



Introduction to Romans

Romans stands as the most comprehensive and systematic presentation of the gospel in the New Testament, written by the Apostle Paul around A.D. 57 during his third missionary journey. Composed likely while Paul was in Corinth, the letter was addressed to a diverse congregation in Rome—a city of unmatched political and cultural influence at the heart of the Roman Empire. Though Paul had not yet visited the church, he longed to encourage and instruct them in the faith and prepare for future missionary work in Spain.

At the center of Romans is the righteousness of God revealed through the gospel. Paul opens with the universal problem of human sin—both Jew and Gentile are under condemnation—and then moves to God's gracious solution: justification by faith in Jesus Christ. The letter then explores the implications of that salvation, offering deep reflection on sanctification, the role of the law, union with Christ, life in the Spirit, and God's sovereign purposes in history, particularly regarding Israel.

Romans is not merely theological—it is also deeply pastoral and practical. Paul exhorts believers to present their lives as living sacrifices, to pursue love, humility, and peace within the body of Christ, and to submit to governing authorities. He addresses divisions between Jewish and Gentile Christians, calling for unity that reflects the grace they have received.

With a blend of robust doctrine and transformative application, Romans calls believers to marvel at the depth of God's mercy and to live in obedient response to His grace. For centuries, this letter has grounded the church in gospel truth and fueled spiritual awakening—from Augustine to the Reformation and beyond. As we read, we are invited to behold the glory of the gospel and to respond with lives marked by faith, hope, and love.¹

1. D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 391–412

Week of Monday, July 7, 2025

Romans 1:1-7

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures— 3 concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh 4 and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead. 5 Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, 6 including you who are also called by Jesus Christ.

7 To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When I was younger, at times I was tempted to skip ahead in a new book, but I often found myself confused and lost. You meet characters you don't know and hear references to things that happened before, but without the beginning, the story doesn't fully make sense. There's a richness in the foundation that gives clarity to the conclusion. And when you miss that foundation, everything that comes later feels disconnected, even hollow.

That's how it can be with the gospel if we don't understand its roots. We might be tempted to think the gospel begins in the New Testament, as if Jesus suddenly appears on the scene out of nowhere, performing miracles, teaching crowds, and dying on a cross. But right from the very first lines of his letter to the Romans, Paul slows us down and takes us back. He wants us to see that the gospel is not new. It's not a last-minute idea. It's not a fix to a broken plan. It is the fulfillment of a promise "which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures"

In other words, the story of Jesus is not a detour or a side note, it's the continuation and the climax of everything God has been doing since the beginning of time. From Genesis to Malachi, every page of the Old Testament is pointing forward to a Redeemer. Through the law, God revealed our sin and our deep need for mercy. Through the prophets, He promised a coming King who would rule with justice and bring peace. Through the sacrifices, He gave us a picture of substitutionary atonement. Through every rescue, every covenant, every shadow and symbol, God was writing a story, and Jesus is the One who ties it all together.

The story of Jesus didn't begin in a manger in Bethlehem. It began in the heart of God before the foundation of the world. Before Adam ever sinned, before Abraham believed, before David ruled, God had already planned to send His Son to redeem and restore. And when the time was just right, He did exactly what He said He would do.

That means your faith isn't built on emotion, hype, or spiritual sentiment. It's anchored in something far more solid, God's unshakable faithfulness. He keeps His Word. He always has. He always will. He sent His Son, Jesus, born in David's line, just as promised. He lived in perfect obedience, died for our sins, "and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead". The cross was not a mistake. The empty tomb was not an afterthought. The gospel was not a plan B, it was the plan all along.

And if God has been that faithful through generations, you can trust Him with your story too. He hasn't forgotten you. The gospel reminds us that God finishes what He starts.

That's why we're beginning this journey through Romans, not just to learn more, but to be formed by the truth of the gospel. Romans helps us see the bigger picture: who God is, what He's done, and how we're called to live in response.

So as we open this letter together, let's ask God to ground us more deeply in His grace, to remind us of His faithfulness, and to show us again that the story really is all about Jesus.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 1

Romans 16:25–26

2 Samuel 7:12–14

Luke 24:27, 44

Acts 13:32–33

Philippians 2:6–11

1 Peter 2:9–10

Galatians 1:15–16

Group Discussion Questions

How does recognizing the gospel as the fulfillment of God’s long-standing promises deepen your trust in His redemptive plan? In what ways does this shape how you read the Old Testament and understand the unity of Scripture?

Jesus is described as both descended from David and declared the Son of God in power by His resurrection. Why is it essential for our salvation that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine? How does holding both truths together deepen your worship and strengthen your confidence in Him as Savior and Lord?

Paul saw himself as a servant, called and set apart for the gospel. How would you articulate your own gospel calling in this season of life? What does being “set apart” look like in your current relationships, or responsibilities?

How has the grace you’ve received shaped not only your identity, but also your sense of mission? Where is God currently calling you to help cultivate “obedience of faith” in others?

Paul describes believers as “loved by God and called to be saints.” How does regularly returning to this identity guard you against performance-driven spirituality or spiritual complacency?

Paul’s mission was for “the sake of His name among all the Gentiles.” How does a global view of the gospel confront tendencies toward comfort, or cultural preference?

Week of Monday, July 14, 2025

Romans 1:8-17

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because the news of your faith is being reported in all the world. **9** God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in telling the good news about his Son—that I constantly mention you, **10** always asking in my prayers that if it is somehow in God’s will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you. **11** For I want very much to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, **12** that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.

13 Now I don’t want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I often planned to come to you (but was prevented until now) in order that I might have a fruitful ministry among you, just as I have had among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish. **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

One of my favorite times of the week is Tuesday evening, my small group night. It's not just a scheduled meeting on the calendar; it's something I genuinely look forward to. Part of that is because I'm grateful for the chance to share what God is doing in my life, through His Word, in prayer, or in the ordinary moments of the week. But honestly, what makes it truly special is hearing from the other men in the group. Listening to how God is at work in their lives, the insights they bring to the passage we're studying, or even just hearing how they're holding onto faith in a hard season, it strengthens me. Sometimes it's a word I didn't know I needed. Other times it's just knowing I'm not walking alone.

That's the kind of dynamic Paul longed for when he wrote to the church in Rome. He says that he wanted very much to be with them, not just to give, but to receive. He says, "that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine." And I find that beautiful. This is the Apostle Paul, bold, seasoned in ministry, used powerfully by God, and yet he's looking forward to encouragement from ordinary Christians he hasn't even met yet.

There's something profoundly humbling in that. Paul doesn't see himself as above the need for encouragement. And he doesn't see the believers in Rome as too inexperienced to offer it. He fully expects that when believers gather, whether new in the faith or walking with Jesus for decades, something special and strengthening can happen.

This is how God has designed the church to work. We aren't just individual Christians trying to survive the week. We're a body. And when we show up in each other's lives, whether around a table, in a text message, over coffee, or in a hospital room; we create space for mutual strengthening.

Sometimes encouragement looks like a deep spiritual insight. Sometimes it's just someone showing up when you need them. And sometimes it's a newer believer reminding you what fresh joy in Jesus looks like, because maybe you've forgotten.

Wherever you find yourself right now, whether you're weary or thriving, seasoned or just starting out, know this: your faith matters. It matters to the people around you. And their faith matters to you. God uses it all. You never know how your simple act of showing up and being real about your faith might encourage someone else. And you never know what God might use in someone else to refresh your soul.

Look for ways to build real, Christ-centered friendships, relationships where you can talk honestly about your faith, your struggles, and how God is at work in your life. Don't pull away from community, even when life feels busy, complicated, or even a little awkward. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is simply show up, be present, listen well, and be willing to share even a small piece of what God is teaching you. It doesn't have to be polished or profound. Just real.

Let's be the kind of people who show up for each other. Who speak life and truth and grace. Who don't pretend to have it all together, but who trust that God works through honest, imperfect people encouraging one another in faith. We don't just need to strengthen others, we need to be strengthened too. And that's exactly how God designed it.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 1

Philippians 1:3–5

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Hebrews 10:24–25

Philemon 1:6–7

1 Corinthians 9:16

Acts 20:24

Habakkuk 2:4

Philippians 3:9

Group Discussion Questions

Paul says he prays for the believers in Rome “always.” What does that say about the importance of regularly praying for other Christians? Are there any habits or practices that have helped you stay consistent in praying for others?

Paul was eager to encourage the believers in Rome, but he also wanted to receive encouragement from them. Why is it important for believers to remain open to encouragement from others?

Share a time when you were unexpectedly encouraged by someone younger in the faith. How did God use that moment to strengthen you?

Paul describes himself as “obligated” to all people. In what ways do you feel a sense of responsibility to share the gospel? How do you wrestle with that? Are there any groups of people or individuals you feel less eager to share the gospel with? What do Paul’s words challenge in your heart?

Paul says he is “not ashamed of the gospel.” In what situations today might Christians feel pressure to hide their faith? How can we grow in gospel courage? What does it mean to say the gospel is “the power of God for salvation”? How does that truth affect your confidence in sharing it with others?

What is one step you want to take this week to grow in prayer, encouragement, or gospel boldness?

Week of Monday, July 21, 2025

Romans 1:18-32

18 For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, **19** since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. **20** For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. **21** For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

24 Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. **25** They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. **27** The men in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error.

28 And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. **29** They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, **30** slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. **32** Although they know God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Have you ever read a passage of Scripture and thought, This sounds like it was written yesterday? Our passage this week feels that way. It's like reading a news article or scrolling through a social media feed. The issues Paul addresses, denial of truth, idolatry, distorted desires, broken relationships, pride, cruelty, and moral confusion, are just as present today as they were in the first century.

That's not discouraging; it's actually a reminder of something deeply comforting: God's Word is timeless. It doesn't expire. The Bible remains relevant because it was breathed out by a God who sees all of history at once. What Paul describes here isn't just a cultural snapshot, it's the human condition apart from God.

Paul shows us the root of humanity's downward spiral: the suppression of truth. Even though God has made Himself clearly known through creation, His power and divine nature on display all around us, people choose to ignore Him. Instead of worshiping the Creator, they worship created things. And when we trade truth for a lie, God allows us to chase what we think we want. That's the tragic pattern in this passage: "God delivered them over to disgraceful passions.", and the results are heartbreaking.

But Romans 1 isn't here just to point out what's wrong with the world out there, it also confronts what's in our own hearts. It forces us to ask: Where am I ignoring what God has made clear? Where am I tempted to trade the truth for a lie? It's a sobering reminder of what happens when we reject the light we've been given.

Yet built into this warning is a call to grace. If the world's problems stem from ignoring God, then the way back begins with turning to Him. The gospel, which Paul has just begun to explain in this chapter, is God's power to save us from the judgment we deserve. And it's the only hope for a world unraveling at the seams.

So don't lose heart as you read this passage. Let it stir compassion for those who don't yet know the truth. Let it renew your gratitude for the mercy you've received. And let it strengthen your confidence in the gospel that never grows old.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 1

Psalm 19:1–4 – General Revelation in Creation

John 3:36 – God’s Wrath and the Necessity of Faith

Jeremiah 2:11–13 – Exchange of Glory and Idolatry

Psalm 81:11–12 – God Giving Them Over

2 Timothy 3:1–5 – Fruits of Rebellion

Isaiah 5:20 – Calling Evil Good

Ephesians 5:6 – Wrath Because of Sinful Living

Romans 3:9–12 – Universal Sinfulness

Group Discussion Questions

How does Romans 1:18–32 confront the idea that someone can be “spiritual” or “moral” without acknowledging God? What does this reveal about the true nature of rejecting God’s truth?

What are some modern-day expressions of idolatry that may not involve physical statues but still compete for the worship that belongs to God alone? How do we discern them in our own lives?

According to this passage, why is no one excused from accountability to God, even those who have never read the Bible? How should this shape our view of evangelism and missions?

Have there been moments when you’ve tried to ignore or push down something God was clearly revealing to you, whether through Scripture, conscience, or creation? What did that look like, and what would a faithful response look like instead?

Paul’s words about God’s wrath can feel uncomfortable or even offensive in today’s culture. How do we talk about God’s judgment in a way that is faithful to Scripture but also marked by humility, love, and compassion?

In what ways does this passage serve as both a warning and a mirror? What are some signs that a culture—or even an individual—is walking the road of exchanging truth for lies?

What role does thankfulness (or the lack of it) play in this passage? How might gratitude toward God protect us from drifting into idolatry or spiritual apathy?

Week of Monday, July 28, 2025

Romans 2:1-16

1 Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. **2** Now we know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. **3** Do you think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment? **4** Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? **5** Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed. **6** He will repay each one according to his works: **7** eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; **8** but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness. **9** There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; **10** but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. **11** For there is no favoritism with God.

12 For all who sin without the law will also perish without the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. **13** For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. **14** So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. **15** They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them **16** on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

We've all seen it happen. A famous person gets exposed, some hidden sin finally comes to light, and suddenly everyone has something to say. Social media explodes. Talk shows dissect every detail. Comment sections fill up with finger-pointing and outrage. And in that moment, people rush to distance themselves: "I would never do that."

But Paul's words in Romans 2 can feel a bit jolting. He says, in essence, "Be careful. The same stuff you're condemning in others? You're not so far off yourself." That's a hard truth. And if we're honest, we know it's true.

We might not have done exactly what someone else did. But most of us have had moments where we've gossiped while judging gossip, or gotten angry while criticizing someone's temper, or felt superior while condemning someone else's pride. The truth is, it's way easier to see sin in someone else's life than to admit it in our own.

Paul isn't saying we should look the other way when someone falls morally. If a friend or fellow believer is caught in sin, Scripture calls us to lovingly help them turn back. But here's the trap: when we're quick to criticize others and slow to search our own hearts, we've moved from helpful to harmful.

Paul goes on to say in Romans 2:4, "Do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?" God is patient, not so we can stay the same, but so we can be changed. He gives us time to turn around, to repent, to grow.

The danger is that our obsession with the "big sins" of others can numb us to the quiet sins in our own hearts. Pride. Bitterness. Jealousy. Unforgiveness. These things can sit deep in our souls while we shake our heads at someone else's failure.

That's why Paul's reminder in Romans 2:16 is so sobering: "God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus." God doesn't just see what's out in the open, He sees what's hidden. What's buried deep. What we justify or try to ignore.

So what should we do?

When we see someone fall, it should make us pause. Not to gossip, but to reflect. It should stir humility, not superiority. It should remind us that apart from God's grace, we're all in the same boat.

Instead of saying, "I would never," maybe the better response is, "Lord, keep me close to You. Keep me honest. Show me where I need to repent too."

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 2

Matthew 7:1–5

Luke 6:37–42

2 Peter 3:9

Ecclesiastes 12:14

Group Discussion Questions

Why do you think we tend to notice and call out sin in others more quickly than we recognize it in ourselves? What might be going on in our hearts when that happens?

Can you think of a time when you were critical of someone, only to realize later you were guilty of something similar? What did that experience reveal about your own need for grace?

What do you think distinguishes healthy spiritual discernment from a judgmental spirit? How can we tell when we've moved from one to the other in our relationships or conversations?

Romans 2:4 says that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. How does that reshape the way we think about God's character and His view of our sin? Can you share a time when His patience had a personal impact on you?

How does the message of the gospel in this passage both challenge us and comfort us? What do you think it means to live in light of both God's justice and His mercy?

What role does humility play in how we respond to the sins of others, and to our own? How might a humble posture change the way we interact with people who are struggling?

Week of Monday, August 4, 2025

Romans 2:17-29

17 Now if you call yourself a Jew, and rely on the law, and boast in God, **18** and know his will, and approve the things that are superior, being instructed from the law, **19** and if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light to those in darkness, **20** an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of the immature, having the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law— **21** you then, who teach another, don't you teach yourself? You who preach, "You must not steal"—do you steal? **22** You who say, "You must not commit adultery"—do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do you rob temples? **23** You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? **24** For, as it is written: The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.

25 Circumcision benefits you if you observe the law, but if you are a lawbreaker, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. **26** So if an uncircumcised man keeps the law's requirements, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? **27** A man who is physically uncircumcised, but who keeps the law, will judge you who are a lawbreaker in spite of having the letter of the law and circumcision. **28** For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and true circumcision is not something visible in the flesh. **29** On the contrary, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—by the Spirit, not the letter. That person's praise is not from people but from God.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When I was younger, I had a decent knowledge of the Bible. I read it often, and could talk about it with some confidence. But I didn't truly understand it. I was reading and interpreting it through the wrong lens, shaped more by my background and assumptions than by the gospel itself. Because of that, I came away with a distorted view of God and His Word. I had access to Scripture, but I was missing its heart. I had knowledge, but not understanding. And looking back, I realize that some of my words and attitudes may have cut down sincere believers because I thought they weren't seeing the Bible as clearly as I was.

Here Paul is addressing a similar danger. Speaking to Jewish believers in Rome, he draws a sharp distinction between possessing the truth and being transformed by it.

The Jewish people had been given extraordinary privileges: They possessed the Law of God. They knew His will. They were called to be a light to the nations.

But Paul warns that simply having the Law, knowing the right things, and even teaching others doesn't mean a person's heart is right before God. In fact, he exposes a sobering reality, outward religion without inward transformation is empty.

Paul drives his point home writing "On the contrary, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—by the Spirit, not the letter. That person's praise is not from people but from God."

Truly belonging to God has never been about outward appearances, rituals, or titles. It is about a new heart that only God can give. This truth still applies to every culture and every age. It is possible for us today to: Carry a Bible everywhere we go. Attend church every Sunday. Know the right answers in Bible study. Serve in ministry. And yet, if our hearts are unchanged, we are no different than the people Paul warns here.

But Paul's point is not to discourage us from reading the Word or engaging in church life. His aim is to press us deeper. He's urging us not to stop at outward actions, but to seek the inward work of the Spirit that produces genuine love for Christ and joyful obedience.

The gospel reminds us that this change does not come through our own effort. It comes only by grace through faith in Christ. When we trust in Jesus, the Spirit changes our hearts, breaking sin's hold, giving us new desires, and empowering us to live in obedience that flows from love.

Looking back, I see how patient God was with me. In those early years, my problem wasn't that I didn't know Scripture, it was that I didn't see Christ as the center of it all. I needed the Spirit to open my eyes. I needed the gospel to reshape how I read the Bible and how I lived my life. And that is still true today. Every one of us needs the Spirit's work daily, because without Him we drift back toward trusting in our own knowledge, abilities, and appearances.

So, Paul's message is as much for us as it was for the believers in Rome. Don't settle for the appearance of faith. Press on to the reality, Christ in you, changing your heart by His Spirit.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 2

Deuteronomy 4:5–8

Deuteronomy 30:6

Isaiah 29:13

Ezekiel 36:25–27

Luke 12:47–48

Acts 10:34–35

Galatians 3:10–11

James 1:22–25

Group Discussion Questions

Paul says the Jews relied on the law and boasted in God. In what ways might we as Christians slip into the same mindset, taking our spiritual privileges for granted? How does having God's Word bring not just blessing, but also serious responsibility?

