



Explore the Bible.®

DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

...and patience, experience, and
ence, hope

5 And hee maketh not ashamed. Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Ho'ly Ghost which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without strength

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

For it, when we were suffering, He was crucified to God for the death of the sons of men, that He might rescue us from all iniquity, purifying to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good deeds.

11 And not only so, but we are also *joy* in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The Abundant Grace of Christ

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

tribulation is coming, we know that the Son of Man is coming, and disciplining us for greater holiness. (Heb. 12)

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D

Roma

NOTICE

1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be changed.



ns

Romans



THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the power of God to change lives.

The word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the good news of what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus.

The good news of the gospel is rightly understood in light of the bad news of sin. Romans 3:23 tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Our sin separates us from God.

Nothing we can do will bridge the chasm between us and God. No amount of good deeds can earn our salvation. “No one will be justified in his sight by the works of the law” (Rom. 3:20).

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). That is good news! Because Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead, we can have “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1) and “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). He is waiting for you now.

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus Christ as God’s Son and accept Jesus’ gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: “Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.”

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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» MEET THE WRITER



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MUST SHARE

The gospel has the power to change people; therefore, believers must share the gospel with others.

ROMANS 1:1-7,13-17

Romans is Paul's letter explaining the gospel. He wrote about his trust in the power of the gospel and showed the importance of the gospel by making it the center of his life. Paul wrote about the power and the results of the gospel. The gospel is the key to understanding the life of Paul, and it is the central focus of the Book of Romans.

Many Deaf people do not know about Jesus. Less than two percent of the Deaf people in the world are Christians. How many Deaf people live in your area? How many of them are Christians? Lynn and her husband, Bill, were a Deaf couple living in Texas. Both became Christians when they were young. Ever since Lynn and Bill married, they have worked hard to tell other Deaf people about Jesus. Recently Bill resigned his job so they could work full time doing Deaf Bible translation. This is how they will share Jesus around the world. As you study God's Word, pray and ask God to give you a burden for lost Deaf people in your community.

ROMANS 1:1-7,13-17

1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. God called me to be an **apostle** **A** and chose me to tell the **Good News**. **B** **2** God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures. **3** The Good News is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a man, He was born from the family of David. **4** But through the Spirit of holiness he was declared to be God's Son with great power by rising from the dead. **5** Through Christ, God gave me the special work of an apostle, which was to lead **people of all nations** **C** to believe and obey. I do this work for him. **6** And you who are in Rome are also called to belong to Jesus Christ. **7** To all of you in Rome whom God loves and has called to be his holy people: **Grace** **D** and **peace** **E** to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **13** Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I planned many times to come to you, but this has not been possible. I wanted to come so that I could help you grow spiritually as I have helped the other **non-Jewish people**. **F** **14** I have a duty to all people—**Greeks** **G** and those who are not Greeks, the wise and the foolish. **15** That is why I want so much to preach the Good News to you in Rome. **16** I am not **ashamed** **H** of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes—to save the Jews first, and then to save non-Jews. **17** The Good News shows how God **makes people right with himself** **I**—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, "But those who are right with God will live by faith."

- a. An apostle is one who is sent. Usually we use the word for the twelve disciples chosen and sent by Jesus. Paul was also an apostle sent by Jesus.
- b. The gospel; the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and the salvation He gives to people who believe.
- c. Most English Bibles use the word *Gentile* here. *Gentile* means anyone who is not a Jew.
- d. God's special love for all people. The greeting of grace and peace appears in all of Paul's letters. (See for example Philippians 1:2.)
- e. Peace or "shalom" was the traditional Jewish greeting. Paul used the word to mean the joy and freedom from fear we have when we accept Jesus as our Savior.
- f. Gentiles
- g. People who lived in Greece or people who spoke Greek and followed Greek culture
- h. Embarrassed, not proud
- i. Paul is writing about justification which means how God makes a relationship right between Himself and people.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why do people who know the truth have a duty to share that truth with others?
2. Who wrote the Book of Romans? Why did he write it?
3. Who is the good news about? Why is it good news?
4. Why did Paul want to visit Rome?
5. Who needs the good news today? Who can tell the good news today?
6. How can you and your Christian brothers and sisters tell the gospel to Deaf people in other nations?
7. What special work did God call Paul to do? What special work has God called you to do?
8. What does it mean to be ashamed of the gospel? Are you sometimes embarrassed when you try to share the gospel? Why or why not?
9. Why is the resurrection of Jesus an important part of the gospel?
10. How can we become right with God?

BIBLE SKILL: *The Gospel*

The gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ. It is the truth about salvation from God, given to us through Jesus Christ—His life, His teachings, His death, and His resurrection. The first four books in the New Testament are called the Gospels because they tell the story of Jesus. In your Bible, look for these books in the New Testament. Write the names of the four gospels:

M _____

M _____

L _____

J _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- We find truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- When believers understand the truth, they have a duty to share it with others.
- The truth of the gospel causes believers to be bold and strong in their belief.

What is “the gospel” of Jesus Christ? Discuss with your group how we can explain the gospel of Jesus to our Deaf friends who do not know Him.

What was Paul’s duty (responsibility) to the Gentiles? What is the duty of your Deaf Bible study group? How can each of you fulfill your duty?

How can you show you are not ashamed of the gospel? List actions you will take this week.

MEMORY VERSE

I am not ashamed of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes—to save the Jews first, and then to save non-Jews. – Romans 1:16

DAY ONE

Read Romans 1:1-2, noting how Paul introduced himself.

Picture this in your mind: Paul is standing beside another man, his assistant, who is seated at a desk. Paul talks and the assistant writes Paul's words on a scroll. Paul is thinking about the Christians in Rome. He knows some of them, but he has never visited in their church. Paul begins to talk and the assistant begins to write: "From Paul..."

Paul said he was an apostle. This means he had authority to preach the gospel. At first, the word *apostle* described only the twelve followers of Jesus (Luke 6:13-16). Paul said he had a special command from Jesus Christ and God the Father (Galatians 1:1).

Paul also said he was a servant, or slave, of Jesus Christ. Paul wanted to obey God like a slave must obey his master. He knew God chose him to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:15-16). He traveled and preached the gospel in many cities. He started new churches and then wrote letters to them. This is a letter to the Christians in Rome. In this letter, Paul said he wanted to visit Rome.

Paul identified himself as a servant of Jesus Christ. What can you do to show you are a servant of Jesus Christ?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 1:3-4, understanding who Jesus is.

The Christians in Rome already knew much about Jesus. However, Paul wanted them to know the whole story and to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. He wanted them to know the good news which he preached.

The name *Christ* had a special meaning for Jews. *Christ* is a Greek word. In the Hebrew language it is Messiah. The word *lord* was more of a Gentile word. The Gentiles must obey their lords, masters, and kings. In the Bible, the word *Lord* is an English translation of the Hebrew word *Elohim*, a special name for God in the Old Testament. When we say, "Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God," we are proclaiming who Jesus is.

The world has seen many strong religious leaders, but never one like Jesus. You may be familiar with some of these names: Mohammed,

Buddha, Gandhi, or Joseph Smith. They were popular when they were alive. People all over the world heard about them. And then these leaders died. Their bodies are still in their graves. Only one grave is empty—the grave of Jesus. The resurrection proved the divinity of Jesus. Jesus did not become God when He arose from the grave. He has always been God!

How did the miracles of Jesus show His power? Why is the resurrection the greatest miracle of Jesus?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 1:5-7, recognizing God’s call.

Grace is a gift. It is not something a person can earn. Before he met Jesus, Paul thought he could please God by doing good things. He tried to obey all the details of the law. But he could not earn eternal life by his actions. Eternal life is a gift from God.

Paul said Jesus called him to become a missionary to the Gentiles. Paul’s message was, “Jesus died for all people.” Jesus died for Jews, and He died for Gentiles. He said God also called the Christians in Rome to belong to Jesus Christ. They must be missionaries to the people in the city of Rome.

Paul said the Christians in Rome were called to belong to Jesus Christ. That is another way to say “follow Jesus.” Some other words we use include: accept Jesus as Savior, believe in Jesus, and trust in Jesus. In many nations of the world today, Deaf Christians are talking with Deaf people about Jesus. When a Deaf person accepts Jesus, the missionaries continue to encourage and teach so the new believer can tell other Deaf people the wonderful gospel story.

What did God call Paul to do? What does God call you and all Christians to do? How well are you obeying that call?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 1:13-15, defining our duty.

Paul said he tried to visit the Roman Christians many times, but he was not yet able to do it. We know from the Book of Acts he did finally get there. It was Paul's great desire to share the good news with the people who lived in Rome. To prepare the Roman Christians for his future visit, Paul wrote the Book of Romans that we are now studying.

To obey God's call on his life, Paul worked as a missionary sharing Christ with all people. He shared with Greeks and non-Greeks. The word *Greeks* means people who lived in the nation of Greece. It also means the people who spoke the Greek language or followed Greek culture. Paul also said the gospel is for everyone, both wise and foolish. He meant the gospel is for people who have an education and for people who have no education.

God gave Paul the duty (responsibility) to go to Gentile nations and preach about Jesus. Your Christian responsibility may be much different from Paul's work. God may ask you to travel to other nations to teach and preach. Or, He may ask you to be a witness for Him in your hometown.

How can you and the members of your Bible study group fulfill your duty to share Christ with everyone?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Missions*

Every believer has the responsibility to share the gospel with people in every nation in the world. This is a command from Jesus Himself (Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8). We must witness with our words, our signs, and our lives. We must give money to support missionaries who go to other nations to preach the gospel. We must be missionaries to tell Deaf people in our own communities about the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 1:16-17, summarizing the power of the gospel.

The gospel changes people's lives. The gospel causes people who were God's enemies to become God's friends. God will help us overcome our fear of sharing the gospel with others. This is the gospel message:

1. Everyone has sinned (done wrong things) against God (Romans 3:23).
2. We all have earned God's punishment (Romans 6:23). And we cannot save ourselves by good works or by religion (Romans 3:20).
3. God sent His son, Jesus, to this world (John 3:16). Jesus lived a perfect life, without any sin (Hebrews 4:15).
4. When Jesus died on the cross, He suffered the punishment for our sins (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:8,18).
5. God will forgive us if we confess our sin to Him (Acts 3:19). We must trust Him. Then God will change our lives (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This is the good news that Paul preached boldly. Like Paul, it is time for all of us to boldly share this good news with our neighbors and the people of the world.

How would you explain the good news to an unbelieving Deaf friend? What will help you to boldly tell the gospel story to others?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 1:1-7,13-17. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your small group the truth of the gospel (the good news). How can your group share the gospel with Deaf people and hearing people in your city?

Why does knowing the truth of the gospel give you the responsibility to share the gospel? How well are you and your friends doing with this sharing? What can you do to share it better?

What does it mean to be ashamed of the gospel? What can your small group do together to boldly share Christ with your Deaf community?



GUILTY

People sin when they ignore God. Sin will destroy them.

ROMANS 1:18-28,32

What does the road into sin look like? It starts in a place somewhat near God but ends in a place that is far from God and deep in the destruction of sin. It starts knowing about God. It ends in death.

Here is the path Paul described. The Gentiles knew about God, but they hid the truth about Him and lived in sinful ways. They knew about God but still rejected Him. They foolishly chose to worship things God made instead of worshiping God. Because they rejected God, He let them face His judgment for their sin. They knew their actions were wrong and would lead to death, but they continued to sin. In the end, God let them go their own way.

Look into your heart and mind. Are you somewhere on this path? Are you sometimes like those Gentiles? Jimmy was a Deaf student at Delgado Junior College in New Orleans. When he started college, he turned from God. Soon his life was lost in parties and drugs. His once happy life was now full of anger and pain. Only turning to Christ saved him from destruction.

ROMANS 1:18-28,32

18 God's anger **A** is shown from heaven against all the evil and wrong things people do. By their own evil lives they hide the truth. **19** God shows his anger because some knowledge of him has been made clear to them. Yes, God has shown himself to them. **20** There are things about him that people cannot see—his eternal power **B** and all the things that make him God. But since the beginning of the world those things have been easy to understand by what God has made. **C** So people have no excuse for the bad things they do. **21** They knew God, but they did not give glory to God **D** or thank him. Their thinking became useless. Their foolish minds were filled with darkness. **E** **22** They said they were wise, but they became fools. **23** They traded the glory of God who lives forever for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people, birds, animals, and snakes. **24** Because they did these things, God left them **F** and let them go their sinful way, wanting only to do evil. As a result, they became full of sexual sin, **G** using their bodies wrongly with each other. **25** They traded the truth of God for a lie. They worshiped and served what had been created instead of the God who created those things, who should be praised forever. Amen. **26** Because people did those things, God left them and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex and started having sex with other women. **27** In the same way, men stopped having natural sex and began wanting each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrongs. **28** People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. **H** So God left them and allowed them to have their own worthless thinking and to do things they should not do.

32 They know God's law says that those who live like this should die. But they themselves not only continue to do these evil things, they applaud others who do them.

- a. God is angry because of sin. God's anger is not like ours. His anger comes from His holiness not from impatience.
- b. God is omnipotent (all powerful).
- c. People who do not believe in God can still see evidence of God's existence when they see the world around them that He made.
- d. We give glory to God by submitting to Him. The people Paul described here did not believe or submit to God.
- e. The opposite of light or understanding from God; this is the darkness they lived in.
- f. God turned His back on them or, we could say, God left them in the darkness they had chosen.
- g. When people turn from God, they turn to all kinds of sexual sin. Paul here clearly describes homosexual sex as part of the spiritual darkness in which these people lived.
- h. People living in sin do not want God so they reject a true understanding of who God is.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why does ignoring God lead to destruction?
2. What makes God angry and what would make Him turn from His anger?
3. How can we give glory to God?
4. How does the created world around us show us who God is?
5. Why do people have no excuse for the bad things they do?
6. What will happen to people who reject God? How would you describe spiritual darkness and foolishness?
7. What kinds of things are often like idols today because they get more attention than God?
8. The Gentiles said they were wise. What did Paul say they were?
9. What did Paul mean when he wrote, "God left them"?
10. What steps in life must a person take to avoid God's judgment?

BIBLE SKILL: *Searching verses*

God wants all people to know Him.

Read Romans 1:18-23; 1 Corinthians 1:20-25; and Galatians 4:8-9. How do these verses compare to each other?

In Romans 1:18-23, what tells us that everyone in the world knows God? How many times does Paul make that clear in these verses?

IN MY CONTEXT

- God shows Himself through all that He has created.
- When people reject God and His truth, they turn to spiritual darkness and foolishness.
- When people reject God, they do not value life as they should.
- People who reject God will face His judgment and deserve death.

In what ways have you been blinded to sin? How did you realize your need for God? How can you help others realize their need for God?

Where do you find spiritual darkness in your community? How can you help bring God's light to those places?

Read carefully through the Bible verses, making a list of ways people who reject God show they do not value life as they should. How can you show respect for human life?

List some people you know living under God's judgment of death. How can you and your Bible study group reach those individuals with the gospel?

MEMORY VERSE

They traded the glory of God who lives forever for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people, birds, animals, and snakes.
– Romans 1:23

DAY ONE

Read Romans 1:18-20, looking for God's revelation of Himself.

Sin makes God angry, but God will turn from His anger if a person repents. God calls people back to Himself. God lets people experience the result of their sin so they will cry out to Him for salvation. In the New Testament, people who lived the worst kind of lives seemed to be the first to accept Jesus. (See John 4:1-54.) Too often those who appeared to live good lives were not interested in Jesus and His salvation.

If we pay attention to nature, we can learn about God. When Paul wrote these words, he may have been thinking about Psalm 19:1-6. In that psalm, David wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies announce what his hands have made."

God has placed within each of us a conscience. It is our personal understanding of God (Romans 2:14-15). All over the world people see the sun, moon, and stars and want to know who the Creator is. Animals, plants, or the birth of a baby all show God and His love for people. People who have never heard of God search for a way to worship the Creator.

What does the created world around us teach about God? How can creation help us turn from sin and turn to Jesus?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 1:21-23, identifying idolatry.

Idolatry is defined in the Bible as the worship of anything or anyone other than God. It is worship of many gods, the use of idols, worship of animals or people, and the use of idols in the worship of God.

When the Israelites went into the promised land, God warned them against the beliefs and practices of the people who lived there. Their worship of idols included male and female prostitution, making a child walk through a fire, and sacrificing children on the altar. Fortune telling was part of many religions. Worshiping what God made instead of worshipping God is like eating a wonderful dessert and then thanking the dessert instead of thanking the person who made the dessert! That makes no sense.

People will always worship something. Satan tries to lead us away from God. We see this often today when millions of people worship

popular singers and movie stars. They call them their “idols.” When these idols die, it almost causes a time of national mourning. Few people truly give God the honor He deserves. God does not receive the most important place in their lives (Mark 12:29-30).

What kinds of things are often like idols today because they get more attention than God? What do you need to give up or spend less time with so you can serve God better?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 1:24-25, finding the results of idolatry.

What is the result of idolatry? These verses tell us God left them. God did not leave (go away). The word *left* means God “took his hands off” and let them go ahead and do what they wanted to do. What could be worse than to be left alone, without God? People still have hope while they are living. But if people really want God out of their lives, God has provided a place called hell where they can go and never see God!

The ancient idol worshipers are not much different from people today. Idolatry is everywhere—on television, in movies, and in magazines. The emphasis today is to get and enjoy created things. People enjoy things and ignore the Creator.

God is good and perfect (James 1:17-18). He cannot excuse any wrong behavior. But God does not always stop people when they want to do wrong things. In verse 24, Paul wrote that God gave them up to the desires of their own hearts. In other words, God lets people do the wrong things so they can see what sin does to them.

How has our world today traded the truth of God for a lie?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 1:26-28, focusing on specific sins.

Why did Paul choose these specific sins? Maybe it was because sexual sin was part of idol worship. It was also in government, entertainment, and other areas of life. From the beginning, God wanted sex to be a special part of love between a husband and wife. When a man and a woman get married, they become as one person (Genesis 2:24).

At the time Paul wrote this letter, men and women used their bodies in sinful ways. Women had sex with women, and men had sex with men. Paul said God left them to their desires and the punishment caused by their sin. In Paul's day, this kind of sin was common in Greece and in the Roman Empire. Nero was one of the worst of all the evil Roman kings. He married a young boy and took him to the palace to become his "wife."

God may let people do such things, but these things are sin, and sin must be punished or forgiven. Everyone will die someday (Romans 6:23). Before we die, God wants to forgive us and to save us. That is possible because of Christ's death. If we believe in Jesus, He will save us (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 1 John 1:9).

How can you share God's love with sinful people?

How can you reach out to people who are openly sinning?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God's Anger*

God's anger is not like our anger. We become angry because of something we do not like. God is angry because people choose to sin. God's anger is like a judge making a decision against someone who has broken the law (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10). God's anger is always directed toward sin (Numbers 11:4-21; Deuteronomy 9:7-22). God's anger toward sin will finally lead to punishment (John 3:36).

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 1:32, thinking about why all of us need salvation.

People sinned and they also invited other people to sin. They knew they were not doing the right things, but they let sin control their lives. People today are as sinful as the people in Paul's time. Paul's words are still true. People still refuse to obey God. They prefer to follow their own desires. Their evil thoughts control what they choose to do. These people knew they would not escape God's punishment. Today people know this too, and yet they continue their evil way. They do not repent; they celebrate!

People tend to know God's law is right and good. They know about God's judgment, but they choose to do sinful things. When people know they are sinning, they can turn to God, repent of their sin, and trust Jesus for salvation.

Not everyone sins in the same way as these people Paul wrote about. But even if we are not guilty of the sins Paul described, we need to remember we, too, have sinned against God (1 John 1:8-10). All of us need the salvation God gives through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Why does everyone need salvation from sin? How can you turn from your sin to God who is always ready to save?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 1:18-28,32. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What can you and your group do to help others see God in His creation?

Discuss what it means to live in darkness and apart from God.

What can your Bible study group do to help others understand the nature of sin and God's gift of salvation?



NOT ENOUGH

Because no one can keep the law perfectly, everyone needs a Savior.

ROMANS 2:17-29

Paul seems to have written to Gentile believers in chapter 1. In chapter 2, he wrote to Jewish believers. We could give this chapter the title, “Who are you?” or “Who do you think you are?” Maybe you know someone who bragged because he was president of a group, but he never did anything he was supposed to do. You might say to him, “Who are you? Are you the leader or not? If you are, then get to work!”

The Jews felt very safe before God just because they were Jews. They felt God would take care of them. Some of them thought because they were Jews, they had a right to teach the Gentiles how to become Christians. For this group of Jewish believers becoming a Christian meant following the Old Testament law. It especially meant being circumcised. Paul made it clear in these verses that obedience to the law did not work. True obedience to God required a work of the Spirit in the heart of a person.

