

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE *for*

Exploring

Romans

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Lesson 1

Romans: A Bird's-Eye View

You are about to begin a study of history's most influential theological document. Not only did it inform the early church and stimulate the Protestant Reformation, but it has exerted a pervasive influence on both the church in general and countless individual lives across the 2,000 years of Christian history. Among other things, the book of Romans is the most complete explanation of the plan of salvation in the Bible.

As with other Bible books, one of the best ways to begin is to read Romans through in one sitting from a translation such as the Revised Standard Version, the King James or New King James Versions, the New International Version, or the *New American Standard Bible*. A first reading should take about one hour. Answering the questions will, of course, take some additional time, but the amount depends upon individual goals in the study of this important book of the Bible.

I. First Impressions of Romans

A. As you complete your initial reading of each chapter, jot down in three or four sentences what you think the author is seeking to teach you in that chapter.

Chapter 1:

Chapter 2:

Chapter 3:

Chapter 4:

Chapter 5:

Chapter 6:

Chapter 7:

Chapter 8:

Chapter 9:

Chapter 10:

Chapter 11:

Chapter 12:

Chapter 13:

Chapter 14:

Chapter 15:

Chapter 16:

II. First Impressions from Exploring Romans

Read the “Introduction to Romans.” On the basis of your reading:

A. Provide a one-sentence statement on the purpose of Romans.

B. List the seven major themes of Romans.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

C. Discuss the impact of Romans on world history.

D. Reflect on the founding of the Roman church.

E. Highlight the main issues related to the occasion and background of the document.

F. In one paragraph indicate the relevance of Romans for our lives in the twenty-first century.

Lesson Two

Setting the Stage

Romans 1:1-17

Exploring Romans, Sections 1-3

A. Read Romans 1:1-7 and section 1.

1. Summarize in your own words what Paul is telling his readers.
2. List the important points in these seven verses.
3. What does Paul tell us about Jesus in these verses?
4. What does Paul tell us about himself in these verses?
5. According to section 1, what does Paul tell us about the gospel in these verses?

B. Read Romans 1:8-15 and section 2.

1. List in sequence the important points in these verses.
2. What can we learn about Paul's biography from these verses?
3. Discuss verses 8-15 in terms of the purpose of the letter of Romans.
4. According to section 2, what do these verses tell us about church leadership?

C. Read Romans 1:16, 17 and section 3.

1. List the important ideas in these verses.
2. Reflect on the relationship between the three “I am’s” of verses 14-16.
3. After reading section 3, discuss Paul’s use of the word “power.”
4. In relationship to the overall purpose of Romans, why does Paul emphasize Jew and Gentile in these verses?

Lesson Three

Sin and Judgment

Romans 1:18-2:29

Exploring Romans, Sections 4-9

A. Read Romans 1:18-21a and section 4.

1. Summarize Paul's argument in verses 18-21a.
2. Discuss the concept of God's wrath.
3. From section 4, outline the flow of Paul's argument that runs from Romans 1:18 through 3:26.

B. Read Romans 1:21-32 and section 5.

1. List the six most important points in these verses.
2. Discuss what the phrase "God gave them over" implies.
3. Reflect on why section 5 calls these verses "sin's downward path."

C. Read Romans 2:1-5 and section 6.

1. How do verses 1-5 relate to 1:21-32?
2. Reflect on how the kindness of God leads a person to repentance.

3. What do these verses have to say to us “good” church people?

D. Read Romans 2:6-11 and section 7.

1. If salvation is by grace through faith, how is it that people are judged by works?

2. After examining section 7, outline the flow of the argument in verses 6-11.

3. In what ways is judgment a “two-edged sword”?

E. Read Romans 2:12-16 and section 8.

1. Summarize the meaning of these verses.

2. If sin is the transgression of the law, how can a person sin without the law?

3. After reading section 8, explain Romans 2:13 in light of Romans 3:20.

F. Read Romans 2:17-29 and section 9.

1. Discuss Paul’s main point(s) in these verses.

2. What does it mean to get your heart circumcised?

3. List the major points in the “great reversal” in section 9.

Lesson Four

The Problem of Sin and the Law

Romans 3:1-20

Exploring Romans, Sections 10-12

A. Read Romans 3:1-8 and section 10.

1. Outline the main points of these verses (section 10 will help here).
2. Just how is it that being a Jew is advantageous?
3. Discuss why Paul may have used the voice of his antagonists to set forth the arguments in these 8 verses.
4. According to section 10, what 3 positive lessons flow out of Romans 3:1-8?