Can you think of times, whether in history, in the church, or in personal experience, where hypocrisy has hurt the gospel's reputation? What practical steps can we take to guard our own hearts from falling into the same trap?

Paul warns against trusting in outward marks like circumcision. What might be some "modern circumcision" equivalents, religious activities or external habits that Christians might wrongly depend on to prove they're right with God?

Paul calls us to look beyond appearances. What are some signs that reveal the Spirit is genuinely at work in someone's heart? How can we encourage one another to pursue this kind of inner transformation?

Paul emphasizes that true belonging to God is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit. How does this truth free us from trying to "perform" our way into God's favor? What difference does it make in how we live out our faith?

This passage challenges us to examine ourselves honestly. If someone looked at your life closely, what would they see that points to an inward transformation by the Spirit rather than just outward religion?

Week of Monday, August 11, 2025

Romans 3:1-8

1 So what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? **2** Considerable in every way. First, they were entrusted with the very words of God. **3** What then? If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? **4** Absolutely not! Let God be true, even though everyone is a liar, as it is written:

That you may be justified in your words
and triumph when you judge.

5 But if our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, what are we to say? I am using a human argument: Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath? **6** Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world? **7** But if by my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? **8** And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say, "Let us do what is evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

We've all had moments where we've let someone down, missing something important, breaking a promise, or saying the wrong thing. In human relationships, those failures usually leave a mark. Sometimes it's small; other times it creates distance or even breaks the relationship.

That's because human relationships are often conditional, based on performance, trust, and mutual respect. And because that's our everyday experience, we can be tempted to think God works the same way.

If I fail him again, will he still love me? If I doubt or fall into sin, will he turn away?

Romans 3 gives us a clear answer: "Absolutely not!" Paul writes:

What then? If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Absolutely not! Let God be true, even though everyone is a liar, as it is written: That you may be justified in your words and triumph when you judge. Romans 3:3–4

God's character doesn't rise and fall with ours. His promises are rooted in his eternal nature, not in our ability to keep them. He doesn't abandon his people when they stumble, because his covenant faithfulness flows from who he is, not what we do.

This truth is both comforting and convicting. When you sin, his grace still covers you in Christ. When you doubt, his Word remains true. When you wander, his mercy calls you home.

For the believer, this security is grounded in Christ's finished work, not our performance.

God's faithfulness isn't a free pass for sin. In Paul's day, some twisted grace into an excuse to sin more, thinking it would bring God more glory. Paul responds:

And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say, "Let us do what is evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved! Romans 3:8

A right understanding of God's faithfulness doesn't lead to indifference, it leads to repentance and obedience:

Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? Romans 2:4

Grace is never a loophole; it's a summons to worship. When you truly see that God holds you fast, even in your weakness, you don't want to run from him. You want to run to him.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3

2 Timothy 2:13

Psalm 51:4

Deuteronomy 4:7–8

Romans 6:1–2

Romans 9:14

Group Discussion Questions

What responsibilities come with being given God's Word? How can we be faithful stewards of Scripture in our everyday lives?

How are we sometimes tempted to believe that our failures change how God views us? Why is it important to correct that thinking with Scripture?

What's the difference between someone who struggles with sin and someone who justifies sin using theology or grace? How can we guard against falling into that kind of thinking?

How does this passage deepen your view of God's character—especially His faithfulness and justice? In what ways do you need to trust Him more fully this week?

Why do you think Paul confronts the idea that "if my sin highlights God's righteousness, then sinning might be good"? How do we see this kind of twisted thinking in today's culture or even within the church?

Paul emphasizes that God is always true, even if every person is a liar. How does that truth give us confidence when our world's values shift or when people around us compromise?

How does knowing that God's faithfulness is not dependent on ours shape your worship, repentance, and perseverance in the Christian life?

Week of Monday, August 18, 2025

Romans 3:9-20

9 What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, **10** as it is written:

There is no one righteous, not even one.

11 There is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

12 All have turned away;
all alike have become worthless.
There is no one who does what is good,
not even one.

13 Their throat is an open grave;
they deceive with their tongues.

Vipers' venom is under their lips.

14 Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and wretchedness are in their paths,

17 and the path of peace they have not known.

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are subject to the law, so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become subject to God's judgment. **20** For no one will be justified in his sight by the works of the law, because the knowledge of sin comes through the law.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Up to this point in Romans, Paul has been building a careful argument. In chapter 1, he shows that the Gentiles are guilty before God. In chapter 2, he shows that the Jews, even with the law, are guilty as well. By the time we reach chapter 3, the picture is clear: Paul doesn't leave any room for exceptions. "There is no one righteous, not even one." Whether Jew or Gentile, religious or not, we all stand guilty before a holy God. These verses are like a mirror, showing us not only our outward failures but also the sin that runs through our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

Here's the hard truth, our problem isn't just that we slip up once in a while. At our core, our hearts are turned away from God. We're not neutral, just waiting to decide between good and evil, we're already under sin's power and unable to free ourselves. It's a painful reality to face, but until we see how serious our condition is, we'll never appreciate how good the good news really is.

Paul also makes it clear that the law can't save us. Instead, it exposes us: "...the knowledge of sin comes through the law". Think of the law like a bright flashlight in a dark room. It shows the dirt and dust we didn't notice before. It takes away our excuses and leaves us with nothing to say in our defense. The law was never meant to save us, it was meant to show us our need for God and point us to the One who can save.

That's why what comes next in Romans is so important. The law closes every door we thought we could walk through, but the gospel opens one wide. Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live. On the cross, He took the judgment we deserved. And through faith, His righteousness becomes ours.

This is the heart of the gospel: we're not made right with God because of what we do, but because of what Christ has already done.

If we downplay our sin, we'll also downplay our Savior. But when we let Scripture tell us the truth about ourselves, it frees us from pretending. We stop comparing ourselves to others and start clinging to Christ. And when we cling to Him, we discover peace, joy, and confidence, not in what we've done, but in what He has finished.

Yes, this is a tough section to read, but it is so very needed. Yet we must not stop at verse 20. Because starting in verse 21, Paul turns the corner, and there we find life in Christ.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3
Galatians 3:22–24
Ephesians 2:1–3
Philippians 3:9
2 Corinthians 5:21

Paul's Supporting Old Testament Quotes

Psalm 14:1–3
Ecclesiastes 7:20
Psalm 5:9
Psalm 140:3
Psalm 10:7
Isaiah 59:7–8
Psalm 36:1

Group Discussion Questions

What does this passage teach us about the reach of sin in human nature? Do you think Paul is saying people can't ever do anything outwardly good, or something deeper?

Why do you think people often want to downplay or excuse their sin? What are some ways we tend to do that?

How do these verses challenge our culture's common belief that people are basically "good at heart"?

Which part of Paul's description of sin in this passage hits you the hardest, and why?

How does seeing the depth of our sin make the good news of Jesus more wonderful and more urgent?

How would you explain to someone that the law was never meant to save us but to point us to Christ?

How might this passage equip you to share the gospel more clearly with someone who thinks they're "good enough" for God?

Week of Monday, August 25, 2025

Romans 3:21-26

21 But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets. **22** The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. **23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; **24** they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. **25** God presented him as the mercy seat by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. **26** God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

I still remember the day as a teenager when I ran out of gas. I was driving along a stretch of road where the nearest gas station was miles away. I pulled over to the side, realizing how stuck I really was. Even if I walked all that distance, I wasn't sure I had enough money in my pocket to buy both a gas can, if they even had one, and the gas I needed. I felt helpless and embarrassed.

With no other options, I called my dad. To my relief, he didn't scold me much. He simply showed up, gas can in hand and gave me just what I needed to get home. His only reminder was to make sure I stopped at the next station and filled up. What I couldn't do on my own, my dad did for me. He stepped in where I had no way forward.

That's exactly the kind of rescue Paul is describing in Romans 3. For nearly three chapters, he lays out the truth that we are all stranded spiritually, guilty before God and unable to make ourselves righteous. The law shows us the problem, but it cannot solve it. On our own, we are empty, without the resources to move forward. Then, in verse 21, Paul gives two words that change everything: "But now."

"But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed... The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." In other words, what we could not do, God has done through His Son. All of us have sinned and fallen short of His glory, but we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." At the cross, Jesus paid the debt of our sin, satisfied the justice of God, and opened the way of mercy.

That night on the side of the road, my dad gave me just enough fuel to get home. But in Christ, God gives us far more than just enough. He doesn't merely give us a little push to limp along; He clothes us in His righteousness, covers our sin completely, and secures our future with Him. Where we were helpless, He was sufficient. Where we were guilty, He has declared us righteous.

As a teenager, I was thankful for the way my dad came to my rescue. But looking back now, I see an even greater picture of what God has done for me in Christ. He has stepped into my hopelessness, not with a temporary fix, but with an eternal gift. Because of Him, I am no longer condemned but made right in God's sight.

When you feel empty, uncertain, or unable to move forward, remember that Christ has already done what you could never do. He has satisfied God's justice, provided His righteousness, and secured your place with Him. You do not move ahead in your own strength, but in the finished work of Jesus.

The words "*But now*" stand as a reminder that while sin once left us without hope, God has made a way through His Son. That way is open to all who believe, and it leads not to judgment but to life everlasting.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3

Galatians 2:16

Philippians 3:9

Titus 3:4–7

Ephesians 1:7

Mark 10:45

Hebrews 9:11–22

Isaiah 53:5–6

2 Corinthians 5:21

Group Discussion Questions

Paul begins with the words “But now” (v. 21). Why do you think these two words are such a turning point in Romans? How would you describe the difference between life *before* and life *after* this “but now”?

Many people believe Jesus was real or even a good teacher—but what does it look like to move from head knowledge to real trust in Him? How would you explain that difference to a friend?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (v. 23). What do you think it means to “fall short of God’s glory”? Can you think of examples—in your own life or in the world—that show how this is true?

The word *justified* is a courtroom term. How would you explain it in everyday language? And why does it matter that this verdict is given freely, not earned?

When you hear the word *redemption*, what images or stories come to mind? How does Christ’s death and resurrection fulfill this picture for us?

God presented Christ as the “mercy seat” (propitiation) through His blood (v. 25). The Old Testament mercy seat was where the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement. What does this show us about how seriously God views sin—and how completely Christ’s sacrifice deals with it?

Week of Monday, September 1, 2025

Romans 3:27-31

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law of faith. 28 For we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

We all like to brag a little, don't we? Maybe it's about a project we finished, a good grade, hitting a personal goal, or even something small like keeping up with a diet or exercise plan. Deep down, we like to feel like we've accomplished something.

But Paul says in Romans 3:27, "Where then is boasting? It is excluded." When it comes to being right with God, there is no room for bragging. Because salvation isn't something we've earned, it's something God gives. If heaven worked on a points system, we'd spend eternity comparing scores and patting ourselves on the back. But the Bible says clearly: no one is righteous, not even one. None of us could ever meet God's perfect standard on our own.

That's why salvation has to be by grace alone. God didn't look down and pick the "best performers." He rescued people who could never rescue themselves. Even the faith we place in Christ is a gift from Him, not something we drum up on our own. So, when we believe in Jesus, we're not saying, "Look what I did." We're saying, "Look what He did for me."

And here's the beautiful truth, the cross is the great equalizer. It doesn't matter how good your record looks to others or how badly you've blown it, everyone comes to God the same way. Empty-handed, needy and dependent on grace.

That means in Christ, there's no reason to look down on others, and no reason to despair over yourself. The gospel silences pride and fills us with gratitude. If we're going to boast in anything, let it be in Jesus, His perfect life, His sacrifice on the cross, and His resurrection.

At the end of the day, salvation isn't a partnership where we do our part and God does His. It's God's work from start to finish. And that's actually really freeing. Our confidence doesn't rest in what we can do, but in what our Savior has already done.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3

Genesis 15:6

Ephesians 2:8–9

Galatians 2:16

Galatians 3:24–29

Matthew 5:17

Romans 8:3–4

Group Discussion Questions

Why do you think Paul emphasizes that salvation is “not from works, so that no one can boast”?

What are some subtle ways Christians today might be tempted to “boast” in themselves instead of in Christ?

Abraham was declared righteous because he *believed* God. What does this teach us about the nature of true faith?

What’s the difference between believing in Jesus as a set of facts and trusting Jesus personally for your salvation?

Jesus said He came to *fulfill* the Law, not abolish it. What do you think He meant by that?

Week of Monday, September 8, 2025

Romans 4:1-12

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. 4 Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

6 Likewise, David also speaks of the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 Blessed are those whose lawless acts are forgiven
and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the person
the Lord will never charge with sin.

9 Is this blessing only for the circumcised, then? Or is it also for the uncircumcised? For we say, Faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness. 10 In what way, then, was it credited—while he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? It was not while he was circumcised, but uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while still uncircumcised. This was to make him the father of all who believe but are not circumcised, so that righteousness may be credited to them also. 12 And he became the father of the circumcised, who are not only circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith our father Abraham had while he was still uncircumcised.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When Paul wants to explain how a person is made right with God, he doesn't start with rules or rituals. He doesn't point to Abraham's impressive acts of obedience. Instead, he takes us back to one simple moment: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness."

Abraham wasn't made right with God because of all the good things he did. He wasn't made right because he was perfect, or because he came from the right family, or because he followed every religious ritual. Abraham was made right with God because he believed. He trusted God enough to take Him at His word.

God had promised him a son, even though he and Sarah were too old to have children. From a human perspective, the promise was impossible. But Abraham chose to trust God anyway. He didn't know how God would keep His word, but he believed that He would.

That word credited is like a financial term. It might be compared to the idea of drowning in debt, with no way to pay it off. And then, out of nowhere, someone not only cancels your debt but deposits more money than you could ever spend. That's what happened spiritually with Abraham. His account with God wasn't filled by what he did, it was filled by what God gave.

And the same is true for us. We can never work hard enough or do enough good things to make ourselves right with God. If we try to earn our way, we'll always fall short. But when we believe in God, when we trust His promise that Jesus has done everything necessary for us to be forgiven, then His righteousness is credited to us. Our sins are no longer counted against us. Instead, we are covered with the righteousness of Christ.

That's why Paul highlights Abraham. His story shows that it has never been about works, but always about faith. God counts us righteous not when we've done enough, but when we believe.

So here's the question for us today: What promise of God do you need to believe, even when you don't see how it could possibly work out? Maybe it's the promise that your sins are forgiven in Christ. Maybe it's the promise that He will never leave you or forsake you. Maybe it's the promise that He can work all things together for good, even in the middle of a situation that feels impossible.

Faith doesn't mean you have all the answers. It doesn't mean you see every step of the plan. Faith means taking God at His word. That's what Abraham did, and that's what we are called to do.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 4

Genesis 15:1–6

Genesis 17:9–14

Psalm 32:1–2

Galatians 3:6–9

Ephesians 2:8–9

James 2:21–23

Hebrews 11:8–12

Group Discussion Questions

How does the Bible describe our sins being credited to Christ and His righteousness being credited to us? What would be missing from the gospel if we only had one side of this exchange?

What does it really mean to believe God? How is that different from simply agreeing that something is true?

How does the difference between a gift and something owed help us understand the difference between grace and works in salvation?

Why is the forgiveness of sins described as a blessing? How might this perspective change the way we view our daily struggles with sin?

Why is it significant that Abraham was counted righteous before he performed any religious ritual? How does that strengthen our understanding that salvation is by faith alone and not by works?

What do we learn about God's character in the way He justifies sinners apart from works? How should this truth move us toward humility, gratitude, and worship?

Week of Monday, September 15, 2025

Romans 4:13-25

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 If those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made empty and the promise nullified, 15 because the law produces wrath. And where there is no law, there is no transgression.

16 This is why the promise is by faith, so that it may be according to grace, to guarantee it to all the descendants—not only to the one who is of the law but also to the one who is of Abraham's faith. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: I have made you the father of many nations—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, the one who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist. 18 He believed, hoping against hope, so that he became the father of many nations according to what had been spoken: So will your descendants be. 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body to be already dead (since he was about a hundred years old) and also the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do. 22 Therefore, it was credited to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was credited to him was not written for Abraham alone, 24 but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Have you ever looked at someone else's situation in life and wished you could share in it, not out of envy, but out of a genuine desire to belong to what they're experiencing? Maybe it's a family gathering, a friendship circle, or even a community where love and security are evident. That longing can quickly slide into envy if we're not careful, but sometimes it's simply a desire to experience something good that you don't yet have.

I often think about this when I consider children who grow up without stable, loving homes. The ache of seeing another child embraced in the warmth of family affection must be overwhelming at times. They don't want to replace someone else's family, but they long to share in that same belonging.

In a much deeper way, that could have been the story for all of us if God had chosen to limit His promises only to a certain line of people. We might have spent our lives peering in through the window, longing for the blessing of being His children but never able to enter. But the beauty of God's promise to Abraham is that it was never about bloodlines or human achievement. It was about faith. Paul says "Now it was credited to him was not written for Abraham alone, but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

That means the door has been swung wide open. The inheritance is not restricted to Abraham's physical descendants, but is extended to all who share his faith, faith in the God who raises the dead, who delivered Jesus over for our trespasses and raised Him for our justification.

Instead of being outsiders longing for a place in the family, in Christ we are brought all the way in. We don't just get to watch others enjoy the promises; we are given the full rights of children. The righteousness that was credited to Abraham is now credited to us, not because of who we are, but because of whom we believe in.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 4

Romans 3:21–22

Philippians 3:9

Romans 8:11

1 Corinthians 15:20–22

Group Discussion Questions

Why does Paul emphasize that Abraham's inheritance did not come through the law but through faith?

How does the law bring wrath, and why can't it be the basis of God's promise?

What does it mean that Abraham believed "hope against hope," and how might this apply to situations in our own lives?

How is faith different from pretending the challenges or impossibilities aren't real?

Why is it significant that our faith is in "Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead"?

What does it mean that righteousness is "credited" to us, and how does this shape the way we relate to God and others?

Week of Monday, September 22, 2025

Romans 5:1-11

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, **4** endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. **5** This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. **8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. **10** For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. **11** And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When I get to verse 8, I can't help but slow down: "But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." We could come up with examples of sacrificial love to try to explain this, but none of them really capture it. The amazing thing is, God has already shown us in the clearest way possible, through the cross.

The chapter begins with an incredible truth: because of faith in Jesus, we've been declared right with God. That means the fight between us and Him is over. We're no longer enemies, we're now standing in His grace. This isn't just about feeling calm inside; it's the rock-solid reality that God has made peace with us through the blood of His Son.