ROMANS 2:17-29

17 What about you? You call yourself a **Jew**. **18** You trust in the **law of Moses** and brag that you are close to God. **19** You know what he wants you to do and what is important, because you have learned the law. **20** You think you are a guide for the blind and a light for those who are in **darkness**. **21** You think you can show **foolish people** what is right and teach those who know nothing. You have the law; so you think you know everything and have all truth. **22** You teach others, so why don't you **teach yourself**? You tell others not to steal, but you steal. **23** You say that others must not take part in adultery, but you are guilty of that sin. You hate idols, but you steal from temples. **24** You brag about having God's law, but you bring shame to God by breaking his law, **25** just as the Scriptures say: **"Those who are not Jews speak against God's name because of you."** **26** If you follow the law, your **circumcision** has meaning. But if you break the law, it is as if you were never circumcised. **27** People who are not Jews are not circumcised, but if they do what the law says, it is as if they were circumcised. **28** You Jews have the written law and circumcision, but you break the law. So those who are not circumcised in their bodies, but still obey the law, will show that you are guilty. **29** They can do this because a person is not a true Jew if he is only a Jew in his physical body; true circumcision is not only on the outside of the body. **30** A person is a Jew only if he is a Jew inside; true circumcision is done in the heart by the Spirit, not by the written law. Such a person gets praise from God rather than from people.

- a. The church in Rome had Jews and Gentiles in it. Jewish believers often tried to convince Gentile believers that keeping the Jewish law was necessary for salvation. Paul knew he had to address that problem in this letter.
- b. The phrase "Law of Moses" refers to the first five books of the Old Testament.
- c. Not only was it not possible for these people to lead the "blind," they were living in spiritual darkness themselves if they were trusting the law for their relationship with God.
- d. In this context "foolish people" would be the Gentiles.
- e. This is the nature of a hypocrite—someone who teaches one way but lives another.
- f. Paul seems to be quoting Isaiah 52:5.
- g. Circumcision was a physical symbol of Judaism and the sign of the covenant.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why does everyone need a savior?
2. What did the Jews brag about?
3. Why was it not possible for the Jews to be guides for those who were spiritually blind and lights for those who were in spiritual darkness?
4. What did the Gentiles think of God when they saw the Jew's actions? What do non-believers think of God when Christians act like hypocrites?
5. What would happen if you could fully obey all of the law? Why is it impossible for you or anyone else to do this?
6. What is the only way to have forgiveness of sin?
7. Why is it important to obey God's law?
8. How does God judge people? What is most important to Him?
9. What does Paul mean by "circumcision done in the heart?"
10. How can we know we truly belong to God?

BIBLE SKILL: *God's Law*

Find these Bible verses to learn more about the purpose of God's Law. Write what you learn about the law from the verses.

Romans 3:23 _____

Galatians 3:19 _____

Galatians 3:24 _____

1 Timothy 1:9 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- No person can boast to be perfect because no one can perfectly keep all the law.
- The law is helpful only if people fully obey all of it, not just part of it.
- God knows the hearts of all people. He knows if our hearts are dedicated to Him.

Why is it wrong for you to brag about being perfect? What teachings in the Bible do you find it difficult to follow and obey?

How would you describe your level of obedience to God? In what ways are you talking about obedience but not really obeying? What will you do about it?

What does it mean to have a heart dedicated to God? How well have you dedicated your heart to Him? Why do you think so?

MEMORY VERSE

As the Scriptures say: “There is no one who always does what is right, not even one.” – Romans 3:10

DAY ONE

Read Romans 2:17-19, looking for the problem Jewish leaders had.

Paul praised the Jews at first, but then he criticized them. Paul made clear the difference between religion and true obedience to God. Many people today think they have a good relationship with God because of where they live or what they know. They think God approves them because of what they do or what church they belong to.

When Gentiles wanted someone to teach them about the Christian life, the Jewish Christians were glad to help. These Jewish teachers knew much about God's law. They thought they were able to teach the Gentile Christians. But the Jewish people had a problem. They thought, as the chosen people, they were free from God's judgment. They believed they were saved because they were Jews.

God gave His law to the Jewish people. God wanted them to teach it to the people in other nations. This was a special work God called them to do. Gentiles were like blind people because they did not know God's law. Unfortunately, the Jews who wanted to lead the Gentiles were also spiritually blind. They were blind to their own failures.

What is the difference between religion and obeying God?

What things do you do to obey God?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 2:20-22, looking for the hypocrisy pointed out by Paul.

Paul criticized the Jewish people because they told people how to serve God, but in private, they did not follow their own teaching. This is called hypocrisy—teaching about right living but living in sin. Deaf people often use a sign meaning “practice what you preach.” In this sign, one hand is “preaching” outward and the other hand is “preaching” toward the signer. This was the Jewish failure; they did not practice what they preached.

Paul said these Jewish teachers taught other people to obey the law, but they did not obey the law themselves. The teachers said it was wrong to steal, but they stole things. They taught it was important to be faithful

to their wives, but they were guilty of adultery. They preached against idolatry, but they sold things to the temples and cheated on the prices. In other words, no matter what they said, their actions did not agree with their words.

If we say God's Word is true, then we must obey it. God's Word—the Bible—must guide every part of our lives. As we teach other people, we must be careful to learn the lessons from the Bible and obey.

What must believers do to avoid hypocrisy? In what ways have you failed? What can you do differently in the future?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 2:23-24, finding a sin to avoid.

God made a special agreement called a covenant with the Jews. To show their faithfulness to this agreement, all the male members of the family were circumcised. However, no physical act can give a person a right relationship with God. Having a right relationship requires a deeper change in a person's life. Jesus said a person must be born again (John 3:3).

What about you? Everyone who knows you may think you are a Christian. But God knows the truth about you. Your actions may satisfy other people, but you cannot satisfy God by your actions alone. God knows if you truly have a right relationship with Him.

Paul often warned the churches about teachers who were not true (1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Some people taught because they wanted to earn money. Maybe they knew the Bible, but they did not know God properly. Hypocrisy and wrong thinking are still found in many churches today. Every time it shows up it brings shame to God. We followers of Jesus can hurt God's work just like the Jewish leaders in Rome. Of all the evils we must avoid, this one is high on the list—for people to speak against God because of us.

How can you have a right relationship with God? Why do you need to obey God if you want a right relationship with Him?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 2:25-27, identifying what satisfies God.

False teachers today sometimes lead cults. A cult may have many teachings based on the Bible, but they often change or add to what the Bible says. The most important way to identify a cult is what they teach about Jesus. A cult does not teach Jesus is God's Son who died and was raised again for our salvation through faith in Him alone. A cult does not follow the Bible alone as the Word of God.

Paul wrote to Rome to make it clear that the Jewish law and circumcision did not fulfill the law, and it did not bring a person into right relationship with God. Only trusting Jesus could do both of those things. Therefore, having the law and circumcision was of no benefit for salvation. The saved Gentile was more of what God wanted than the law-following Jew. It is so important to know these biblical truths and to follow them. If we do not, we are on the way to being like a cult. Some people live a good moral life and say they are religious, but they are not true believers. Only those who trust in Jesus satisfy God.

How does your life match what you say about your beliefs? How do you know God is satisfied with you?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Right Relationship with God*

A person can only have a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. When a person believes in Jesus, that person is saved or redeemed. The whole person is redeemed. God gives salvation to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His blood made salvation possible. Only in this saving relationship is a person in right relationship to God.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 2:28-29, drawing a line under what changes people's lives today.

God told Abraham circumcision would show the agreement between God and His people (Genesis 17:9-13). To live in relationship with God, the Jewish people had to follow God's law and that included circumcision. However, circumcision alone did not lead to a right relationship with God. Circumcision does not free a person from sin. Interestingly enough, people who are not circumcised can serve God fully! Neither the law nor circumcision can change the heart.

The important truth for us today is we must obey God. And this is how we do it: we must trust Christ alone. Our own works cannot save us from our sins. It is not the law but the Holy Spirit that changes people's lives. He gives power to live in the right way. The law cannot do this.

When God's Spirit changes you from the inside at salvation, then God accepts you as one of His own people. Then, even if other people will not praise you, God will praise you.

How does the Holy Spirit change you on the inside?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 2:17-29. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your small group the meaning of self-righteousness. How does your failure to live perfectly stop you from being self-righteous?

Why does God require us to be fully obedient to Him? If the Old Testament law cannot make us obedient to God what can?

How can you encourage each other to keep your hearts fully devoted to following Jesus?



JUSTIFIED

Everyone who accepts the gospel by faith becomes justified before God the Father.

ROMANS 3:21–4:3

This lesson helps us understand one of our major doctrines as Christians—justification. The word *justification* means “to be made right” or perhaps even better, “to be declared right.” When we say that God has justified us, we mean that God has done what was needed to make us right with Him. God has fixed what was broken and wrong.

When you see a page of a book or newspaper, sometimes both the left and the right margins are even. Other times, like this page, only the left margin is even. The right margin has some lines longer than others. When a printer makes all the lines even, it is called “justifying the margins.” To begin with, the lines are not all the same, but the printer makes them even. This example may help with the idea of justification. We are not in a right relationship with God. We are broken and jagged and wrong. But God does what is needed to fix us: He makes what is wrong to be right. By the death and resurrection of Jesus, God declares that we are now right with Him.

ROMANS 3:21–4:3

21 But God has a way to make people **right with him** **A** without the law, and he has now shown us that way which the **law and the prophets** **B** told us about.

22 God makes people right with himself through their faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for all who believe in Christ, because all people are the same:

23 Everyone has sinned and **fallen short** **C** of God's glorious standard, **24** and all need to be made right with God by his **grace**, **D** which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ. **25** God sent him to die in our place to take away our sins. We receive forgiveness through faith in the **blood of Jesus' death**. **E** This showed that God always does what is right and fair, as in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. **26** And God gave Jesus to show today that he does what is right. God did this so he could judge rightly and so he could make right any person who has faith in Jesus. **27** So do we have a reason to brag about ourselves? No! And why not? It is the way of faith that stops all bragging, not the way of trying to obey the law. **28** A person is made right with God through faith, not through obeying the law. **29** Is God only the God of the Jews? Is he not also the God of those who are not Jews? **30** Of course He is, because there is only one God. He will make Jews right with him by their faith, and he will also make those who are **not Jews** **F** right with him through their faith. **31** So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants.

4:1 So what can we say that Abraham, the father of our people, learned about faith? **2** If Abraham was made right by the things he did, he had a reason to brag. But this is not God's view, **3** because the Scripture says, "**Abraham believed God**, **G** and God accepted Abraham's faith, and that faith made him right with God."

- a. Our sin is taken away by God's grace and we are justified.
- b. The *Law* refers to the first five books of the Old Testament. *Prophets* refers to that section of the Hebrew Bible that included the historical books (like Kings and Chronicles), the major prophets (like Isaiah), and the minor prophets (like Hosea).
- c. This is the idea of not reaching the goal such as being a runner in a race who falls behind or an arrow that does not reach its target.
- d. God's great love when He forgives our sin and saves us. God gives us what we do not deserve. That is the idea of grace.
- e. This is the language of sacrifice. Jesus' death was a sacrifice for our sin. (See Hebrews 9:12.)
- f. The Greek Bible here has the word "uncircumcision" and refers to Gentiles.
- g. Paul quoted Genesis 15:6.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How would you explain justification to another person?
2. Verse 21 tells us God has a way to make people right with Him. What is that way?
3. How are all people the same?
4. In your own words, explain what grace means.
5. List reasons for believing God is always right and fair.
6. Why do some people think they can earn salvation by doing good things? What can we boast about and what can we not boast about?
7. In the verses of today's lesson, make a circle around all the important words about being made right with God (such as: grace, faith in Jesus).
8. Do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? Why or why not?
9. What did Abraham do to become right with God? What are some examples of his faith?

BIBLE SKILL: *Learning about Salvation*

Compare Romans 3:23-24 with 2 Timothy 1:8-10 and Ephesians 2:8-9. Write in your own words how a person gains salvation.

IN MY CONTEXT

- God gives salvation freely to anyone who places their faith in Jesus.
- God declares those who place faith in Jesus to be righteous.
- Salvation happens because of our faith in Jesus; therefore we have nothing to brag about.
- Faith is the only way to a relationship with God.

Discuss with your group what it means to place one's faith in Jesus. How does this act of faith save us?

What can you and the members of your Bible study do to intentionally show love to people who are different from you? When will you start?

How can you have a right relationship with God? What can you do to help others have a right relationship with God?

MEMORY VERSE

Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard, and all need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ.
– Romans 3:23-24

DAY ONE

Read Romans 3:21-22, looking for God's way to justify.

Paul used the Scriptures to prove to the Jews they were not right with God even if they obeyed the Old Testament Law. He showed them this was announced in their own Scriptures. The Old Testament speaks of becoming right with God through faith and not by the Law. God will make people right with Himself, even if they have not followed the Old Testament Law perfectly.

The Jewish people did not understand how God did not require religion and following rules to be right with God. Instead, He only required faith in Jesus. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the complete payment for our sin. We must thank Jesus because our salvation does not require us to obey thousands of rules.

The law and the prophets (the Old Testament) made it clear how God wants people to have faith. It is the most important response to God there is. In Romans 4, Paul used verses from the law and the prophets to show God wants faith.

How did you become right with God? How can anyone in the world become right with God?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 3:23-24, drawing a line under God's free gift.

Sin is the greatest problem any person can have, and it is the problem that everyone has. Sin ruins the relationship between a person and God. Because of sin, people have lost their right to enter heaven. People have tried many ways to escape the power of sin. They have tried to do good works, to be a good person, or to be very religious. None of these things are enough. People may be very honest in what they do or what they believe, but without God's grace, they cannot enter heaven.

God offers righteousness as a free gift. This is wonderful news! We cannot earn this righteousness. Jesus died for our sin. What we must do now is trust Him. We must confess our sin and invite Him into our lives. Then God will forgive our sin. It is God's free gift and He offers it to everyone, from every nation. By grace God makes us righteous

(2 Corinthians 5:21). We become part of God's family (Ephesians 1:5). We have a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have God's promise of our future resurrection (Ephesians 1:13-14). And, we are free from the power of Satan (Titus 2:11-14).

Verse 24 says we are "free from sin." What does this mean for you?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 3:25-26, finding how righteousness and faith are connected.

In a law court, a judge will free a person if he is not guilty. God is the Judge of the whole world, and we are all in His court. What is more, we are all guilty. Nevertheless, God frees everyone who trusts in Jesus as their Savior. We become righteous (justified) because of our personal faith in Christ.

In Old Testament times, people offered animals as sacrifices when they asked God to forgive their sin. They knew the death of an animal was not enough to pay for their sin (Psalm 51:15-17; Micah 6:6-8). Something more was needed and that something is Jesus.

Jesus' death on the cross satisfied the punishment we deserve for our sin. God has removed the punishment we should receive. God's mercy and grace are reasons for us to repent of our sin and turn to Him through faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Paul wrote about God's judgment and His goodness. Because God is a perfect Judge for all people, He must punish sin. Because He is good, He sent His Son Jesus as the sacrifice so our sin could be forgiven.

**How does our faith open the way for God to make a person righteous?
How did God make you righteous?**

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 3:27-31, understanding more about God's work in our salvation.

Paul was a good Jew. He had a good education and knew what the Law (the Old Testament) taught. He thought he could go to heaven because he obeyed the Law of Moses. Before Paul became a Christian, he persecuted Christians. He did this because he believed Christians had turned from God by turning to Jesus. For Paul, the Law had been everything, and he thought Jesus turned people away from the Law.

But God had other plans for Paul. When Paul became a believer, everything changed for him. In Christ, Paul found salvation by faith and not by obedience to the rules. Looking back, Paul saw that a person who sought God through the law became a person who was self-righteous. Such a person would think, "Look how good I am; I keep the law." In Christ, Paul learned he could not boast. He could not save himself. Instead, he could only appeal to God's mercy by trusting Jesus.

The Jews thought they were better than the Gentiles. But the truth is we are all the same; we are all sinners. We all need faith in Jesus.

What does it mean to be self-righteous? What boast do you have before God?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Justification*

In the New Century Version, the word "justification" is translated "to be made right with God." Justification is God's gracious and full forgiveness of our sins available to us because of the righteousness of Jesus. It is given to all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God (Galatians 3:11 and Titus 3:7).

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 4:1-3, finding the only path to God.

Paul said his message about faith was not new. He explained how the Old Testament taught the same message about faith. Paul used the example of Abraham. Abraham lived a long time before God gave the law to Moses. Abraham lived by faith, and his faith made him right with God (Genesis 15:6). God promised Abraham he would become the father of many people, and God would bless those people if they had faith in Him. Read that promise in Genesis 12:1-9.

God did not choose Abraham because Abraham was a good man. God did not choose Abraham because he followed some laws. God chose Abraham because of his faith. Because of Abraham's faith, the Bible calls Abraham a friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:5-9; James 2:23).

Abraham did not just believe in the idea of God. Even Satan believes God is real (James 2:19). True faith means that in full trust we give our lives completely to God, turning from sin and self, and placing our lives totally in Christ. That kind of faith was the reason God said Abraham was righteous. That kind of faith brings salvation today.

What is the one path to God for you and for all the people of the world?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 3:21–4:3. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

How did you become a Christian? What can you and your small group do to show your faith in Jesus?

Discuss with your group what it means to be right with God. How can you explain righteousness to a Deaf friend?

Why is faith in Jesus the only way to be right with God? How can you live out your faith in Jesus every day?



AT PEACE

All who accept the gospel find peace with God.

ROMANS 5:1-11

We have peace with God because we are made right with God by faith. The death of Jesus on the cross shows God's love to us. We have many blessings because of our faith and God's justification. In addition to peace, Paul lists *hope* and *rejoicing* when we suffer for God. We can experience God's love and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Before we were saved we were enemies of God. Now we are His friends, His children.

Andrew graduated from the School for the Deaf in Knoxville where he had been a star on the school basketball team. Even though he was a very popular student, his life was a mess. He did not do well in school, and after school he had a hard time keeping a job. He lived with his mother and made money by selling drugs. Trying to find some help, he went to the Deaf church in his city. There he trusted Christ. Immediately his life took a huge change. The turmoil of his life was replaced by the peace of Christ.

ROMANS 5:1-11

1 Since we have been made **right with God** **A** by our faith, we have **peace** **B** with God. This happened through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** who through our faith has brought us into that blessing of God's grace that we now enjoy. And we are happy because of the **hope** **C** we have of sharing **God's glory**. **D** **3** We also have joy with our troubles, because we know that these troubles produce **patience**. **E** **4** And patience produces character, and character produces hope. **5** And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. He gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us. **6** When we were unable to **help ourselves**, **F** at the right time, Christ died for us, although we were living against God. **7** Very few people will die to save the life of someone else. Although perhaps for a good person someone might possibly die. **8** But God shows his great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners. **9** So through Christ we will surely be saved from **God's anger**, **G** because we have been made right with God by the blood of Christ's death. **10** While we were God's enemies, he made us his **friends** **H** through the death of his Son. Surely, now that we are his friends, he will save us through his Son's life. **11** And not only that, but now we are also very happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we are now God's friends again

- a. The NCV uses the words "right with God" in this place; most English Bibles use the word "justified."
- b. God's peace is with us even when we have problems all around us.
- c. Paul uses the word "hope" to mean knowing something will happen because God says it will happen. This kind of hope is not a wish but a reality.
- d. All of the power and majesty of God.
- e. The patience that God makes in us is a patience that is waiting for something we know will happen.
- f. We could not help ourselves because there was nothing we could do to get out of our hopeless situation. We could not save ourselves.
- g. God's anger is different from human anger. God is angry toward sin because sin destroys everything it touches—especially our relationship with Him.
- h. The NCV uses the word "friend." Most English Bibles here have the word "reconciled."

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What must happen before we can have peace with God?
2. What is the hope we have in Christ? Why does this hope make us happy?
3. Paul said we can have joy when we have troubles. How can you explain Christian joy to someone who is not a Christian?
4. How can trouble give us patience?
5. What does God pour out to fill our hearts? How does He do that?
6. Can you think of someone who gave his life for others, as in war?
Discuss this idea with your group. How is this different from what Jesus did in verse 8?
7. What causes God's anger in verse 9? What saves us from God's anger?
8. How would you explain to a person who is not a Christian how to become friends with God?
9. How would you explain faith to your Deaf friends? How do you feel when you think that God saves believers now and forever?
10. Discuss the blessings believers experience because we are saved.

BIBLE SKILL: *Learning about God's peace*

A common greeting in the Bible is "Peace be with you." It was not something unusual. It was a common greeting in New Testament times, much like today we say, "How are you?" The Hebrew word is "Shalom." Read the following verses and match them to the idea in the verse:

Isaiah 9:6-7

The writer closed his letter with, "Peace to all of you who are in Christ."

John 14:27

Jesus was called the Prince of Peace.

1 Peter 5:14

Jesus promised His disciples peace.

IN MY CONTEXT

- When we become right with God through faith in Jesus, we experience peace.
- God shows His love to us through the death of Jesus which was a sacrifice for our sins.
- God saves believers through faith in Jesus, now and forever.

List problems you are currently facing. How can you reflect the hope you have in Christ through these problems?

How did the death of Jesus show you that He loved you? What can you do that will show how the love of Jesus has changed your life?

With your Bible study group, identify Deaf people you know that may wonder about God loving them. What can you and the members of your Bible study do to intentionally share God's love with the people you identified? What new life lessons from this passage can you share with them?

MEMORY VERSE

God shows his great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners. – Romans 5:8

DAY ONE

Read Romans 5:1-2, underlining the benefits of salvation.

