



Introduction to Romans

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, July 7, 2025

Romans 1:1-7

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

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

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

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 1

Romans 16:25–26

2 Samuel 7:12–14

Luke 24:27, 44

Acts 13:32–33

Philippians 2:6–11

1 Peter 2:9–10

Galatians 1:15–16

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, July 14, 2025

Romans 1:8-17

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

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

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

HOPE Journaling

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Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 1

Philippians 1:3–5

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Hebrews 10:24–25

Philemon 1:6–7

1 Corinthians 9:16

Acts 20:24

Habakkuk 2:4

Philippians 3:9

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, July 21, 2025

Romans 1:18-32

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

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

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

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

HOPE Journaling

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Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 1

Psalm 19:1–4 – General Revelation in Creation

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

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

Psalm 81:11–12 – God Giving Them Over

2 Timothy 3:1–5 – Fruits of Rebellion

Isaiah 5:20 – Calling Evil Good

Ephesians 5:6 – Wrath Because of Sinful Living

Romans 3:9–12 – Universal Sinfulness

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, July 28, 2025

Romans 2:1-16

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

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

HOPE Journaling

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Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So what should we do?

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 2

Matthew 7:1–5

Luke 6:37–42

2 Peter 3:9

Ecclesiastes 12:14

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, August 4, 2025

Romans 2:17-29

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

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

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Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 2

Deuteronomy 4:5–8

Deuteronomy 30:6

Isaiah 29:13

Ezekiel 36:25–27

Luke 12:47–48

Acts 10:34–35

Galatians 3:10–11

James 1:22–25

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, August 11, 2025

Romans 3:1-8

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

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

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

HOPE Journaling

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Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3

2 Timothy 2:13

Psalm 51:4

Deuteronomy 4:7–8

Romans 6:1–2

Romans 9:14

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, August 18, 2025

Romans 3:9-20

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

There is no one righteous, not even one.

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

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

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

Vipers' venom is under their lips.

14 Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and wretchedness are in their paths,

17 and the path of peace they have not known.

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

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

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

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

Paul's Supporting Old Testament Quotes

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

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, August 25, 2025

Romans 3:21-26

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

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3

Galatians 2:16

Philippians 3:9

Titus 3:4–7

Ephesians 1:7

Mark 10:45

Hebrews 9:11–22

Isaiah 53:5–6

2 Corinthians 5:21

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, September 1, 2025

Romans 3:27-31

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

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 3

Genesis 15:6

Ephesians 2:8–9

Galatians 2:16

Galatians 3:24–29

Matthew 5:17

Romans 8:3–4

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, September 8, 2025

Romans 4:1-12

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

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

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

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

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

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 4

Genesis 15:1–6

Genesis 17:9–14

Psalm 32:1–2

Galatians 3:6–9

Ephesians 2:8–9

James 2:21–23

Hebrews 11:8–12

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Monday, September 15, 2025

Romans 4:13-25

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

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

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

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Weekly Devotional

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

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

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

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

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

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Romans 4

Romans 3:21–22

Philippians 3:9

Romans 8:11

1 Corinthians 15:20–22

Group Discussion Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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