Then Paul says something we might not expect: not only can we rejoice in the hope of God's glory, but we can even rejoice in our suffering. That sounds strange, but here's why: God uses hardship to grow us. Struggles build endurance. Endurance shapes character. And character leads to a hope that won't let us down, because it's grounded in God's love, which the Holy Spirit has poured into our hearts.

At the center of it all is the cross. Human love might lead someone to sacrifice for a close friend or family member, but it rarely goes further than that. God's love is so different. Jesus gave His life not for the strong or the worthy, but for the weak, the broken, and the sinner. His love isn't just words, it's action, proven once and for all at the cross.

And the cross doesn't just deal with our past, it also guarantees our future. If God made peace with us while we were His enemies, how much more can we be confident now that we belong to Him? If Christ's blood has already made us right with God, then surely He will also save us completely on the final day. Our hope doesn't rest on our grip on Him, but on His firm grip on us.

God's love isn't shaky or dependent on how life is going. It's steady, unchanging, and proven at the cross. Every time we look at Jesus crucified and risen, we see the evidence: "But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

And that truth is enough. Enough to give us peace with God, strength to face hardship, confidence for eternity, and joy that leads us to worship today.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 5

Colossians 1:20

1 Peter 1:3–4

James 1:2–4

Ephesians 3:17–19

1 Timothy 1:15

1 Thessalonians 1:10

2 Corinthians 5:18–19

Group Discussion Questions

What does it really mean to have peace with God? How is that different from just having a sense of calm or inner peace?

How can we honestly rejoice in the middle of hardships? What changes in our perspective when we see what those hardships can produce?

Why is it significant that Christ died for us when we were completely helpless and undeserving? What does this reveal about our condition apart from Him?

How do you hold together the reality of God's wrath with the reality of His love? Why do we need both to understand the gospel?

What's the difference between being declared "innocent" and being declared "righteous"? Why does that matter for how we live as Christians?

Knowing that God loved you at your worst, how does that change the way you approach Him in prayer, repentance, and daily trust this week?

Week of Monday, September 29, 2025

Romans 5:12-17

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned. **13** In fact, sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not charged to a person's account when there is no law. **14** Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. He is a type of the Coming One.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man's trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift which comes through the grace of the one man Jesus Christ overflowed to the many. **16** And the gift is not like the one man's sin, because from one sin came the judgment, resulting in condemnation, but from many trespasses came the gift, resulting in justification. **17** If by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

We don't have to be taught how to sin. Nobody sits a toddler down and says, "Here's how to be selfish", it just shows up. From the very beginning, pride, stubbornness, and disobedience come naturally. Paul tells us why: when Adam, the first man, rebelled against God, sin and death came into the world. His choice didn't just affect him, it affected everyone who came after him. That's why every one of us wrestles with temptation, brokenness, and eventually faces death. We're all living in the shadow of Adam's failure.

But then comes the good news. Paul says in verse 15, "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man's trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift which comes through the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many." Those words change everything. Adam's sin brought ruin, but Jesus' gift brings life. The damage from Adam's disobedience is real, but the grace of God in Christ is greater. What Adam broke, Jesus came to restore, and He doesn't just repair the damage, He overflows with mercy and blessing.

Paul draws out the sharp contrast: one man's trespass spread death to many, but through the one man, Jesus Christ, grace overflows to the many. Adam's act left humanity condemned, but Christ's act brings justification. Adam's choice led to slavery under sin, but Christ's gift brings freedom. Adam's disobedience brought death, but Christ's obedience brings eternal life. The difference is staggering, and it shows us that the gift doesn't just undo the trespass, it far surpasses it.

So what does this mean for us today? Simply this: we can't fix ourselves. Sin goes too deep, and death is too final. No amount of effort, no attempt at being "good enough," can undo what Adam's fall brought into the world. But here's the good news, Jesus has already done what we never could. His work is finished, and His grace is more than enough. It doesn't just cover the bare minimum; it overflows. That means no sin in your past is beyond His mercy, no guilt too heavy for His forgiveness, no failure stronger than His grace.

Instead of carrying the weight of sin on our own shoulders, we can lay it down at the cross. Jesus has done for us what we could never do for ourselves. In Him, grace is greater, life is restored, and hope overflows.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 5

Genesis 3:6–19

Psalms 51:5

Romans 3:23–24

1 Corinthians 15:21–22

Philippians 2:8–11

Ephesians 2:4–9

Romans 6:23

Group Discussion Questions

Paul says, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.” How does this help explain why sin and brokenness are universal? Do you see this reality in our world today?

In what ways is Christ’s gift different from Adam’s trespass? How is it greater?

Why is it important that Paul emphasizes overflowing grace instead of just enough grace? How does that shape the way we view salvation?

If Adam’s choice affected all of us, what hope do we find in Christ’s obedience affecting all who believe? How does this deepen your appreciation of Jesus’ work on the cross?

Many people believe they can “be good enough” to make things right with God. How does this passage challenge that idea?

How does knowing that Christ’s grace overflows give you confidence in your walk with Him today?

Week of Monday, October 6, 2025

Romans 5:18-21

18 So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone. **19** For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. **20** The law came along to multiply the trespass. But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more **21** so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Sometimes I really dislike mirrors. They show you what you otherwise would not have seen. Some mornings, I feel like I'd be better off not looking into one at all. But as uncomfortable as it can be, the mirror's not the problem, it's just revealing what's already there.

That's what God's law does. It's a mirror that shows us our true reflection. When Paul says, "The law came along to multiply the trespass," he means that the law exposes sin for what it really is. It reveals what's been hiding beneath the surface of our hearts. What we might have thought were minor flaws turn out to be deep cracks caused by sin's hold on us.

And yet even here, the law is an act of mercy. It doesn't just expose our sin to shame us, it does so to draw us toward grace. Like a mirror, the law can show the dirt on our faces, but it can't clean us. It drives us to the only One who can, Jesus.

Before we knew Christ, the law's purpose was to bring us to that point of recognition. It silences our excuses and shows us how far short we fall of God's holiness. When we finally admit, "I can't fix this," we're ready to hear the good news that Christ already has. The law does the hard work of truth-telling so that grace can do the heart work of redeeming.

And once we've been rescued by that grace, the law takes on a whole new role. It no longer condemns us, it guides us. The same words that once showed our guilt now show us the path of gratitude. Through the Spirit, God writes His law on our hearts so that obedience becomes an act of love, not fear.

Paul ends this section with one of the most wonderful sentences in all of Scripture: "Where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more." The more clearly we see the depth of sin through the mirror of God's law, the more we marvel at the depth of His grace.

Christ didn't just balance the scales, He tipped them completely in our favor. His obedience covers our disobedience. His righteousness becomes ours. And His grace reigns where sin once ruled.

So the next time you look into a mirror, let it remind you of the deeper truth God's Word reveals, the reflection of who we are apart from Christ, and who we become by His grace.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 5

Genesis 3:1–19

Isaiah 53:4–6

John 1:16–17

1 Corinthians 15:21–22

2 Corinthians 5:21

Galatians 3:19–24

Ephesians 2:1–5

Group Discussion Questions

What does this passage teach us about the seriousness of sin and how it affects every person? How should that understanding shape the way we see humanity apart from Christ?

How does Jesus' obedience and sacrifice undo the damage that came through Adam's disobedience? What does that reveal about God's plan of redemption?

This passage mentions that the law was given to show the reality of sin. How do you see God's law working to restrain sin, reveal sin, and guide believers today? Which of those purposes have you experienced most clearly in your own life?

How does knowing that Jesus obeyed perfectly on our behalf encourage you when you recognize your own failures to obey? What does it mean for you personally that His righteousness has been credited to you?

Paul describes a world where sin once ruled but grace now reigns. Where do you see those two powers, sin and grace, at work today, both in the world around you and in your own heart?

What does it look like for grace to rule in your daily life? How might that change the way you approach obedience, repentance, and worship?

Week of Monday, October 13, 2025

Romans 6:1-14

1 What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? **2** Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. **6** For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, **7** since a person who has died is freed from sin. **8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, **9** because we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will not die again. Death no longer rules over him. **10** For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **11** So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. **13** And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness. **14** For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law but under grace.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

I've seen a few people who wrestled with addiction break free from its chains. It can get such a hold on people that many never break free, and some often stumble again after having been free for a period of time. Those whom I've talked to who have stayed clean all share one common approach. First, there has to be something bigger you are fighting for and empowered by, and second, it's an understanding of how vulnerable they are to relapse. Because of this, they remove every opportunity to walk that dark path again and remind themselves of this daily. In other words, they take this deadly seriously.

Our sin and our propensity to sin should be approached with the same level of intensity. Even as believers, we are not immune to temptation or the pull of sin. But through Christ, we are no longer under sin's control. Paul reminds us that we've died to sin and have been raised to new life in Christ. What once defined and dominated us has been broken by His power.

The problem is, we often forget who we are. We let old habits and desires whisper that nothing has really changed. But Paul tells us to "consider yourselves dead to sin." That means we must continually remind ourselves of what is true, sin no longer reigns; grace does. Freedom in Christ doesn't mean temptation disappears; it means we now have the Spirit's power to say no.

So, like those who guard carefully against relapse, we too must remove every opportunity for sin to take root again. That might mean changing certain patterns, avoiding certain influences, or confessing sin to a trusted friend who will help us stay accountable. Living as one who is "alive to God" means not just resisting sin but actively pursuing righteousness, replacing old habits with new, godly ones, and filling our minds with truth instead of temptation.

Every day, we have a choice: to let sin rule, or to live in the freedom Christ has already secured. Take sin seriously, but take God's grace even more seriously. It's His power that keeps us free.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 6

Galatians 2:20

Colossians 2:12–13

John 8:34–36

Ephesians 2:4–6

Titus 2:11–12

Romans 8:1–4

Colossians 3:1–4

Group Discussion Questions

Why would anyone think that more sin might somehow show more of God's grace? How do people today sometimes take advantage of grace instead of letting it change them?

What does it really look like to live as someone who's been "buried with Christ" and raised to a new life? How should that change the way we live day to day?

The Bible says our old self was crucified with Christ. What does that "old self" look like in real life, and how does it still try to take over sometimes?

What does it mean to live like you're "dead to sin but alive to God"? What helps you remember that truth when temptation hits?

How can you offer yourself to God in your everyday routines—at home, at work, or with friends—so that your life points to Him?

Grace means we're not ruled by sin anymore. How does that truth give you strength and confidence, instead of making you careless about sin?

Week of Monday, October 27, 2025

Romans 6:15-23

15 What then? Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Absolutely not! **16** Don't you know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one you obey—either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? **17** But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were handed over, **18** and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. **19** I am using a human analogy because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you offered the parts of yourselves as slaves to impurity, and to greater and greater lawlessness, so now offer them as slaves to righteousness, which results in sanctification. **20** For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness. **21** So what fruit was produced then from the things you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. **22** But now, since you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification—and the outcome is eternal life! **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Paul's words in Romans 6 cut to the heart of what motivates and governs our lives. Every person serves something, whether it's success, comfort, approval, pleasure, or Christ Himself. The question isn't if we're serving a master, but who it is.

Before knowing Christ, we were slaves to sin, unable to choose righteousness. But now, by faith, we've been set free and made servants of righteousness. Grace doesn't give us permission to sin, it gives us power to obey.

Think of it this way: we harvest what we plant. No one plants apple seeds expecting oranges. Likewise, if we sow selfishness, anger, or pride, we'll reap brokenness, guilt, and emptiness. But when we invest in godly habits, prayer, Scripture, service, confession, we begin to see the fruit of peace, joy, and Christlikeness.

As the saying goes, the fruit reveals the root. So, take a look at your life. Your schedule, your thoughts, your conversations, what do they say about what you're investing in? What shapes your decisions, or brings you comfort?

Paul reminds us that the one we obey is the one who truly rules us. If sin motivates our choices, it leads to spiritual death. But obedience to God brings life and holiness.

The beauty of this passage is that Paul isn't just calling for change, he's reminding us that God has already begun the work. "But now, since you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification—and the outcome is eternal life" (Romans 6:22).

In Christ, we have a new Master and a new power. The Holy Spirit reshapes our desires so obedience becomes a joy, not just a duty. As we walk with Him, old chains begin to fall away.

So ask yourself: What's controlling your life today? What seeds are you planting with your thoughts, time, and habits?

The fruit of tomorrow depends on the seeds we plant today. Choose to sow truth, obedience, and gratitude, and trust God to bring a harvest that glorifies Him.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 6

John 8:34-36

Galatians 6:7-9

Matthew 7:16-20

Titus 2:11-14

Galatians 5:16-25

1 John 5:11-12

Group Discussion Questions

When you look at your daily decisions, priorities, and reactions, what do they reveal about who or what is truly in control of your heart right now?

How does God's grace motivate real change in your life? Can you think of a time when grace—not guilt—was what moved you to obedience?

What kinds of “seeds” are you planting through your habits, entertainment, conversations, and use of time? What kind of fruit do you think those seeds will produce in a month... or a year?

If someone could only see the “fruit” of your life—your words, relationships, and choices—what would they learn about what motivates you most? Where do you see healthy fruit growing, and where might God be calling you to do some pruning?

Why do you think surrendering to God's authority actually leads to freedom rather than restriction? What areas of life are hardest for you to hand over to Him, and why?

When you think about the long-term outcome of your choices, what kind of harvest do you most want your life to produce? How does remembering God's gift of eternal life shape the way you live right now?

Week of Monday, November 3, 2025

Romans 7:1-6

1 Since I am speaking to those who know the law, brothers and sisters, don't you know that the law rules over someone as long as he lives? **2** For example, a married woman is legally bound to her husband while he lives. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the husband. **3** So then, if she is married to another man while her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law. Then, if she is married to another man, she is not an adulteress.

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in relation to the law through the body of Christ so that you may belong to another. You belong to him who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. **5** For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions aroused through the law were working in us to bear fruit for death. **6** But now we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the old letter of the law.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Paul begins this passage with an illustration we can easily picture: marriage. A marriage covenant remains in place as long as both spouses live. In the same way, before Christ saved us, we were bound to the law. It had a rightful claim on us. But when we came to Christ, it was as if we died with Him. That death broke our old bond to the law, and now we belong to Jesus, the risen Lord. And that belonging isn't empty, it has a purpose: that we might bear fruit for God.

Before Christ, the law stood in front of us, shining a light on our sin. The law is good, holy, and true, but our hearts were not. So instead of producing righteousness in us, the law exposed the depth of our sin. The moment it said, "Do not covet," our hearts went searching for something to covet. The law could diagnose our condition, but it couldn't heal us. It could tell us what holiness required, but it could not give us the power to walk in it.

But through Jesus, through His death and resurrection, everything has changed. We are not set free to drift into sin, but to live a new life empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Grace does not weaken holiness; grace finally makes true holiness possible. The very Spirit who raised Jesus now dwells within us, shaping our desires, strengthening our obedience, and producing fruit that we could never produce on our own. What once felt like striving and frustration now becomes a joyful walk with Christ, step by step, as He changes us from the inside out.

When we remember that we are united to Christ, not trapped under a list of rules, obedience becomes an act of love, not pressure. And it's in that place of resting in grace and walking with Christ that genuine spiritual fruit begins to appear.

So perhaps the question for us is less, "How hard am I trying?" and more, "How close am I staying to Christ?"

Because when we remain near Him, when we remember whose we are and who lives in us, fruit isn't forced; it grows. Joy grows. Patience grows. Faithfulness grows. Love grows. Not perfectly, and not instantly, but steadily, because the Spirit of God is at work in us.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 7

Galatians 2:19–21

Galatians 5:16–25

Jeremiah 31:31–34

Ezekiel 36:26–27

John 15:1–8

Romans 6:5–14

2 Corinthians 3:4–6

Group Discussion Questions

In what ways do Christians sometimes slip back into “trying to be good enough” instead of living by grace? How can we recognize when that’s happening?

In practical terms, what does it mean that we “died to the law through the body of Christ”? How should that change the way we relate to God and obedience?

Paul says the law exposed sin but could not change us. Where do you see that reality in your own life or experience?

Paul says our new purpose in Christ is “that we may bear fruit for God.” What does spiritual fruit look like in everyday life?

What’s the difference between obeying God out of pressure and obeying Him out of love? How does the gospel reshape our motivation?

What does serving in the new way of the Spirit look like in real life? How do we stay close to Christ instead of striving in our own strength?

Week of Monday, November 10, 2025

Romans 7:7-13

7 What should we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! But I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Do not covet. **8** And sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the law sin is dead. **9** Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life again **10** and I died. The commandment that was meant for life resulted in death for me. **11** For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me. **12** So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. **13** Therefore, did what is good become death to me? Absolutely not! But sin, in order to be recognized as sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment, sin might become sinful beyond measure.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

I am the type of guy, and I think this might be pretty standard for most men, who doesn't regularly go to the doctor. My wife, Jill, is truly the only reason I began getting an annual physical, and even then, I sometimes go reluctantly when an illness comes up.

For a long time, I operated with the idea that not knowing about a problem was the same thing as not having one. But as I've learned, avoiding the doctor doesn't actually make me healthier, it just keeps me unaware. If a test ever revealed a serious condition, that test didn't cause the problem; it simply exposed what was already there.

Paul says something similar about the law of God in Romans 7. He anticipates the question: "Is the law sin?" (v. 7). His answer is emphatic—"Absolutely not!" The law isn't the problem. Like a good doctor, it reveals the problem already present within us. "I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.'"

The law is good. It defines sin and exposes the sickness of our hearts. It shows us where the boundaries are and that we've crossed them. But Paul goes even further, sin doesn't just violate God's commands; it twists them. Once we know where the line is, something within us wants to step over it. "Sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind" (v. 8). The law reveals not only that we sin but that we love to sin. Our hearts are more rebellious than we'd ever admit.

And just as ignorance of the law is no defense in a courtroom, ignorance of God's law doesn't excuse us before Him. We were already guilty, already spiritually sick, long before we ever opened His Word to see it. The law simply brings that reality into focus.

God doesn't just diagnose the problem; He provides the cure. In His mercy, He sent His Son to bear the penalty of the law we broke and to give us a new heart that delights in righteousness. The same law that once condemned us now points us to Christ, who fulfills it perfectly and gives life where sin brought death.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 7

Romans 5:20–21

Romans 3:20

Galatians 3:19–24

James 1:13–15

2 Corinthians 3:6–9

Genesis 3:1–6

Exodus 20:17

Psalm 19:7

Group Discussion Questions

What is the true purpose of God’s law, and how does this passage challenge the idea that rules or commands can make us righteous?

Why do you think human nature is often drawn to what is forbidden? How have you seen that pattern play out in your own life?