We are all sinners. We may think we are better than people who murder or rob a bank. But God does not see levels of sin; He sees our sin. We all need a Savior. We cannot do anything to earn God's salvation. Nevertheless, God gives us salvation because of His love and grace. God gave His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. This is a picture of grace. Grace is His love and kindness to people who have sinned against Him.

The Bible tells us about God's peace. David wrote, "Those who love your teachings will find true peace" (Psalm 119:165). Jesus told His disciples, "I told you these things so that you can have peace in me" (John 16:33). This peace is listed as part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22. It is part of the armor of God in Ephesians 6:15. There are many benefits that come with our salvation. For example, we have hope, happiness, and a sharing in God's glory. All these benefits come to us because we now have the benefit of peace with God!

What benefits from salvation do you find in these verses? What is so good about peace with God?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 5:3-5, looking for the process to hope.

Paul said to have joy in our troubles! Can you believe that? Why should we think about troubles with joy? Paul explained why. Troubles are not things we are to seek. However, when they come, we know that God works through them. He uses troubles to make us patient. As we grow patience, we learn to have Christian hope in the middle of hard times. We also learn by experience that our hope in God is never disappointed but is a way for God to pour out His love.

You can read an example of this in Acts 16:16-40. Paul and his friend Silas were put in jail because they healed a young woman. They were beaten and put in chains. When night came, they started singing and praising God! They rejoiced in their suffering! God opened the jail and they became free. The jailer and his family accepted Jesus. In the end,

God poured out His love on Paul, Silas, and the jailer and his family.

We will never be disappointed in God. He will always fill us with His love. We must be ready to receive His love and be willing to share it.

How can you as a believer have joy even in your troubles? How does trouble end up in hope?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 5:6-8, thinking about God's great love.

John 3:16 tells us about God's love for the whole world. He loves everyone so much He gave His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us. Our right response to God is to believe the gospel. God loves us because He created us to have fellowship with Him. God wants every person to come to Him. When we stand before God, He will see how Jesus' blood erased all our sins, and He will see us without sin. (Read Isaiah 1:18.)

Jesus told a story about a Jewish man whose job was to collect taxes for the government. That tax collector asked for mercy (Luke 18:9-14). The tax collector was humble, and he put his trust in God. At the final judgment, God will not accuse that man of sin. Instead, God will see him as righteous because his sins have been forgiven. This is so amazing. God did not ask us to clean up our lives first and then He would love us. God saw us in our sin, and He loved us anyway. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!

How do you see God's great love in these verses? How does the death of Jesus prove that God loves you?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 5:9, finding an explanation of the blood of Christ.

Paul wrote about God's anger. God loves all people, but sin makes God angry (Romans 1:18). God's anger is a righteous anger. When people become angry it is often because we don't get what we want. Our anger may cause us to sin. But God does not sin. God's anger is different from ours. We can only understand God's anger when we see that it is not different from God's love.

In this verse, Paul wrote about the blood of Christ. Of course, he means the death of Christ. But maybe he was thinking about the bloody sacrifices the Jewish priests made every day (Leviticus 17:11). The Old Testament has many chapters about how to make the sacrifices of animals and why they must do it. The animal was innocent. It died so God could accept His people. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-28). We do not need to sacrifice animals now because Jesus' death took care of that need forever. Through faith in the sacrifice of Christ, we are, by an act of God's love, saved from God's anger against sin.

How can you rightly understand the anger of God? How does the sacrifice of Jesus show us God's love? How does His death save us from God's anger?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Christian Hope*

Paul wrote about the eternal hope we have as children of God. This hope is not the sign we make with our fingers crossed. This hope shows we expect something. The writer of the Book of Hebrews said our hope is the anchor of our soul (Hebrews 6:18-19). Paul said our hope is based on a God "who raises people from the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9-10). Christian hope is being sure of what we have not yet seen (1 Peter 1:21).

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 5:10-11, identifying how to become God's friend.

The New Century Version says that we are God's friends. How can that happen? Of course, the answer is in the death of Jesus. As sinners we were "enemies" of God. God loved us when we were sinners. Now, because of the death of Jesus and our faith in Him we are God's friends. We are happy and safe in God's love, and because we are now His friends, we can enjoy His blessings.

Most English Bibles use the word "reconciled" instead of the words "made us his friends." The meaning is the same, but the word "reconciled" has a powerful picture in it. The idea in the word is that two people have a broken relationship. They cannot get along. They are definitely not friends. The word "reconciled" means to correct the broken relationship and bring the two "enemies" back into a relationship as friends. The death of Jesus brings reconciliation to all who trust Christ. God makes us "friends" again.

What does it mean to be God's friend? What can you do to lead other people into a friend relationship with God?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 5:1-11. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your small group the benefits from having a right relationship with God. How did you come to have peace with God (which is one of these benefits)?

Jesus showed love through sacrifice. How was the death of Jesus an act of love? Now that you have received love, how can you show love to others?

With your small group practice explaining how a person can become reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. How is this the same as becoming God's friend?



FREE

Everyone who accepts the gospel will find freedom from the guilt of sin.

ROMANS 6:1-14

In these verses, Paul asked an interesting question—does our salvation mean it is all right for us to sin? He said some people think if they sin more, then God can give them more mercy! Does that make sense to you? Of course not. When we put our faith and trust in Jesus, we will want to avoid sin every way we can. Our salvation makes us free from the slavery of sin. Sin does not control us anymore.

Paul used the idea of death and life to make his point. He explained that Jesus died and came back to life. In a similar way, we died to our old life of sin and came back to a new life. The new life is free from the power of sin. Also, the new life is free to live in the way that God wants. Therefore, Paul concluded that sin will not be our master, but Jesus will.

We must show our salvation by the kind of life we live. Our obedience is like a sacrifice to God. We show we are thankful for our salvation by living the way God wants us to live.

ROMANS 6:1-14

1 So do you think we should continue sinning so that God will give us even more grace? **2 No!** **A** We died to our old sinful lives, so how can we continue living with sin? **3** Did you forget that all of us became part of Christ when we were baptized? We shared His death in our **baptism**. **B** **4** When we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared His death. So, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the wonderful power of the Father, we also can live a new life. **5** Christ died, and we have been joined with Him by dying too. So we will also be joined with Him by rising from the dead as He did. **6** We know that our old life died with Christ on the cross so that our **sinful selves** **C** would have no power over us and we would not be **slaves to sin**. **D** **7** Anyone who has died is made free from sin's control. **8** If we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him. **9** Christ was raised from the dead, and we know that He cannot die again. Death has no power over Him now. **10** Yes, when Christ died, He died to defeat the power of sin one time—enough for all time. He now has a new life, and His new life is with God. **11** In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin and alive with God through Christ Jesus. **12** So, do not let sin control your life here on earth so that you do what your sinful self wants to do. **13** Do not offer the parts of your body to serve sin, as things to be used in doing evil. Instead, offer yourselves to God as people who have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used in doing good. **14** Sin will not be your master, because you are not under **law** **E** but under God's **grace**. **F**

- a. The New Century Version Bible says “No!” Many other English versions try to show the strength of what Paul wrote here. The Christian Standard Bible translates by saying “Absolutely not!”
- b. Putting a person under water, as if being buried, then raised again. This shows the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It also shows we are putting sin to death, and we rise to new life in Jesus.
- c. Before salvation, we let sin control our lives. After salvation, we let the Holy Spirit control our lives.
- d. Before we were believers, we had no choice but to sin. We were slaves to sin. We must refuse to follow what our sinful selves lead us to do.
- e. Paul used the word “law” to mean the first five books of the Old Testament which include the laws the Jews followed as part of their covenant with God.
- f. God's great love for all people.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why do people need to turn away from sin?
2. How does accepting Jesus free believers from the guilt of sin?
3. What was the power that raised Jesus from the dead?
4. How is baptism a picture of the resurrection of Jesus?
5. In what ways do we join Jesus in His death and resurrection?
6. What does it mean to be a slave to sin? What are some examples of this slavery?
7. What are some ways we show we have a new life in Christ?
8. What does it mean to “offer the parts of your body to God?”
9. What does Paul mean when he says we are “not under law”?

BIBLE SKILL: *The Romans Road to Salvation*

Many people use the Romans Road to share the gospel. Here are the steps of the Romans Road. Look up each verse and mark it in your Bible so you can tell someone the gospel.

Romans 3:23 – Everyone is guilty of sin.

Romans 6:23 – The punishment for sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

Romans 5:8 – Christ died for us while we were sinners.

Romans 10:9-10 – Salvation comes to those who confess and believe.

IN MY CONTEXT

- Jesus' death frees believers from the control of sin.
- Jesus' resurrection gives eternal life for believers.
- Believers show they are saved by living in a right way that pleases God.

Discuss with your group how the death of Jesus makes a believer free from the control of sin. How have you experienced this freedom in your own life?

How does the resurrection of Jesus make a difference in your life? How can your everyday life show what Jesus' resurrection has done to you?

What can your Bible study group do to hold each other accountable for living the new Christian life?

MEMORY VERSE

The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 6:23

DAY ONE

Read Romans 6:1-4, looking for what God saved us from.

People wondered if we might actually honor God by continuing to sin! After all, if we continue to sin, we give God the chance to give more grace. Paul answered this with the strongest “NO!” God saved us from the power of sin. Christians may still do wrong things, but we must not let sin control our lives again.

Most people have some time in their lives when they would like to move far away and leave their old lives behind. They want to forget all the bad things they did in the past and start new. When we accept Jesus, He gives us new life. We do not need to move to another state or nation. Jesus changes our lives in a good way. We are different because we now serve Jesus. People can see the change Jesus makes in our lives.

A photo is one good way to explain baptism. We may look at a photo of Bill and say, “That is Bill.” But is the photo truly Bill? No. The photos remind us of Bill. This is the same with baptism. Baptism is not salvation, but it is a good picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

What is the strongest temptation you face? How do you resist that temptation? How does baptism remind you of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 6:5-7, finding what it means to be a slave or to be free.

“Sinful selves” means when sin controls our natural desires. For example, it is natural for our bodies to need food. Sin can change our desire for food. We can want more food than we need. Or we can steal because we are greedy, and then other people suffer because we took their food away. But now we are joined to Christ by faith. Our old nature died on the cross with Christ (Galatians 2:20). Therefore, sin has no power over us, unless we let it. Before we trusted Christ, sin was like a master, and we were its slaves. However, Christ made us free so we can obey Him.

The people in Rome understood what Paul meant about slaves. When the Romans conquered other nations, they took people from those nations to become slaves. Slaves had no rights. Peter said, “People are

slaves of anything that controls them” (2 Peter 2:19). Paul wrote, “In the past you were slaves to sin” (Romans 6:20), “but now you are free from sin and have become slaves of God” (Romans 6:22). Slavery to sin destroys our lives. Slavery to Christ makes us free.

Are you a slave to sin or are you free in Christ? How can you explain your freedom in Christ to someone who is not a Christian?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 6:8-11, understanding spiritual death and spiritual life.

Jesus brought Lazarus back to life (John 11:1-44). The resurrection of Jesus, though, was not like the resurrection of Lazarus. Lazarus died again. However, Jesus rose from the grave forever. Our resurrection will be like Christ’s resurrection. We will not die again. We will live with Christ forever.

Because Christ died and rose from the dead, when we die, we will rise from the dead. This is a promise Jesus made because Jesus defeated death. Baptism shows how a Christian dies to sin and rises again with Christ. Baptism also shows how the Christian himself will die but will also, like Jesus, live again.

Paul used this picture of death and resurrection to help the Romans understand the break from sin that comes to those who trust Jesus. The old sin life is dead. As believers, we must live new lives for God’s glory. How do we do this? We can find what God’s will is for our lives by reading the Bible and praying. God will not make it difficult for us to know what He wants us to do.

How does the resurrection of Jesus help you understand your own resurrection? Now that you are dead to your old sin life, how will you live?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 6:12-13, drawing a line under how we must use our bodies.

People have a sinful nature because of Adam's sin. God made Adam and Eve leave the garden of Eden because they sinned. God does not let sin come into His presence. Because Jesus died for us, our sin is forgiven when we enter God's kingdom. Jesus took away eternal death and gave us eternal life. Eternal life is a free gift because of God's grace. We accept that free gift of life by believing Jesus.

Read Hebrews 2:17-18 and 4:14-16. Jesus helps us when we are tempted, because He was tempted. Temptation is not sin. Sin happens when we surrender to the temptation. Television and the Internet offer many evil things for us to see. Knowing these things are evil is not sin. Watching them is the sin.

Every part of our bodies can sin. With our eyes, we can look at wrong things or see bad signs. Our hands can work in bad ways and say wrong things. Our feet can take us to places where we must not go. We must not use our bodies as tools to serve sin. We must use our bodies as tools for doing good.

List some ways you can use your body and mind as tools to do things that honor God.

KEY DOCTRINE: *Baptism*

In Romans 6:4, Paul said when we are baptized we share in the death of Christ. New Testament Christians were baptized by immersion to show their faith in Christ. People who repented and professed faith in Jesus as Savior were baptized (Acts 8:12). Baptism is like a picture. It shows Christ's burial and resurrection. It also shows the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. Baptism is a picture of the Christian's death to sin and the beginning of a new life.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 6:14, answering the question “What controls your life?”

Paul asked a question in verse 1: Should we sin more so God can give us more grace? The answer is in verse 14: We are not controlled by the law. We are controlled by God’s grace. Our lives, our desires, and our goals are changed because of God’s grace.

This verse suggests a test. Think about your life. What controls your life? Are you controlled by anger, by complaining, by greed, by pride, by laziness, or by any other sin? If sin controls your life, you may need to ask God to show you what to do. You can find more help on the inside front cover of this book.

This verse is a promise of victory. Temptation to sin is always present, but the power of sin was broken when Jesus died on the cross for us. Paul encouraged the new Christians and also Christians who had strayed away from obeying Jesus. Grace gives us the freedom and power to overcome sin. As we grow spiritually, God will give us more grace every time we are ready for it.

How does your life show that you are a believer?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 6:1-14. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

How can you encourage each other in your group to act in ways that show you are free from sin’s control?

Discuss what it means to know we have eternal life. How does the resurrection of Jesus make a difference in your life daily?

Do your actions show you belong to Christ? Are you doing the things Jesus taught? Discuss with your group some things you can do to show you belong to Christ.



RAISED!

Salvation comes through Jesus' death and resurrection.

LUKE 24:1-12

Luke wrote about the resurrection of Jesus. Luke was not one of the twelve disciples. He was not present with the people who saw Jesus while He was on earth. But Luke was Paul's faithful friend and traveled with him on his missionary trips. Luke carefully studied and talked with the people who were eyewitnesses to the life of Christ.

Luke writes about the resurrection like a historian. He tells us stories that no one else tells us. Only Luke tells about the appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Luke gives us the names of the women at the tomb. He gave these details because he knew the facts of the resurrection would help people believe the reality of the resurrection. No one had ever come back from the dead like Jesus did. The truth of the gospel depended on the reality of the resurrection. No wonder Luke cared about the resurrection details. The story Luke told helps us to know that Jesus is not dead. He is truly alive. Jesus being alive makes all the difference in history.

LUKE 24:1-12

1 Very early on the **first day of the week**, ^A at dawn, the women came to the **tomb**, ^B bringing the **spices** ^C they had prepared. **2** They found the **stone rolled away** ^D from the entrance of the tomb, **3** but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** While they were wondering about this, **two men in shining clothes** ^E suddenly stood beside them. **5** The women were very afraid and bowed their heads to the ground. The men said to them, “Why are you looking for a living person in this place for the dead? **6** He is not here; he has risen from the dead. Do you remember what he told you in **Galilee**? ^F **7** He said the **Son of Man** ^G must be handed over to sinful people, be crucified, and rise from the dead on the third day.” **8** Then the women remembered what Jesus had said. **9** The women left the tomb and told all these things to the **eleven apostles** ^H and the other followers. **10** It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women who told the apostles everything that had happened at the tomb. **11** But they did not believe the women, because it sounded like nonsense. **12** But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Bending down and looking in, he saw only the cloth that Jesus’ body had been wrapped in. Peter went away to his home, wondering about what had happened.

- a. Jesus arose on the first day of the week which is Sunday.
- b. The tomb was a cave with spaces cut out where the bodies were laid.
- c. Various kinds of spices were used to prepare the dead body for burial.
- d. The entrance of the tomb was covered by a large round stone that could be rolled to open or close the entrance of the tomb.
- e. The men were angels. Only Luke tells us that there were two of these heavenly messengers.
- f. An area near the Sea of Galilee, about 100 miles north of Jerusalem.
- g. Jesus often called Himself “Son of Man.” The words come from the Book of Daniel and refer to the Messiah. See Daniel 7:13.
- h. The eleven disciples; Judas was not with them anymore.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How does the death and resurrection of Jesus make it possible for people to be saved?
2. Why did the women wait until Sunday morning to go to the tomb?
3. How do you think the women felt when Jesus' body wasn't in the tomb?
4. What question did the men (angels) ask the women in verse 5? What did they mean?
5. What did the women do after they left the tomb?
6. How did the men react to the story the women told? Why didn't they believe?
7. How did Peter react when he saw the empty tomb? Why didn't Peter understand what had happened to Jesus?
8. Why is it hard for people to believe in the resurrection? Why do you believe it is true?
9. How does it help you to believe in the resurrection when you know that the women, the disciples, and many other people saw Jesus after His resurrection?

BIBLE SKILL: *Resurrection Appearances of Jesus*

Read the passages listed below and write down the names of the people who saw Jesus after His resurrection.

Matthew 28:1-10 _____

Mark 16:1-12 _____

Luke 24:13-35 _____

Luke 24:36-43 _____

John 20:1-29 _____

John 21:4-8 _____

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Jesus' tomb is still empty.
- God raised Jesus from the dead so there is no doubt about His resurrection.
- Many people saw Jesus after the resurrection and clearly said He Is alive.

What impact does the resurrection of Jesus have on your life each day?

Discuss ways people today are guilty of forgetting the words of Jesus. How can you and the members of your Bible study hold one another accountable for remembering and obeying Jesus' words?

With whom can you share about the resurrection of Jesus? Write their initials and begin to pray each day for the opportunity to share.

MEMORY VERSE

He is not here; he has risen from the dead. Do you remember what he told you in Galilee? – Luke 24:6

DAY ONE

Read Luke 24:1-3, discovering the greatest miracle in all of history.

Jesus died on Friday afternoon. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus hurriedly buried His body (John 19:38-42). The women were not able to go to the tomb all day Saturday because it was the Sabbath Day. The law did not permit the women to work on the Sabbath. But at sunrise on Sunday morning, they went to the tomb where Jesus was buried. They took spices to put on Jesus' body. Joseph and Nicodemus did some of that on Friday evening. The women came to complete the normal preparation of a body when it was buried.

Mark said the women discussed the problem of what to do with the heavy stone blocking the opening to the tomb (Mark 16:3). However, when they arrived at the tomb the large round stone had already been moved away. The tomb was open. Not only was it open, it was empty. The body of Jesus was gone. They probably thought someone had taken His body. They were about to learn the true reason for the empty tomb. Jesus was alive. God had raised Jesus back to life. The greatest miracle in all history had just happened—the resurrection.

How can you explain to your Deaf friends what happened on that resurrection Sunday almost 2,000 years ago?

DAY TWO

Read Luke 24:4-9, remembering the words of Jesus.

The women had planned to properly bury Jesus' body. But when they arrived, their plans and their lives were changed! They were surprised when they saw the stone was moved. The women were even more surprised when the body of Jesus was not there! Can you imagine what they said to each other?

Then they saw the two angels. First, no stone. Then, no body. Then, two angels. It is easy to understand how the women were afraid! One of the angels spoke to the women and told them not to be afraid (Matthew 28:5). He asked, "Why are you looking for a living person in this place for the dead?" The angel said Jesus had been dead but now He was alive. Can you imagine what the women felt when they heard this?

The angel patiently reminded them how Jesus told them about His death and said He would rise to live again (Matthew 17:22-23;

Luke 9:21-22). When the women remembered what Jesus had said, they ran off to tell the disciples. This is the first time someone said the greatest truth in all of history—“He is alive!”

Do you believe Jesus is alive today? How do you show you believe He is alive? How can you share the truth that Jesus lives?

DAY THREE

Read Luke 24:10, identifying the women at the tomb.

Who were these women who went to the tomb?

Mary Magdalene (from a place called Magdala) is the woman Jesus healed by removing seven demons (Matthew 28:1; Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9; John 20:1,14-18).

Joanna was the wife of Chuza. He worked for King Herod so they were probably wealthy. She was one of the women who went with Jesus from place to place (Luke 8:2-3). They may have prepared food for all the people who were with Him.

Mary the mother of James (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1) is not named in any other place in the New Testament. She was possibly the mother of one of the apostles whose name is usually given as James the Less (not James, the brother of John).

Salome was the mother of James and John (Matthew 27:56; Mark 16:1).

The women hurried to tell the disciples. This was not something to be kept secret. It is good to notice that the story of the resurrection was trusted first to these remarkable women. God uses men and women to tell His story. Men and women must continue to tell about the resurrection today.

How do the women inspire you to tell the story of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?

DAY FOUR

Read Luke 24:11, thinking about why it is hard to believe the resurrection.

