul one day around the year 34 AD while on a ride to arrest Christians in the city of Damascus...




Read Acts 9:1-20

Saul became Paul meaning “small” or “humble”. Paul reflected on his humbling encounter with Christ in Philippians 3:7-11 saying he considered everything up to that point as “rubbish.” Having found the “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ,” Paul began preaching that Jesus is the Christ⁵. Soon afterwards, he was led to Arabia where he received equipping and apostleship over the course of three years with the risen Christ⁶. Returning north around 37 AD, the Apostle Paul met the Apostles Peter and James before going to the region where he was born to spread the Good News⁷. His first missionary journey was launched at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit about 9 years later (around 46 AD)...



Read Acts 13:2-3, 32-39, 44-52

Paul’s boldness in the Lord becomes more evident in this passage. It is likely that this trip brought him into conflict with Peter. As recorded in Galatians 2:11-21, Peter acted hypocritically when Jewish believers were present. Paul confronted him for being “two-faced.” This helped bring to a head a big issue: should Gentile believers have to follow Jewish customs? (Note: Paul likely began writing letters during this time.) Around 49 AD, the problem was addressed in the Council at Jerusalem...

 **Read Acts 15:5-11, 13-14, 19-21**

We see at the Council, how testimony and Scripture helped the Apostles see God's plan for the Gentiles. (Note: Peter showed no sign of a hypocritical attitude⁸.) Following this remarkable conference, Paul was sent on his second missionary journey. He traveled farther with the Gospel on this trip, made his famous appeal to the people of Athens,⁹ and faced the first of many Roman officials¹⁰. Paul also wrote several more letters as he traveled. Between 53 & 57 AD, Paul began a third and final missionary trip¹¹. This journey would end with his arrest in Jerusalem¹². While imprisoned, Paul claimed his right as a Roman citizen and appealed to Caesar¹³. He probably also wrote several of his "prison letters" at this time. His trip to face Caesar in Rome was interrupted by a storm and shipwreck on the island of Malta¹⁴. Approximately 2 years later (59-61 AD), Paul was in Rome serving the Lord as a prisoner waiting to face the leader of the Roman world...

 **Read Acts 28:16-31**

Paul likely continued to minister by writing several of his "prison letters" while in Rome. Many believe his words in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 ("The time of my death is near.") were written at this time. These words seem to reflect his sense that his earthly life was almost finished. Most likely around 68 AD, Paul faced trial before the Emperor Nero, a brutal persecutor of Christians. Nero had Paul executed. A few years later (70 AD), responding to a Jewish uprising, new Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasian oversaw the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This effectively ended Judaism, as it was known. Within 300 years, Christianity grew exponentially among Gentiles from being a small Jewish sect to become the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Paul – the model Christian

From conversion Paul lived for Christ, planting churches around the Roman world and reaching countless Gentiles over many decades. He suffered a great deal for serving Christ. Paul was whipped, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, imprisoned, starved, and sleep-deprived, but he never lost faith¹⁵. He died as he had lived, for Jesus Christ.

 **Read Ephesians 4:1-6, Galatians 1:6-12, or 1 Timothy 1 and reflect**

As you think about Paul's life and his character as shown in these passages, what stands out to you?

What words would you use to describe the Apostle Paul?

How might God want you to learn from Paul's example?

Key verse

Continue to work on memorizing Romans 1:16. See if you can write it out from memory.

Prayer time

Spend some time thanking God for His work in the life of Paul the Apostle. Ask Him to help you to follow after Him as Paul did.

¹1 Samuel 9-11

²Acts 22:3

³Philippians 3:4-6

⁴Acts 22:22-28

⁵Acts 9:20, 23

⁶Galatians 1:11-18; 2 Corinthians 12:1-6; Acts 9:22-23

⁷Galatians 1:21; Acts 9:30

⁸Acts 15:7-8

⁹Acts 17:16-34

¹⁰Acts 18:12

¹¹Acts 18:22-21:17

¹²Acts 21:17-23:22

¹³Acts 23:23-26:32

¹⁴Acts 27:1-28:16

¹⁵2 Corinthians 11:23-29

PARENT GUIDE**Family Activity**

Have your family sort through the mail together, talking about what each piece is, and who sent it and why. *(It might be helpful to save a more personal piece of mail from the past week to add to the mail pile to help with this activity.)*

What type of mail is the best to receive? What type don't you like? Why?

How else do people communicate or share messages with us today?

Explain to your child how back in Bible times, people wrote letters to get messages to someone far away. The Apostle Paul wrote letters to tell others about Jesus. Some of those letters became books of the Bible.

Read Romans 1:1-7 together.

Why do you think Paul wrote this letter?

How do you think people felt when they opened a letter from Paul? How would you feel?

What are a couple things Paul wrote about the people in Rome?

Explain to your child that Paul wanted to teach Christians about Jesus, how to get along with each other, and how to live among people who did not believe in God. He could not stay in one place and reach all the people he wanted to. So Paul wrote lots of letters. We can do the same thing.

Let each family member practice writing a letter to someone who does not know Jesus. In your letter, tell what you know about Jesus and what He means to you... just like Paul did. You may even feel led to mail the letter to the person.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

The Additional Study section for Course 5 will be different than in previous courses. This new format will be a guided independent study of the passage that will be covered during the next week's teaching. This will allow you an opportunity to practice a similar format of Bible study as was covered in this week's Personal Study. It will also prepare you for better engagement with the upcoming teaching.

**Read Romans 1:1-17****Observation**

(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)

Interpretation

(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context? What questions do I have?)

Application

(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)