Can you think of a time when God’s Word exposed sin in your life that you hadn’t recognized before? What did that experience produce in you—guilt, gratitude, repentance, or resistance?

How does this passage correct our tendency to see the problem as external (“rules are too strict,” “circumstances made me sin”) rather than internal (“sin within me is the issue”)?

In what ways can recognizing the goodness of God’s law help us grow in holiness without falling into legalism?

When God’s Word exposes something uncomfortable in your heart, what helps you respond with repentance and hope instead of shame or avoidance?

Week of Monday, November 17, 2025

Romans 7:14-25

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold as a slave under sin. **15** For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. **16** Now if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. **17** So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. **18** For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. **19** For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. **20** Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me. **21** So I discover this law: When I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. **22** For in my inner self I delight in God's law, **23** but I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. **24** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself am serving the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There are some struggles in life that feel like they just keep circling back around. For many people, it's their eating habits, and I understand that more than I'd like to admit. I've had those moments where I've said to myself, "Alright... Monday is the day I get this under control."

And Monday usually does start off with good intentions. Then the day gets long, someone offers something sweet, or you walk past something that smells a little too inviting, and suddenly that strong start isn't quite as strong anymore.

Before long, you find yourself saying, "Okay... maybe next Monday." And when the pattern repeats, it's easy to feel that familiar frustration and wonder, "Why is this so hard?"

Paul understood that kind of struggle, not with food, but with his own heart.

This passage is Paul at his most honest. He wants to obey God. He loves God's law. Yet he finds himself drifting toward the very things he hates.

He says things like: "I don't understand why I do this." "I do the thing I don't want to do." This isn't Paul making excuses, it's him describing the tension every believer feels. A redeemed heart still living in a body that remembers the old patterns.

Before Christ, sin doesn't feel like a struggle, it feels like your normal. But after Christ gives you a new heart, suddenly you feel the pull in both directions.

A heart that wants to honor God. A flesh that still remembers the old ways. So when old habits, whether in anger, attitude, or anything else, try to pull you back, that doesn't mean God is done with you. It means you're alive. Dead people don't struggle, living people do.

Paul's cry, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?" isn't hopelessness. It's humility. It's the cry of someone who knows he can't win this fight on his own. And then he immediately answers the question: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Paul's hope isn't in trying harder next week. It's not in "getting it right this time." It's in Jesus, the One who strengthens us, carries us, forgives us, and transforms us day by day. We don't outgrow our need for grace. We grow deeper into it.

Your struggle may take a different shape. It might be your temper, your words, your thoughts, discouragement, laziness, lust, or pride, any area where you've promised yourself things would change, only to slip back into the same pattern.

Romans 7 is God's reminder that the answer isn't a stronger will. It's a stronger Savior. The battle inside you is not proof that God has abandoned you, it's proof He's still working on you.

But at the same time, Paul isn't giving us permission to shrug off sin or make peace with patterns that dishonor Christ. This is not an excuse to stay where we are, it's an invitation to cling more tightly to the One who can change us. Grace doesn't minimize sin; it empowers us to fight it. And by His grace, that fight is never wasted, never ignored, and never fought alone.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 7

Romans 8:1–4

Psalm 130:1–4

Galatians 5:16–17

Philippians 2:12–13

1 John 1:8–10

1 Peter 2:11

Hebrews 10:14

2 Corinthians 12:9–10

Group Discussion Questions

Paul is brutally honest about his struggle with sin. Why do you think it's so hard for Christians today to speak with that same honesty? What changes when we do?

Paul wanted to do what was right, yet still felt the pull of his old nature. Where in your life do you feel that same “pull” the most right now? What does that reveal about the areas God is growing you?

Paul says the very fact that he hates his sin is evidence of God's work in him. How does this reshape the way you think about your own spiritual frustrations or repeated failures?

In your experience, what are the most common lies we believe when we fall into the same sin again? How does the gospel confront those lies?

Paul doesn't look inward for rescue — he looks upward: “Who will rescue me?” What does it look like for you, practically, to “run to Christ” in the middle of the struggle instead of promising yourself you'll do better next time?

Why do you think humility is so important in the battle against sin? How does Paul's example of honesty challenge the way you approach your own weaknesses?

Week of Monday, December 22, 2025

Romans 8:1-4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, **2** because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. **3** For what the law could not do since it was weakened by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering, **4** in order that the law's requirement would be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

“I forgive you.” Few phrases lift a burden from the heart like those words. I can still remember moments when I had hurt someone I cared about, a harsh word, a thoughtless decision, and when I went to make it right. Hearing genuine forgiveness didn’t just ease my mind; it felt like a weight slid off my shoulders. The relationship was restored. The tension dissolved.

But as meaningful as human forgiveness is, Paul points to a freedom that goes infinitely deeper:

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.”

Scripture is clear: our sin against God is not simply a mistake here or there. It’s a condition, a spiritual brokenness that touches every part of who we are. Left to ourselves, we are guilty and unable to fix it. No matter how sincerely we try, we cannot rewrite our record or make ourselves righteous.

That is where the law comes in. The law is good, holy, and true, but its role is like a mirror. It shows us what’s wrong, but it can’t make us right. It can reveal our sin, but it cannot remove it. The law can diagnose, but it cannot deliver.

So Paul gives us the turning point of the entire gospel:

“For what the law could not do... God did.”

What we were powerless to accomplish, God Himself has already done. He sent His Son, not to lower the standard, but to meet it for us. Christ stepped into our place, took on humanity, and bore the judgment we deserved. He faced condemnation so we would never have to.

This is why Paul can make such a bold announcement: no condemnation. Not reduced condemnation. Not postponed condemnation. None.

In Christ, the verdict has been settled once and for all. The burden is lifted, the debt is paid, the relationship restored. And more than that, God gives us His Spirit so we can walk in a new way. Forgiven people become transformed people, not out of fear of punishment, but out of gratitude for grace.

When guilt rises up or shame tries to pull us under, Romans 8:1 steadies our hearts: In Christ, there is no condemnation, there is complete forgiveness, Christ’s righteousness credited to us, and a fully restored relationship with God.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 8

Romans 3:21–26 – justification and propitiation through Christ.

Romans 5:1–11 – peace with God; saved from wrath.

Romans 7:21–25 – our struggle, answered by Christ.

Isaiah 53:4–6 – substitutionary atonement.

2 Corinthians 5:21 – Christ made sin for us.

Galatians 5:16–25 – walking according to the Spirit.

Colossians 2:13–15 – debt canceled; condemnation removed.

Group Discussion Questions

Where do you still feel condemned, even though God says you are free? How would your daily life look different if you truly believed this is *already* true?

How have you experienced the law's ability to reveal sin, but not remove it? Why is it important to understand what the law can and cannot do?

How does Romans 8:3 help us understand the depth of God's love? What makes Christ's substitution for us so central to the Christian life?

What emotions does it stir in you to know Christ took the condemnation you deserved? How might this truth change the way you respond to failure, guilt, or shame?

What does it practically look like to walk according to the Spirit rather than the flesh? Where do you sense the Spirit inviting you to obey right now?

Why is it important to see that holiness flows from acceptance, not as a condition for it? How could confusing this order lead to either legalism or despair?

How does the gospel truth in Romans 8:1–4 move you to worship, gratitude, or obedience this week? What specific step will you take as a result of this passage?

Week of Monday, December 29, 2025

Romans 8:5-17

5 For those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on the things of the Spirit. **6** Now the mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace. **7** The mindset of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. **8** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **9** You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. **10** Now if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. **11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through his Spirit who lives in you.

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, **13** because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. **15** For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "*Abba*, Father!" **16** The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, **17** and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

As children, one of the hardest lessons to learn is delayed gratification. Waiting feels unnecessary when something is available right now. Why hold out for something better later when you can have something lesser immediately? That struggle doesn't disappear with age. Many adults still wrestle with it, just in more subtle, socially acceptable ways.

At the heart of that struggle is where our minds are set.

Paul makes a clear distinction in Romans 8: those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, and those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. This isn't merely about behavior, it's about direction, desire, and focus.

The things of the flesh promise quick satisfaction. They appeal to comfort, control, pride, and self-interest. They are often immediate and convenient, but they are also temporary. Paul does not soften the outcome: "the mindset of the flesh is death". What feels good now but pulls us away from God always leads us somewhere we were never meant to go.

By contrast, the things of the Spirit are often slower and less flashy. They involve obedience, trust, humility, and patience. They may require saying no now in order to experience something far better later. But Paul tells us plainly where this road leads: "the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace."

This is not a call to perfection. Paul is not claiming that Christians never struggle with sin. Scripture is honest about that reality. First John reminds us that believers still sin and still need confession and forgiveness (1 John 1:9–10). The difference is not the absence of sin, but the presence of a new power and a new pattern.

For the Christian, sin is no longer the ruling authority. It may distract us, trip us, or tempt us, but it does not define us. The Spirit of God now dwells within us, shaping our desires over time and reorienting our hearts toward what pleases God. What once felt natural begins to feel heavy. What once felt restrictive begins to feel freeing.

Paul goes even deeper by reminding us of our identity. We are not merely forgiven sinners trying to behave better, we are adopted children of God. "You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear," Paul writes, "but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father!'" (Romans 8:15).

Children who know they are secure in their father's love can learn to wait. They don't need to grab for every passing pleasure because they trust that something better is coming. In the same way, the Spirit trains us to live not for immediate gratification, but for eternal joy.

Living by the Spirit means learning, day by day, to value what lasts over what fades, to say no to what feels urgent so we can say yes to what is eternal. And as we do, we grow in confidence that the God who adopted us will finish the work He began.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 8

Galatians 5:16–17 - The conflict

Colossians 3:1–3 - The new mindset

Ezekiel 36:26–27 - The promised transformation

John 6:63- The source of life

1 Corinthians 2:14 - The limitation of the flesh

1 John 3:1–2 - The assurance of adoption

2 Corinthians 5:17 - The reality of new creation

Group Discussion Questions

How would you describe the difference between setting your mind on the flesh versus setting your mind on the Spirit in everyday life?

How have you seen the mindset of the flesh lead to death, and the mindset of the Spirit lead to life and peace, either personally or in others?

Why is it important that Paul emphasizes our identity in the Spirit before addressing our behavior?

What does it look like practically to “put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit,” and how is that different from simply trying harder to obey?

How does understanding yourself as an adopted child of God shape the way you approach obedience and repentance?

In what ways are believers tempted to slip back into a spirit of slavery or fear rather than living in the freedom of adoption?

How does the promise of being heirs with Christ, sharing in both suffering now and future glory, help you resist the pull of immediate gratification today?

Week of Monday, January 5, 2026

Romans 8:18-25

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope **21** that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. **23** Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. **24** Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? **25** Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Can you think of two things so vastly different, one so much greater than the other, that it's not even worth comparing them? One that came to my mind was a flashlight compared to the sun. Once the sun rises, the flashlight doesn't just seem small, it becomes irrelevant.

That's the kind of comparison Paul makes in Romans 8:18: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us."

Paul isn't minimizing suffering. He knows pain, loss, and hardship firsthand. But he is placing suffering next to something infinitely greater. When the glory of what God has promised is set beside the trials of this life, the comparison collapses. Not because suffering is imaginary, but because glory is overwhelming.

Paul goes even further. Creation itself is groaning, longing for redemption. The brokenness we feel isn't just personal; it's cosmic. The world as we know it is not the way it was meant to be, and deep down, we know it. Every ache, every loss, every frustration is a reminder that we are still waiting.

But we wait with hope.

Not wishful thinking. Not optimism. Biblical hope is confident expectation rooted in God's promise. We have the firstfruits of the Spirit, real evidence that redemption has already begun. What we experience now is not the full sunrise, but the first light breaking over the horizon.

So we don't despair in the waiting. We endure it. We trust God in it. We live with eyes lifted beyond what is seen, knowing that what is coming will one day make every comparison unnecessary.

The flashlight won't matter when the sun rises. And the glory to come will far outweigh every suffering along the way.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 8

Genesis 3:17–19 - Creation cursed due to human sin

Isaiah 65:17–25 - Promise of renewed creation

1 Corinthians 15:42–49 - Resurrection brings bodily redemption

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 - Present suffering versus future glory

Philippians 3:20–21 - Our bodies await transformation

Hebrews 11:13–16 - Hope fixed on unseen fulfillment

Revelation 21:1–5 - Creation fully liberated from curse

Group Discussion Questions

How does Paul describe the relationship between human sin, the brokenness of the world, and the hope of future restoration?

What does the image of both creation and believers “groaning” communicate about what life is like right now for followers of Christ?

Why do you think Paul insists that present suffering is not even worth comparing to the glory that is coming?

What does it mean to long for the redemption of our bodies, and how does that shape a healthy Christian understanding of salvation?

How is the kind of hope Paul describes different from simple optimism or wishful thinking, especially in seasons of waiting?

In what practical ways should this future hope influence how we endure suffering, exercise patience, and live faithfully in the present?

Week of Monday, January 12, 2026

Romans 8:26-30

26 In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30** And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There have been times when I felt so overwhelmed that when I tried to pray, there simply were no words. Sometimes all I could manage was, “Father, please help me.” Other times, it wasn’t even that, just a quiet sigh, a sense of defeat when words failed altogether.

That’s why I find such deep comfort in what Paul writes: “In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

What a freeing truth. Unlike our attempts to communicate with one another, where misunderstanding can easily break the connection, our relationship with God does not depend on our ability to articulate our thoughts clearly. When words fail us, communication with God does not fail. He already knows. More than that, He is already at work.

Prayer, then, is less about explaining ourselves perfectly to God and more about resting in the truth that our needs are fully known and faithfully handled by Him. Even in our weakness, we are not left alone. The Spirit Himself steps in, carrying our burdens before the Father according to God’s perfect will.

Paul goes on to say: “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”

This doesn’t mean every moment will feel good or make sense right away. But it does mean we can trust the One who understands us completely and guides us perfectly. Whether we are walking through pain or experiencing joy, God is never confused by our circumstances. All things, every moment, every season, are being woven together to accomplish His good and gracious purposes in our lives.

When words fail, God does not. And that is a truth we can rest in, even in the quiet moments when prayer feels like nothing more than a sigh.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 8

Psalms 139:1–4

1 Samuel 1:12–15

Galatians 4:6

Genesis 50:20

Isaiah 55:8–9

Ephesians 1:4–11

Philippians 1:6

Group Discussion Questions

When you struggle to find words in prayer, how does this passage reshape what you believe is happening in those moments?

What does it mean for you personally that God searches your heart and understands your needs even when you don't?

How does knowing the Spirit prays for you according to God's will affect the way you approach prayer and weakness?

In what ways does the promise that God works "all things together for good" challenge or comfort you in your current season?

How do verses 29–30 help define what "good" actually means in God's plan for His people?

How does the certainty of God's purpose, from foreknowledge to glorification, shape your confidence in Him when life feels uncertain?

Week of Monday, January 19, 2026

Romans 8:31-39

31 What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? **32** He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? **33** Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. **34** Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. **35** Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **36** As it is written:

Because of you
we are being put to death all day long;
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

It's one thing to understand that you can't earn your salvation. You don't get right with God by trying harder, being better, or cleaning yourself up first. You are saved because God was kind to you in Jesus. Jesus lived the life you couldn't live, died the death you deserved, and rose again so you could be forgiven and made new. Salvation isn't something you achieve, it's something you receive.

You don't work your way into God's family. You are brought in by grace.

But Romans 8 goes even further. It says that not only can you not earn your salvation, there is also nothing that can take it away.

Paul asks a series of simple but powerful questions: "Who can really be against us?" "Who could bring a charge against us?" "Who could condemn us?" "What could separate us from Christ's love?"

And the answer every time is the same: no one, nothing.

But this promise isn't meant for everyone in a general sense. Paul is talking about people who are in Christ, those who are trusting in Jesus, not in themselves. This is for those who belong to Him, not just those who know about Him. That matters deeply. That is an eternally important distinction.

The Bible doesn't say, "Nothing can separate everyone from God's love." It says nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ. This security is for those who have put their faith in Jesus and are depending on Him to save them.

If that's you, here is what is true: God has already said you are forgiven and right with Him. Jesus has already died for you, risen, and is even now speaking to the Father on your behalf.

That means no accusation can undo what God has decided. No failure can cancel what Jesus has paid for. Hard seasons, suffering, and even death itself do not mean God has stepped away from you. Paul lists real struggles, trouble, pain, loss, danger, and then says none of them can break God's hold on His people.

This isn't just meant to make you feel better. It's meant to give you something solid to stand on.

If your salvation depended on how well you live, you could lose it every time you fall. But because your salvation depends on what Jesus has done, it is held steady by Him.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 8

Psalm 44:22

Isaiah 50:8–9

John 10:27–30

Hebrews 7:25

Colossians 2:13–14

1 Peter 1:3–5

Ephesians 1:13–14

2 Timothy 1:12

Group Discussion Questions

What comes to mind for you when you hear the idea that God is truly “for you”? What makes that easy or hard to believe in your own life?

How does looking at what God has already given us in Jesus shape the way you think about what you’re asking Him for now? Where do you find yourself struggling to trust that He will really provide what you need?

What are the thoughts, experiences, or voices that most often make you feel unworthy, guilty, or distant from God? How do you usually respond when those feelings surface?

How have seasons of hardship, loss, or suffering affected the way you see God and His love for you?

What do you think it looks like to live from a place of confidence in Christ even when circumstances don’t change? Where do you find that most challenging right now?

What parts of God’s promise of steady, unbreakable love feel most comforting to you? What parts are hardest for you to trust or rest in?

Week of Monday, January 26, 2026

Romans 9:1-18

1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience testifies to me through the Holy Spirit— **2** that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. **3** For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood. **4** They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and the promises. **5** The ancestors are theirs, and from them, by physical descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, praised forever. Amen.

6 Now it is not as though the word of God has failed, because not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. **7** Neither is it the case that all of Abraham's children are his descendants. On the contrary, your offspring will be traced through Isaac. **8** That is, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but the children of the promise are considered to be the offspring. **9** For this is the statement of the promise: At this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son. **10** And not only that, but Rebekah conceived children through one man, our father Isaac. **11** For though her sons had not been born yet or done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to election might stand— **12** not from works but from the one who calls—she was told, The older will serve the younger. **13** As it is written: I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau.

14 What should we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! **15** For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **16** So then, it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy. **17** For the Scripture tells Pharaoh, I raised you up for this reason so that I may display my power in you and that my name may be proclaimed in the whole earth. **18** So then, he has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Perhaps you know what it's like to benefit from knowing the right person. Several years ago, at a previous job, our department went to a baseball game as a team outing. It was a fun day with coworkers, exactly what you'd expect. Then our director, who somehow always knew everyone, ran into another executive he had known. A brief conversation later, a few of us ended up in a suite. Better seats. Free food. Private restrooms. A full upgrade. I didn't plan it. I didn't earn it. I didn't even see it coming. I benefited simply because I was connected to the right person.

