

Community Group Leader Discussion Guide

Romans 1

08.23.2026

Opening Focus - What stood out to you most in the sermon this week - or what was one line, story, or idea that landed in your heart?

Romans 1:1 (NASB)

Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Romans 1:16–17 (NASB)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written: "But the righteous one will live by faith."

Discussion Question 1

Paul opens this letter by calling himself a “bond-servant” of Christ Jesus and then boldly declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel. What does it look like in everyday life to live unashamed of the gospel? Where do you most need fresh courage to live boldly proclaiming the gospel?

Part One: Apart from Christ

Paul paints a sober picture of the human heart when it turns away from the living God. These verses are not merely a description of “them out there”; they are a mirror held up to every heart that has not yet fully bowed to Christ.

1. Apart from Christ, we suppress God’s truth.

Romans 1:18–20 (NASB)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Discussion Question 2

God has made His power and divine nature plain through creation, yet the human heart still often suppresses that truth. In what subtle ways do we still push God’s truth to the margins of our thinking or daily decisions? How does the gospel gently but firmly call us back to honesty before Him?

2. Apart from Christ, we exchange God’s glory.

Romans 1:21–25 (NASB)

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Discussion Question 3

The heart’s great tragedy is that it trades the glory of a Holy God for something far lesser. What “images” or substitutes are you most tempted to exalt in place of the Creator? How does gratitude—or the lack of it—reveal whom we are really worshiping?

3. Apart from Christ, we reject God's authority.

Romans 1:28–32 (NASB)

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper, people having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.

Isaiah 6:3–5 (NASB)

And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of armies. The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, "Woe to me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of armies."

Isaiah 6:6–7 (NASB)

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your guilt is taken away and atonement is made for your sin."

Discussion Question 4

Isaiah's vision of God's holiness left him undone—yet grace met him with cleansing fire from the altar. When have you most keenly sensed the weight of your own unworthiness before a holy God? How does the gospel's provision of grace and salvation free us to stop running from His authority and begin resting under it?

Part Two: Because of Christ

The same gospel that exposes our need also supplies the power to live differently. Because of Christ, the downward spiral of Romans 1 can be reversed. The bond-servant of Jesus discovers a new freedom.

1. Because of Christ, we can submit to God's truth.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NASB)

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

2. Because of Christ, we can seek God's glory.

Psalms 19:14 (NASB)

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

Romans 1:8 (NASB)

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the world.

3. Because of Christ, we can surrender to God's authority.

Romans 1:1 (NASB)

Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Discussion Question 5

Paul gladly declared and lived the title "bond-servant of Christ Jesus." That posture of glad surrender is the opposite of the rebellion described earlier. What would it look like for you this week to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, to seek His glory in both word and heart, and to live as one set apart for the gospel? Where is the Spirit inviting you to a deeper "yes" to His authority?

May the gospel's power deepen your faith, quiet your fears, and set your heart free to live unashamed for the glory of God.