The words from the women were strange and the apostles did not believe them. The Greek word translated *nonsense* means they thought the women were “out of their heads” or dreaming. The disciples did not expect Jesus to rise from death to life.

After Peter, John, and others saw the empty tomb, it still was not easy for them to believe. Do you remember the story about Thomas? He said he could not believe until he saw and touched Jesus (John 20:19-25). These men and women knew much more about death than they knew about resurrection. Some of them had seen Jesus bring Lazarus and others back to life. They knew Jesus had powers no one else had. But since Jesus was dead, how could He come back to life?

The men and the women did what they usually did when someone died. The women used spices to prepare the body. The men shared memories. They were in a terrible, dark place even though Jesus was already alive. So many people today live in darkness—spiritual darkness. Even so, Jesus is alive today and is ready to take them, by faith, out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Why is it so hard for people to believe the truth of the resurrection? How can you convince your Deaf friends that the resurrection is real?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Resurrection*

God raised Jesus from the dead. God raised the physical body of Jesus. His body was in many ways the same as His earthly body; however, it was different too—it was a glorified body. Jesus appeared to His disciples and many other people. They knew Jesus was the same Person who had been crucified. Later He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God.

DAY FIVE

Read Luke 24:12, finding the eyewitnesses to the resurrection.

Have you noticed in the gospels how Peter is usually the first disciple to speak or act? John said Peter ran to the grave, and John ran with him (John 20:3). John recorded that he ran faster than Peter and looked into the cave. But Peter was the first (as usual!) to go into the cave. They went in and saw how the cloth for the head was separate from the rest of the grave clothes. If someone had removed the body, that person would not have left the clothes in the grave. Peter and John knew for sure Jesus' body had come out of those clothes (John 20:3-8). The two disciples had seen Lazarus when he came out of the tomb. Lazarus was still wrapped in the "grave clothes" (John 11:1-44). Peter was on the edge of believing. Now he was wondering. Soon he would be fully convinced.

By the end of that first Sunday, Peter, the disciples and the women had all become eyewitnesses to the truth of the resurrection. You and I have not seen Jesus with our eyes (yet), but we too are witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus!

What does it mean to be an eyewitness to the resurrection? How are you an eyewitness to the resurrection of Jesus?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Luke 24:1-12. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

How can you convince someone that the tomb was and is empty?

Why is it important that God raised the body of Jesus from the tomb? How can each of you encourage the faith of your group?

How are you an eyewitness to the resurrection of Jesus? Who do you need to tell about the living Jesus? Pray with your group for those who struggle with faith in Christ.

SAFE IN CHRIST

All who accept the gospel are safe eternally because they are children of God.

ROMANS 8:12-25

God gives eternal life to all who trust in Jesus. Through faith in Jesus, we put to death our sinful life. We exchange it for eternal life. We show we are children of God by living the way the Holy Spirit leads us. This power of the gospel makes believers want to share it with others. The way we become children of God is like adoption. We are adopted as children of God. Then, as His children, we will inherit so much more than anything earthly life might give us.

All of creation is waiting to be made free from the results of sin. When God created everything, it was good. But sin damaged that creation. In the future, God will make His creation new again. Creation is waiting, and all of God's children are waiting for the day when God makes all things new.

Here is the bottom line for this lesson—those who trust Christ are safe and secure in their relationship with God the Father, and they are safe in the future that God has promised them.

ROMANS 8:12-25

12 So, my brothers and sisters, we must not be ruled by our **sinful selves** **A** or live the way our sinful selves want. **13** If you use your lives to do the wrong things your sinful selves want, you will **die spiritually**. **B** But if you use the Spirit's help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, you will have **true life**. **C** **14** The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them. **15** The Spirit we received does not make us slaves again to fear; **it makes us children of God**. **D** With that Spirit we cry out, "**Father**." **E** **16** And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say we are God's children. **17** If we are God's children, we will receive blessings from God together with Christ. But we must **suffer as Christ suffered** **F** so that we will have glory as Christ has glory. **18** The sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be shown to us. **19** Everything God made is waiting with excitement for God to show his children's glory completely. **20** Everything God made was changed to become useless, not by its own wish but because God wanted it and because all along there was this hope: **21** that **everything God made** **G** would be set free from ruin to have the freedom and glory that belong to God's children. **22** We know that everything God made has been waiting until now in pain, like a woman ready to give birth. **23** Not only the world, but we also have been waiting with pain inside us. We have the Spirit as the **first part of God's promise**. **H** So we are waiting for God to finish making us his own children, which means our bodies will be made free. **24** We were saved, and we have this hope. If we see what we are waiting for, that is not really hope. People do not hope for something they already have. **25** But we are hoping for something we do not have yet, and we are waiting for it patiently.

- a. The sinful self is the old way of life apart from Christ ruled by the desires of our bodies.
- b. Spiritual death is a life that is separated from God.
- c. True life is life that comes from having a right relationship with God in Christ.
- d. Most English Bibles have the word "adoption" here. Paul writes that we were adopted into the family of God. In this way we are His children.
- e. Paul used the Aramaic word "abba" which means "daddy."
- f. Paul often connects the ideas of blessings and suffering. (See Philippians 3:10.)
- g. Everything that God made—all of creation—is hurt by the sin of people and wants to be free from that hurt and ruin.
- h. We have the Holy Spirit living in us. This is just the first part of all that God will give to believers.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. By accepting Christ to be our Savior, what promises do we have for our futures?
2. What is the difference between spiritual death and spiritual life?
3. As a child of God, what promises do you have for your future? Make a list of those promises.
4. How does the Holy Spirit help us know we are children of God?
5. What are some of the blessings we receive as God's children?
6. What kind of suffering can the children of God expect?
7. Why does all of God's creation look forward to a time when God will make all things new? How will making all things new and right give glory to God? How do you and I hurt what God has made?
8. If the Holy Spirit is the "first part," what else do we receive from God?
9. What hope do you have that in the future everything, including our bodies, will be made right by God?

BIBLE SKILL: *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came to some persons when God gave them special understanding or power. When David sinned, he asked God not to take His Spirit from him (Psalm 51:11). The Old Testament prophet, Zerubbabel was a leader when the Jewish people went back home after their captivity in Babylon. Read what the prophet Zechariah said to him in Zechariah 4:6. Use a Bible concordance to find other verses about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

IN MY CONTEXT

- God gives eternal life to His children.
- God promises that His children will have an eternal inheritance.
- Someday God will make all of His creation new and perfect again for His glory.
- God will also make our bodies new so we can act as His children.

What are some things you can do daily to live by the Spirit instead of the flesh? How can you include these actions into your daily life?

How would you describe your relationship with God? What steps do you need to take to improve your relationship with Him?

Discuss as a group the connection between our hope and our witness. How can you and the members of your Bible study learn to share the hope we have in Christ with other people?

MEMORY VERSE

So now, those who are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty.
– Romans 8:1

DAY ONE

Read Romans 8:12-13, looking for when eternal life begins.

The Bible says we can know if people are believers by their fruit. That means we know what kind of Christian they are by how they live each day. Sadly, we see and hear about people who are supposed to be believers who are involved in some terrible crime or sin. Paul gave a strong warning about this kind of life in verse 13.

A Christian's responsibility is to live by the Holy Spirit, to make right choices, and to glorify God. With the Holy Spirit living in us, we will have eternal life. That eternal life begins at the time we accept Jesus. It will never end. We will live part of that time here on earth and the rest of eternity in heaven with God.

When Christians follow the leading of God's Holy Spirit, the fruit they produce will be for Him. Check your own fruit. Are you serving God or yourself? If you are not serving God, you need to repent and follow Him more closely. If you are serving God, praise the Lord!

How can you focus more on the Holy Spirit leading you today?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 8:14-18, finding spiritual blessings

Our old lives, which the sinful nature controlled, have gone. We have begun a new life because we are in Christ. We are now God's adopted sons and daughters. Now, we can call God our Father. In fact, the word Paul used is more like "daddy" than the more formal word "father." We know God like children know their dad!

As children of God we experience many blessings. However, Paul almost always connected spiritual blessings with present day suffering. Jesus suffered in many ways while He was on earth. We must not be surprised if we suffer for Him. When we join Jesus in His suffering, then we can join Him in His glory.

Paul wrote about troubles and pain from his own experience. He suffered cold and hunger as he went from place to place. He was sure he would suffer for only a short time but his joy would last forever. Our pain today is very small when we compare it with our wonderful future

life in heaven. Suffering for Jesus is an opportunity to become strong spiritually and grow in wisdom (James 1:2-4). It is an opportunity for the light of the Lord to shine through us.

What are your eternal gifts from God? How do blessings and suffering happen in your life?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 8:19-22, underlining what will happen to creation.

The word *glory* is an interesting Bible word. Sometimes we sign glory like we would describe a shiny new car. The word *glory* in these verses could be signed honor. The Hebrew word for glory means the “weight of God’s presence.” When you see the word *glory* in these verses, try using the sign for honor and think about how the presence of God feels. That might help.

In verses 19-21, Paul wrote about “everything God made.” God created everything good! But everything changed when Adam and Eve sinned. In verse 20, because of sin, everything became useless. The Greek word translated *useless*, can also be translated as worthless, or in error. God’s creation became imperfect. But in verse 21, Paul said everything will be new and filled with God’s glory.

Read Genesis 3:17-19. God cursed the ground because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Before they sinned, everything in the garden of Eden was perfect – no death, no sickness, and no unpleasant work. Then sin ruined everything. In the future, Jesus will come again as King of kings and Lord of lords. Everyone will see His glory, and we will share in that glory.

Why is all creation in trouble? What will God do to fix all of creation? How will creation show His glory?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 8:23, signing what the Holy Spirit brings.

In verse 22 we read how the whole world seems to be in pain. It is waiting for the time when God's children (Christians) will have complete freedom. God's children also cry inside because we desire that freedom too. Now our bodies suffer pain, especially spiritual pain. But pain and death will end when Jesus returns (Revelation 21:4). Now our lives are not perfect, but then everything will be perfect.

The Holy Spirit brings joy today and the promise of blessing in the future. We want to be free from the weakness of our physical bodies. We want to be free from our sinful human nature. We hope for the time when God changes our human bodies to be like Christ's body (Philippians 3:21).

When Jesus returns, it will mean no more pain, no suffering, no more tears, no more sadness, and no more death. We will have new bodies—spiritual bodies. Paul said when he died, his life would be better, but for now, he must continue to do God's work (Philippians 1:21).

What will your life be like when Jesus returns? What must you do between now and that time?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Last Things*

God in His own time and in His own way will bring the world to the right and perfect end. Jesus will return. The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all people. The end for those who reject Jesus is hell. The end for those who follow Christ is a glorified body living in heaven with the Lord forever. We patiently wait for the return of Jesus, waiting in Christian hope.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 8:24-25, learning about our hope for the future.

We must have faith in God's plans for the future. Faith about something in the future is called hope. We live in a time between pain now and glory in the future. We wait with patience because we know God will do what He has promised to do. Someday we will see it all and will not need to hope. Until then, we must have hope. How can we have strong hope? By reading the many promises from God in the Bible. God always keeps His promises! (Hebrews 6:19). Many of God's promises are about the future when we will go to live as His adopted children (1 Corinthians 15:42-57 and Revelation 21:1-7).

The Holy Spirit will help you to grow in faith, hope, and patience. Each one of these characteristics helps the other ones to grow. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit. That means these things come to believers who let the Holy Spirit lead in their lives. Peter described the hope we have as Christians. It is not like a flower that fades (1 Peter 1:4-5). It is like a rock that never goes away.

**Why is it wise to have a strong hope in what God will do in the future?
How will your Christian hope help you live differently?**

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 8:12-25. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your small group what it means to have eternal life. How does God give this life to His children? What is your eternal inheritance as His children?

How has your sin and the sin of the world affected all of creation? What do you think creation will be like when God makes all things new? How can you care now for God's creation?

What can you and your small group do to show your Deaf friends the Christian hope that you have?

SAVED

God has always given salvation to people through faith

ROMANS 10:5-15

One way to explain God's plan for salvation is called "The Romans Road." The name comes from the use of verses from the Book of Romans. Romans 3:23 says, "Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard." This means everyone is a sinner. That includes you and me.

The next verse on the road is Romans 6:23: "The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord." The first part of this verse means sin leads to eternal death, but the second part of the verse tells us that eternal life is a gift to freely receive.

The last verses are Romans 10:9-10, which are in today's lesson: "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved." Receiving God's gift happens when a person believes on the living Jesus as Lord of his or her life. You can use these verses to help lead your Deaf friends to Jesus.

ROMANS 10:5-15

5 Moses writes about being made right by following the law. He says, “A person who obeys these things will live **because of them.**” **A** **6** But this is what the **Scripture** **B** says about being made right through faith: “Don’t say to yourself, ‘Who will go up into heaven?’” (That means, “Who will go up to heaven and bring Christ down to earth?”) **7** “And do not say, ‘Who will go down into the world below?’” (That means, “Who will go down and bring Christ up from the dead?”) **8** This is what the Scripture says: “**The word is near you;** **C** it is in your **mouth and in your heart.**” **D** That is the teaching of faith that we are telling. **9** If you **declare with your mouth,** **E** “Jesus is **Lord,**” **F** and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. **10** We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we declare with our mouths that we believe, and so we are saved. **11** As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will **never be disappointed.**” **G** **12** That Scripture says “anyone” because there is no difference between those who are Jews and those who are not. The same Lord is the Lord of all and gives many blessings to all who trust in him, **13** as the Scripture says, “Anyone who calls on the Lord **will be saved.**” **H** **14** But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them; **15** and before someone can go and tell them, that person must be sent. It is written, “How beautiful **is the person who comes to bring good news.**” **I**

- a. Leviticus 18:5
- b. The Scripture is the Old Testament.
- c. Salvation was now easy to access through faith in Jesus.
- d. The verses quoted in verses 6-8 are Deuteronomy 30:12-14.
- e. When Paul lived there was no sign language as we know it today. God does not require words from a mouth. When we profess faith in Jesus through signs, God saves us just as He saves hearing people who profess faith in Jesus with their mouths.
- f. Lord is the same as king, master, ruler.
- g. Isaiah 28:16
- h. Joel 2:32
- i. Isaiah 52:7; most English Bibles have the words “how beautiful are the feet of those...”

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Can a person be saved by following the Old Testament law? Why or why not?
2. What does it mean that God has always given salvation to people through faith?
3. What does “Jesus is Lord” mean? Why is this something we must believe and confess?
4. What does verse 11 and 12 mean when they say that anyone can be saved?
5. What must happen before someone can “hear” or learn about the Lord?
6. How can you and your church help send people to share Jesus with the lost people of the world?
7. Why would the Scripture say that people who bring good news are beautiful?

BIBLE SKILL: *Finding Verses about Salvation*

Find each verse and write a few words to remind you what that verse tells you about salvation.

Romans 3:23-24 _____

Romans 8:38-39 _____

Romans 10:9-10 _____

Philippians 3:8-11 _____

Hebrews 7:24-25 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God raised Jesus from the dead. God promises to save all people who put their faith in Jesus.
- God's salvation through faith in Jesus is available to all people.
- Believers must be busy about telling others the gospel. We must also be willing to send out missionaries through the whole world.

Discuss with your Bible study group how to explain verses 9 and 10 to a Deaf person who does not know Jesus. Share your story with the class how you came to trust in Jesus. How was your story like verses 9 and 10? How was it different?

Who are the "Gentiles" in our culture these days—not just ethnically, but maybe socially or economically? How can you and your Bible study members intentionally reach out to those groups this week?

How can you share the gospel with Deaf people in your area? What are you and your church doing to send missionaries around the whole world?

MEMORY VERSE

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.
– Romans 10:9

DAY ONE

Read Romans 10:5, learning why you are a law breaker.

Paul quoted six times from the Old Testament in this week's Bible verses. In verse 5, Paul quoted what Moses wrote in Leviticus 18:5. That verse says, "Obey my laws and rules; a person who obeys them will live because of them. I am the LORD." The problem is this: If people obeyed God's law completely, they would have a right relationship with God. But Paul knew people did not obey the law completely. Only Christ did that.

Jewish leaders like Paul knew how important this verse in Leviticus was. They worked hard to obey all the many laws in addition to the Ten Commandments. But after he met Jesus, Paul knew he was not able to obey every law, every day, all of his life. He realized the laws were the basis of the covenant the Jewish people had with God. But they could not be obeyed. The leaders invented many more laws until a Jewish person was totally overwhelmed with rules. We can't obey all of God's law. We are law breakers and sinners.

How good are you at obeying all God's laws? How does being a law breaker lead you to God's mercy and salvation?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 10:6-8, seeing faith in the Old Testament.

Paul made it clear that people become right with God only by faith in Christ. He quoted Moses from Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Even though these words are difficult, Paul was building an argument for faith in the Old Testament. What works can we do for salvation? None! We do not need to search for Christ. He has already come down. And we have no need to look for Him in the grave, He has risen from death. The work of salvation is done. We can't add to it.

Some religions seek salvation by what they do for and with their idols. But our God seeks us! He speaks to our hearts. He loves us. He gives us many blessings. He gave us His Word—the Bible—to show us how to live. His greatest blessing is making a way for our salvation. We do not need to work for salvation. Salvation is free. Jesus is ready to save people anytime, anywhere.

If we don't work for salvation what do we do? By faith in Jesus we simply open ourselves up to His gift.

How would you explain faith in the Old Testament? How is faith today different from back then? How is it the same?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 10:9-10, finding the faith that God accepts.

Jesus provides the only way to God, and it is free. Some religions say a person must offer food to their ancestors and pray to their dead relatives. Some churches today teach that a person must do certain “good works” if they want to go to heaven. Some churches teach you must be baptized to become saved. All of these teachings are wrong.

Paul wrote about the way a person must become saved: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.” This does not mean salvation happens when our mouths speak these words. Hands can sign the words just fine. But it is not the words that save. It is Jesus who saves as we submit to Him as the risen and living Lord.

The Greek word, *Lord*, was a common word when Jesus lived. Sometimes it meant something like “sir.” But it also meant “master.” The Jewish people used the word “Lord” to translate God’s name—Yahweh. Your lord is the one you worship—the one who rules your life. Having faith in the risen and living Lord is the faith that God accepts.

What is the faith that God accepts? Why must you have faith in the risen and living Lord to be saved?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 10:11-13, learning who can be saved.

Verse 11 is a quotation from Isaiah 28:16: “Everything will be built on this important and precious rock. Anyone who trusts in it will never be disappointed.” This is a prophecy about Jesus.

The emphasis is on trusting Jesus. No one who truly trusts Jesus will be sorry they became a Christian. This is the best thing that can happen to us. Jesus blesses us, He protects us, and He puts joy in our hearts. If we do sin and then repent, Jesus will forgive us. Trusting Jesus does not mean we will have no problems. But He promises to be with us all the time here on earth and eternally in heaven. He does not desire for anyone to be lost forever without Him.

Verse 13 is a quotation from an Old Testament prophet named Joel. “Anyone who calls on the LORD will be saved” (Joel 2:32). God invites both Jews and Gentiles to be saved by faith in His Son. God does not leave anyone out of His plan for salvation. Jews or Gentiles, Deaf or hearing, men or women may come to God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Why does God want all people to trust in Jesus?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Jesus is Lord*

“Jesus is Lord” means Jesus as the Son of God is the one and only King and Master of all that is. He lived on earth as a man and faced temptations the same as other people, but He did not sin. He was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. He went back into heaven and is now at the right hand of God. One day He will return in power and glory to judge the world.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 10:14-15, looking for what we must do.

People need Jesus. But someone must tell them about Him. Think about all the Deaf people in every nation around the world. Many of them have never seen the story of Jesus. No one has told them. This is also true of many Deaf people in America. Who will go to them and tell them about Jesus? Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8 are commands from Jesus. We must tell others.

Verse 15 is interesting. The NCV says, “How beautiful is the person...” but most English Bibles say, “how beautiful are the feet...” At that time, without all the technology we know today, men ran from one town to another to carry messages. Picture a group of people who need help. They send a messenger to the nearest city for help. The people are looking up the road for the runner to bring them some good news. You can imagine how they felt when they see the runner coming back. How beautiful are the feet! It is our duty to the lost people of the world to tell the story of Jesus and to help send the story to all the peoples of the world.

Why must you tell others about Jesus? How can you and your church help take the story of Jesus to the whole world?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 10:5-15. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned. If you need to, meet on VP.

Do you know someone who thinks they can be saved by doing good things? What can you say to help them understand salvation is only by faith in the living Jesus?

Discuss with your small group how God wants to save all people. How can you share Christ with your Deaf community? How can you share Christ with your hearing neighbors and family?

What can your group do to encourage missionaries? How can you and your small group be missionaries?



MERCY

God still offers the gospel to all people including Jews and Gentiles.

ROMANS 11:17-32

Paul tends to identify a question and then writes to answer the question. In the early chapters of Romans, one question was the purpose of the Old Testament Law. In the middle of Romans, one question was if we live in grace, why should we live holy lives? Paul used careful logic to answer these and many other questions.

In chapter 11, the question is, did God throw out the Jewish people (11:1)? It seemed that way. Some of the Gentiles were bragging about receiving salvation without following all the rules and laws of the Jews. In these verses, Paul wrote about God's kindness and His anger. He emphasized that believers need to know that God's mercy is open to all people, Gentiles and Jews.