That's how life often works. Connections open doors. Relationships bring advantages. But Romans 9 reminds us there is one place where that does not apply: salvation.

Paul writes this passage with deep sorrow. He's speaking about his own people, Israel, and his heart is breaking because so many have rejected Christ. He even says that if it were possible, he would be willing to be cut off from Christ himself if it meant they could be saved.

From a human standpoint, his struggle makes sense. If anyone seemed like they should be "in," it was Israel. They had the covenants, the law, the worship, and the promises. Jesus Himself came from them by physical descent. Yet Paul is clear: none of those privileges ever guaranteed salvation.

Being born into the right family, having the right background, or being closely connected to God's people does not make someone part of God's family. God's promise was never based on lineage or effort. "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel."

Paul points to Isaac and Jacob to show that God has always worked this way. Before anyone had done anything good or bad, God made it clear that salvation rests on His calling, not human achievement. This doesn't make God unjust, it shows that salvation has always been mercy, never entitlement.

That's why Paul says it so plainly: salvation does not depend on human will or effort, but on God who shows mercy.

This truth hits close to home. Many of us have family members or close friends we long to see come to faith. We wish our relationship with Christ could somehow count for them too. But it doesn't work that way. Our adoption into God's family doesn't automatically extend to those we love.

Each person must see their own need for Christ. Each heart must be opened by God. And while that reality can weigh heavily on our hearts, it should drive us to pray, not to despair.

If you are in Christ, you didn't get there because of your background, your effort, or your connections. You are there because God was merciful to you.

That truth humbles us, it fuels gratitude. And it keeps us faithfully pointing others to Jesus, the only One who can do for them what we cannot.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 9

Genesis 18:9–15

Genesis 21:8–12

Genesis 25:19–26

Malachi 1:1–5

Exodus 9:13–17

Exodus 33:12–23

John 6:37–44

Ephesians 1:4–6

Group Discussion Questions

Who are the people that you long to see come to faith, and how does that burden show up in your prayers?

What are some things people today might rely on for spiritual security besides genuine faith in Christ, and how do you see that temptation in your own life?

How does knowing that salvation is rooted in God's mercy, not your performance or background, shape the way you think about your own story with Christ?

When you struggle with questions about fairness or deserving, what helps you trust God's character rather than measure Him by human standards?

How does believing that salvation does not depend on human effort change the way you pray for others who don't yet believe?

Where in your life are you tempted to think God is absent or inactive, and how does this passage challenge that assumption?

In what practical ways should remembering God's mercy shape how you treat others this week, especially those who are difficult, distant, or different from you?

Week of Monday, February 2, 2026

Romans 9:19-29

19 You will say to me, therefore, “Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?” **20** On the contrary, who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?” **21** Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor? **22** And what if God, wanting to display his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? **23** And what if he did this to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory— **24** on us, the ones he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? **25** As it also says in Hosea,

I will call Not My People, My People,
and she who is Unloved, Beloved.

26 And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.

27 But Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, Though the number of Israelites is like the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved;

28 since the Lord will execute his sentence completely and decisively on the earth.

29 And just as Isaiah predicted: If the Lord of Armies had not left us offspring, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Sometimes the Bible reminds us of something we don't naturally like to hear: we are not the center of the story, God is. God didn't give us Scripture only for the parts that feel easy or encouraging at first glance. He gave us all of His Word, and every part of it is meant to shape us, even the parts that make us slow down, think, or feel uncomfortable.

Romans 9 is one of those passages. It shows us that God is free in His mercy, free to choose according to His own wise and gracious purpose. For some, that's uncomfortable, because that challenges our sense of fairness and our assumption that mercy must work by our rules. Because of that, some avoid this chapter altogether, while others try to soften it so it feels easier to accept. But our discomfort can't be what determines how we do, or don't, listen to God's Word.

When we try to reshape God so that He fits our own ideas of what feels fair or reasonable, we don't actually understand Him better, we end up with a smaller version of Him. A smaller God might feel easier to deal with, but He won't be the God the Bible shows us. So what do we do with a passage like this?

We let it speak, even when it's hard. We don't rush past the parts that challenge us or explain them away. We also remember that no verse stands on its own, God's Word is consistent from beginning to end. And when we reach the limits of what we can understand, we don't stop asking questions, but we do place those questions in the hands of a God who knows far more than we do.

Romans 9 reminds us that God sees more than we see, knows more than we know, and is always working for good, even when His ways are beyond us.

Paul knows the question that naturally comes next, so he brings it up himself: If God really is in control like this, how can He still hold people responsible? That's an honest question, and Paul doesn't ignore it.

Instead of giving a technical explanation, Paul shifts our perspective. He reminds us that we are not God. We are the ones being shaped, not the ones in charge. Like clay in a potter's hands, we are invited to bring our questions to God, but not to put ourselves above Him. We learn to trust the One who is wisely shaping all things.

And what we see in this passage isn't a harsh or careless God. We see a patient God. A God who holds back judgment. A God who shows mercy. A God who keeps His promises. When Paul points back to the prophets, he's reminding us that this has always been how God works, saving by grace, preserving a people for Himself, and doing exactly what He said He would do.

This passage may not answer every question we have. But it gives us something even better: a reason to trust God. Even when we don't fully understand His ways, we can trust His heart. And for those who belong to Christ, Romans 9 is not meant to shake our hope, but to strengthen it, because our salvation does not rest on how strong our faith feels, but on the faithfulness of the God who always keeps His promises.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 9

Isaiah 29:16 — (*Romans 9:20*)

Isaiah 45:9 — (*Romans 9:20*)

Hosea 2:23 — (*Romans 9:25*)

Hosea 1:10 — (*Romans 9:26*)

Isaiah 10:22–23 — (*Romans 9:27–28*)

Isaiah 1:9 — (*Romans 9:29*)

John 6:37–44

Matthew 11:25–27

2 Timothy 2:19–21

Group Discussion Questions

When you hear the question in verse 19 (“Why does He still find fault?”), where do you find that same struggle showing up in your own life or prayers?

Paul reminds us that God is the Creator and we are the creation. How does that perspective shape the way you respond when God’s ways don’t make sense to you?

What is your typical reaction when you feel out of control, trying harder, pulling back, questioning God, or trusting Him? How does this passage speak into that?

Verses 22–23 highlight God’s patience. Where have you personally experienced God being patient with you, even when change didn’t happen immediately?

How does knowing that salvation is rooted in God’s mercy (not performance) affect the way you think about your relationship with Him today?

The idea of a “remnant” reminds us that God is always working, even when it’s hard to see. Where do you need to trust God’s faithfulness right now despite discouraging circumstances?

What does this passage teach us about God’s justice and mercy, and how they work together rather than against each other?

How does Romans 9:19–29 help us hold God’s sovereignty and human responsibility together without fully resolving the tension?

Week of Monday, February 9, 2026

Romans 9:30-10:4

30 What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. **31** But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law. **32** Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. **33** As it is written,

Look, I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over
and a rock to trip over,
and the one who believes on him
will not be put to shame.

10:1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation. **2** I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. **3** Since they are ignorant of the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. **4** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes,

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

I have a billion dollars. And I will give it freely to whoever emails Pastor Eric Foster first!

Okay, so did you immediately race and send an email to Pastor Eric as quickly as possible or did you keep reading? If you just kept on reading, why? Well, in short, you did not believe me. You may spend hours a day trying to make a small fraction of the riches offered, or you may have already spent a career to make a fraction of it, but you still think that makes more sense than sending Pastor Eric an email... And you were right. I have no money to give you.

Saying that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone can sort of sound like my offer. It sounds too good to be true. Or maybe it sounds too easy? Maybe it sounds like a scam or a trick? Especially if you have spent your whole life trying to earn God's favor. Or maybe just if you spent your life trying to earn your mom or dad's approval! Eternal life to the fullest cannot be this easy.

This is certainly part of what the Jews in the first century may have thought about Christianity. But, this was a misunderstanding on their part. The way of salvation has always been by faith. The book of Hebrews helps make this very clear. It is impossible for the flesh and blood of animals to take away sin. But how does this make sense? Weren't Israelites supposed to make sacrifices? And if you look into the book of Leviticus, didn't God Himself say that the sacrifices atoned for sin? Was God lying? No!

In one sense, the sacrifices only pointed to the blood of Christ and could not make atonement themselves. Jesus is the Redeemer. He is the only Redeemer. No one has ever been saved apart from His sacrifice. But when the people were making sacrifices, they were not just doing it because they thought it sounded cool, they were acting in God's direction. God Himself came to them and made a covenant, a relational agreement, with Israel. He said that if they followed His commands, and made the directed sacrifices, He would forgive their sins. God accepted their obedience and worship as acts of faith, faith specifically in His promised salvation and forgiveness. The people of Israel did not yet understand fully what the forgiveness God offered would cost Him, but God accepted their sacrifices as acts of faith in His Provision. He provided through Christ.

Today, we are in a covenant relationship with God based on and through Christ. We are to live our lives as living sacrifices for God. We are expected to pray and to fast. We are expected to gather together as members of God's family. We are expected to encourage and support one another, giving of our time, talents, and finances. But let us not confuse this with going to work every day to earn a paycheck, hoping to one day earn enough to buy God's favor. God's favor is offered freely. He has far more than a billion dollars and He wants to lavish His riches on you! All He wants is for you to see Him, for you to trust Him, and for you to lovingly submit to His good plans.

Our acts of obedience should be acts of faith that show our trust and love in God. If we make them into stacking blocks to elevate ourselves, we will stumble on the grace of Christ. Lay down your pride and accept God's goodness and forgiveness as a gift. This has always been the only way of redemption. Faith in God's undeserved, but promised, provision.

-Devotional written by Ryan Arrington

Read Also:

Romans 10

Hebrews 10:1-10

Leviticus 16

Hebrews 11

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 6:16-18

Isaiah 8 (Focus on vs. 14)

Isaiah 28 (Focus on vs. 16)

Group Discussion Questions

When you read that the people who sought righteousness did not find it and the people who did not seek it found it, does this seem unfair to you?

In what ways do you trust God? (With your finances? With your time? With your talents? With your connections?)

In what ways do you not trust God? (With your finances? Time? Talents? Connections?)

This passage helps us realize that we can compare ourselves with others quickly and easily. It seems as if Israel is saying in their hearts "We definitely should be saved before these people!" Do you find that you think this about any person or group of people?

Paul was beaten, stoned, and had many other horrible things happen to him. Many, if not a great majority, of these things happened at the hands of the Jews. And yet, Paul still expresses his longing for their salvation more than once. Who has injured you? Do you desire that they receive grace and forgiveness for free from Christ, not having to earn it?

Does faith seem too wimpy to be useful? Or do you see something else in it? / What gives faith power?

Week of Monday, February 16, 2026

Romans 10:5-21

5 since Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: The one who does these things will live by them. **6** But the righteousness that comes from faith speaks like this: Do not say in your heart, “Who will go up to heaven?” that is, to bring Christ down **7** or, “Who will go down into the abyss?” that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. **8** On the contrary, what does it say? The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. This is the message of faith that we proclaim: **9** If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, **12** since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. **13** For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? **15** And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. **16** But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? **17** So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. **18** But I ask, “Did they not hear?” Yes, they did:

Their voice has gone out to the whole earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.

19 But I ask, “Did Israel not understand?” First, Moses said,

I will make you jealous
of those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation
that lacks understanding.

20 And Isaiah says boldly,

I was found
by those who were not looking for me;
I revealed myself
to those who were not asking for me.

21 But to Israel he says, All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and defiant people.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

What if someone shared information with you that could literally save another person's life? Not advice. Not an opinion. Not a rumor. Real information that, if acted on, would keep someone from real danger. Now imagine you were the only one who knew it, and the only way they'd hear it is if you told them.

You also know how this might go. They might think you're overreacting. They might dismiss it entirely. They might even mock you, misunderstand you, or distance themselves from you because you genuinely believe it's true. Would you still tell them?

Most of us would say yes, of course we would. We wouldn't stay quiet if someone's physical life was at stake. We'd speak up, maybe even repeat ourselves, because the danger is real.

That's one of the questions Romans 10 quietly presses on us, but with even greater weight.

Paul reminds us that salvation isn't something we climb toward or earn through effort. It isn't about saying the right words or performing the right actions. Salvation comes through faith in Christ, believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord. It's simple, but it's not small. Our eternity depends on it.

Then Paul asks a series of questions: How will people call on Him if they haven't believed? How will they believe if they haven't heard? How will they hear if no one tells them?

In other words, God has chosen to carry His life-saving message through ordinary people like us. Now you might say this passage is referring only to pastors, but the Bible is clear we all are called to share this news.

And that's where sometimes we hesitate. We believe the gospel is true. We believe it is the only way a person can be made right with God. We believe it has eternal consequences.

And yet, if we're honest, we often struggle to talk about it. Maybe it's because the danger feels less immediate than physical danger. Eternal things don't always feel urgent when everything around us seems fine. Maybe it's fear, fear of rejection, awkwardness, damaged relationships, or being misunderstood. Or maybe it's simply uncertainty about what to say or when to say it.

Paul doesn't pretend this is easy. In fact, he acknowledges that not everyone will believe. Some will hear and still reject the message. That reality doesn't cancel the responsibility, it adds clarity to it. Our role is faithfulness, not just about looking for results.

Sharing the gospel isn't about winning arguments or forcing outcomes. It's about loving people enough to speak, even when the response is uncertain. It's about trusting that God works through His Word, even when we feel weak, hesitant, or imperfect.

I share this not as someone who has it all figured out, but as someone who often feels this tension too. I believe the gospel is the best news anyone could ever hear. And yet there are moments when I struggle to say it out loud.

Romans 10 reminds us that God's saving plan includes our voices. Not because we're impressive, but because He is kind, patient, and generous, and because He delights in working through imperfect people. If faith comes by hearing, then the question for us is whether we're willing to be the ones God uses to help others hear.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 10

Deuteronomy 30:11–14

Leviticus 18:5

Philippians 3:8–9

Isaiah 28:16

Joel 2:32

Matthew 28:18–20

Isaiah 52:7

Isaiah 65:1–2

Group Discussion Questions

Where are you most tempted to measure your relationship with God by performance rather than trust?
What does that reveal about how you view grace?

What does “confessing Jesus as Lord” practically look like in your daily decisions, habits, or priorities right now?

When you struggle spiritually, do you tend to work harder or rest more fully in what Christ has already done?

Who has God already placed in your life that you might be responsible for helping hear the gospel?

What fear or discomfort most often keeps you from talking about your faith, and what does this passage say to that fear?

Paul makes it clear that people can hear the truth and still resist it. How does that truth free you from feeling responsible for outcomes while still calling you to faithfulness?

What is one specific step of obedience this passage is calling you to this week—either in trusting Christ more deeply or speaking about Him more clearly?

Week of Monday, February 23, 2026

Romans 11:1-10

1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. **2** God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Or don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he pleads with God against Israel? **3** Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and they are trying to take my life! **4** But what was God's answer to him? I have left seven thousand for myself who have not bowed down to Baal. **5** In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. **6** Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace.

7 What then? Israel did not find what it was looking for, but the elect did find it. The rest were hardened, **8** as it is written,

God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that cannot see
and ears that cannot hear,
to this day.

9 And David says,

Let their table become a snare and a trap,
10 a pitfall and a retribution to them.
Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,
and their backs be bent continually.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

It can be discouraging to feel like you're the only one trying to do what's right. That feeling can show up in places like in your job, at school, or with extended family. You're trying to live with honesty and follow Christ, but it seems like everyone else is playing by a different set of rules. Over time, that kind of pressure can wear you down and make faith feel lonely.

That experience isn't new. Elijah felt the same way. After a long and difficult season, he told God that he thought he was the only one left who truly cared. From his point of view, everyone else had given up. But God showed him that his view wasn't the full picture. There were others who were still faithful, people Elijah didn't see and didn't even know existed.

Paul brings up that story in Romans 11 to remind us of something simple and important: God is still at work, even when it doesn't look like it. Just because faithfulness isn't loud or obvious doesn't mean it has disappeared.

Paul's point here is about God's faithfulness to His people, but that same faithfulness shows up in our lives today, often through the people God places around us.

When Paul talks about a "remnant," he's not talking about people who have it all together. He's talking about regular people, people who get tired, struggle, doubt, and sometimes feel outnumbered, but who are still being held by God's grace. They didn't stay faithful because they were especially strong. They stayed because God stayed faithful to them.

And one of the main ways God helps us keep going is through the church.

You might feel alone at work or in other parts of your life, but God has not left you to walk this road by yourself. A good church family reminds you that you're not the only one trying to follow Jesus. It's a place where people pray for you, encourage you, and help you keep things in perspective when the week has been heavy.

Your church doesn't have to be perfect to be a real help. It just needs to be a place where people care about one another and keep pointing each other back to Christ. When faith feels hard during the week, the church becomes a place to catch your breath and remember that God is still holding on to His people.

So when you feel discouraged or out of place, remember this: God is still working, and He has given you a family to walk with you, even when the rest of the world feels far from Him.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 11

1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18

Deuteronomy 29:4

Isaiah 29:10

Psalms 69:22–23

Romans 9:6–8

Romans 10:1–4

Galatians 2:16

Ephesians 1:4–6

Group Discussion Questions

Where do you most feel discouraged about following Jesus right now? Is it at work, in your family, with friends, or in your own spiritual life?

What are some ways discouragement can distort how we see God's work in our lives or in others?

What helps you trust God when His work feels hidden or slow? What makes that hard for you?

As you think about this passage, what stands out as an area of life where responding to God feels challenging right now?

Who has God placed in your life to encourage you in your faith—and who might God be calling you to encourage right now?

What is one small step you could take this week to stay spiritually encouraged or connected when discouragement creeps in?

Week of Monday, March 2, 2026

Romans 11:11-24

11 I ask, then, have they stumbled so as to fall? Absolutely not! On the contrary, by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. **12** Now if their transgression brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness bring!

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Insofar as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, **14** if I might somehow make my own people jealous and save some of them. **15** For if their rejection brings reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? **16** Now if the firstfruits are holy, so is the whole batch. And if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them and have come to share in the rich root of the cultivated olive tree, **18** do not boast that you are better than those branches. But if you do boast—you do not sustain the root, but the root sustains you. **19** Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” **20** True enough; they were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but beware, **21** because if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. **22** Therefore, consider God’s kindness and severity: severity toward those who have fallen but God’s kindness toward you—if you remain in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. **23** And even they, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted in, because God has the power to graft them in again. **24** For if you were cut off from your native wild olive tree and against nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these—the natural branches—be grafted into their own olive tree?