B. Read Romans 3:9-19 and section 11.

1. Describe your first impression after reading these verses.
2. In one sentence highlight the lesson Paul is teaching in verses 9-19.
3. Define the “law” in verse 19.
4. What has Paul accomplished in the long argument running from Romans 1:18-3:19?

5. How is total depravity described in section 11?

C. Read Romans 3:20 and section 12.

1. What does this verse teach us about the law?

2. What does this verse teach us about salvation?

3. Discuss the ways in which section 12 helps us to better understand this important verse.

Lesson Five

Justification by Faith (part 1)

Romans 3:21-31

Exploring Romans, Sections 13-16

A. Read Romans 3:21, 22a and section 13.

1. Discuss the significance of “but now” in the flow of the argument of the book of Romans.
2. Rephrase Romans 3:21, 22a in your own words to bring out its full, expanded meaning.
3. What is the significance of the phrase “apart from the law” in verse 21?
4. After reading section 13, discuss the meaning of “faith.”

B. Read Romans 3:22b-24a and section 14.

1. Discuss the meaning of “no distinction” in its context.
2. How does verse 23 relate to chapters 1-3? Be explicit in your answer.
3. According to section 14, what are some of the implications and nuances of the word “grace”?
4. How were Luther and Paul correct in their legalistic days on the implications of keeping the law?

C. Read Romans 3:24-26 and section 15.

1. List the great metaphors of salvation in these three verses.
2. Discuss the implications of the term “redemption.”
3. Explain the implications of “propitiation.”
4. What is the meaning of God’s passing over “the sins previously committed”?
5. After reading section 15, discuss the implications of the cross for the vindication of God.

D. Read Romans 3:27-31 and section 16.

1. Discuss the word “boasting” in verse 27 in its context.
2. What can we learn about the law from these verses?
3. According to section 16, what are the three implications of Paul’s discussion of salvation in Romans 3:21-26 set forth in verses 27-31?

Lesson Six

Justification by Faith (part 2)

Romans 4:1-5:21

Exploring Romans, Sections 17-23

A. Read Romans 4:1-8 and section 17.

1. Summarize verses 1-8 in your own words.
2. Why is Abraham so important to Paul's presentation?
3. According to section 17, how did Paul differ from the Jews on his understanding of Genesis 15:6?
4. Why bring David into the presentation?

B. Read Romans 4:9-15 and section 18.

1. Summarize verses 9-15 in your own words.
2. Discuss the importance of these verses in Paul's argument.
3. List the ways in which section 18 helped you understand these verses.

C. Read Romans 4:16-25 and section 19.

1. List the main points being made in these verses.

2. Reflect on how these verses forward Paul's argument in chapter 4.
3. After reading section 19, discuss the "perfection" of Abraham's faith.

D. Read Romans 5:1-5 and section 20.

1. List the important points in these verses.
2. After reading section 20, discuss the "fruits" of justification.
3. Discuss the meaning of Paul's use of the word "hope."

E. Read Romans 5:6-11 and section 21.

1. Paraphrase this passage in your own words.
2. What do these verses tell us about the love of God?
3. According to section 21, what is the "great exchange"?

E. Read Romans 5:12-14 and section 22.

1. Discuss in your own words the meaning of these verses.
2. In the overall context of Romans, how could there be sin without the law?

3. According to section 22, what are the two pivotal points in human history?

G. Read Romans 5:15-21 and section 23.

1. Paraphrase verses 15-21 in a manner that clarifies the passage's meaning.
2. Discuss the implications of the phrase "not like" in these verses.
3. After reading section 23, explain the implications of the word "all" in verse 18.

Lesson Seven

The Way of Godliness

Romans 6:1-7:25

Exploring Romans, Sections 24-31

A. Read Romans 6:1-11 and section 24.

1. What inspired the question in verse 1 and the strong reaction to it in verses 2-11?
2. Summarize in your own words verses 1-11.
3. According to section 24, what do these verses teach about the nature of baptism?

B. Read Romans 6:12-14 and section 25.

1. State the purpose of these three verses in one sentence.
2. After reading section 25, explain the difference between sin reigning and sin remaining.
3. What is the meaning of “not under law but under grace” in these verses?

C. Read Romans 6:15-19 and section 26.

1. Summarize the meaning of these verses to Paul’s argument in their context.
2. Discuss the nature of human freedom in the light of these verses.

