

## STUDY

# Romans Bible Study Guide (Free PDF, 11 Sessions)

Leader's Edition — with Answers

Walk through Paul's letter to Rome one movement at a time, from the gospel to the transformed life.

An 11-session study of Romans for groups or solo reading, covering the whole letter in order.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.*

**Romans 1:16-17 (NIV)**

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

**Romans 3:23-24 (NIV)**

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Romans 5:1 (NIV)**

# The study guide

## SESSION 1 · ROMANS 1:1-17

### The Gospel Announced

Paul introduces himself and the message he is not ashamed of. The gospel is God's power for salvation, and in it the righteousness of God is revealed to everyone who believes.

1. How does Paul describe the gospel in Romans 1:16-17, and what words does he use to say where its power comes from?

Paul calls it the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew and then to the Gentile (Romans 1:16). In it the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last (Romans 1:17). Its power comes from God, not from the one who carries the message.

2. Why might Paul say he is 'not ashamed' of the gospel, and what does that suggest about the pressure the Roman believers were under?

Rome was the capital of an empire, and a crucified Jewish Messiah sounded like foolishness there (1 Corinthians 1:18). Paul writes to believers living in that shadow (Romans 1:7, 15). Saying he is not ashamed tells us that shame was a real temptation.

3. Where in your own life do you find it hardest to live unashamed of the gospel, and what would change if you trusted it as God's power there?

Leader's note: This question asks where we go quiet about Jesus. Paul's anchor is Romans 1:16: the gospel is God's power, not ours. Invite each person to name one place where they hide their faith, and to ask God for courage there.

## SESSION 2 · ROMANS 1:18-3:20

### The Whole World Accountable

Paul shows that no one is exempt, neither the religious nor the irreligious. Every mouth is silenced and the whole world is held accountable to God.

1. What does Paul say about both the Gentile and the Jewish reader in this section, and how does he level the ground between them?

In Romans 1:18-32 Paul describes the Gentile world suppressing what God has made plain in creation (Romans 1:20). Then he turns to the one who judges others, and to the Jew who has the law but does not keep it (Romans 2:1, 17-24). He sums it up: Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin (Romans 3:9).

2. Why does Paul spend so long establishing universal guilt before he gets to the good news?

Until the diagnosis is clear, the cure does not sound like good news. If we think we are fine, we do not look for a Savior. Paul silences every mouth (Romans 3:19-20) so that the gift in Romans 3:23-24 can be received as a gift.

3. What does it do to your heart to be told plainly that you cannot make yourself right with God by your own effort?

Leader's note: This question is hard on purpose. Romans 3:23-24 tells us all have sinned and are justified freely by his grace. Give people room to sit with the weight, and then with the relief that God asks us to receive, not to earn.

**SESSION 3 • ROMANS 3:21-4:25**

## Justified by Faith

Righteousness comes apart from the law, through faith in Jesus, as a gift. Paul points back to Abraham, who was counted righteous because he believed God.

1. How does Paul use the example of Abraham in chapter 4 to explain what faith is?

Paul says Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3, quoting Genesis 15:6). This came before circumcision and before the law (Romans 4:9-11). Faith is being fully persuaded that God can do what he has promised (Romans 4:20-21).

2. What is the difference between a righteousness earned by works and one received as a gift, and why does that difference matter?

A worker is paid what is owed (Romans 4:4). A gift is given freely, and God justifies the ungodly who trust him (Romans 4:5). If righteousness were earned, we could boast and never know if it was enough. As a gift it is secure and leaves all the glory to God (Romans 3:27, 4:16).

3. What would it look like for you to stop earning and start receiving God's acceptance this week?

Leader's note: This question asks where we still try to earn what God gives freely. Romans 3:24 says we are justified freely by his grace. Invite each person to name one place they are still working for God's approval, and to pray to rest there this week.

**SESSION 4 • ROMANS 5:1-11**

## Peace With God

Having been justified through faith, we have peace with God. Paul anchors that peace not in our feelings but in what Christ did while we were still sinners.

1. What specific gifts does Paul say flow from being justified by faith in Romans 5:1-11?

Paul says we have peace with God (Romans 5:1) and access by faith into the grace in which we stand (Romans 5:2). We rejoice in the hope of glory, and we can even rejoice in suffering, because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:2-5). We are saved from wrath and reconciled to God (Romans 5:9-10).