Both Gentiles and Jews are included in God's family through faith in Jesus. Unbelief by the Jews made them an enemy of God. But, in time, God will show His grace to the Jews. Even still, not everyone will be saved, only those who trust in Jesus.

ROMANS 11:17-32

17 It is as if some of the branches from an **olive tree** ① have been broken off. You **non-Jewish** ② people are like the branch of a wild olive tree that has been **joined to** ③ that first tree. You now share the strength and life of the first tree, the Jews. **18** So do not brag about those branches that were broken off. If you brag, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. **19** You will say, “Branches were broken off so that I could be joined to their tree.” **20** That is true. But those branches were broken off because they did not believe, and you continue to be part of the tree only because you believe. Do not be proud, but be afraid. **21** If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, then He will not let you stay if you don’t believe. **22** So you see that God is kind and also very strict. He punishes those who stop following him. But God is kind to you, if you continue following in his kindness. If you do not, you will be cut off from the tree. **23** And if the Jews will believe in God again, he will accept them back. God is able to put them back where they were. **24** It is not natural for a wild branch to be part of a good tree. And you who are not Jews are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree and joined to a good olive tree. But since those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree, surely they can be joined to their own tree again. **25** I want you to understand this **secret**, ④ brothers and sisters, so you will understand that you do not know everything: Part of Israel has been made stubborn, but that will change when many who are not Jews have come to God. **26** And that is how **all Israel** ⑤ will be saved. It is written in the Scriptures: “The Savior will come from Jerusalem; He will take away all evil from the **family of Jacob**. ⑥ **27** And I will make this **agreement** ⑦ with those people when I take away their **sins**.” ⑧ **28** The Jews refuse to accept the Good News, so they are God’s enemies. This has happened to help you who are not Jews. But the Jews are still God’s chosen people, and he loves them very much because of the promises he made to their ancestors. **29** God never changes his mind about the people he calls and the things he gives them. **30** At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received **mercy**, ⑨ because those people refused to obey. **31** And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they also can receive mercy from him. **32** God has given all people over to their stubborn ways so that he can show mercy to all.

- a. A common tree in Israel. Sometimes the olive tree was a symbol for the nation of Israel. The people who grew olives joined a limb from a wild olive tree into one that was in the orchard so the olives would be better.
- b. Most English Bibles use the word “Gentiles.”
- c. Most English Bibles use the word “grafted.”
- d. In this verse it means more like a hidden truth, something people did not know. Many English Bibles use the word “mystery.”
- e. Israel may mean the nation of the Jews or all people who are “spiritually Jews,” which would be all who are part of the family of God by faith.
- f. The family of Jacob is another way to say the people of Israel or the Jews.
- g. The covenant God made with Abraham
- h. See Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9.
- i. God’s loving care for all people

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why does God continue to offer salvation to all people, including Jews and Gentiles?
2. What is Paul talking about when he writes about olive branches that are broken off or grafted into an olive tree?
3. What must Jews or Gentiles do to become part of God's "olive tree"?
4. How can God be both kind and strict?
5. When Paul wrote about "all Israel" or the "family of Jacob" in verse 26, who was he talking about?
6. What is the agreement (or covenant) Paul wrote about in verse 27?
7. What does it mean to be an enemy with God? How does a person become an enemy of God?
8. How does a person receive mercy from God? Is God's mercy available for both Jews and Gentiles? Why do you think so?
9. What makes you think that God is merciful to everyone? How has He shown mercy to you?

BIBLE SKILL: *Matching verses*

The Bible reminds us that everything on earth and in heaven will change or end, but God remains the same forever. Match the following verses with the idea from the verse.

Psalms 102:23-27

Everything else is like moving shadows, but God never changes.

Hebrews 13:8

God is Alpha (first) and Omega (last). He is "A" to "Z."

James 1:17

Nothing continues the same forever, except God.

Revelation 1:8

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

IN MY CONTEXT

- All people come to God through faith in Jesus. Therefore, we can never look down on unbelievers.
- All believers need to know that God's mercy, shown through Jesus Christ, is available to the Jews.
- God is full of mercy for everyone. He gives salvation to all who put their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Discuss with your Bible study group why salvation comes only through faith in Jesus alone. How can this truth stop you from looking down on people who are not yet believers?

Who around you has rejected Christ? What is your attitude toward them? How can you and your Bible study group continue to minister to them in a loving and respectful way?

How aware are you that God offers salvation to all people? What proof do you have to show from your actions that you really do believe salvation is for all people? What changes do you need to make in your life because God loves all people?

MEMORY VERSE

Yes, God made all things, and everything continues through him and for him. To him be the glory forever! – Romans 11:36

DAY ONE

Read Romans 11:17-21, comparing people to an olive tree.

Olive trees were common in Israel when Jesus lived. The olive tree was so common it became a symbol of the Jewish nation. (Read Jeremiah 11:16.) One way to grow better olives is to graft new olive branches into an old olive tree. Grafting means to remove a branch with no fruit and put in its place a branch from another tree. The new branch will grow from the older tree and grow fruit.

Paul used the picture of an olive tree with grafts to help the Roman Christians understand what had happened to the Jews. Since the Jews as a people did not follow Christ they were removed from the tree. The non-Jews who were following Christ were grafted into the tree. It seems that some believers were proud of themselves and speaking down about the Jews. Paul said all these things should make them feel humble, not proud.

God still loved the Jews but unbelief by them had heavy consequences. Not many Jews follow Jesus today. God loves all people. He loves Deaf people and hearing people all over the world. But everyone must come to God in faith or they cannot come to Him at all.

How can you compare believers and non-believers to branches in an olive tree? How can you show God a humble and thankful attitude for allowing you to be part of His family?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 11:22-24, finding God's love for the Jews.

The Bible teaches us much about God's kindness. We can refuse or accept God's kindness. We accept His kindness through faith. We refuse it through unbelief. We have a choice.

Paul continued with his idea of an olive tree. The man who grows olives must cut away branches if they are no good and do not produce fruit. This is the idea of a Jew who does not truly believe in and obey God. The grower will also graft in a branch from a different tree so he will get more fruit. This is the idea of the Gentiles becoming part of God's kingdom by believing in Jesus. God can cut off a branch or add a branch.

God does that by showing mercy, but He also uses strict judgment against people who do not believe.

Some Christians may think that God has stopped loving the Jewish people. He has not. He still loves them, and God will save any Jewish person who comes to Him through faith in Jesus.

How do you know God still loves the Jewish people? Who are your Jewish friends that you can tell about Jesus?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 11:25-27, looking for God's plan for the Jews.

Paul told his Gentile brothers and sisters about God's future plan for the Jews. The Old Testament prophets wrote about that plan. Read Isaiah 60:1-14; Micah 7:11-12; and Zechariah 8:1-23. The words in these verses show a wonderful future. Paul was sure God's plan for the Jews included salvation. Israel had had a stubborn disbelief, but a time would come when this would change. Paul saw a future when the evil of Jacob and the sins of the Jews would be gone.

There is much we do not know about this time. In fact, Paul called it a "secret" (NCV) or a "mystery" (NIV). Is this something that will happen when Jesus comes again? Or will many of the Jews come to Christ before the return of Jesus? It seems that no one knows for sure. What we do know is that in His time, God will show His grace to Israel and offer them the same salvation He offered to the Gentiles. We also know that salvation happens one person at a time for Jews and for Gentiles.

Why is it important to know God does not give up on people?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 11:28-31, thinking about the Jewish people.

These verses explain God's plan for the Jews and Gentiles. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world as the promised Messiah. Some Jews accepted Jesus. Most Jews did not accept Him. The lack of faith by the Jews worked for the advantage of the Gentiles. Nevertheless, the Jews are still God's chosen people. He loves them because He first chose them. God never changes His mind, so this was all part of His plan.

Most of the Jews rejected God's mercy. The Gentiles who accepted Jesus as Savior received God's mercy. The Jews will also receive mercy from God if they choose to accept Him. God does not want anyone to die without Christ. God is ready and willing to give grace and mercy when we are ready and willing to obey Him.

Paul urged the Gentile Christians to trust God's wisdom and to believe God's plan. Many Jews who do not believe might behave like enemies. But Christians must love the Jews as friends, because God loves them.

How is God's offer of salvation in Christ fair for all people?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God*

Our God is the only living and true God. He is intelligent, spiritual, and personal. He is the Creator, Redeemer, and Ruler of the universe. God is all-powerful and all-knowing. His perfect knowledge includes all things—past, present, and future. We owe Him our highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God shows Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with separate personal characteristics, but as one God.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 11:32, understanding God’s mercy.

This verse suggests the idea of a prison. A person in prison can still hope to be free in the future. The prison is the unbelief of both the Gentiles and the Jews. In His mercy, God offers freedom (salvation) to all people. Some Gentiles accepted God’s mercy (accepted Jesus as Savior) and were made free from their prison. It is God’s desire that the Jews also will accept God’s mercy. God’s mercy is offered to all. But only people who accept God’s mercy will be saved. God allows people to stubbornly turn from Him because sometimes their stubborn sin will break and allow His mercy in.

Everyone has an opportunity to be saved, but one day that opportunity will end—with their death or when Jesus returns. Peter wrote about this: “The Lord is not slow in doing what he promised—the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost, but He wants all people to change their hearts and lives” (2 Peter 3:9).

Who do you know that needs to experience God’s mercy? What can you do to help them experience God’s mercy?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 11:17-32. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What kind of attitude should you and your small group have toward non-believers? What can you do to show God’s love toward all people?

Discuss with your small group what the Scripture teaches about God’s love and mercy. How should you act toward all people?

Practice with your small group how you would explain to a lost person that they can be saved by placing their faith in Jesus. Who can you tell about Jesus this week?



LIVING AS SACRIFICES

Believers must show a Christ-like character and live as sacrifices in everything they do.

ROMANS 12:1-2,9-18

Many Bible teachers see the Book of Romans having two main parts. The first part ends at chapter 11. The focus is on the gift of salvation received by faith in Jesus. The second part of the book explains how we live this new life in Christ.

Paul challenged the Christians in Rome to offer themselves to God as a living sacrifice. These words challenge us, too. Believers' lives must be like acts of worship to God. A living sacrifice includes changing our minds so our thoughts show the will of God. Salvation changes how we think and what we see as important.

Paul said believers put the needs of other people first. Salvation changes how we relate to other believers. Paul also said Christians must show love for all people, even someone who persecuted them. Believers must try to be at peace with all people. Salvation changes how we relate to all people. These are our first steps into understanding how we live in Christ.

ROMANS 12:1-2,9-18

1 So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a **living sacrifice** **A** to him. Your **offering** **B** must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship. **2** Do not be shaped by this world; instead be **changed** **C** within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect.

9 Your love must be real. Hate what is evil, and hold on to what is good. **10** Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give each other more **honor** **D** than you want for yourselves. **11** Do not be lazy but work hard, serving the Lord with all your heart. **12** Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes, and pray at all times. **13** Share with God's people who need help. Bring **strangers** **E** in need into your homes. **14** **Wish good** **F** for those who harm you; wish them well and do not **curse** **G** them. **15** Be happy with those who are happy, and be sad with those who are sad. **16** Live in peace with each other. Do not be proud, but make friends with those who seem unimportant. Do not think how smart you are. **17** If someone does wrong to you, do not pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do what everyone thinks is right. **18** Do your best to live in peace with everyone.

- a. A sacrifice was something given up. Animal sacrifices were killed. Our lives are given up, but we are still alive. Our sacrifice means giving our lives in service to Jesus.
- b. In this verse, an offering is not a tithe but giving our lives as a gift to God.
- c. The Greek word here is *metamorphoo* which is the English word for the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly.
- d. Respect; thinking of others as more important than ourselves.
- e. When Jesus lived, it was expected of good people that they would welcome strangers into their homes.
- f. The NCV has the words "wish good." Most English Bibles use the translation of "bless" which is a much stronger word than "wish."
- g. It is hard to imagine that a Christian would curse anyone, yet when someone hurts us we could easily curse and wish evil upon them. This must not happen.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What is Christian character like? How does living as a sacrifice lead to Christian character?
2. What kinds of offerings can we give to God in addition to our money?
3. What must we do to let the Holy Spirit change our way of thinking?
4. How can we show our love for God and our love for other people are real?
5. In verse 10, how did Paul describe the love we have for others in our church?
6. Why is it wrong to be lazy? How can we serve the Lord with all our hearts?
7. What is Christian joy, and where does it come from?
8. What are some ways we can help fellow believers and how can we help strangers as well?
9. Why does Paul tell us to live at peace with others? What must we do to have that peace?

BIBLE SKILL: *Find Verses about Revenge*

Find the verses in parentheses to learn what the Bible says about revenge.

The Law of Moses told the people not to seek revenge against another (Leviticus 19:17-18). Jesus said to turn the other cheek, rather than seek revenge (Matthew 5:38-42) and to forgive (Luke 17:3-4). Revenge is for God alone, and all His judgments are right and good (Revelation 19:1-2). How would you summarize what these verses teach?

IN MY CONTEXT

- Salvation changes how believers think and what they value.
- Salvation changes how we relate to other believers.
- Salvation changes how we relate to all people including those who want to hurt us.

**Discuss with your Bible study group the ways salvation changes us.
How is your thinking different from before you knew Christ?
What needs to change?**

**What is different now in the way you get along with other Christians?
What can you do to have better relationships with the people in your
Bible study group?**

**Why is it so hard to live at peace with all people? What can you do to
bless the people who try to hurt you?**

MEMORY VERSE

Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. – Romans 12:2

DAY ONE

Read Romans 12:1, finding what will please God.

God is pleased when Christians give their lives in worship and honor to Him every day. The world is watching to see how we honor God every day—at work, at home, in our neighborhoods, and when we are in the store. Our words/signs, our actions, and our attitudes tell people what kind of Christians we are. God asks for a living sacrifice.

If we have the right attitude toward God, then we will think rightly about ourselves and other people. Paul used the idea of the Jewish priests who offered sacrifices for the people. If the sacrifice was not a perfect animal, it did not please God (Leviticus 1:1-9).

Paul explained how Christians should live. When we use every part of our body to please God, our feet will go where God wants them to go. Our hands will help other people. Our hands will speak to encourage other people and to tell them the good news about Jesus Christ. The right use of our bodies will be like the perfect animal sacrifice. It will please God. Our worship will honor God.

What does it mean to you to be a living sacrifice? How can you use every part of your body to please God?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 12:2, looking for the connection between thinking and doing.

It is easy for us to copy what other people do. But Christians must not copy everything people in the world do. We belong to God's world. We must live in a different way from people who are not Christians.

As Christians, what we think will affect what we do. We will think differently about the use of money. Money belongs to God, so we will not waste it or use it selfishly. We will think differently about sex. We will

make careful choices about what we read. We will be careful about what we watch on television. The Holy Spirit will guide us as we try to please God. We will want to obey God and continue to change and to become like Him.

God's kind of love must take the place of our selfishness (Mark 12:28-31). We must trust God to give us what we truly need (Luke 12:22-34). We must look to Jesus instead of things of the world (Philippians 3:17-20). Paul wrote about a new way of thinking and then about doing God's will.

What in your thinking needs to change so your actions can change also?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 12:9-13, signing to yourself what real love does.

Paul said that that our love must be real. What, then, does real love look like? Verses 9-13 give us a good picture of real love in action with fellow believers. Notice how we are to love each other like brothers and sisters.

Real love does the actions described in these verses. It hates evil and holds to the good. It honors other people but does not demand honor for self. Real love is not lazy but serves the Lord with great energy. Real love is joyful, patient, and full of prayer. Real love helps people in need and even takes care of people who are strangers. That is a full list, isn't it?

We must serve the Lord with all our hearts because He saved us. We owe Him everything. When we realize we owe Him everything we will love His children because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In what ways are you already following these instructions from Paul? What are you failing to do? What do you need to start doing to show real love?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 12:14-15, learning how to love non-believers.

Verse 14 seems to shift the attention to relationships with people who are outside the family of faith. It is clear we are to love all people. But here Paul shows us that this love must include even those who would hurt us. The Greek word for this kind of love is *agape*. This is a love that cares for people no matter what they do back to us.

This is the kind of love that shares the joys and pains of other people. We sometimes have trouble with both sides of this; we are sometimes jealous when others are happy, and we sometimes think people have gotten what they deserve when they are sad. None of this is right.

Do you try to “get even” when people hurt you or say bad things about you? Jesus said to pray for them and ask God to forgive them. When you forgive that person, it may be the first step in leading them to believe in Jesus. When we let God’s love shine through us that honors God.

What is the right way for you to love non-believers? What must you do when others try to hurt you? How can this honor God?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Peace and War*

Every Christian has the duty to seek peace with everyone. Christians should do all in their power to have peace with their neighbors and peace between nations. This is what Jesus taught us to do. The true solution to conflict and war is the gospel of Jesus. The greatest need that all people and all nations have is to accept and follow the teachings of Jesus. Christians throughout the world should pray for peace and for the reign of Jesus, the Prince of peace.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 12:16-18, thinking about the importance of peace.

It is not easy to live at peace with everyone. In fact, sometimes we cannot. In these verses, Paul told us to “do your best to live in peace with everyone.” This is the Christian goal for relationships with those who live around us. Keep in mind that Jesus said, “They are blessed who work for peace, for they will be called God’s children” (Matthew 5:9). We wonder today if the world will ever find peace. We cannot solve the conflict problems of the world, but we can and must work for peace with the people around us.

Read Acts 7:58-60. Paul saw Stephen as his enemy, and then he saw how Stephen died. Stephen prayed for the people who were killing him. Stephen asked God to forgive them. Soon after that, Paul met Jesus and became a strong Christian. Perhaps the actions of Stephen helped Paul to understand about peace. Paul said Christians must do right things. This is true even when someone hurts us. The Christian must not hurt that person back. It is wrong to seek revenge; it is right to seek peace.

What is the right thing to do if someone hurts you? How can you work for peace with all those who live around you?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 12:1-2,9-18. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What can you and your small group do to encourage each other to think about and value the things of God?

Discuss with your small group what you have learned from these verses about relating to other believers. How can you put these things into practice?

How has your salvation changed the way you relate to all people? What can each of you do to make peace with people around you?



CITIZENS

Believers must try to be like Christ in their communities and in the world.

ROMANS 13:1-14

When Paul lived, the city of Rome controlled the land surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Paul and his readers were all subject to the laws and rule of Rome. Paul said Christians must be willing to be good citizens of Rome. We know that God is King over all nations and governments. However, believers must honor their government and leaders by being good citizens. The Christians in Rome had to live this way toward the Roman government. We must live this way toward our government.

Paul also wrote that believers must show love to their neighbors. Loving our neighbors as ourselves will meet the requirements of the Law. Believers must show Christ-like love to all people and especially to other believers. This is even more important since the return of Christ is sooner now than ever before.

ROMANS 13:1-14

1 All of you must **yield** **A** to the **government rulers**. **B** No one rules unless God has given him the power to rule, and no one rules now without that power from God. **2** So those who are against the government are really against what God has commanded. And they will bring punishment on themselves. **3** Those who do right do not have to fear the rulers; only those who do wrong fear them. Do you want to be unafraid of the rulers? Then do what is right, and they will praise you. **4** The ruler is God's servant to help you. But if you do wrong, then be afraid. He has the power to punish; he is God's servant to punish those who do wrong. **5** So you must yield to the government, not only because you might be punished, but because you know it is right. **6** This is also why you **pay taxes**. **C** Rulers are working for God and give their time to their work. **7** Pay everyone, then, what you owe. If you owe any kind of tax, pay it. Show respect and honor to them all. **8** Do not owe people anything, except always owe love to each other, because the person who loves others has obeyed all the law. **9** The law says, "You must not be guilty of adultery. You must not murder anyone. You must not steal. You must not want to take **your neighbor's things**." **D** All these commands and all others are really only one rule: "Love your neighbor **as you love yourself**." **E** **10** Love never hurts a neighbor, so loving is obeying all the law. **11** Do this because we live in **an important time**. **F** It is now time for you to wake up from your sleep, because our **salvation is nearer** **G** now than when we first believed. **12** The "night" is almost finished, and the "day" is almost here. So we should stop doing things that belong to darkness and take up the weapons used for fighting in the light. **13** Let us live in a right way, like people who belong to the day. We should not have wild parties or get drunk. There should be no sexual sins of any kind, no fighting, or jealousy. **14** But **clothe yourselves** **H** with the Lord Jesus Christ and forget about satisfying your sinful self.

- a. Most English Bibles here use the word *submit* or *submission*. The idea is to obey.
- b. Any political power, local or national. When Paul lived the Caesar in Rome was the top government ruler.
- c. Governments have always collected taxes, and Christians should pay their taxes.
- d. Paul quotes four of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.
- e. Leviticus 19:18.
- f. Important because the return of Jesus Christ is near.
- g. This phrase: "salvation is nearer" is another way Paul writes about the return of Christ.
- h. Put on yourselves Christ-like actions and words. Paul used this picture language in many places.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How are Christians supposed to live in their communities and country so as to represent Christ well?
2. Why does a government have the power to punish people who break the law?
3. Why is it important for believers to pay taxes?
4. If we do not approve of what our government does, why must we honor and pray for that government anyway?
5. How can Christians today obey Paul's instruction about not owing anyone anything except our debt to love? How does this fit with car payments, credit cards, and mortgages?
6. Read Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:34-40. Why do these two commandments include all other laws?
7. What can we do to love all people? Why is it especially important for us to love other Christians?
8. What did Paul mean by "day" and "night" in verse 12?
9. If Christians live in "a right way" what are some things we will not do? What are some things we will do?