3. According to section 26, what is the difference between freedom *from* God and freedom *for* God?

D. Read Romans 6:20-23 and section 27.

1. In what ways do these verses form a climax to chapter 6?
2. What evidence is there in the passage that verse 23 is speaking about eternal death or the second death?
3. Discuss, in light of section 27, the significance of “wages” versus “gift” in these verses.

E. Read Romans 7:1-6 and section 28.

1. Describe your first impressions after reading these verses.
2. List the ways in which section 28 helped you to better understand verses 1-6.

F. Read Romans 7:7-12 and section 29.

1. What can we learn about the law in these verses?
2. According to section 29, why did Paul highlight the tenth commandment?
3. Summarize what these verses are telling us.

G. Read Romans 7:13-20 and section 30.

1. What do these verses teach about the law?
2. What do these verses teach about human nature?
3. According to section 30, who is the “I” in these verses?

H. Read Romans 7:21-25 and section 31.

1. What do these verses teach about human nature?
2. What is the function of these verses in Paul’s argument?
3. According to section 31, what five important ideas are found in these verses?

Lesson Eight

Christian Assurance

Romans 8:1-39

Exploring Romans, Sections 32-37

A. Read Romans 8:1-4 and section 32.

1. In the light of the last part of chapter 7, what is the purpose of this paragraph?
2. Summarize the teaching of these verses in your own words.
3. According to section 32, what are the implications of the word “walk”?

B. Read Romans 8:5-11 and section 33.

1. In three or four sentences, summarize the meaning of these verses.
2. What is the function of the word “minds” in verse 5?
3. According to section 33, why did Paul use the concept of resurrection in these verses?

C. Read Romans 8:12-17 and section 34.

1. Why did Paul start this paragraph with “so then”?
2. In your own words summarize the teaching of these verses.

3. According to section 34, what do these verses teach about adoption?

D. Read Romans 8:18-25 and section 35.

1. What do these verses teach us about non-human creation?
2. What do they teach about hope?
3. What do they teach us about suffering?

E. Read Romans 8:28-30 and section 36.

1. Paraphrase in your own words verses 26 and 27.
2. What is the meaning of verses 28-30?
3. What does verse 28 mean to your personal life?

F. Read Romans 8:31-39 and section 37.

1. Describe your emotions as you read these verses.
2. What are these verses trying to tell us?
3. In one sentence describe the essence of verses 31-39.

4. What are the implications of these verses for you personally?

Lesson Nine

Salvation for Everyone (part 1)

Romans 9:1-33

Exploring Romans, Sections 38-41

A. Read Romans 9:1-5 and section 38.

1. In light of section 38, summarize the argument in Romans 9:1-8.
2. What is the function of chapters 9-11?
3. Why is “I” so central to Romans 9:1-3?
4. List the advantages that the Jews had.

B. Read Romans 9:6-13 and section 39.

1. Summarize the meaning of this paragraph.
2. According to section 39, what does this paragraph add to the development of Paul’s argument?
3. What are the implications of the phrase “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated”?

C. Read Romans 9:14-18 and section 40.

1. Describe the significance of mercy in these verses.

2. What can we learn about predestination from these verses?

3. What can be learned about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart from section 40?

D. Read Romans 9:19-33 and section 41.

1. Summarize the meaning of these verses in three or four sentences.

2. What are the implications of verses 30-32?

3. After reading section 41, discuss whether or not God is arbitrary.

4. What words of comfort do we find in Romans 9:19-33?

Lesson Ten

Salvation for Everyone (part 2)

Romans 10:1-11:36
Exploring Romans, Sections 42-46

A. Read Romans 10:1-13 and section 42.

1. Summarize the meaning of verses 1-4.
2. Discuss the implications of verses 9-13.
3. According to section 42, what is the meaning of verse 4, which many translate that Christ is the end of the law?

B. Read Romans 10:14-21 and section 43.

1. List the main points in verses 14-17.
2. What does verse 21 teach us about God?
3. According to section 43, what is the place of Romans 10:14-21 in Paul's argument?

C. Read Romans 11:1-10 and section 44.

1. List the main points in verses 1-10.
2. Describe the function of "the remnant" in these verses.

3. According to section 44, what is the “Elijah syndrome”?

4. What is Paul seeking to teach Israel in verses 14-21?

D. Read Romans 11:11-24 and section 45.

1. Summarize the meaning of verses 11 and 12.

2. List the major lessons in verses 13-24.

3. According to section 45, what are the implications of “fear” in verse 20?

E. Read Romans 11:24-36 and section 46.

1. In three or four sentences summarize the main points of these verses.

2. In the light of the first 11 chapters of Romans, expound on the implications of verse 32.

3. Why might verse 32 be seen as a theme text for the book of Romans?

4. After reading section 46, discuss the meaning of “all Israel” in verse 26.

Lesson Eleven

Living God's Love (part 1)

Romans 12:1-13:7

Exploring Romans, Sections 47-51

A. Read Romans 12:1, 2 and section 47.

1. List the main points in these verses.
2. What are the implications of the word “therefore” in verse 1?
3. After reading section 47, discuss the meaning of “transformed.”
4. Discuss the meaning of these verses for your personal life.