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Have you ever wondered what it really means to be grafted in? In horticulture, grafting is the careful process of joining a branch to a tree it does not naturally belong to so that it can receive life from the tree's root system. The grafted branch has no life in itself to sustain it. Its growth and fruitfulness depend entirely on the tree to which it is joined.

(Scan the QR code to see a short video demonstrating the grafting process.)



As you watch, notice how dependent the grafted branch is. It survives, and flourishes, not because of what it contributes, but because of where it is connected. That is exactly the image Paul uses in Romans 11.

Gentile believers are not pictured as planting a new tree or earning a place on their own. We are pictured as branches graciously grafted into an existing tree. The life we enjoy in Christ does not originate with us; it flows to us from a root we did not plant. As Paul puts it plainly, "You do not support the root, the root supports you." Humility, then, is not optional. It is the natural response of those who remember where their life truly comes from.

That is why Paul issues such a strong warning against arrogance. Salvation has never rested on human worthiness, strength, or faithfulness, but on God's mercy. Some branches were broken off, others were grafted in, but the tree itself remains the same. Gentiles were not added because they were better. They were added because God is gracious.

What Paul calls the root in Romans 11, he describes elsewhere as promise and inheritance. God made a covenant with Abraham, promised blessing to the nations, and fulfilled that promise in Jesus Christ. Those who belong to Christ are heirs, not by achievement, but by grace.

This means the church is not a replacement project or a fresh start disconnected from the past. From the beginning, God's plan was to form one people through His promise, fulfilled in Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles who believe belong to that same tree. Gentiles have been grafted into what God was already growing, and Jewish believers remain part of it by faith. The life that flows through the church today comes from the same faithful promise that sustained God's people for generations, now fully revealed and secured in Jesus Christ. Everything all believers enjoy, Jew and Gentile alike, comes by grace, not by merit, because it rests on God's promise rather than human worthiness.

That truth leaves no room for spiritual pride. When we compare ourselves to others or treat faith as a marker of superiority rather than gratitude, we have forgotten the root. We stand only because God keeps His promises. And remembering that truth doesn't produce anxiety, it produces humility, reverence, and deep assurance.

Grace does this work in us. It humbles us, reshapes how we view others, and redirects all boasting away from ourselves and toward Christ alone. If we boast at all, we boast in the faithfulness of a God who graciously grafts sinners into His saving plan.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 11

Deuteronomy 32:21

Isaiah 6:9–13

Jeremiah 11:16–17

Hosea 1:10; 2:23

Matthew 21:33–45

Galatians 3:6–9, 14, 29

Ephesians 2:11–22

Group Discussion Questions

Where have you seen God bring something good out of human failure, either in Scripture or in your own life? How does that shape the way you respond when your faith feels weak or you fall short?

Paul tells believers to “fear,” but not to be afraid. What does a healthy, God-centered reverence look like in everyday life, and how is it different from living in fear, anxiety, or insecurity?

How can we be confident in our salvation without becoming critical, defensive, or spiritually superior toward others? What helps keep assurance rooted in Christ rather than comparison?

Paul includes strong warnings alongside strong promises. How do these warnings actually protect us and serve God’s kindness instead of undermining grace?

Paul says God is able to restore those who have been broken off. How should that shape the way we pray for people who seem far from God, and the way we respond during seasons when our own faith feels fragile?

If we remember that we were “grafted in” by grace and not by nature, how should that shape the way we relate to other true believers who share the same gospel, even when we differ on secondary issues or expressions of worship?

Week of Monday, March 9, 2026

Romans 11:25-32

25 I don't want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you will not be conceited: A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. **26** And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

The Deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

27 And this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.

28 Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your advantage, but regarding election, they are loved because of the patriarchs, **29** since God's gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable. **30** As you once disobeyed God but now have received mercy through their disobedience, **31** so they too have now disobeyed, resulting in mercy to you, so that they also may now receive mercy. **32** For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may have mercy on all.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There are moments in life when things don't unfold the way we expected. Our plans can stall. People we hoped would follow Christ seem uninterested. Sometimes even our own spiritual growth feels slower than we imagined. In moments like that, it's easy to wonder what God is doing, or if He's doing anything at all.

That kind of struggle isn't new. Paul addresses a situation that could have led believers to draw the wrong conclusions about God's plan. Many of the Jewish people, the very ones who had received God's promises, had rejected Jesus. At the same time, more and more Gentiles were coming to faith in Christ. To some, it may have looked like God had changed direction or walked away from His promises. Others may have been tempted to grow proud, assuming God was finished with Israel.

But Paul tells them neither of those conclusions is right. He reminds them of something simple but important: "since God's gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable." (Romans 11:29)

Even though many in Israel had turned away, God had not abandoned the promises He made long ago, to Abraham and to His people. His purposes were never temporary or fragile. What God begins, He does not discard. When God makes a promise, He keeps it.

And that's striking when we think about how often promises fail in our world. People make commitments they later walk away from. Plans change. Words are forgotten. If we're honest, we've all experienced broken promises, and we've probably broken a few ourselves.

But God is not like us. The promises He makes, He keeps. Paul then brings the whole discussion to a powerful conclusion: "For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may have mercy on all." (Romans 11:32)

Paul isn't saying that every person will automatically receive God's mercy. Throughout Romans he has made it clear that salvation comes through faith in Christ. Instead, Paul is showing something deeper about God's plan. Both Jews and Gentiles have lived in disobedience at different points in the story. Yet God has allowed this so that His mercy might be clearly seen.

No one gets to claim they earned their place with God. No one can say they figured it out better than everyone else. In the end, everyone who is saved stands in the same place: as someone who needed mercy.

That truth should humbles us, and fill us with hope.

Because if salvation ultimately rests on God's mercy, then our hope doesn't rise or fall on what we can see right now.

When progress feels slow, when someone you love seems far from Christ, when you can't quite see what God is doing keep trusting. Keep praying.

The same God who has been faithful throughout the entire story of redemption is still faithfully working today. And the God who begins His work in mercy never abandons what He has started.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 11

Genesis 12:3

Genesis 17:7

Deuteronomy 29:4

Isaiah 6:9–10

Isaiah 27:9

Isaiah 59:20–21

Jeremiah 31:31–34

Zechariah 12:10

Ephesians 2:11–18

Ephesians 3:4–6

Titus 3:4–5

Group Discussion Questions

Paul says Israel experienced a “partial hardening” until God’s larger plan unfolded. What does the word partial tell us about God’s ongoing purposes for Israel and His larger plan of redemption?

This passage shows that both Jews and Gentiles needed mercy. When have you been reminded that your own faith and salvation are entirely the result of God’s mercy rather than something you earned?

Paul reminds us that “since God’s gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable.” How does knowing that God does not take back His promises shape the way you view your relationship with Him?

Think about a time when you struggled to understand what God was doing in your life or in someone else’s life. What helped you keep trusting Him, or what made it difficult?

Where do you see the temptation toward spiritual pride in your own heart, whether comparing yourself to others, assuming you understand God’s work better than others, or becoming impatient with people who seem slow to change?

How does knowing that God’s promises and purposes are not reversible change the way you view your struggles, your spiritual growth, or the people you are praying for?

When you remember that your own salvation is entirely the result of God’s mercy, how should that shape the way you treat others, especially people who are struggling, skeptical, or far from Christ?

Week of Monday, March 16, 2026

Romans 11:33-36

33 Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments
and untraceable his ways!
34 For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
35 And who has ever given to God,
that he should be repaid?
36 For from him and through him
and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There are moments in life when the only fitting response is to stop and praise God. Sometimes it comes after walking through something difficult. Other times it comes when we experience an unexpected blessing or see God clearly at work in our lives or in the lives of others. In those moments, the most natural response is simply to pause and give God the praise He deserves.

One of those moments for me came when God answered a prayer that had been on my heart for some time, the prayer to understand what was truly right.

I grew up believing that salvation came through Jesus plus belonging to a particular fellowship. For a good part of my life, into my early twenties, I assumed that was the truth. But over time God began to slowly open my eyes to the error of that teaching. As questions grew, I began praying a simple but sincere prayer: “God, show me what is true.”

The turning point came while reading John 14:6. In that moment, the words of Jesus: “I am the way, the truth, and the life”, came alive in a way they never had before. God used that truth to show me that salvation rests in Christ alone, not in Christ plus anything else. Through that moment, He freed me from the spiritual captivity of what I had believed for so long.

The freedom and clarity that followed stirred my heart to give thanks and praise to God.

In many ways, that’s the same place the apostle Paul arrives as he reflects on God’s saving plan in the chapters leading up to Romans 11. After reflecting on God’s mercy, His faithfulness to His promises, and His sovereign work in salvation, Paul pauses and responds with worship:

“Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments
and untraceable his ways!”
—Romans 11:33

When Paul steps back and considers the grace of God, that salvation comes not by human effort but by God’s mercy, the only fitting response is praise.

And that is still true for us today. When God opens our eyes to the truth of the gospel, when He rescues us from what once held us captive, and when we begin to see the depth of His mercy, the right response is the same one Paul gives us here: pause, stand in awe, and give God the praise He deserves.

And Paul brings it all together with these words:

“For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.”
—Romans 11:36

Every part of our salvation begins with God, is sustained by God, and ultimately points back to God. And when we see that clearly, whether for the first time or whether we are being reminded of it for the hundredth time, the only fitting response is worship.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 11

Isaiah 55:8–9

Isaiah 40:13

Job 41:11

Psalms 145:3

1 Corinthians 2:16

Colossians 1:16–17

Revelation 4:11

Group Discussion Questions

Paul says God’s judgments are “unsearchable” and His ways are “untraceable.” Why do you think God sometimes allows His plans to remain beyond our full understanding?

Verses 34–35 ask two rhetorical questions: “Who has known the mind of the Lord?” and “Who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?” What do these questions teach us about the relationship between God and humanity?

The devotional describes being freed from the belief that salvation required “Christ plus something else.” Why do people often struggle with the idea that salvation is entirely by grace?

If everything is “from Him, through Him, and to Him,” what does that tell us about the ultimate purpose of salvation and the Christian life?

If God’s wisdom and plans are beyond our full understanding, how can we practically grow in trusting Him during seasons when life doesn’t make sense? What might that look like in daily life?

If everything in our lives ultimately comes “from Him, through Him, and to Him,” what is one practical way this truth should shape the way we approach our decisions, priorities, or goals?

Week of Monday, March 23, 2026

Romans 12:1-2

1 Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

The word surrender often carries a negative connotation. It sounds like giving something up because you have no other option, your back is against the wall. It implies losing control, yielding power, and letting go. In war, surrender is often an act of desperation, a way to preserve life when continuing to fight would mean certain defeat.

But what if surrender was different?

What if it was prompted not by defeat, but by something good? What if it was made possible because of the sacrifice of another, and the terms of surrender actually led to a far better outcome? What if the one surrendering was clearly in the wrong, opposed to what is good, and yet was offered mercy?

In that case, surrender wouldn't be loss at all. It would be gain.

That's what Paul is calling us to in Romans 12. Do we truly understand the depth of God's mercy? His mercy is His kindness toward us in our sin, choosing not to give us the judgment we deserve, but instead giving us forgiveness, salvation, and blessing through Jesus.

Because of that, this surrender is unlike any other. The Christian life is not lived to earn mercy, but in response to mercy already given. We've already received the benefit of this life-changing exchange, and now the only fitting response is to offer our lives back to Him.

And when we truly understand that, everything changes.

This isn't loss, it's life. It's not giving something up, it's stepping into what God created us for. It's a blessing, a relief, and a deep peace that passes understanding.

That's why Paul begins, "in view of the mercies of God." The Christian life starts with what God has done, not what we do. Because of His mercy, we present our whole lives to Him, not to earn His acceptance, but because we already have it in Christ. This is our true worship.

At the same time, we resist being shaped by the world and instead are transformed as our minds are renewed by God's Word. And as that happens, we begin to see clearly, discerning and even desiring what is good, pleasing, and aligned with His will.

Because of God's mercy, we no longer live for ourselves, we offer our lives back to Him, and in doing so, we discover the life we were meant to live.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 12
Ephesians 2:4–5
Titus 3:5–6
1 Corinthians 6:19–20
Luke 9:23
John 4:23–24
1 John 2:15–17
Ephesians 4:22–24
Colossians 1:9–10

Group Discussion Questions

Why is it so important that the Christian life is rooted in God’s mercy? What begins to break down when we lose sight of that foundation?

What does it mean to live as a “living sacrifice”? How is that different from how we typically think about sacrifice or surrender?

How does this passage challenge the way we often think about worship? What would it look like for your everyday life this week to be an act of worship?

What areas of your life are hardest to surrender to God right now (time, plans, relationships, habits)? Why do those areas feel difficult to release?

Where do you see the world most strongly shaping your thinking or priorities? What are some subtle ways we can be conformed without realizing it?

What are some practical ways we can pursue a renewed mind? What habits or influences are currently shaping how you think?

Week of Monday, April 6, 2026

Romans 12:3-8

3 For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. **4** Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, **5** in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. **6** According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; **7** if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; **8** if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There's a common sentiment you'll hear from time to time: "I'd rather just do my own thing spiritually."

Sometimes that comes from real hurt experienced in the past. Sometimes it's just personality, preferring independence over involvement. And if we're honest, there are moments when stepping back from people feels easier, safer, less complicated.

But in Romans 12, Paul gives us a very different picture of the Christian life.

He begins with a call to humility, "not to think of himself more highly than he should think" Why does he start there? Because pride often tells us we don't need others. It convinces us that we can follow Jesus on our own terms, in our own way, disconnected from the body.

But then Paul gives us this image: the church is a body. And a body only works when it's connected.

"Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another." (Romans 12:4-5)

That last phrase is key: members one of another, We don't just belong to Christ, we belong to each other.

God has intentionally designed His people this way. Each believer has been given gifts, different roles, different strengths, different ways of serving. And those gifts aren't just for personal growth, they are meant to build up others.

Which means this: When we pull away from the church, we're not just stepping back, we're removing something God intended others to receive.

Your encouragement might be what someone needs to keep going. Your service might meet a need no one else sees. Your faithfulness might strengthen someone else's faith.

And at the same time, when we isolate, we expose ourselves to blind spots. We miss correction, encouragement, accountability, and care, the very things God uses to help us grow.

The Christian life was never meant to be lived alone.

Yes, the church is made up of imperfect people. Yes, there will be moments of frustration or even hurt. But God's design hasn't changed. He calls us not just to believe, but to belong, to serve, and to build one another up. Because a healthy body only functions when every part is connected and engaged.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 12
1 Corinthians 12
Ephesians 4:15–16
1 Peter 4:10–11
Philippians 2:3–4
Hebrews 10:24–25
Ephesians 4:7

Group Discussion Questions

What does it look like to think too highly, or too lowly, of yourself spiritually?

How does the gospel shape a right and healthy view of yourself?

Why might someone be tempted to live the Christian life independently, apart from the church?

What are some dangers or blind spots that can develop when someone isolates from the body of Christ?

How might stepping away from the church affect not just you, but others?

What gifts or strengths do you believe God has given you, and how are you using them in the life of the church?

What is one specific way you can more intentionally engage in the life of the church this week?

Week of Monday, April 13, 2026

Romans 12:9-21

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. **10** Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another. **11** Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. **13** Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. **17** Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. **18** If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. **19** Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord. **20** But

If your enemy is hungry, feed him.
If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
For in so doing
you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.

21 Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There's a big difference between talking about love and actually living it out.

Paul gets really practical in this section of Romans 12. He says, "Let love be without hypocrisy." In other words, don't fake it. Don't just be polite on the surface while holding onto frustration or bitterness underneath. Real love is sincere, and it shows up in how we treat people in everyday moments, not just when it's convenient.

And this is where it really starts to challenge us. It's easy to love people who are easy to love. But what about when someone keeps frustrating you? Or when you feel overlooked, misunderstood, or even wronged? Paul says to be patient in suffering, to pursue peace, to bless instead of retaliate, and to refuse to repay evil for evil. That's not natural, it goes against our instincts. It's the kind of life only God can produce in us.

And that's the key. This isn't a checklist to earn anything from God. It's the overflow of a life that's already been changed by Him. Back in verse 1, Paul reminds us that all of this flows from "the mercies of God." We don't love this way to be accepted, we love this way because we already are.

So when we respond with patience instead of anger, or grace instead of bitterness, we're not just trying harder, we're living out what God has already done in us.

That leads to a simple but searching question: how you respond to people, especially difficult people, what does that reveal about what God is doing in your heart?

Most of us don't have to think long before someone comes to mind. A strained relationship. A frustrating situation. A moment where it would be easier to pull back, shut down, or get even. But what would it look like to respond differently this time? To take one step toward peace. To choose patience. To speak with kindness instead of reacting.

That's what it looks like to "overcome evil with good." Not in big, dramatic moments, but in the small, everyday decisions. The more we understand the depth of God's mercy toward us, the more this kind of life doesn't feel like a burden, but a fitting and reasonable response for those He has redeemed.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 12
John 13:34–35
1 Corinthians 13:4–7
Philippians 2:3–8
Matthew 5:38–45
Luke 6:27–28
1 Peter 2:21–23
1 Thessalonians 5:15–18
Hebrews 13:1–2
Proverbs 25:21–22

Group Discussion Questions

When you think about “real love,” what does fake or surface-level love look like in everyday life, and where do you see that show up in yourself?

What makes it hard to put others first, and what would that actually look like in your relationships right now?

What does it look like to respond well to someone who’s hurt, annoyed, or frustrated you instead of reacting the way you normally would?

When there’s tension with someone, what does it look like for you to take responsibility for your part and move toward peace?

Why is it so hard to let go of the need to “get even,” and what would it look like to trust God with that instead?

What does this passage show us about God’s character, especially when it comes to justice, mercy, and how He deals with wrong?

Do these commands feel more like a list of things to do or the result of a changed heart? How does the gospel shape the way we live this out?

Week of Monday, April 20, 2026

Romans 13:1-7

Let everyone submit to the governing authorities, since there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are instituted by God. 2 So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the one in authority? Do what is good, and you will have its approval. 4 For it is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For it is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong. 5 Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath but also because of your conscience. 6 And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's servants, continually attending to these tasks. 7 Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

This week's passage brings us face to face with two topics that rarely make our list of favorites: authority and submission. Most of us may accept authority as a necessary part of life, but deep down we tend to believe things would be better if we were in charge. Christina and I have had many conversations about my attitude toward rules I don't think are necessary or logical. And she often (and rightly) reminds me that others are watching how we live. Because what Paul shows us in Romans 13 is about far more than frustrating rules or authorities we happen to disagree with—it is about the posture of our hearts before God.

I am struck by Paul's command in verse 1: "Let everyone submit to the governing authorities." This becomes even more powerful when we remember the context. The governing authorities of Paul's day were not friendly toward Christians. Paul himself would eventually be imprisoned under their rule, and according to Christian tradition, executed by them. In other words, Paul is not speaking about submission to ideal leadership. He understands that authorities can be unjust, inconsistent, and even hostile. Maybe, in some small way, you can relate.