BIBLE SKILL: *Find Verses about The Darkness of Sin*

Find the verses mentioned below to learn about the darkness of sin. Darkness is often used in the Bible to describe the sinful life. Find these verses and write a brief summary.

John 1:5 and 3:19 _____

Proverbs 4:19 _____

1 John 1:6 _____

Ephesians 5:8,11 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers should honor their government and its leaders. Christians do this by being good citizens.
- Believers should show Christlike love to all people, especially to other Christians.
- Believers should live holy lives as we eagerly wait for the return of Christ.

What are some things you and the members of your Bible study group do to make your community a better place? How can you be a light for Christ by ministering to your community leaders?

Who are some people you struggle to love? How can you learn to love them better? What are some practical ways you can show God's love this week to the people on your list?

Identify some spiritually dark places around you that need Christ's light. How can you represent Christ in those areas? What holds you back? How can you overcome those barriers?

MEMORY VERSE

Love never hurts a neighbor, so loving is obeying all the law.
– Romans 13:10

DAY ONE

Read Romans 13:1-5, looking for how Christians relate to government.

What is the right way for Christians to think about their government? Should we obey? What if our leaders are bad? What if the laws are against God's law? These are important questions for Christians. The basic answer is that Christians should obey the laws of their government because this will honor Christ.

When Paul lived, the Roman government was bad in many ways. Even still, Paul wrote that Christians should submit or "yield" to government leaders. Paul even identified government leaders as servants of God who were meant to help people. Paul wrote that government has a right kind of power given by God to punish evil and encourage good.

Could there be a time when Christians take a stand against their government? Paul does not write about that here. When laws and leaders direct us to dishonor God, then we must honor God (Acts 5:29). We have a Christian duty toward our country. However, we have a greater duty to God.

How should Christians relate to the government of the country where they live? How do you rightly honor the government and your leaders?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 13:6-7, finding what you owe to whom.

When Paul lived each person in Rome between ages 14-65 paid a personal tax. They also paid a tax on their income and other local taxes. Our taxes are much like theirs; we pay sales tax and property tax and income tax and other taxes. What is the Christian way to think about taxes?

Some Jewish leaders tried to trap Jesus. They asked Jesus about paying taxes. Jesus asked, "Whose image and name are on a coin?"

They said the name was Caesar. Then Jesus said, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and give to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:13-17). Christians have both duties. Paul’s command is that we pay what we owe. We owe taxes to government, and we owe our love to God.

How should you as a Christian feel about taxes? What do you owe to your government? What do you owe to God?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 13:8-10, learning what fulfills the law.

Isn’t it interesting that God cares about our debts? Paul said not to owe people anything except the debt of love. Most Bible teachers agree Christians can have debts like a mortgage, but we should not fall behind on our mortgage or other debts. We must be very careful going into debt.

The first four commandments from the Ten Commandments tell us how to honor God. The other six commandments tell us how to treat people. Paul listed four of the commandments about our responsibilities to other people. The sin of adultery ruins families. But a person who loves does not want to spoil another person’s life. People may steal or be jealous but the person who loves does not rob anyone and is not jealous. The person who loves wants to give to other people. When we show real love for other people, we are fulfilling the intent of the law.

How should you apply Paul’s words about debt? How does love fulfill the law?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 13:11-12, comparing darkness and light.

In the New Testament, believers looked forward to the day when Jesus would come back to earth. Paul said that day is nearer every day and the gospel must be shared with as many people as possible before Jesus returns. This is still true; the day of Christ's return is nearer every day for us, too. We must not become busy with everyday activities and forget our responsibility to share the gospel.

When Paul wrote about the night, he was thinking about the power of the devil and the power of sin. Evil people often wait until it is dark before they do bad things. Thieves prefer to steal when it is dark. They are afraid of daylight, because people may recognize them. When Paul said the night is almost over, he meant the opportunity for people to do evil things is almost over. Christ defeated the power of sin and the devil when He died for us. Our salvation will be complete when Jesus returns.

What did Paul mean when he used the words "night" and "day?" Does your living show the light of Jesus? Why do you think so?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Religious Liberty*

Only God is Lord over the conscience of people. He is above all the rules and laws of people which are against His Word or not in His Word. Church and government should be separate. God is the one who first made civil government. Christians should be loyal and obedient to government when it is not contrary to God's will. Christians are to honor and pray for government leaders. However, a free church in a free state is the Christian goal.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 13:13-14, deciding to put on the “clothing” of Jesus.

When Paul wrote to Thessalonica, he said more about Christians living in the light. “You are all people who belong to the light and to the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. So we should not be like other people who are sleeping, but we should be alert and have self-control. Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But we belong to the day, so we should control ourselves. We should wear faith and love to protect us, and the hope of salvation should be our helmet” (1 Thessalonians 5:5-8).

It is always important that believers live holy lives. It is even more important as the return of Christ comes closer. Our time is short to live for Christ and to share His salvation. Therefore lay aside the old sinful self like dirty clothes and stay wrapped in Christ.

**What do you need to let God remove from your life?
How will you live when you put on the “clothing” of Jesus?**

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 13:1-14. Meet with one or two members from your Bible study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What can you do to be the best Christian citizen possible?

What can you as a group do to show love to each other and to those outside of the church?

Share with each other ways you want to improve in your Christian life so you will be ready when Jesus comes. What would you change in your life if you knew Jesus would return tomorrow?



ACCEPTING OTHERS

*Believers should accept and encourage other believers.
This will help to build unity.*

ROMANS 14:1-12

In chapter 14, Paul helped the Romans accept other Christians without judgment. He explained that Christians are God's servants and responsible to Him alone. God is the only Judge. We need to think of how much spiritual understanding a fellow believer has and encourage them, not judge them.

Christians need to learn how accepting other believers honors God. We often disagree about what food we can eat or how we should worship. We need to be more understanding of people's practices.

One church may do something one way and another church do it differently. For example, some Deaf churches use recorded music when they sing. Some sing in ASL without any recorded music. Some Deaf groups meet for Bible study at the same time the hearing church has Bible study, and then they join the hearing people and have interpreters. None of these things are wrong; they are just different. If God accepts each one, then so should we.

ROMANS 14:1-12

1 Accept into your group someone who is **weak in faith**, **A** and do not argue about **opinions**. **B**

2 One person believes it is right to **eat all kinds of food**. **C** But another, who is weak, believes it is right to eat only vegetables. **3** The one who knows that it is right to eat any kind of food must not reject the one who eats only vegetables. And the person who eats only vegetables must not think that the one who eats all foods is wrong, because God has accepted that person. **4** You cannot judge another person's servant. The master decides if the servant is doing well or not. And the Lord's servant will do well because the Lord helps him do well. **5** Some think that **one day is more important** **D** than another, and others think that every day is the same. Let all be sure in their own mind. **6** Those who think one day is more important than other days are doing that for the Lord. And those who eat all kinds of food are doing that for the Lord, and they give thanks to God. Others who refuse to eat some foods do that for the Lord, and they give thanks to God. **7** We do not live or die for ourselves. **8** If we live, we are living for the Lord, and if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, **we belong to the Lord**. **E** **9** The reason Christ died and rose from the dead to live again was so He would be **Lord over both the dead and the living**. **F** **10** So why do you judge your brothers or sisters in Christ? And why do you think you are better than they are? We will all stand before God to be judged, **11** because it is written in the Scriptures: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "everyone will bow before Me; everyone will say that **I am God**." **G**

12 So each of us will have to **answer to God**. **H**

- a. A new believer or one who is not growing spiritually
- b. An opinion is one's view concerning some issue or idea. We accept different opinions and actions. Just like Paul, we are more discerning about doctrinal issues and differences.
- c. The issue was some rejected meat for religious reasons and then judged other believers who continued to eat meat.
- d. The issue was some thought certain days were more holy than other days and then judged other believers who did not share this idea.
- e. Whatever we do, we are responsible to God because we are His.
- f. God is the only one who can raise someone from the dead. He has power over life and death.
- g. Isaiah 45:23
- h. At the time of judgment, we will answer to God for everything we have done.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What can we Christians do to help make unity among believers?
2. Why do some Christians judge how other Christians think and how they practice their faith? Why does Paul tell us not to do this?
3. Why is it important that everything you do as a Christian honors God? For example: how can you honor God by what you eat, how you dress, and what you say?
4. According to verse 5 what is the right day on which to worship?
5. Living or dying, to whom do you belong? How does it make you feel to belong to God?
6. Why is it wrong to judge a Christian brother or sister and to think you are better than they?
7. Who will judge everyone in the last judgment? What are some issues in your life you would not want God to judge?
8. Who will bow before God in the last judgment? How can you help an unbeliever be prepared for the last judgment?
9. What are some ways your Deaf group can encourage members and friends to live for the Lord?

BIBLE SKILL: *Find Verses about Unity.*

God wants His people to work together. When differences divide a church, the mission of the church becomes less clear. We are not able to share Jesus with the world when our fellowship is broken. Find the verses below, and write what they say about unity for believers.

John 17:20-22 _____

Ephesians 2:16 _____

Ephesians 4:3 _____

1 Corinthians 1:10 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers should not judge other Christians. We should respect the spiritual understanding of others and their religious activities.
- Believers must honor God in all we do.
- Believers should have an understanding attitude toward other believers and their ways of honoring God.

Are you more likely to judge others or look down on others? Give an example. What changes do you need to make in your life based on today's study?

What are some practical ways you and the people in your Bible study group can show that God owns your lives? How can you honor Him by honoring someone who is different?

What are some activities that cause disagreement between Christians? How can you help each other to be more understanding of Christian differences?

MEMORY VERSE

So let us try to do what makes peace and helps one another.
– Romans 14:19

DAY ONE

Read Romans 14:1-4, answering the question, “Who is the judge?”

Some of the believers in Rome had strong opinions, which led to judging other believers. Some were strong in their faith. Others were weak in faith. Some were Gentiles and some were Jews. Some were from one nation and other believers were from other nations.

Much of the problem was between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians. Before they were saved, the Gentile Christians worshiped idols. They burned part of an animal to sacrifice to their idols. Then they sold the rest of the meat in the market. Other people bought that meat to eat. Some believers thought eating this meat was fine. But other believers thought it was wrong and therefore ate only vegetables. Paul stated that either practice was good but judging the other was not good.

Terrible arguments happen in our churches today because Christians want everyone to have the same view. Keep in mind that if an opinion is against the truth of God’s Word, then a strong Christian must speak out with love for the truth. Many practices can vary and still be prompted by faith. We are God’s servants. He will judge us.

What can you do to help your Christian brothers and sisters be more accepting of each other?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 14:5-6, looking for who we must honor.

Another difference of opinion in the church in Rome seems to be about special religious holidays. Gentiles did not understand the Jewish holidays. Paul said it was all right for the Jews to have their holidays (or their Sabbath), but they must not force the Gentiles to join them.

In most of our churches, there are people from many different nations and cultures. Some celebrate the Christian holidays at different times and in different ways. This does not mean they worship God better or worse than other believers. All people can enjoy the foods and celebrations from their nation and praise God in their culture and language. Christians must always give honor to God. God doesn’t care

much about how our cultures modify our Christian activities. He looks into our hearts.

Believers must honor God in all their decisions. Christmas and Easter are celebrated in many ways in nations around the world. The way we celebrate is not as important as how we honor God with our celebrations. Special days are called holidays, or holy days. They must have Christ at the center and not be just another church party!

How can you honor God with everything you do? What should you stop doing today that does not honor God?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 14:7-8, drawing a line under to whom we belong.

As Christians, we belong to Jesus. Our lives and deaths are in His hands. We must honor Him in the way we live, and we must honor Him in our death. All our Christian brothers and sisters are in this same condition as we are—we all belong to Christ. Therefore, as a fellow servant I must leave judgment of my fellow servants to the Lord. My job is to respect all Christians, encourage them to be part of the church, and love them deeply.

Jesus never asked anyone to “give Him a try.” He demands full surrender (Luke 9:23). We can’t squeeze Jesus into one part of our lives. If we are truly His, then Jesus is our life. When Allen became a Christian, his life took a major change. Bass fishing and drugs had been the important things in his life before Christ. When he gave his life to Jesus, he soon became a serious student of the Bible. Later he became a Bible teacher. Today he is the pastor of a Deaf church. We will not all become pastors, but we must all become committed because now we belong to Him.

How does belonging to Jesus change the way we think about other Christians and the way we relate to them?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 14:9-11, finding the job of the Christian.

Have you seen this verse from 1 Samuel 16:7? “God does not see the same way people see. People look at the outside of a person, but the LORD looks at the heart.” Often, we judge fellow Christians because we are looking at the outside and not the inside. On the outside we see the differences. That often leads us to think we are better than other believers. Paul would tell us that this is wrong.

Jesus is the Lord over all. I am Lord over nothing. Jesus is the Judge for every living creature. I am judge for no one. Every knee will bow before the Lord in the final judgement. No one will bow to me. No one will bow to you either. So let us be sure to let God alone be the judge for everyone.

What then is our job? We are to respect all believers. We are to look down on no one. We are to welcome all. We are to be friends with everyone who comes among us. We are to accept all—Deaf or hearing, rich or poor, male or female. This is the way of Christ.

What can you do to make everyone feel welcomed and accepted? What is your job as a Christian?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Last Things*

God in His own time and in His own way will bring the world to an end. Jesus will return before the end just as He promised. The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all people. Hell is the future for those who reject Christ. Heaven is the future for those who trust and follow Christ.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 14:12, thinking how you will answer God.

Christ will judge everyone. No one will escape this judgment. Romans 14:12 tells us three things about the judgment.

1. It will include every person—“each of us.” No one will escape. No one will be too good, too smart, too rich, or too powerful to escape this judgment. No one can pay a lawyer to represent them.

2. It will happen—“will have to [must] answer.” We will see ourselves as God sees us. We will answer for the sins we did and the sins of not doing what God wanted us to do.

3. God will be our judge—“to God.” Only God can judge the worth of each person’s life, because only God knows if a person acted fully with all of his or her limited understanding.

Are you ready to answer to God? Have you trusted Jesus? Are you sharing Christ with others? Are you loving your brothers and sisters in Christ? How will you answer?

What do you need to do today to be prepared for God’s judgment?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 14:1-12. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned. Use VP if you need to.

Discuss with your small group what you can do to stop judging other believers.

What would you need to change to honor God with all you do in your life?

What religious practice of other Christians do you need to try to understand? How does God’s judgment help you live for Christ today?



REACH

Believers must do all they can to share the gospel with everyone.

ROMANS 15:14-21,30-33

A missionary is a person who takes the story of Jesus to those who do not know Jesus. Often a missionary must leave his or her home country and go to a different country. Paul was a missionary who obeyed God's call by traveling over much of the first century Roman world telling people about Jesus and planting churches.

God called Paul to share the gospel with others, especially with Gentiles. He was always careful to point others to Jesus. Paul went where people needed to know Jesus. That is why he was writing to Rome so he could go and work there. Paul hoped that the Romans would partner with him in the work of the gospel.

It is not enough to learn that Paul was a missionary. Believers must also be missionaries. He is calling many Deaf people today to go to other countries to tell the story of Christ. How is God calling you?

ROMANS 15:14-21,30-33

14 My brothers and sisters, I am sure that you are full of **goodness**. **A** I know that you have all the **knowledge** **B** you need and that you are able to teach each other. **15** But I have written to you very openly about some things I wanted you to remember. I did this because God gave me **this special gift**: **C** **16** to be a minister of Christ Jesus to those who are **not Jews**. **D** I served God by teaching His Good News, so that the non-Jewish people could be an offering that God would accept—an offering made holy by the Holy Spirit. **17** So **I am proud** **E** of what I have done for God in Christ Jesus. **18** I will not talk about anything except what Christ has done through me in leading those who are not Jews to obey God. They have obeyed God because of what I have said and done, **19** because of the power of miracles and the great things they saw, and because of the power of the Holy Spirit. I preached the Good News from Jerusalem all the way around to **Illyricum**, **F** and so I have finished that part of my work. **20** I always want to preach the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ, because I do not want to build on the work someone else has already started. **21** But it is written in the Scriptures: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard about him **will understand**.” **G**

30 Brothers and sisters, I beg you to help me in my work by praying to God for me. Do this because of our Lord Jesus and the love that the Holy Spirit gives us. **31** Pray that I will be saved from the nonbelievers in **Judea** **H** and that this **help I bring to Jerusalem** **I** will please God’s people there. **32** Then, if God wants me to, I will come to you with joy, and together you and I will have a time of rest. **33** The God who gives peace be with you all. Amen.

- a. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul was not writing to correct them as he had to the Corinthians but to prepare them for his visit.
- b. Spiritual understanding; They were a church and had teachers and leaders.
- c. Paul’s special gift came from his calling. See Acts 9 for Paul’s calling to reach the Gentiles.
- d. *Not Jews* or non-Jewish people is how the NCV translates the word *Gentiles*.
- e. Paul did not have sinful pride, but he was proud of what God did.
- f. Illyricum is the Roman province west of Macedonia. It is only mentioned here in the Bible. The idea “from Jerusalem to Illyricum” is like saying “from east to west.”
- g. Isaiah 52:15
- h. The southern part of the area settled by the Jews.
- i. Paul was taking a special offering of money to help the Christians in Jerusalem.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why is it so important that believers share the gospel of Jesus with everyone?
2. What did Paul say was his special gift?
3. Is pride a sin? What did Paul say he was proud about?
4. Why must Christians obey God? How did Paul obey God?
5. Where had Paul witnessed for Jesus? Where does God want us to witness for Him?
6. Why do you think Paul did not want to witness where another Christian had already witnessed?
7. What did Paul ask the Roman Christians to do for him?
8. Who was trying to hurt Paul, and why did he need to be rescued from them?
9. Why did Paul pray, "If God wants me to"? Why is it important to pray for an understanding of God's will for your life every day?

BIBLE SKILL: *Find Verses about Giving Glory to God*

Read the following verses in your Bible. Write a few words about what you learn from them.

Acts 12:21-23 _____

Isaiah 42:8 _____

1 Peter 2:12 _____

Philippians 2:11 _____

Acts 14:13-15 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God calls believers to share the good news of Jesus with other people.
- Believers must be careful to point to Jesus to give Him the glory for all good things.
- Believers should make plans and actually go to share the good news with people who do not know Jesus.
- Believers must work together with other believers to share the good news. We can do more if we work together.

How is God calling you to share the good news with other people?

**Why is it important to help others focus on Jesus and not ourselves?
What can you do to always point people to Jesus?**

What are some ways your church reaches out to Deaf people in your community? Discuss with your Bible study group ideas for how you could do more.

MEMORY VERSE

I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him. Then your hope will overflow by the power of the Holy Spirit. – Romans 15:13

DAY ONE

Read Romans 15:14, finding Paul's words of praise.

Paul seems to be defending himself for writing such a strong letter. Perhaps in verse 14 he softened the “blow.” Yes, they needed Paul's instructions, but that does not mean they were broken until he fixed them. They were in fact fellow believers—“brothers and sisters.” They were also full of goodness and knowledge. They were good because the Holy Spirit was at work in them. There was goodness in their character and in their hearts. They had knowledge because they studied and knew God's Word. They too were people of faith and prayer.

Paul wanted the Roman Christians to be open to his writing. But he already knew that the Christians in Rome were strong believers. They faced hard times in Rome with courage. We should seek to be good and knowledgeable like the Roman Christians were.

What did Paul praise the Roman Christians for? How can you have the good qualities that they had?

DAY TWO

Read Romans 15:15-16, looking for Paul's calling and ministry.

Paul had not visited the church in Rome, but he said he wanted to remind them about some important things. As Paul wrote this letter, he may have felt he was almost too bold in his writing. That seems to be why in these verses Paul wrote to explain the gift he had from God.

Paul described how God made him a minister to the Gentiles. It had been his calling since he was saved in Acts 9. But why did Paul describe the Gentiles as an offering to God? In the Jewish temple, a priest offered a sacrifice that pleased God. Paul considered himself like a priest offering a gift. The Gentiles were like a gift that the Holy Spirit made pleasing to God. In the Old Testament, Gentiles could not enter the inner parts of the Jewish temple. The death of Jesus changed that. Now the Gentiles had a true relationship with God.

Jews often said the Gentiles were unclean. They were not holy like the Jews. Paul explained that Gentile believers were made holy by God's Holy Spirit. He wrote to the Roman church to obey God's call on his life.

What must you do to obey God's call to share Christ with the people around you?

DAY THREE

Read Romans 15:17-19, drawing a circle around the main point.

God used Paul to bring the Gentiles into His kingdom. This happened because Christ worked through Paul. The Holy Spirit gave Paul the power to do "miracles" and "great things" to show he was a true apostle (2 Corinthians 12:12 and Acts 14:8-10). God did many other miracles when Paul prayed. For example, through Paul, God cured many people in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12).