2. How does Romans 5:8 ground our assurance in God's action rather than our worthiness?

Christ died for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). God's love came first, before we had done anything to deserve it. Our assurance rests on a finished act of Christ, not on how well we did today.

3. When your feelings tell you God could not love you today, how could the truth of Romans 5:8 steady you?

Leader's note: This question sets feelings beside facts. Romans 5:8 is the fact: Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Invite each person to read it aloud, slowly, and to name one feeling it needs to answer.

**SESSION 5 • ROMANS 5:12-6:23**

## Grace Greater Than Sin

Where sin increased, grace increased all the more. Paul moves from how grace reigns to how the believer, no longer a slave to sin, now lives under a new master.

1. How does Paul describe the believer's relationship to sin after coming to Christ in chapter 6?

Paul says we died to sin (Romans 6:2) and were baptized into Christ's death, so we walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4). Sin is no longer our master (Romans 6:14). We count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11), and we offer ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13).

2. Why does Paul reject the idea that grace gives us license to keep sinning?

Paul's answer to 'shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?' is 'By no means!' (Romans 6:1-2). Grace forgives, but it also joins us to Christ's death and resurrection, so it changes who we are. To use grace as a license misses what grace has done to us.

3. What is one area where you have settled for old habits, and what would living as 'alive to God' look like there?

Leader's note: This question asks about one settled habit. The anchor is Romans 6:11, which tells us to count ourselves alive to God. This is not a call to grit our teeth. It is a call to remember who we are in Christ. Invite each person to name one habit, and to ask what living as alive to God would change.

**SESSION 6 • ROMANS 7:1-8:17**

## The Spirit and the Struggle

Paul names the honest war between wanting to do good and failing to do it, then turns to the Spirit who frees and empowers those who are in Christ Jesus.

1. How does Paul describe the inner conflict in Romans 7, and how does Romans 8:1 answer it?

Paul says he does not understand his own actions, and that he does not do what he wants to do (Romans 7:15-19). He cries out, 'What a wretched man I am!' (Romans 7:24). The answer is thanks to God through Jesus Christ (Romans 7:25), and then Romans 8:1: no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Faithful readers differ on whether Paul describes his life before Christ or the believer's ongoing fight, but all agree that Christ is the answer.

## 2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of the believer according to Romans 8:1-17?

The Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2) and gives us life (Romans 8:11). He leads us as children of God (Romans 8:14), and he testifies with our spirit that we belong to God (Romans 8:15-16). By him we put to death the misdeeds of the body (Romans 8:13).

## 3. Where do you feel the struggle Paul names in Romans 7, and how does 'no condemnation' meet you in it?

Leader's note: This question is for anyone who knows the struggle of Romans 7. The anchor is Romans 8:1: no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Invite each person to name where they feel the struggle, and to hear that the verdict over them is already given.

### SESSION 7 · ROMANS 8:18-39

## Nothing Can Separate Us

Present suffering is set against future glory. Paul builds to one of the strongest assurances in all of Scripture, that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

## 1. What does Paul list as things that cannot separate us from God's love at the end of chapter 8?

Paul lists trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and sword (Romans 8:35). Then death, life, angels, demons, the present, the future, powers, height, depth, and anything else in all creation (Romans 8:38-39). None of it can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## 2. How does Paul hold together honest suffering and unbreakable hope in this passage?

Paul does not hide the pain. He speaks of present sufferings (Romans 8:18) and of creation groaning (Romans 8:22-23). Yet he sets them beside the glory to come, the Spirit who prays for us in our weakness (Romans 8:26), and God's purpose in all things (Romans 8:28). His hope rests on God's love, not on the absence of pain.

## 3. What fear have you been carrying that this passage speaks directly to, and how does it answer it?

Leader's note: This question asks us to name a fear. Romans 8:38-39 is the anchor, and it answers with love, not with a plan. Invite each person to name the fear they have carried, and to read those verses over it, slowly.

### SESSION 8 · ROMANS 9:1-11:36

## God's Faithfulness to Israel

Paul wrestles with the place of Israel in God's plan. His grief is real, but so is his confidence that God's saving purpose is faithful, merciful, and sovereign from beginning to end.