But the governing authorities are not the ultimate focus of this passage. Paul lifts our eyes higher. All authority, he says, exists under the sovereign rule of God. No authority is self-made or independent. Jesus Himself affirmed this when He told Pilate, "You would have no authority over me at all if it hadn't been given you from above" (John 19:11). The question, then, is not simply how we feel about authority, but what we believe about the God who stands behind it.

God's design for authority is good. Paul tells us that it exists to restrain evil and promote what is right. Authorities are meant to function as servants of God for your good. Are they perfect in this? Not at all. History—and our own experience—confirms this for us. Yet even imperfect authority can still serve a real purpose in God's plan. Without it, disorder and chaos would quickly take over. Authority, even when flawed, is still part of God's grace to us.

At the same time, Scripture helps us hold an important tension. Paul is describing the rule, not the exception. The normal posture of the Christian life is one of submission to governing authority. Yet obedience to God is always our goal. In Acts 5:29, the apostles say, "We must obey God rather than men." These two truths are not in conflict—they are meant to be lived out in harmony. This leads us to an important question: how do we live in light of this tension?

What is our response to God's design? Paul says the right response is submission. Not merely outward compliance, but a willing alignment of the heart. This is part of the transformed life Paul described in Romans 12:1–2. Conformity to the world often expresses itself in resistance and rebellion, saying, "I will do what I want." But transformation produces something different: a humble submission to God's design, even when it stretches us. And how we respond in these moments reveals something deeper—whether we truly trust that God is in control. Submission is our default posture, and our ultimate allegiance belongs to God.

This is where our witness becomes very real. The way we respond to authority speaks loudly. It shapes how others see our faith. It influences those closest to us. I think about my own boys—how they watch the way I respond to rules, leaders, and expectations. What am I teaching them about authority? More importantly, what am I showing them about trusting God? When we live with respect, integrity, and a clear conscience, even in situations we wouldn't choose, our lives point beyond ourselves to the greater authority—the God who rules over all things with perfect wisdom and justice.

-Devotional written by Jason McDonald

Also Read:

Romans 13

Daniel 2:20-23

John 19:6-16

1 Peter 2:11-17

Acts 5:21-32

Daniel 3:8-23

Matthew 22:15–22

1 Timothy 2:1–7

Group Discussion Questions

When you hear words like authority and submission, what is your initial reaction? What past experiences or assumptions might shape that response?

Romans 13 teaches that all authority ultimately comes from God. How does that truth challenge or change the way you think about leaders or systems you struggle with?

Paul says authority exists to restrain evil and promote good. Where do you see this working well in our world? Where do you see it breaking down? How should we think and respond in both situations?

How do we live out both truths: submitting to governing authorities and obeying God above all (Acts 5:29)? Can you think of real-life situations where this tension might come into play?

In what ways does your response to authority reveal your level of trust in God's sovereignty? Where is it hardest for you to submit, and why?

How does the way we speak about and respond to authority affect our witness to others—especially those closest to us (family, coworkers, friends)? What would it look like for you to model a Christlike posture this week?

Week of Monday, April 27, 2026

Romans 13:8-14

8 Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** The commandments, Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not covet; and any other commandment, are summed up by this commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself. **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

11 Besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. **12** The night is nearly over, and the day is near; so let us discard the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13** Let us walk with decency, as in the daytime: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. **14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Most people want to be a good spouse, parent, or friend. We think about the things we need to do. Be more patient. Less reactive. More present. And often it feels like a long list we're trying to keep up with.

But what if those things aren't meant to compete for our attention?

What if they're meant to flow from something deeper?

Paul says that we "owe" one thing to each other. Love. Not because it's easy, but because love is what fulfills everything God has called us to do in our relationships. When love is present, it changes how we speak, how we respond, how we treat people.

That's a shift from how we often think. We tend to see God's commands as behavior problems to fix. "I just need more discipline." But Paul points us somewhere else. He points us to a heart shaped by love.

And that kind of love doesn't come from trying harder. It comes from being changed.

Paul reminds us that "the night is nearly over, and the day is near." In other words, we're not who we used to be, and we're not living for what we used to live for. Because of Christ, we've been brought into the light. So we are called to live like it.

That means we don't just ignore sin or hope it fades over time. We begin to put it off. The old patterns. The old reactions. The things that belong to the darkness. And in their place, we intentionally begin to put on a new way of living.

So instead of just trying to manage our behavior, we're called to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's the difference.

This isn't just about doing better. It's about living as someone who has been made new. And as that happens, love isn't something we force. It becomes something that overflows from a heart transformed by Christ.

And the more we walk with Him, the more that love begins to shape every part of our lives.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Also Read:

Romans 13

Matthew 22:37–40

Galatians 5:13–14

1 Corinthians 13:4–7

1 John 3:16–18

Ephesians 5:14–16

1 Thessalonians 5:5–8

Colossians 3:8–14

Galatians 5:16–17

Group Discussion Questions

Paul says we “owe” love to one another. How does that shape the way you think about your relationships this week?

What tends to get in the way of loving others well in your everyday life?

How is loving others different from simply trying to follow a list of rules?

Paul calls us to “wake up.” What are some ways we can drift spiritually without realizing it?

What does it look like, practically, to live “in the light” in your current season of life?

What do you think it means to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” in your daily life?

What is one step you can take this week to intentionally pursue Christ and remove something that pulls you away from Him?

Week of Monday, May 11, 2026

Romans 14:1-12

1 Welcome anyone who is weak in faith, but don't argue about disputed matters. **2** One person believes he may eat anything, while one who is weak eats only vegetables. **3** One who eats must not look down on one who does not eat, and one who does not eat must not judge one who does, because God has accepted him. **4** Who are you to judge another's household servant? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will stand, because the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person judges one day to be more important than another day. Someone else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the Lord. Whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and whoever does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat it, and he gives thanks to God. **7** For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. **8** If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. **9** Christ died and returned to life for this: that he might be Lord over both the dead and the living. **10** But you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. **11** For it is written,

**As I live, says the Lord,
every knee will bow to me,
and every tongue will give praise to God.**

12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

The longer you walk with Christ, the more you realize the Christian life requires both conviction and humility. There are some truths we simply cannot compromise on. Things like the authority of the Bible, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone are at the very center of Christianity. If we lose those truths, we lose the gospel itself.

But then there are other areas where genuine Christians may come to different conclusions. Things like the mode of baptism, views on the end times, or how a church is structured. Those things still matter. We shouldn't ignore them or treat them like they're unimportant. But they are not what determines whether someone truly belongs to Christ.

In many ways, this is part of why denominations exist. Christians who agree on the gospel can still disagree on some secondary issues and choose to worship in different churches because of those convictions. That doesn't automatically make someone unfaithful or mean they are rejecting Christianity. Often, it's simply believers trying to follow Scripture as faithfully as they can.

And that doesn't mean we can't talk about those differences. In fact, we should. It's good to open the Bible together, ask questions, and explain why we believe what we believe. Those conversations can help us grow and sharpen our understanding of God's Word. But there's a big difference between having a healthy conversation and looking down on someone because they don't agree with us on every point.

That's exactly the kind of situation Paul addresses in Romans 14. Believers in the church were disagreeing over certain practices and personal convictions. Some felt freedom to eat certain foods, while others did not. Some treated certain days as especially important, while others didn't. And Paul's response is interesting. He doesn't tell them those conversations don't matter, but he does tell them to stop judging and despising one another over them.

That hits close to home because it's easy for us to do the same thing. Sometimes we can turn every disagreement into an argument. We can become frustrated when other Christians don't see things exactly the way we do. Or we can start to feel spiritually superior because we think we've "figured it out" better than someone else.

But Christian maturity is not just about having strong convictions. It's also about learning humility, patience, and love. It's learning how to stand firmly on truth without treating other believers like enemies over every disagreement.

Paul reminds us that one day each of us will stand before God. That doesn't mean we never speak truth into one another's lives or help each other pursue obedience to Christ. Scripture clearly calls us to encourage, correct, and lovingly restore one another when needed. But Romans 14 reminds us not to take God's place by looking down on fellow believers or condemning them over matters where Scripture allows room for differing convictions.

The church needs both truth and grace. Truth to stand firm where Scripture is clear, and grace to handle disagreements with humility and love.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Also Read:

Romans 14

1 Corinthians 8:1–13

1 Corinthians 10:23–33

Colossians 2:16–23

Matthew 7:1–5

Philippians 2:9–11

2 Corinthians 5:10

Group Discussion Questions

What do you think it means to be “weak in faith” in this passage, and what are some modern examples of disagreements Christians may have today?

How can we distinguish between: essential doctrines Christians must stand firm on and secondary issues where faithful believers may disagree?

In what ways can both legalism and pride become dangers in the Christian life?

How should remembering that fellow believers belong to Christ affect the way we speak about and treat one another?

How can recognizing another believer’s sincere desire to honor the Lord help reduce unnecessary conflict and division within the church?

How should the reality that every believer will one day stand before God shape the way we respond to disagreements with other Christians?

Week of Monday, May 18, 2026

Romans 14:13-23

13 Therefore, let us no longer judge one another. Instead decide never to put a stumbling block or pitfall in the way of your brother or sister. 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself. Still, to someone who considers a thing to be unclean, to that one it is unclean. 15 For if your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy, by what you eat, someone for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore, do not let your good be slandered, 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 Whoever serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and receives human approval.

19 So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another. 20 Do not tear down God's work because of food. Everything is clean, but it is wrong to make someone fall by what he eats. 21 It is a good thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble. 22 Whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But whoever doubts stands condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith, and everything that is not from faith is sin.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When you became a Christian, whether you knew it or not, all of your previously held beliefs, convictions, and opinions needed to be passed through the filter of the Gospel. This is a part of Paul's command in Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

However, one of the difficult things about this is that every Christian is going through this process, we all had different starting points in the process, we are all at different stages in the process, and, confusingly, we are not all coming to the same conclusions on everything. In Rome, the topic that people were having a hard time coming to the same conclusion about was, oddly enough, food. Why? Because food was an important part of the former Jewish and the former pagan way of life for these Christians, and people were struggling with moving from their former way of life to the new freedom they have in Christ.

For the Jew, they had the Levitical food laws that declared certain foods unclean for them to eat (Lev. 11). But now, Christ has declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19), bringing the Jew out from the Law. For the Gentile, much of their food, whether it was served at a dinner party or simply sold at the market, was sacrificed to an idol of a false god. But now in Christ, eating this meat was no longer considered an act of pagan worship, and they were free to eat with a clean conscience (see 1 Cor. 8).

But not everyone was experiencing this level of freedom. All foods were clean for a Jewish Christian to eat, but that doesn't mean that they *felt* clean eating pork or shellfish. A Gentile Christian could eat food that was sacrificed to an idol but, as Paul describes in 1 Cor. 8:7, "Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god," (that is, that they are participating in pagan worship).

But the real trouble is that this issue of food was threatening the church. Christians who were technically correct in their understanding of these food-related issues, Paul says, can "hurt," "cause to stumble," or even "destroy...someone for whom Christ died" because their consciences are still pricked when it comes to what they can and can't eat. Therefore, Paul has to redirect the Romans to quit "majoring in the minors" and to focus on love, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Christians with strong consciences must not demean Christians with weaker consciences, but must use their strength and maturity to "make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" rather than "[destroying] the work of God for the sake of food."

Now, Levitical food laws and food sacrificed to idols are probably not the topics that cause strife between Christians today, but we live in a very polarized and politicized culture where Christians are judging others who hold different opinions on matters that the Bible doesn't take a firm stance on. Christians who exercise their Christian freedom to drink alcohol responsibly can cast judgement on the teetotalers, and vice versa. Christians who homeschool their children can cast judgment on those who send their children to public school, and vice versa. Christians who don't immunize their children are judged by those who do, and vice versa. Christians who refuse to buy products from companies that support abortion and the LGBTQ agenda are judged by those who aren't bothered by that fact, and vice versa.

We can have our convictions about these issues, but we must ask ourselves, "Am I holding these convictions in a way that is acting in love, or not? Am I edifying my brothers and sisters, or causing them to stumble? Am I casting judgment on someone over an issue where God himself does not cast judgment on them? Am I destroying those for whom Christ died over a nonissue, or am I serving Christ in this way that is pleasing to God and receives human approval?" If we know our Bibles well enough to know the freedom that we have in Christ, ought we to remember how frequently the Bible commands us to love one another?

-Devotional written by Rick Leeman

Also Read:

Romans 14

Mark 7:14-20

Acts 15:1-35

Ephesians 4:1-6

Colossians 2:16-23

Group Discussion Questions

What are other “issues of conscience” that Christians face today?

How and why can eating and drinking “destroy someone for whom Christ died” and “destroy the work of God”?

A Hindu neighbor of yours becomes a Christian. What would you say to him if he asked you about eating beef?

Christians over the years have had very strong opinions about drinking alcohol. What does the Bible have to say about alcohol? How does Romans 14:13:22 (and the other texts listed above) help unify Christians with differing stances towards alcohol?

Paul says that “anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.” How and why does this both please God and other people?

What is one issue or action that you are prone to cast judgment upon, even though a Christian is free to do it?

Week of Monday, May 25, 2026

Romans 15:1-7

1 Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not to please ourselves. 2 Each one of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself. On the contrary, as it is written, The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me. 4 For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures. 5 Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice.

7 Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you, to the glory of God.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

As believers, we're called to bear with one another, encourage one another, and help carry each other through life. And the truth is, every one of us has seasons where we need that kind of patience and encouragement from others. Sometimes we're the ones struggling, weak, discouraged, or hard to walk with. Other times, we're called to come alongside someone else in love. But right in the middle of talking about that, Paul gives this reminder, "For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures." Romans 15:4

Paul points believers backward so they'll have strength to keep moving forward. There's something powerful about remembering what God has done.

Throughout Scripture, God's people are constantly called to remember. Remember how God brought Israel out of Egypt. Remember how He provided in the wilderness. Remember how patient He was with His people even when they wandered and failed again and again. Remember His faithfulness to keep His promises.

Those stories served a purpose for us today as well. They were written to encourage us. They remind us that the same God who carried His people then is the God still carrying His people now.

Part of growing as a Christian is learning to look back and remember what God has already brought us through. Seasons where we didn't know how things were going to work out. Times we struggled with sin. Moments where God convicted us, restored us, provided for us, or patiently stayed faithful to us when we were weak.

And when we remember those things, it changes how we treat other people. It's a lot harder to be impatient with others when you remember how patient God has been with you. It's easier to walk patiently with struggling believers when you remember the people God used to walk patiently with you.

It's easier to extend grace when you haven't forgotten how much grace you still need yourself. That's really where this whole passage is leading. The encouragement God gives us isn't meant to stop with us. It's meant to overflow into the way we love and care for others within the church.

As we remember God's faithfulness through His Word and through our own lives, He shapes us into people who can patiently walk with others instead of just living for ourselves.

And ultimately, all of this points us back to Jesus. Jesus did not live to please Himself. He patiently bore with weak and failing people. He welcomed sinners. He carried burdens. He showed compassion over and over again. And because He has shown that kind of grace to us, we're now called to show that same grace to one another.

Maybe one of the best things we can do this week is simply stop and remember: What has God brought me through? Where has He been patient with me? Who did He use to encourage and strengthen me along the way?

Because remembering God's faithfulness in the past often becomes the very thing that helps us faithfully love and serve others today.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Also Read:

Romans 15

Philippians 2:1–8

Galatians 6:1–2

1 Corinthians 10:23–33

Psalms 69:7–9

1 Corinthians 10:1–11

Ephesians 4:1–3

Lamentations 3:21–26

Group Discussion Questions

What does Christ's willingness to endure suffering and humiliation for the sake of others teach us about true spiritual maturity and love?

Why is it important for Christians to view the Old Testament as a source of encouragement, endurance, and hope rather than merely history or background information?

How did disagreements between stronger and weaker believers create tension in the early church, and why was mutual patience so necessary for preserving unity?

Why do you think Paul places such a strong emphasis on humility, patience, and selflessness when addressing relationships within the church?

What are some ways Christians today can prioritize personal preferences or freedoms over the spiritual good of others?

How does remembering the patience, grace, and mercy God has shown you personally affect the way you respond to difficult or struggling people?

In what ways can sharing stories of God's faithfulness in past seasons become a source of encouragement and strength for other believers today?

Week of Monday, June 1, 2026

Romans 15:7-13

7 Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you, to the glory of God. **8** For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises to the fathers, **9** and so that Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

**Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and I will sing praise to your name.**

10 Again it says, **Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people!** **11** And again,

**Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples praise him!**

12 And again, Isaiah says,

**The root of Jesse will appear,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
the Gentiles will hope in him.**

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When I became a believer in college, I started reading the Bible for the first time. As I was starting to be exposed to the different part of Scripture, a girl I thought was cute suggested that I read the Book of Daniel because of how “crazy” it is—and of course I felt compelled to do so. Apart from the familiar stories of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions’ den, the Book of Daniel truly was crazy and I had no idea of what I was reading. Even with a seminary degree, I still have a difficult time understanding what Daniel is describing. I think many Christians have similar feelings when it come to understanding and appreciating much of the Old Testament.

But what does this have to do with Romans 15:7-13? Two things: *first*, Paul is telling us something very important about how we ought to read and understand the Old Testament in general; and *second*, he is using that way of understanding the Old Testament to exhort the Romans to foster unity within the church.

First, what Paul wants us to know and remember when we open up our Bible to the Old Testament is that *it always points us to the person and work of Jesus Christ*. In some way, shape, or form, *all* of the people, *all* the promises, and *all* the prophesies in the Old Testament prepare us for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And, conversely, so much of what we read in the New Testament points us back to the Old Testament. The Old and New Testaments are so interconnected that if we want to understand one, we need the other.

Paul is showing us this here in Romans 15:7-13. Paul is showing how Jesus “confirm(s) the promises to the fathers,” who are Abrham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the promise that was made and reiterated to them throughout the Book of Genesis is that, “Abraham is to become a great and powerful nation [that is, Israel], and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him” (Gen. 18:18).

It is Jesus, who is himself a “son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1), who comes from the great nation of Israel, who would fulfill the promise made to Abrham to bless all nations. And to prove his point, Paul quotes (in order): Psalm 18:49; Deut. 32:43, Psalm 117:1; and Isaiah 11:1 and 11:10, all focusing on how the Jewish Messiah would bring the Gentiles in to worship Yahweh.