Paul preached and taught the Christian message and started churches "from Jerusalem to Illyricum." Illyricum today includes parts of Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Croatia. The two places are about one thousand miles apart. It is like saying, "From California to New York," meaning all across the nation.

But here is the point, Paul knew his work was not about him. It was all about Jesus. He did not brag about the work he had done. He bragged about the work that Christ had done. It is always easy for all of us to think we are responsible for the good things that God does. We are tools in God's hands. We must always point people to Jesus, not to ourselves.

Why was Paul always careful to brag about Jesus? How can you live your life so your words and actions point people toward Christ?

DAY FOUR

Read Romans 15:20-21, thinking about how Isaiah is fulfilled again.

Paul had a great desire to take the gospel to new places. He knew this was the only way the salvation of Jesus could spread. He said he was like a farmer who planted seed or a builder who started a new building (1 Corinthians 3:6-10). He wanted to preach the gospel to people who had never heard it.

Verse 21 is a quotation from Isaiah 52:14-15. Isaiah wrote about the coming Messiah. Paul interpreted the words of Isaiah to apply to the work that Paul was doing. Those who had not seen or heard would soon understand. In Paul's time, most of the Gentiles had never heard the gospel until Paul came to their city. Many came to Christ when they heard the gospel from Paul.

Those of us who have been involved in Deaf ministries for many years can see how Isaiah is fulfilled again. In the past, most of the Deaf people of the world had no access to the story of Jesus. Now more than ever Deaf missionaries are going to the world and the Bible is being translated into many of the Sign Languages of the world.

Where are Deaf people near you who have never seen the story of Jesus? How can you tell them? How can you help take the story to the whole world?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Cooperation*

Christians should find many ways to cooperate between churches. This might be through associations and conventions and other ways. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another to send missionaries around the world. As possible, Christian denominations should cooperate in the work of the gospel.

DAY FIVE

Read Romans 15:30-33, deciding to pray and partner with other Christians.

Paul often asked Christians to pray for him (Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2). He prayed all the time for the new believers (Romans 1:9-10). The first Christians all believed that God acts powerfully because of His people's prayers (James 5:16-18). Even though Paul was strong in the Spirit, he knew he needed the Roman Christians to pray for him.

Paul had the calling and the spiritual gifts to do his ministry. But he needed partners in the gospel. In these verses, Paul invited the Roman Christians to partner with him in his ministry just as we must partner together with many believers if we are to take the gospel to the whole world.

How can you partner with other Christians? How is prayer a worthy way to be a Christian partner?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Romans 15:14-21,30-33. Meet with one or two members from your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your group ways that you can share the good news of Jesus with others. Make plans for when and how you can tell someone who has never seen the story of Jesus before.

Why is it important for you to point others to Jesus? How can you do a better job of pointing people to Jesus in the future?

Work with your group to develop a prayer list for Deaf missionaries, Deaf churches and ministries, and lost Deaf people. Find new ways to remind yourself to partner with these people and groups in prayer.

the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Je-sus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

The Abundant Grace of Christ

12 Wherefore, as "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;

tribulation, because we know that thro' all such things, Father is disciplining us for greater holiness." Heb. 12:10.

13 The Christian's hope is certain because God's love is secured by His Son's sacrifice which is the life of our being.

14 We can be sure of God's love since He has made us, who were ungodly, we were all sinners, as were He, and made us His children.

The word "atonement" is a Hebrew word used in sacrifices to express the idea of "at-one-ment" and "reconciliation."

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15 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

16 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

17 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

18 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Je-sus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

19 Wherefore, as "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;

20 tribulation, because we know that thro' all such things, Father is disciplining us for greater holiness." Heb. 12:10.

21 The Christian's hope is certain because God's love is secured by His Son's sacrifice which is the life of our being.

22 We can be sure of God's love since He has made us, who were ungodly, we were all sinners, as were He, and made us His children.

23 The word "atonement" is a Hebrew word used in sacrifices to express the idea of "at-one-ment" and "reconciliation."

LEADER HELPS



MUST SHARE

Romans 1:1-7,13-17

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to grow in their desire to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Enlist a volunteer to sign the story from Acts 9:1-18.

Be prepared to answer questions the group might have from the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN that Paul wrote the Book of Romans. In the Book of Acts, Luke first calls him Saul. But in Acts 13:9, Luke says Saul was also called Paul. God called Paul to be an apostle in a special way. **ASK** the volunteer to sign the story from Acts 9:1-18. Let members share other information they may remember about Paul.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What is the Good News? (Romans 1:1-7)

SIGN Romans 1:1-7. Lead the group in a discussion of questions 1, 2, and 3 from Explore the Text (p. 7). Invite members to focus on verse 2 again. **EXPLAIN:** *Throughout the Old Testament God made it clear He had a plan. When Jesus appeared to the men from Emmaus after His resurrection, He explained to them what the Scripture said about Him. (See Luke 24:27.) Jesus fulfilled everything the prophets said would happen.*

DIRECT the group to read verses 3 and 4 again. **EXPLAIN:** *These two verses give some important points of the good news all people need to know. Jesus, God's Son, took on human flesh. He was from the family line of David. While on earth He showed His power through His resurrection from the dead. He is both God and man.*

In verses 5-6 Paul told about his duty to share the good news with the Gentiles. In verse 7, Paul used a greeting he used in other letters—"grace and peace to you."

Grace is God's gift of love to us. Peace is the security believers have because of their relationship with God through Christ.

2. We Must Share (Romans 1:13-15)

ENLIST a volunteer to sign Romans 1:13-15. **ASK:** *Why do you think Paul felt it was his duty to share the good news? Do believers today still have a duty to share?* **ENCOURAGE** the group to find Matthew 28:19-20 in their Bibles. After they have had time to read it, ask one member to sign the verses for the group. **EXPLAIN:** *We call these verses the Great Commission. Jesus commanded His followers to teach others about Him—to make new followers.*

LEAD the group to discuss questions 4-6 from Explore the Text (p. 7).

3. Be Bold (Romans 1:16-17)

ASK: *If you were at a party, would you feel comfortable talking about Jesus with people there? What about at work? Where do you feel comfortable talking about Jesus? Where does it feel uncomfortable?*

EXPLAIN: *Paul told how he felt about sharing Jesus with others in the next two verses.* **SIGN** Romans 1:16-17. Focus on questions 7-10 from Explore the Text (p. 7). Invite members to find the Key Doctrine for today's session on page 11. Emphasize Acts 1:8. **EXPLAIN:** *Believers have the Holy Spirit to lead and give them the power to share the good news.* **ASK:** *Where did Jesus say we would be witnesses? What does this mean for us today?*

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points of the session and questions from In My Context (p. 18). **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to increase our boldness to tell others about Him.

GUILTY

Romans 1:18-28,32

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to be sensitive to notice God's leading in their lives.

Bring a flashlight or a camping light to the class for an illustration.

Recruit four volunteers to each sign one section of the verses for the session.

Be prepared to answer questions from the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Begin the session by turning on the flashlight. **INVITE** the group to imagine being outside on a dark night. **ASK:** *If you saw a light, which way would you walk? Toward the light or away from the light? If you walked toward the light, what would happen? (The light would become brighter.) If you walked away from the light, what would happen? (Things would become darker.) Which way is the smarter way to go?*

EXPLAIN: *Today we will see what happens when people "walk away" from God's light.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Can See in Nature (Romans 1:18-20)

DIRECT the first volunteer to sign Romans 1:18-20. **REMINDE** the group that God hates sin. He is right to be angry at sin. His anger is different from ours. People normally become angry for selfish reasons. God's anger is holy and is against sin. **SEE** the Key Doctrine on page 19 for more information about God's anger.

EXPLAIN: *Maybe you know someone who complains that God is not fair. They may say, "What about people who don't know about God? God shouldn't judge them." Paul makes it clear—God shows His great power and holiness to all people in His creation. There is no good reason for people to sin against Him.*

CHOOSE one or two questions from Explore the Text (p. 15) for discussion.

2. Replaced by Nonsense (Romans 1:21-23)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Romans 1:21-23. **LEAD** in a discussion of questions 3 and 6 from Explore the Text (p. 15). **EXPLAIN:** *Remember, people should know God because they see His creation. Their hearts should respond to God with thanksgiving. This is like moving to the light. As we move to the light, we will have more light. But when people reject God, they do foolish things. They choose darkness. As they do more evil, they move farther from God, and it becomes even darker.*

3. God Left Them (Romans 1:24-28)

DIRECT the third volunteer to sign Romans 1:24-28 for the group.

LEAD the group in discussing question 9 from Explore the Text.

EXPLAIN: *Perhaps you know parents who have rebellious children. These parents may have to show “tough love” to their children. This means they must let the children go and learn from their mistakes. They hope the children will return to them someday. They still love their children. God also wants sinners to come to Him. (See 2 Peter 3:9.)*

ENCOURAGE group to read verses 26-31 in their Bibles. The actions listed here happen because people choose to reject God and His ways.

4. Deserving Death (Romans 1:32)

DIRECT the fourth volunteer to sign Romans 1:32. **EMPHASIZE:** *Paul said these people know in their hearts they are wrong but still choose to do evil things.* **ASK:** *What does it mean that “they applaud others who do them”? What about our world today? What wrong actions does the world support or approve?*

IN MY CONTEXT

FOCUS on the main points from In My Context (p. 16). **LEAD** the group to discuss the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, requesting God to help us pay attention to Him and His plan for us. Pray we will always move toward His light.



NOT ENOUGH

Romans 2:17-29

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to give their hearts fully to God.

Ask two volunteers to prepare a short skit to demonstrate what “hypocrite” means. For example: one person could tell the other how bad soda is for their health. Then the same person buys a soda, doing the opposite of what they said.

Write the outline for the session on the board.

Be prepared to answer questions the group might have from the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Lead the group to list things people may do to earn God’s favor. Highlight responses about keeping the law. Explain that Paul focused on the Jews and the dangers of depending on the law.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Hypocrites (Romans 2:17-24)

INVITE the two volunteers to do their skit. **LEAD** a discussion asking the following questions: *What do we call that kind of person? (A hypocrite.) Do you know anyone who says, “Churches are full of hypocrites!”? Why do you think they say that?*

EXPLAIN: *Some of the Jews in the Roman church felt they were better than the Gentiles. They were proud because they had the law from Moses. They felt special because they were circumcised. Paul wanted them to understand they needed Jesus just the same as the Gentiles needed Him.*

ENCOURAGE the group to watch for hypocritical actions as you sign Romans 2:17-24. **LEAD** in a discussion of those actions. **FOCUS** on questions 1-4 in Explore the Text (p. 23).

REMIND the group it is important to have an honest view of our lives.

LEAD them to find 1 John 1:5-10 in their Bibles. **ASK:** *How do these verses relate to what we see in Romans?*

2. Full Obedience (Romans 2:25-27)

SIGN Romans 2:25-27. Some people in the group may not be familiar with the requirement for Jews to be circumcised. **EXPLAIN:** *Since the time of Abraham, the Jewish men were circumcised to show they were God's people. Some of them believed that act caused God to accept them. They didn't worry much about obeying other laws. Paul told them that obeying just that one part of the law (circumcision) was not enough. They needed to obey all the law. Even though they were circumcised, they did not always act like God's people.*

INVITE the group to find James 4:17. **ENCOURAGE** discussion on how this applies to the verses in Romans.

LEAD in a discussion of questions 5-7 in Explore the Text.

3. How is Your Heart? (Romans 2:28-29)

SIGN Romans 2:28-29. **EXPLAIN:** *In these verses, Paul explained the importance of a person truly dedicating his or her heart to God. It is more important for a person to have a heart that is right with God than to have the physical mark of circumcision. Jesus scolded the Pharisees because they tried to look good on the outside but were dirty on the inside. (See Matthew 23:27.)* **ASK:** *Where did Paul say true circumcision happens? (In the heart, by the Spirit.)*

LEAD the group to find Titus 3:4-5 in their Bibles and discuss how these verses relate to the verses in Romans. **NOTE** that we cannot do enough good works to earn salvation. But when the Holy Spirit lives in us by faith, we become new and will grow in the Lord.

As a group, **ANSWER** questions 8, 9, and 10 from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 24). **GUIDE** members to answer the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us live in a way that encourages others to know Him better.

JUSTIFIED

Romans 3:21–4:3

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group. If anyone is not a Christian, pray they will understand how to become a follower of Christ from the Bible study this week.

Find a picture of Mt. Everest to show the group during the session.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

SHARE: *Two weeks ago, we learned that the Gentiles did not have God's law. They still did not have an excuse for their sin because God showed them His power and His nature through His creation. Then last week we learned that the Jews had the law, but they could not obey it completely. Both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of sin. In today's verses, Paul made it clear that all people, Jews and Gentiles, need a Savior.*

The title of today's session is "Justified." The word "justified" means made right with God. It means a person is not guilty anymore. God says that person is righteous and clean before Him. The verses for today will explain how that happens.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Through Faith (Romans 3:21-24)

DISCUSS: *Imagine if God said a person could go to heaven if they paid one million dollars. Would that be fair? Would all people have the opportunity to pay their way? Or what if God said a person must climb to the top of Mt. Everest to get into heaven? Would you be able to do it?*

EXPLAIN: *God made a way for all people to be able to have a relationship with Him and have a home in heaven. It is something anyone can do.*

RECRUIT a volunteer to sign Romans 3:21-24. **SPEND TIME** sharing answers to questions 1-4 from Explore the Text (p. 31). **EMPHASIZE** that God's grace is a gift we cannot earn.

2. In Jesus (Romans 3:25-26)

SIGN Romans 3:25-26. **ASK:** *What does it mean that Jesus died in our place? (We were guilty because of our sin. Jesus lived a perfect life, so He was able to be the sacrifice that paid for our guilt.)* **ENCOURAGE** the group to find John 3:16 in their Bibles and sign the verse together. Here again we see God's gift of grace. We must believe (have faith) in Jesus.

FOCUS discussion on question 5 from Explore the Text.

3. For All People (Romans 3:27-31)

ENLIST a volunteer to sign Romans 3:27-31. **EXPLAIN:** *Notice that Paul again mentioned we cannot brag about ourselves. Our actions and works cannot take us to heaven. If climbing Mt. Everest paid our way to heaven, we would be able to brag about that. We could carry a picture of ourselves on the mountain and show it to everyone. We would not give honor to God. But God made the plan of salvation and gives all people the opportunity to have a relationship with Him. He deserves all the praise and thanksgiving.*

LEAD in a discussion of questions 6-8 from Explore the Text.

4. Including Abraham (Romans 4:1-3)

EXPLAIN: *You may wonder about the people in the Old Testament. They did not see Jesus. How could they become right with God? Some Jews during Paul's time believed that Abraham became right with God because of his actions. But Paul made it clear that it was through faith.* **SIGN** Romans 4:1-3. We become right with God the same way—by faith.

ENCOURAGE the group to discuss question 9 from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 32). **LEAD** the group in a discussion of the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us share the good news of salvation through faith with others.



AT PEACE

Romans 5:1-11

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to experience peace with God through every situation in life.

Ask a volunteer to prepare to sign the story from Acts 16:16-34 for the group session.

Recruit another volunteer to sign John 14:27 for the group session.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

ASK: *What do you think of when you see the word “peace”?* Allow for some answers and discussion.

EXPLAIN: *There are two ways we look at peace today. One is a feeling we have at times when our minds are calm. We are not worried about anything. The second is about a position we have in a relationship. We once were enemies of God because of our sin. But when we put our trust in Christ, we became His friends or children. That peace in our relationship with Him gives us peace in our minds and hearts also.*

INVITE the volunteer to sign John 14:27. **EXPLAIN:** *Jesus prepared His disciples for His death, resurrection, and ascension. In this story, we can see the peace some of the disciples had.* **DIRECT** the volunteer to sign the story of Paul and Silas in jail. **ASK:** *Why do you think Paul and Silas were able to sing and pray while in prison?*

In today's session, we will see more about how peace works in our lives.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Justified with Benefits (Romans 5:1-5)

SIGN Romans 5:1-5. **EXPLAIN:** *Before we were made right with God, we were separated from Him. As God's children, our lives have meaning. Our purpose is to honor God in our lives.* **INVITE** the group to list other benefits of our peace with God. Answers include: having joy in our troubles, patience, character, hope, we have God's love in our hearts, we have the Holy Spirit. **NOTE** that hope is not a feeling of being positive about something. In this context, hope is a strong knowledge and trust in what God says He will do.

LEAD in a discussion of questions 1-5 from Explore the Text (p. 39).

2. Justified Through His Death (Romans 5:6-8)

The next verses have an important truth for us to remember—God makes us right with Himself because Jesus died for us. He did not wait for us to improve ourselves first. He didn't wait to see if we would do good things. Jesus died for us even while we were still sinners. **RECRUIT** a volunteer to sign Romans 5:6-8.

INVITE the group to read question 6 in Explore the Text. **LEAD** in the discussion about dying for others.

3. Justified Means We are Friends with God (Romans 5:9-11)

SIGN Romans 5:9-11. **ASK:** *What does it mean to you to be friends with God? How does it bring peace in your life?*

POINT OUT at the end of verse 10 Paul said, "He will save us through his Son's life." **INVITE** the group to find Hebrews 7:25 in their Bibles for an example of what Jesus continues to do for us. **ASK** a volunteer to sign the verse. **EMPHASIZE** that Jesus actively works for us, praying for us. We can trust Him always.

LEAD the discussion of questions 7-10 from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 40). **LEAD** in a discussion of the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. If there is time, **SING** together the hymn, "It is Well with My Soul." **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us trust Him and experience His peace in all situations.

FREE

Romans 6:1-14

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to understand and enjoy their freedom in Christ.

Write the outline on the board.

Find a picture of a pastor baptizing someone to show to the group during the session.

Bring a hammer and some pliers (or other tools) with you to the meeting.

Enlist three volunteers each to sign one section of the verses during the session.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

SHOW the picture of the baptism to the group. **EXPLAIN:** *In our churches, when a person makes the decision to follow Christ, the pastor will help the person plan a time for baptism. Baptism is a picture/symbol of what has happened in the life of the new Christian. Often, when the pastor baptizes the new Christian, he will say something like this, "Buried with Christ in baptism, raised to walk in a new life." Watching a baptism helps church members remember Jesus died for them. He rose from the dead and is alive today.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Dead to Sin (Romans 6:1-7)

EXPLAIN: *In Romans 5:20, Paul said, "The law came to make sin worse. But when sin grew worse, God's grace increased." This is what he refers to when chapter 6 begins.* **INVITE** the first volunteer to sign Romans 6:1-7. **GUIDE** a discussion of questions 1-6 from Explore the Text (p. 47).

ENCOURAGE the group to find Galatians 2:20 in their Bibles. In this verse, Paul gave another picture of what it means to let the old life go and begin a new life. **LEAD** the group to sign the verse together.

2. Alive in Christ (Romans 6:8-11)

CALL ON the second volunteer to sign Romans 6:8-11. **EXPLAIN:** *Paul said that because we died with Christ, we also live with Him.* **ASK:** *Where does our power for the new life come from? Remember we have the Holy Spirit in us making us new. (See Titus 3:4-5.) We are not slaves to the old life and sin anymore.*

LEAD the group to discuss question 7 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** *Look at verse 11 again. How does it say we should picture ourselves now? Perhaps if we see ourselves that way, we will be stronger in living the right way.*

3. Tools of Right Living (Romans 6:12-14)

ASK: *So, now that we have a new life, how should we live?* **SHOW** the group the tools that you brought. **ASK:** *What are these called? (Tools) What are they for?* **EXPLAIN:** *They are for us to use in specific ways. If we use them right, they will do a good job. In the same way, we should use our bodies in the right way to do good for God.*

INVITE the third volunteer to sign Romans 6:12-14. **GUIDE** the group in a discussion of questions 8-9 in Explore the Text. On question 9, **BESURE** members understand Christians should honor the government and pray for those in authority. (See 1 Timothy 2:1-3.) In the Old Testament, the law did not give people any power to live right. The law showed people their sins. We now live under grace that helps us live in a way to honor God. (See Titus 2:11-12.)

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 48). **LEAD** in a discussion of the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us live in a way that honors Him.

RAISED!

Luke 24:1-12

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to find great joy in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Enlist a volunteer to summarize the information about Luke in the introduction to the session (p. 53).

Recruit another member to sign the story from Luke 24:1-12. They should prepare it as a story, not reading it from the text, if possible.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *Because today is Easter, we will hold our study of Romans until next Sunday. Today is the day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will study Luke's account of the story.* **INVITE** the volunteer to share the information from the introduction to the session.

EXPLAIN: *After an illegal trial and a terrible beating and crucifixion, two of Jesus' friends buried Him in a tomb. The Roman government sealed the stone that covered the tomb and put a guard there. They knew Jesus told the disciples He would live again. They did not want Jesus' disciples to steal His body to make it look like Jesus came back to life. (See Matthew 27:62-66.)*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What They Found (Luke 24:1-3)

EXPLAIN: *Luke 23:56 says the women prepared spices and perfumes the day of the crucifixion and then rested on the Sabbath. Mark wrote that on Saturday evening, after the Sabbath, they bought more spices. The women were prepared to take care of Jesus' body. On their way to the tomb, they wondered how they would move the stone (Mark 16:3).*

INVITE the volunteer to sign the full story from Luke 24:1-12. **LEAD** in a discussion of questions 1,2, and 3 from Explore the Text (p. 55).