B. Read Romans 12:3-8 and section 48.

1. Summarize the meaning of these verses.
2. What problem is Paul addressing in these verses?
3. What do these verses teach us about how we should behave in the church community?

C. Read Romans 12:9-16 and section 49.

1. List the lessons in these verses.

2. Which lesson makes you feel most uncomfortable? Why?

3. In what ways did section 49 help you understand these verses better?

D. Read Romans 12:17-21 and section 50.

1. Summarize the main lesson in these verses.

2. Remember and describe something that *really* made you angry. How did you handle it?

3. How would the lesson of these verses make a difference if you had to repeat your anger experience?

4. What does section 50 teach about the root of revenge?

E. Read Romans 13:1-7 and section 51.

1. Summarize the major teaching in verses 1-7 about a Christian and the government.

2. How might a leader misuse these verses?

3. According to section 51, what is the importance of the first words of verse 4 to our understanding of the role of the governor?

4. List the ways section 51 helped you understand these important verses.

Lesson Twelve

Living God's Love (part 2)

Romans 13:8-15:13

Exploring Romans, Sections 52-57

A. Read Romans 13:8-10 and section 52.

1. In two or three sentences summarize the implications of these verses.
2. How do these verses relate to Jesus' "great commandment" of Matthew 22:36-40?
3. What do verses 8-10 teach about the relationship between the "great commandment" and the Ten Commandments?
4. According to section 52, what is the relationship between LAW and laws?

B. Read Romans 13:11-14 and section 53.

1. List the main points in these verses.
2. Discuss the meaning of these verses for your life today.
3. How did section 53 help you to understand this passage more fully?

C. Read Romans 14:1-12 and section 54.

1. What is the main point in verses 1-4? Why did you select that point?

2. What is the essential teaching of verses 5-12?
3. According to section 54, what is the food issue here? The day issue?
4. Why is judging another Christian the ultimate sin?

D. Read Romans 14:13-23 and section 55.

1. Summarize the essential points of this passage.
2. Discuss the implications of verse 17.
3. What are the implications of these verses for you personally?
4. List the ways in which section 55 helped you understand these verses more fully.

E. Read Romans 15:1-6 and section 56.

1. List the teachings of these verses.
2. What are the implications of verse 4 for us in the twenty-first century?
3. After reading section 56, discuss the meaning of verses 1-6 for your daily life.

F. Read Romans 15:7-13 and section 57.

1. What are the implications of verses 7-9 in the context of the argument in Romans that began in Romans 1:16, 17?

2. What does verse 13 say to your heart?

Lesson Thirteen

Saying Goodbye

Romans 15:14-16:27
Exploring Romans, Sections 58-62

A. Read Romans 15:14-21 and section 58.

1. What do these verses tell us about Paul and his ministry?

2. In light of verse 17 and Paul's earlier statements, discuss good and bad boasting.

B. Read Romans 15:22-33 and section 59.

1. List in order Paul's proposed itinerary in verses 22-33.

2. How do these verses relate to chapter 1?

3. According to section 59, what do these verses tell us about Paul?

C. Read Romans 16:1-16 and section 60.

1. On a first reading of these verses, what ideas register in your mind as important?

2. Since Paul had never visited Rome, how is it that he had so many friends there? What does that tell us about early Christianity and travel in the Roman Empire?

3. List the ways section 60 helped fill out your understanding of these verses.

D. Read Romans 16:17-23 and section 61.

1. What are the main points in verses 17-20?
2. Discuss the implication of the last part of verse 19 for your personal life.
3. According to section 61, what four lessons do these verses teach about handling problems?

E. Read Romans 16:25-27 and section 62.

1. Discuss the meaning of “who is able” in the context of the entire book of Romans.
2. After reading section 62, discuss the meaning of “mystery” in verse 25.
3. Compare the “obedience of faith” in verse 26 with Romans 1:5. What are the implications of that phrase as you recall the entire book of Romans?

F. Having completed your study of the book of Romans, in two or three paragraphs discuss its meaning for your personal journey as a Christian.