## 1. How does Paul describe both his sorrow over Israel and his trust in God's plan across these chapters?

Paul feels great sorrow and unceasing anguish for his own people (Romans 9:1-3). Yet he says God has not rejected them (Romans 11:1-2), that his gifts and call are irrevocable (Romans 11:29), and that his mercy will reach them (Romans 11:25-32). He ends not with an answer but with praise (Romans 11:33-36).

## 2. What does this section teach about how God's mercy and sovereignty work together?

Paul teaches that God shows mercy as he chooses (Romans 9:15-16). He also teaches that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). Faithful readers differ on how these fit together, but all agree Paul teaches both, and that neither cancels the other.

## 3. When God's ways are hard to understand, how can Paul's response in Romans 11 shape your own?

Leader's note: This question asks what we do when God's ways are past us. Paul's answer in Romans 11:33 is wonder, not a solution. Invite each person to name one thing they do not understand, and to try praying it as praise, as Paul does.

### SESSION 9 · ROMANS 12:1-13:14

## A Living Sacrifice

The doctrine turns to daily life. In view of God's mercy, Paul calls believers to offer themselves as living sacrifices, transformed in mind and tender in love toward one another.

## 1. According to Romans 12:1-2, what does Paul ask us to do in response to God's mercy?

Paul urges us, in view of God's mercy, to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. He calls this our true and proper worship (Romans 12:1). Then he says not to conform to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

## 2. Why does Paul connect being 'transformed by the renewing of your mind' to discerning God's will?

A renewed mind begins to see as God sees. Only then can we test and approve what God's will is (Romans 12:2). Discernment grows from being reshaped by God, not only from gathering more information.

## 3. What is one pattern of this world you sense God asking you to stop conforming to?

Leader's note: This question asks which pattern of the world we have absorbed. The anchor is Romans 12:2, which promises transformation as God's work in us. Invite each person to name one pattern, and to ask God to renew their mind there.

### SESSION 10 · ROMANS 14:1-15:13

## Welcome One Another

Paul addresses the strong and the weak in the Roman church, calling them to stop judging one another over disputable matters and to pursue peace and mutual building up.

### 1. What guidance does Paul give for handling disagreements over disputable matters in chapter 14?

Paul asks the strong to accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters (Romans 14:1). He speaks of food and special days (Romans 14:2-6). We are not to judge or look down on one another (Romans 14:10), nor to put a stumbling block in a sister's or brother's way (Romans 14:13). We pursue what leads to peace and to mutual building up (Romans 14:19).

### 2. How does Paul define real love and unity between believers who see things differently?

Paul prays that God would give us a spirit of unity as we follow Christ Jesus (Romans 15:5). He then says to accept one another, as Christ accepted us, to bring praise to God (Romans 15:7). Unity is not sameness. It is welcome, shaped by how Christ welcomed us.

### 3. Who is a fellow believer you find hard to welcome, and what would 'accept one another' look like with them?

Leader's note: This question asks who we find hard to welcome. The anchor is Romans 15:7: accept one another, as Christ accepted you. Invite each person to name one person, and to ask what a first small act of welcome could be.

## SESSION 11 · ROMANS 15:14-16:27

### Mission and Final Praise

Paul shares his travel plans, names a long list of co-workers, and closes the letter with praise to God. The doctrine has become a community of real people on mission together.

### 1. What do Paul's plans and his long list of greetings reveal about how the gospel builds community?

Paul plans to visit Rome and then go on to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28), and he asks for prayer (Romans 15:30-32). In chapter 16 he greets many by name, including Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2) and Priscilla and Aquila, who risked their lives for him (Romans 16:3-4). The gospel makes a family of real, named people, and no one does the work alone.

### 2. Why might Paul end such a weighty letter with a doxology of praise?

After eleven chapters of God's mercy, praise is the only fitting end. Paul closes by giving glory to the God who is able to establish us by the gospel (Romans 16:25-27). Doctrine that is truly received ends in worship, not in pride.

### 3. Who are the partners God has given you in faith, and how could you thank or encourage one of them this week?

Leader's note: This question asks us to remember the people God has given us. Paul names his friends warmly in Romans 16:3-4. Invite each person to write one name, and to send that person a word of thanks or encouragement this week.