2. Announcing the News (Luke 24:4-9)

ENCOURAGE the group to read Luke 24:4-9. Then **DIRECT** a discussion of questions 4-6 from Explore the Text. **EXPLAIN:** *Jesus told His disciples He would die. He explained that on the third day He would rise from the dead. Apparently, they did not understand this or did not accept it. They did not expect an empty tomb.*

REMEMBER that the chief priests and the Pharisees knew Jesus said He would rise again. They are the ones who asked Pilate to put a guard at the tomb. We might wonder why the disciples did not understand this. But perhaps we are slow to understand some things ourselves.

ASK: *Are there some things in the Bible that we don't understand? Or maybe there are some things we don't want to accept? We can pray for each other to clearly understand what God tells us in His message to us.*

3. Proved (Luke 24:10-12)

INVITE the group to read Luke 24:10-12. **LEAD** them to discuss questions 7-9 in Explore the Text.

DIVIDE the group into smaller groups of three or four. **DIRECT** them to read Luke 24:13-53 and make some notes on what happened next in the story. When they come back together **INVITE** each group share some of the events they found.

IN MY CONTEXT

EXPLAIN: *Some people wonder why there are some different pieces of information in the four gospels. We must remember they were written by four different men. They emphasized different things. As you read all four you will get a more complete story. Try to read all four accounts sometime this week.*

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 56). **GUIDE** the group to answer the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us share the good news that Jesus is alive with others we meet this week.

SAFE IN CHRIST

Romans 8:12-25

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to depend on the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Enlist three volunteers each to sign one section of the verses for the session.

Write the outline on the board.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

ASK: *When you were children, did your parents ever tell you, “If you act badly, people will think I am a terrible mom/dad”? If you have children, do you feel their actions show what kind of parent you are?*

People do watch Christians. Some people will learn about God based on our actions. So how should we behave? Today’s verses will help us with that question.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Eternal Future (Romans 8:12-13)

REMINDE the group that two weeks ago we talked about our new lives in Christ. The old self was buried with Him, and we were raised with Him to a new way of living. This is the beginning of our eternal lives. However, this does not mean we automatically live perfect lives. We do not become robots. We must choose to follow Christ every day in our actions.

INVITE the first volunteer to sign Romans 8:12-13. **LEAD** in a discussion of question 2 in Explore the Text (p. 63). **EXPLAIN:** *We have the Holy Spirit living in us. He helps us to do right. But it is our responsibility to follow Him.*

2. Eternal Inheritance (Romans 8:14-18)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Romans 8:14-18. **EXPLAIN:**

The Aramaic word Paul used for “Father” is “Abba.” This word shows that the relationship between the father and child is very close. When God adopted us into His family, He gave us full rights as His children. We will inherit eternal blessings. This is worth any suffering we will experience.

DIRECT the group in a discussion of questions 3-6 in Explore the Text.

3. Creation Made New (Romans 8:19-22)

ENCOURAGE the group to find Genesis 3:17-19 in their Bibles. After they have had time to read it, **ASK:** *Why did God punish the man and woman? How did this affect the earth?*

INVITE the third volunteer to sign Romans 8:19-22. **LEAD** in a discussion about question 7 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** *Why do you think Paul used the example of a woman going through labor? (Answers could include: Because the pain of childbirth has a good purpose; when the child is born there is great joy; the pain is worth the result.) How do you picture the new perfect earth looking like?*

4. Humanity Made New (Romans 8:23-25)

God will make the earth new. Also, He will make His children new. Right now, we have the Holy Spirit leading us in our daily lives. He is also our promise of a future life with a new eternal body.

ASK: *What kinds of things cause you to look forward to having a new body in heaven?*

CALL FOR the fourth volunteer to sign Romans 8:23-25. **LEAD** a discussion of questions 8 and 9 from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

ENCOURAGE the group to read the rest of Romans 8 during this week. Verses 28-39 are well known verses that give much comfort to Christians. They tell of God plans for good and how nothing can separate us from His love.

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 64). **GUIDE** the group to answer the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, thanking God for making us His children.

SAVED

Romans 10:5-15

PLAN AHEAD

Pray that the group will be secure in their salvation and understand how to help others know Christ.

Write the verses for the Romans Road on the board: Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 5:8; and Romans 10:9-10.

Recruit three members each to sign one segment of the verses for this session.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Christians have developed several different ways to share the good news of Jesus with others. One of these ways is the “Romans Road.” **READ** about this in the introduction to the session on page 69. There are 3 verses listed, and often people also include Romans 5:8. It emphasizes Jesus’ death on the cross.

To open the session, **SHARE** the information from the introduction to the session. **INVITE** the group to sign the verses together. **LEAD** in a discussion of how members can share these verses with friends who do not believe.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Declare and Believe (Romans 10:5-10)

INVITE the first volunteer to sign Romans 10:5-10. **FOCUS** on question 1 from Explore the Text (p. 71). **EXPLAIN:** *In verses 6-8, Paul made the point that the gospel of salvation through faith is not a complicated message. People do not need to do a difficult work to get salvation.* **ASK:** *What do people need to do?* Verses 9-10 clearly tell us what is required.

First, we must declare that Jesus is Lord. In some Bible translations, the word *confess* is used instead of *declare*. *Confess* means to agree or say the same thing. So, when we declare or confess, we are agreeing with God that Jesus is Lord.

ASK: *What does it mean to “believe” that God raised Jesus from the dead?* **BE SURE** to include that believing is more than just accepting something is true. Believe here means a faith in Jesus that changes a person’s life.

LEAD the group to discuss question 2 from Explore the Text.

2. Anyone (Romans 10:11-13)

CALL on the second volunteer to sign Romans 10:11-13. **DIRECT** members in a discussion about question 3 from Explore the Text.

ASK: *Why did Paul say there is no difference between Gentiles and Jews?* God is fair and just. He made a plan to save all people in the same way. We all become God’s children by faith in Jesus.

3. Tell All (Romans 10:14-15)

ASK the third volunteer to sign Romans 10:14-15. As a group, **DISCUSS** question 4 from Explore the Text.

ASK: *What does this mean for us?* Every person should have an opportunity to know who Jesus is and what He did. This means we need to tell those around us. We also need to send missionaries around the world.

Through our offerings we are able to support missionary work in many places around the world. **ASK:** *What are some ways we can support missionaries?*

IN MY CONTEXT

Take time to **PRACTICE** sharing the good news in pairs. The group could try using the verses in the Romans Road to explain salvation.

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 72). **DIRECT** the group to answer the questions. Encourage members to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us become more aware of the people who need to know Jesus.

MERCY

Romans 11:17-32

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group. Ask God to help us all be thankful for our salvation.

Recruit three volunteers each to sign one segment of the verses for today's session.

Write the outline on the board.

Find a picture of an olive tree to show the class during the session.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

The Romans Road is a way to explain the plan of salvation. Romans 6:23 makes it clear our sin earns a punishment for us. That punishment is death and separation from God. But God made a way for us to have forgiveness through Jesus' death on the cross. This is a picture of mercy. We deserved punishment, but God chose to put the punishment on Jesus. This great gift should cause us to be humble and thankful. We cannot be proud of ourselves because we did nothing to earn this great salvation.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Be Humble (Romans 11:17-21)

ASK: *What does it mean to be humble?* One way to think about it is having the right attitude about yourself and your position. If a person is humble, he does not think of himself as better than others. **INVITE** the group to find Romans 12:10 in their Bibles. **ASK:** *What kind of attitude did Paul encourage the believers to have with each other? What would that kind of attitude look like?*

It seems some of the Gentile believers had a proud attitude. Perhaps they felt they were better than the Jewish believers because they did not follow the law, but God still saved them. Paul felt a need to correct them.

Paul used a picture of an olive tree. (Show the picture of the olive tree.) The branches represent the Jewish people, God's people. Some of the branches were broken off because they did not have faith. **CALL** on the first volunteer to sign Romans 11:17-21. **DIRECT** the group to discuss questions 1-3 from Explore the Text (p. 79).

2. Be Thankful (Romans 11:22-24)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Romans 11:22-24. **LEAD** in a discussion of question 4 from Explore the Text. **EXPLAIN:** *If we only think of God as strict and do not remember He is kind, it will seem He is only mean and harsh. If we only think of Him as kind and do not remember that He is also strict; it will seem He ignores His children's need for discipline. God is the perfect balance of being kind and strict.*

3. Be Aware (Romans 11:25-32)

CALL FOR the third volunteer to sign Romans 11:25-32. **DISCUSS** questions 5-9 from Explore the Text.

EXPLAIN: *Some of these verses are difficult to understand fully. However, based on the full context of the Book of Romans, we know that faith is the key. God did all the work in giving us a way to have a relationship with Him. He gave the sacrifice (Jesus, His Son) to pay for our sin. Our responsibility is to believe in Him and follow Him.*

Verse 32 makes it clear that both Jews and Gentiles have disobeyed God. He showed His mercy to both of them and continues to show mercy to all who trust Him.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 80). **GUIDE** in a discussion of the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, thanking God for including us in His family.

LIVING AS SACRIFICES

Romans 12:1-2,9-18

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to give their lives to Christ.

Enlist a volunteer to prepare to sign the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. They should practice so they do not need to look at the text.

Write the outline for the session on the board.

Recruit someone to share his or her testimony about how becoming a Christian changed his or her life. If you are not able to find someone, prepare to share your testimony.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

INVITE the volunteer to sign the story of Zacchaeus for the group. After the story **ASK:** *After Zacchaeus met Jesus, how did his life change? After Paul met Jesus, how did his life change?*

CALL on the one who volunteered to share his or her testimony to do that now. **INVITE** others to comment on how Jesus changed their lives.

EXPLAIN: *In today's verses, Paul shared how following Jesus should change our lives. The first 11 chapters in Romans are full of teaching doctrine. Now we will study how all of that teaching applies to our lives.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Offer Yourself (Romans 12:1-2)

In the Old Testament, God required the Jews to make sacrifices to cover their sin. A sacrifice is an offering or gift to God. They would kill an animal and offer it to God by burning it. When Jesus was crucified, He was the perfect sacrifice that paid for our sin for all time. We do not need to make animal sacrifices anymore.

In our verses for today, Paul said we do still need to make a sacrifice. Watch the verses as they are signed to see what kind of sacrifice God wants.

SIGN Romans 12:1-2. Then **LEAD** a discussion of questions 1-3 from Explore the Text (p. 87).

2. Live Truthfully (Romans 12:9-13)

Verses 1-2 told us how following Jesus changes our thinking. In the next verses, watch for what our relationships with our Christian brothers and sisters should be like.

SIGN Romans 12:9-13. **GUIDE** the group to answer questions 4-8 from Explore the Text. **REMINDE** the group that our love in action like this shows the world that we belong to Him. (See John 13:34-35.)

3. Be at Peace (Romans 12:14-18)

The next verses give followers more of a challenge. It is easy to be kind to people who are kind to us. But how should we act when people are not nice to us?

SIGN Romans 12:14-18. **ENCOURAGE** the group to answer question 9 from Explore the Text. **REMINDE** the group that our actions show Christ's character to the world. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus said, "They are blessed who work for peace, for they will be called God's children." When we help others keep peace, we look like Him.

DIVIDE the group into four smaller groups. **GIVE** each smaller group a set of verses to focus on: 1) Romans 12:9-10; 2) Romans 12:11-13; 3) Romans 12:14-15; and 4) Romans 12:16-18. Each group should think of examples of how believers can do the actions in their verses. After they have time to discuss with each other, they can share their ideas with the whole group.

IN MY CONTEXT

ASK the group how following Jesus changed their lives. After a time of sharing, **REVIEW** the main points from In My Context (p. 88). **LEAD** the group to answer the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to love help us others, even people who don't love us.



CITIZENS

Romans 13:1-14

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to understand how important it is to love God and love others.

Recruit a volunteer to sign the story from Mark 12:13-17. This story is about Jesus' response to paying taxes. The volunteer will sign the story for the group session.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

ASK: *Do any of you enjoy sports? Which ones do you like? Do you think it is important to have rules in the game? Why? Imagine if there was a game of basketball or football with no rules. It would become confusing. Players would not know where boundaries should be. Fouls would happen with no punishment. It would be confusing.*

The same would happen in a city or country if there was no government. In our governments today, there are laws to protect the people who live in the cities, states, and countries. Laws help keep peace. In today's verses, Paul explained how Christians should behave in relationship to the laws where we live.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Submit (Romans 13:1-7)

EXPLAIN: *In Paul's time, the government rulers were not believers. Paul reminded the church that God is sovereign. This means God is in control. He knows what is going on in the world. He allows the government rulers to make laws. (See what Jesus said in John 19:8-11.)*

SIGN Romans 13:1-7. **LEAD** the group to answer questions 1-4 in Explore the Text. When discussing question 3, **INVITE** the volunteer

to sign the story from Mark about Jesus' answer to paying taxes. The leaders wanted to trick Jesus. They thought He was against the government. Jesus' answer made it clear we should respect the government, and we should also obey God. 1 Timothy 2:2 says, "Pray for rulers and for all who have authority so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives full of worship and respect for God."

REMINDE the group that if government rulers require citizens to do something against God, our responsibility is to obey God. As a group **READ** Acts 4:19-20 and 5:29. Even though Peter and John were arrested for telling the good news, they knew obeying God was more important.

2. Love (Romans 13:8-10)

Next, Paul talked about love and how it takes care of our responsibility to each other. **SIGN** Romans 13:8-10. **DIRECT** the group in a discussion of question 5 in Explore the Text.

INVITE the group to find the Ten Commandments in their Bibles (Exodus 20:3-17). After reading through them, **DISCUSS** how love helps believers obey all the commandments. **LEAD** the group to read Matthew 22:37-40, then **DISCUSS** question 6 from Explore the Text.

3. Look Forward (Romans 13:11-14)

In the last verses for today, Paul encouraged the believers to live in a way that honors God because the time of Jesus' return is getting closer. **SIGN** Romans 13:11-14.

EXPLAIN: *When we see someone wear a police uniform, what they wear helps us know who they are. Paul used the picture of clothing ourselves with Christ.* **ASK:** *What kinds of actions and attitudes should we "wear" so others see Christ in us?* **LEAD** the group in answering questions 8 and 9 from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 96). **DIRECT** the group in a discussion of the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us look more like Jesus to our world.



ACCEPTING OTHERS

Romans 14:1-12

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group. Ask God to help them support and encourage each other.

Enlist three people each to sign one segment of the verses for the session.

Write the outline for the session on the board.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

As believers we are to love other believers. Jesus commanded His disciples to love each other in the same way that He loved them. He also said their love for each other would help the world recognize them as His followers (John 13:34-35).

The church in Rome had a special challenge. Some of their members were Jews and some were Gentiles. They had very different backgrounds and cultures. But they all decided to follow Jesus. Some of the Jews continued to celebrate the Jewish holidays. Others continued to follow special diets. At times, believers criticized others for their actions. Some believers thought they were better than others. Paul wanted the believers to be united and stop criticizing their brothers and sisters.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Stop Judging (Romans 14:1-4)

SUMMARIZE the information from the introduction to the session on page 101. **EMPHASIZE** it is important that Deaf people have an opportunity to worship. The different ways they choose to worship depend on how they feel God leads them. **INVITE** the first volunteer to sign Romans 14:1-4. **LEAD** the group to answer questions 1-4 in Explore

the Text (p. 103). When discussing question 2, **MAKE IT CLEAR** that Paul was talking about things that are opinions (like whether to sign hymns with recorded music or not). He does not mean we should not help each other stop doing wrong things.

EXPLAIN: *When tempted to judge another, pray for that person instead. Ask God to bless the person in clear ways. As believers develop this habit, they will find their judging attitudes toward people will change in a positive way.*

2. Honor God (Romans 14:5-8)

CALL on the second volunteer to sign Romans 14:5-8. **NOTE** Paul emphasized the believers had different opinions, but they had the same motive. They served the Lord in the way they thought was best.

EXPLAIN: *One of our church teachings is called the “priesthood of the believer.” Remember in the Old Testament, the priest made sacrifices for the people. The people had to go through the priest to relate to God. When Jesus died for us, He made it possible for us to have a direct relationship with God. We do not go through a priest. The Holy Spirit lives in us and leads us. As believers, we must trust God to work in the lives of our brothers and sisters. He will lead them and us to serve Him in ways that honor Him.*

LEAD the group to answer questions 5 and 6 from Explore the Text.

3. Respect Others (Romans 14:9-12)

INVITE the third volunteer to sign Romans 14:9-12. **GUIDE** the group to answer questions 7-9 in Explore the Text. For more information about the judgment of believers, see 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

As a group, **FIND** the verses in the Bible Skill to learn more about unity among believers.

IN MY CONTEXT

After today’s study, the Holy Spirit may show some members their need to forgive others. Some members may need to ask for forgiveness. Encourage them with Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind and loving to each other, and forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.”

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 104). **DIRECT** the group to discuss the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, thanking God for working in each of our lives.



REACH

Romans 15:14-21, 30-33

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to grow in their desire to share Jesus with others.

Find a map of the Mediterranean during New Testament times. Mark Jerusalem and Illyricum so you can show the group during the session.

Write the outline for the session on the board.

Be prepared to answer any questions the group might have about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *Paul was one of the church's first missionaries. In your Bible, there is probably a map that shows Paul's missionary journeys. God calls all believers to share the good news with others. We all have the responsibility to show others how Jesus loves them. God calls some to go to other nations to teach people who have never heard about Him.*

In today's session, we will see Paul's desire to honor God. His attitude is the same as our missionaries' attitude. And our missionaries have the same needs that Paul had. We can do our part by giving to missions and praying for our missionaries.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Do What God Asks (Romans 15:14-16)

ASK: *Does anyone remember what Jesus said in Acts 1:8? If no one remembers, **INVITE** the group to find the verse in their Bibles. **REMINDE** them that this verse applies to us today. We are witnesses for Jesus. We show Him to the world through our lives. Today we will see what Paul's life as a witness looked like.*

INVITE a volunteer to sign Romans 15:14-16. **LEAD** the group to answer questions 1 and 2 from Explore the Text (p. 111).

2. Boast about Jesus (Romans 15:17-19)

SIGN Romans 15:17-19. **DIRECT** the group to answer questions 3-5 from Explore the Text. **NOTE** that Paul didn't brag about what he did. He only bragged on what Jesus Christ did through him. In Galatians 6:14, Paul said, "The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only reason for bragging. Through the cross of Jesus my world was crucified, and I died to the world." He wanted God to have the glory for the good things he did. It is important for us to always remember that all good things are from God. (See James 1:17.)

ASK: *What are some ways we can be sure God gets the glory for His work in our lives?*

3. Seek the Lost (Romans 15:20-21)

ENCOURAGE another volunteer to sign Romans 15:20-21. **LEAD** in a discussion of question 6 from Explore the Text. **EXPLAIN:** *This doesn't mean that laying the foundation is the only important job. But it is the job Paul felt God called him to do. Invite members to find 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.* **ASK:** *What are some responsibilities God gives believers?*

4. Partner with Others (Romans 15:30-33)

Paul told the church in Rome that he very much wanted to visit them. When he wrote the letter to them, Paul was on his way to Jerusalem. He was bringing an offering from other believers to the church in Jerusalem. Sign Romans 15:30-33.

ENCOURAGE the group to answer questions 7-9 from Explore the Text. When discussing question 8, invite the group to read Acts 20:22-24 in their Bibles. Here we see why Paul was concerned about his trip to Jerusalem.

If your group has not yet done so, **LEARN** how to contact missionaries witnessing to Deaf people in other nations. You can get information about international Deaf mission activities at imb.org/deaf

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context (p. 112). Guide the group to answer the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, thanking God for the opportunity to serve Him and tell others the good news.

THE ROMANS ROAD



› **WE ARE ALL SEPARATED FROM GOD BECAUSE OF OUR SIN.**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

› **THE PENALTY FOR OUR SIN IS DEATH.**

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

› **JESUS CHRIST PAID THE PENALTY FOR OUR SIN.**

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

› **IF WE REPENT OF OUR SIN, THEN CONFESS JESUS CHRIST AS OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, WE WILL BE SAVED FROM OUR SINS.**

“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. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10).

› **THOSE WHO TRUST IN CHRIST WILL BE FREE.**

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

Paul's Voyage to Rome



Romans

Paul's Letter to the Romans is the very heart of the gospel and is worthy of our careful study. Martin Luther, in the preface to his commentary on Romans, called this letter "the chief part of the New Testament." He declared every Christian should "occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes." The gospel—"the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16)—is the theme of Romans. This gospel not only saves us from the penalty of sin but also breaks the power of sin over us. Feed on this letter and taste for yourself God's life-changing power. The more you study Romans, the more precious the gospel will become to you.

 **Explore**
the Bible.

Let the Word dwell in you.

The Promise of a

18 But with thee
enant; and ^{thou} sh
thou, and thy sons, an
wives with thee.

19 And of every living
of every *sort* shalt thou
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and female.

20 Of fowls after their
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this (2 Pet. 2:5, 3:6). That
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remains so today. Biele
explain the flood's impac
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6:18 The term *covenant* i
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6:19 God's preservation
can support billions of a
male and one female on
preserving

6:20 The word *male* is