Paul had an embarrassment of riches from the Old Testament to choose from to prove his point. Ever since God scattered after the Tower of Babel (Gen. 10-11), his redemptive plan included bringing them back to himself through his Messianic King of Israel, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood on the cross would “sprinkle many nations” (Isa. 52:15). And that is why Christ commands us to “make disciples of *all nations*” (Matt. 28:19), and that is why John sees “a vast multitude from *every nation, tribe, people, and language*” worshipping the Lamb (Rev. 7:9). When you open up your Bible (especially the Old Testament), try to notice the same themes running throughout the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

But Paul’s specific point of applications to the Romans (and to us!) is that because of the great lengths that the Lord took in redeeming people from every tribe, tongue, and nation through the blood of his precious Son, who welcomes all—Jew and Gentle—into the Kingdom of God, “welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you, to the glory of God.” The unity of the church is not simply a “best practice” for the organization, but it is something grounded in and flows out of God’s redemptive plan for the world as unites his blood-bought people to himself and to each other.

-Devotional written by Rick Leeman

Also Read:

Romans 15

Genesis 12:1-3

Isaiah 11:1-16

Isaiah 19:16-25

Acts 10:34-48

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Galatians 3:10-14

Group Discussion Questions

How confident do you feel in your understanding of the Old Testament? What parts do you find difficult to understand, and why?

Read Isaiah 19:16-25. What sticks out about this passage? What is particularly surprising about Egypt and Assyria being spoken about in this way? (If you are unfamiliar with Assyria's role in the OT, read 2 Kings 18-19).

Why does Paul say that Jesus "became a servant of the circumcised [Jews]" and that he is the reason the "Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy"?

Why do you think Paul grounds his exhortation to "welcome one another" in the Old Testament?

What does this passage say about your presence in the local church? How were you "welcomed" and how can you be "welcoming"? What are ways we can be unwelcoming?

How does this passage tie in with what Paul has already said about Jews and Gentiles and "the weak and the strong" in the letter?

Week of Monday, June 8, 2026

Romans 15:14-33

14 My brothers and sisters, I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. **15** Nevertheless, I have written to remind you more boldly on some points because of the grace given me by God **16** to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of the gospel of God. God's purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. **17** Therefore I have reason to boast in Christ Jesus regarding what pertains to God. **18** For I would not dare say anything except what Christ has accomplished through me by word and deed for the obedience of the Gentiles, **19** by the power of miraculous signs and wonders, and by the power of God's Spirit. As a result, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. **20** My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else's foundation, **21** but, as it is written,

**Those who were not told about him will see,
and those who have not heard will understand.**

22 That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you. **23** But now I no longer have any work to do in these regions, and I have strongly desired for many years to come to you **24** whenever I travel to Spain. For I hope to see you when I pass through and to be assisted by you for my journey there, once I have first enjoyed your company for a while. **25** Right now I am traveling to Jerusalem to serve the saints, **26** because Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. **27** Yes, they were pleased, and indeed are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual benefits, then they are obligated to minister to them in material needs. **28** So when I have finished this and safely delivered the funds to them, I will visit you on the way to Spain. **29** I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in prayers to God on my behalf. **31** Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, **32** and that, by God's will, I may come to you with joy and be refreshed together with you.

33 May the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

I've been thinking a lot about discipleship lately. First, how to better disciple my son. Then, how to better disciple some of the men I meet with regularly. And finally, how we as a church can better help one another grow in Christ. Over the last several months, I've had conversations with a number of people who share that same desire. There seems to be a growing hunger for deeper relationships, meaningful encouragement, and intentional spiritual growth. As pastors, we've been thinking through what that could look like practically within the life of our church.

With all of that already on my mind, I came to Romans 15 this week and immediately noticed something encouraging in verse 14. Paul tells the believers in Rome that they are "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another." In other words, these believers had been taught well, were applying the truth faithfully, and had become capable of helping others grow too. That's a beautiful picture of discipleship within the church. Mature believers helping one another follow Christ more faithfully.

What stands out to me is that Paul was not writing to a church made up of perfect people. The church in Rome had its share of struggles, disagreements, weaknesses, and growing pains. Yet Paul could still genuinely encourage them because he saw evidence of God's grace at work among them. They were growing in goodness, growing in knowledge, and growing in their ability to help one another spiritually.

That's important because sometimes we can think discipleship is only for pastors, teachers, or Christians who have everything figured out. But the picture we see here is much more personal and much more ordinary. It's believers helping believers. It's one Christian encouraging another with Scripture over coffee. It's parents teaching their children about Christ in everyday moments. It's faithful church members praying together, speaking truth to one another, bearing burdens together, and reminding each other of the gospel when life gets hard. Paul himself models this throughout the rest of the passage. Even as an apostle, he speaks with humility about the grace God had given him and the ministry he had been called to. He understood that spiritual growth ultimately comes from God, but God often uses ordinary people as part of that process. Paul preached, taught, encouraged, warned, prayed, and invested deeply in others because he longed to see people mature in Christ.

One thing I appreciate in this passage is that Paul never approaches ministry like a celebrity building a platform. His focus was never on himself. His ambition was to see Christ known where He had not yet been proclaimed and to see believers strengthened in their faith. Even near the end of the chapter, as he speaks about travel plans and future hopes, you can hear his deep love for the church and his dependence on the prayers of God's people.

I think that's a good reminder for us. Discipleship is not ultimately about programs or strategies, though those things can certainly help. At its core, discipleship is believers intentionally helping one another follow Jesus. And often the most meaningful moments happen through simple faithfulness over time.

As I think about my own son, the men I meet with, and our church as a whole, this passage reminds me that healthy discipleship begins with believers who are themselves growing in Christ. People who are learning God's Word, applying it to their lives, and then lovingly passing those truths on to others. None of us do this perfectly, but by God's grace we can help one another continue growing in maturity and faithfulness together.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Also Read:

Romans 15

2 Timothy 2:1–2

Ephesians 4:11–16

Colossians 1:28–29

1 Corinthians 3:5–9

Matthew 28:18–20

Acts 20:17–38

Isaiah 52:7–15

Psalm 67:1–7

Group Discussion Questions

Paul tells the believers in Rome that they were “able to instruct one another” (v.14). What do you think keeps many Christians from feeling confident enough to help disciple or encourage others spiritually?

In the devotional, discipleship was described as “believers helping believers follow Jesus.” Who has had that kind of influence in your life, and what made their impact meaningful?

Paul’s ministry was deeply intentional, yet also humble and dependent on God’s grace. How can we pursue spiritual growth and discipleship without becoming prideful, controlling, or performance-driven?

Romans 15 shows that discipleship is not just about gaining knowledge, but about applying truth and helping others do the same. What are some practical ways we can intentionally disciple others in everyday life?

Paul had a strong desire to take the gospel to places where Christ had not yet been proclaimed. How should his missionary mindset shape the way we think about our own neighborhoods, workplaces, friendships, and communities?

Near the end of the passage, Paul asks believers to “strive together” with him in prayer (vv.30–32). Why do you think prayer is so essential in discipleship and ministry, and how can we grow in praying more intentionally for one another?

As you think about your own life right now, where is God calling you to take a next step in discipleship, whether that means growing personally, investing in someone else, or becoming more teachable yourself?

Week of Monday, June 22, 2026

Romans 16:1-23

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchreae. **2** So you should welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many—and of me also.

3 Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, **4** who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches. **5** Greet also the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epaphroditus, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. **6** Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. **7** Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews and fellow prisoners. They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles, and they were also in Christ before me. **8** Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. **9** Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. **10** Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. **11** Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those who belong to the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. **12** Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who have worked hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked very hard in the Lord. **13** Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother—and mine. **14** Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. **15** Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. **16** Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send you greetings.

17 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. Avoid them, **18** because such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites. They deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk and flattering words.

19 The report of your obedience has reached everyone. Therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise about what is good, and yet innocent about what is evil. **20** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy, my coworker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow countrymen, greet you.

22 I, Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

When is a movie over? Most of us would say when the screen goes black, a song starts, and the credits roll. No one really cares to watch a long list of names go by to read the names of the minor actors and crew, even though these are the people who really made the movie happen. Some of us may approach Paul's letters the same way, as he typically ends with a list of names—both people he wants to greet and people who send their greetings. These names may be hard to pronounce and may not be up there on the popular baby names lists. But this list of 34 names, Paul would say, makes the Gospel ministry in Rome happen. They show us something about what a church ought to be.

First, the church should be *warm*. Paul clearly has deep affection for all the saints in Rome, and especially for these people that he names. Paul tells the recipients of the letter to greet them specifically and uses glowing words to describe some of them. He calls Phoebe a “benefactor of many.” He notes how Prisca and Aquila “risked their own necks for [his] life.” He greets his “coworkers” his “fellow Jews,” his “dear friends.”—he is greeting people that he truly loves. And, furthermore, he encourages the Romans to emulate this affection by saying “Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

Now, Paul is *not* telling us to start literally kissing each other in the foyer when you grab your coffee and donut on Sunday morning—we 21st century Americans are a little more reserved than those in Paul's context. But what Paul is saying is that we are to be a people who are relationally warm towards one another, who truly love and care for one another, who truly recognize that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and children of the same Heavenly Father.

Second, the church should be *workers*. Notice how many Paul commends for their work (nine by my count). These people are those who have labored for the sake of the Gospel. When Jesus told his disciples “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2), these people are the answer to those prayers. This is vastly different than the consumeristic culture of our day, which asks, “What can the church do for me?” rather than “What can I do for the church?” Such people are worthy of their commendation

Next, the church should *beware*. Not all people who call themselves Christians are commendable, but some are contemptable. Right after the list of saints, Paul tells the Roman Christians to beware of scoundrels. They are divisive and deceptive, undermining the teaching and relationships within the church. While we love our church and the people we worship with, Paul does not want us to be so naïve to think that people will never turn from the Gospel and seek to pit us against each other. We must always remember that the wheat and the weeds are growing together until the harvest (Matt. 13:24-30).

And lastly, the church will be *victorious*. “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (v. 20). This is a reference to Genesis 3:15, when God tells the Serpent who deceived Adam and Eve, “I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” Ultimately, this is about Jesus, who was “struck” on the cross yet “struck” a deathblow to Satan in his death and his resurrection. But Paul says that the church will soon have Satan under our heels. This will come when the church is raised on the Last Day, when “Death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54).

-Devotional written by Rick Leeman

Also Read:

Romans 16

Matthew 13:24-30

Matthew 9:35-38

Hebrews 10:19-25

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Jude 12-23

1 John 4:7-16

Group Discussion Questions

What makes a Christian a relationally “warm” person?

What makes a church relationally “warm” or “cold”? How can a church better foster relational warmth?

Why and how do people approach church in a consumeristic way?

Paul instructed the Roman Christians to give Phoebe whatever she needs to perform her ministry. If time and resources weren't an issue, how would you serve the church?

Nearly every book of the New Testament warns against false teachers. Why do the apostles warn against them so frequently? Do you think we need those warnings today?

What does it mean to be “wise about what is good and yet innocent about what is evil”?

Week of Monday, June 29, 2026

Please note: Due to a schedule adjustment, this passage will be preached on Sunday, July 12.

Romans 16:25-27

25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent for long ages **26** but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God to advance the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles— **27** to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ—to him be the glory forever! Amen.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Paul ends one of the richest theological letters ever written not by talking about himself, but by praising God. After sixteen chapters explaining humanity's sin, God's grace, justification by faith, sanctification, God's sovereign purposes, and the unity of the church, Paul can't help but end in worship.

The first truth he reminds us of is that God is able to strengthen His people. Our strength does not ultimately come from our determination, our discipline, or our circumstances. It comes from God Himself. He strengthens us through the gospel, the good news that Jesus Christ lived the life we could never live, died the death we deserved, and rose again victorious over sin and death. The same gospel that saves us is also the gospel that sustains us.

Paul then speaks of the mystery that has now been revealed. For generations God's plan of redemption was promised in shadows, sacrifices, and prophecies. Now, through Christ, that plan has been made known. Salvation is not limited to one nation or one people but is offered to all who believe. From the beginning, God's purpose has always been to gather people from every tribe, language, and nation into one family through His Son.

Notice also the goal of this revelation: "to advance the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles". Genuine faith is never merely intellectual agreement. Saving faith produces a life that increasingly trusts, follows, and obeys Christ. We are not saved by obedience, but true saving faith always bears the fruit of obedience.

Finally, Paul concludes where every believer's life should end—with the glory of God.

"To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ—to him be the glory forever! Amen." (v. 27)

The gospel is ultimately not about making much of us. It is about making much of God. From beginning to end, salvation displays His wisdom, His grace, His justice, His mercy, and His glory. Our greatest joy is found not in being at the center of God's story but in discovering that He is.

As we finish Romans, we're reminded that theology is never meant to stop with knowledge. It should always lead us to worship. The more clearly we see what God has done through Christ, the more our hearts should respond with gratitude, humility, confidence, and praise.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Also Read:

Romans 16

Ephesians 3:1–13

Colossians 1:24–29

Jude 24–25

Philippians 1:6

Habakkuk 2:14

Genesis 12:1–3

Matthew 28:18–20

Group Discussion Questions

Paul ends this incredible letter with worship instead of one final command. Why do you think praise is the most fitting conclusion to everything he has written?

Paul speaks of God's plan as a "mystery" that has now been revealed in Christ. What does this teach us about God's wisdom, timing, and faithfulness throughout history?

Verse 26 says the gospel is meant to bring about "the obedience of faith." How would you explain the relationship between faith and obedience to someone who thinks Christianity is only about following rules, or only about believing facts?

This passage reminds us that God's plan has always included people from every nation. How should that shape the way we view evangelism, missions, and the people God has placed around us?

Paul ends by giving all the glory to "the only wise God." What are some subtle ways we can drift into making life, or even our faith, more about ourselves than about God's glory?

After studying this passage, what is one truth about God that leaves you with greater confidence, gratitude, or awe than when you began?

As you think back through the entire book of Romans, what truth has challenged or encouraged you the most? Why has that particular truth stayed with you?

Week of Monday, July 6, 2026

We have made it through the book of Romans! In some ways, it can be an intimidating book to study, but as we said when we began, Romans is simply a letter written to ordinary people in an ordinary church. More importantly, it is God's Word, and He continues to use it to speak to His people today. You don't need a seminary degree or special training to hear from the Lord and understand His Word. You need what every believer has—the Holy Spirit. As we've walked through Romans together, I believe God has been faithfully teaching, convicting, encouraging, and transforming us.

Since we have an extra week in our reading plan, I'd like us to take a moment to look back and reflect on some of what God has done in our midst through this study. I say some because I believe He has done far more than we could ever capture in a short devotional, and I also believe He will continue to bear fruit in our lives because of our time in this remarkable letter. Here are three truths that stand out to me.

First, Romans reminds us that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ that brings salvation to everyone who believes. Yet before Paul tells us the good news, he gives us a hard reality check about the condition of the human race apart from Jesus. Left to ourselves, we are far worse sinners than we imagine. As difficult as that truth is, it is one we desperately need to see. Only when we understand the depth of our sin can we truly appreciate the greatness of God's grace. Yes, we are worse sinners than we ever imagined, but Jesus is a far greater Savior than we could ever dream. As you reflect on Romans, take a moment to thank Jesus for doing what you could never do for yourself. Thank Him for rescuing you, forgiving you, and giving you new life through faith in Him.

Second, Romans teaches us that God's purposes are surer than we often believe. We saw that God has not abandoned His promises to Israel. His plan is unfolding exactly as He intended, even when we cannot fully understand it. That truth also gives us confidence in our own lives. I've heard people respond to the phrase, "Good luck," by saying, half-jokingly but completely truthfully, "I don't believe in luck; I believe in the sovereignty of God." There is deep comfort in that statement. Even when God's plan is difficult to understand, when we cannot see through the darkness, or when we wonder how any good could come from our grief, He remains sovereign and faithful. His promises have never failed, and they never will. Whatever season of life you find yourself in today, remind yourself that God is always faithful to His Word.

Third, Romans calls us to love one another in everyday life. This may have been the most personally challenging part of the study for me. I expected to wrestle with deep theological truths, and I did. I expected to think carefully about God's plan for Israel, and I did. What surprised me was how much Paul pressed the everyday implications of the gospel. It is possible to marvel at God's saving grace while overlooking the ordinary ways He calls us to live because of that grace. The gospel has set us free—not so we can continue living for ourselves, but so we can joyfully serve others and display the glory of God. Think about that for a moment. We have the privilege of displaying God's glory in the ordinary moments of life: by loving our spouse, caring for our children, serving our church family, extending grace to those who disagree with us, and sharing the hope of Christ with those who don't believe. Those everyday acts of love become a testimony to the greatness of our Savior. They are not always easy, but through our new life in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, they are possible.

As we finish Romans, my prayer is that we would never move beyond the gospel. May we continue to rejoice in God's grace, rest in His sovereign faithfulness, and live lives that display His glory every day. It has been a wonderful year studying God's Word together, and I am excited to see what He has in store for us as we begin our journey through the book of Ruth. Although Ruth is very different from Romans, I believe the same God who has faithfully taught us through this letter will continue to shape us through His Word. May we come with humble hearts, ready to hear, ready to obey, and eager to see Him at work once again.

-Devotional written by Jason McDonald

Also Read:

Ephesians 2:1–10 – The Greatness of the Gospel: Reflect on the contrast between who we were apart from Christ and what God has graciously done for us through salvation.

Isaiah 53:4–12 – Christ Our Savior: Romans repeatedly pointed us to Christ's substitutionary work. Isaiah reminds us that God's plan to save sinners had been promised long before Jesus came.

Lamentations 3:19–26 – God's Faithfulness: When circumstances are difficult, we remember that God's character never changes.

Psalms 103:19–22 – The Sovereignty of God: God reigns over all things. His rule is never threatened, delayed, or defeated.

Philippians 2:1–11 – Living for Others: The gospel calls us to humility and selfless love, following the example of Jesus.

John 13:34–35 – A Gospel-Shaped Church: Jesus tells us that our love for one another is one of the clearest witnesses to the world.

Colossians 3:12–17 – Living for God's Glory: The Christian life is lived in ordinary moments through Christlike character, thankful hearts, and loving relationships.

Group Discussion Questions

Looking back over our study of Romans, what truth, chapter, or sermon had a significant impact on your walk with Jesus? Why?

Romans reminds us that we are all sinners saved entirely by grace. How has your understanding of the gospel grown during this study?

We spent significant time discussing God's sovereignty and faithfulness, especially in Romans 9–11. How has this changed the way you think about trials, unanswered questions, or the future?

Romans 12–15 emphasizes living out the gospel through humility, service, and love for others. Which of those areas has God most challenged you to grow in?

Paul continually moves from doctrine to practice. Why do you think a right understanding of the gospel is essential for living the Christian life?

If someone asked you, "What is the main message of Romans?" how would you answer after spending the past year studying it together?

As we begin our study of Ruth, what are you praying God will continue to do in your life through His Word?