

Study 1: Intro and Romans 1:1-1:7

You are about to look at a letter that one of the apostles, Paul wrote to the church in Rome. This guide is for you as a leader. Share as much of it with the group as you find helpful. There are activities you can do with your group to help them understand the passage more fully while getting to know one another. Also, there are questions for you to ask your group and to guide them in their understanding of this letter. After most questions are my own musings and answers. Use as you find helpful.

Along with this guide is a copy of the same questions you can give to your group members. They do not include my own musings. For those in your group that like to prepare before hand or take notes while you discuss, these will be very beneficial.

- **Context**

In any Bible study, the most important element is to keep the context in front of the group at all times. It's easy to look at the passages through our own context and that will change the meaning of the passage all together. Also, a rule of thumb I always keep in front of groups is: "Turn to what you DO know to answer what you DON'T know."

So, let's get to know the context of this letter.

The first context is to know who Paul was. To learn his story will help you to more fully understand this letter. Encourage your group to read Paul's story before the first week, or in between week 1 and 2. It can be found in Acts 9-28. We find out throughout Romans that Paul is on his way to give monies he collected from Gentile churches to the church in Jerusalem. His plan is to leave Jerusalem and head to Spain to start a new work. As he makes his way to Spain, he hopes to finally visit Rome for the first time. He has heard about their faith and they know a lot about him as well.

It is believed that Paul wrote this letter while in Greece for 3 months (Acts 20:1-6). He wrote this keeping the Jews and the Gentiles (anyone not a Jew) in mind. The belief is that he wrote it to allow this very influential church to know exactly where he stood theologically. Because the church in Rome was so influential, Paul wrote at great lengths to lay out the gospel in its entirety.

The second context to keep in front of you is the setting of Rome. Why was this church so influential? Simple reason is that it sat in the heart of the greatest world power, the political power house of the area. It was the Washington, DC of that time. The church in Rome was started predominantly by Jewish Christians. In AD 49, Jews were expelled from Rome by the emperor Claudius because of all the arguing going on about Christ and the turmoil it was causing. After Claudius' death, Jews were let back in, but the church was now predominantly made up of believing Gentiles. So, the church is now a great mix of believing Jews and Gentiles. Two cultures living together and following Christ.

- **Activity:**

- ❖ In the movie *Pearl Harbor*, there is a scene in which two pilots are standing on the deck of the ship talking to their Colonel. They are about to be given the assignment of dropping the atomic bomb, yet they don't know why they are there or what their mission is yet. The Colonel knows they are anxious and at the same time excited about the "bigness" of their mission. He asks them if they are eager to die. One of the pilot's answers, "Not eager to die sir, just eager to matter." They wanted to know for what it was they were about to die. Would their death make a difference? Would it matter?
- ❖ Not an easy question to begin the study with, but a necessary question to ask: What are the things in your life you would say you would die for? What people/things "matter" that much? Be honest, even if that means saying you are not sure there is anything that matters to that extent. If there is nothing, what would you want to matter that much?

- **Read Romans 1:1-7**

- ❖ List all the things you discover about Jesus in the first 7 verses.
- ❖ List all the things you discover about Paul in the first 7 verses.
- ❖ What do we learn about the gospel?

- ❖ What do we learn about the readers of this letter?

- ❖ Let's focus a little more on verse 5. Paul's call was to call people from among the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. What empowered this call?

- ❖ Why is Paul's calling so unique from the rest of the apostles? Why do you think he was called to the Gentiles?

- ❖ We see a lot about "calling" in these verses. How would you define calling? What difference would it make in your life to know without a shadow of doubt what your calling is?

- ❖ What does Paul say in verse 6 is the first calling of those in the Roman church? What difference does this make to you, to know that this too is your first calling?

- ❖ How would you define obedience? How has it been displayed in your own life and why would you say we should be obedient to anything? What would you say is the source of obedience?

- ❖ Why was Paul to call the believers in Rome to "obedience that comes from faith"? Why not call them to "faith that comes from obedience"?

- ❖ This week, take time each morning to ask the Lord to remind you of your first and primary calling: to belong to Him. Ask Him to make it clear to you each day what it means for you to belong to Him.

Study 2: Romans 1:8-32

- **Activity:**
 - ❖ As a group, discuss this situation: Imagine you are the parent of a teenager and one night you receive a phone call from the police saying your teen has been arrested for drinking and driving. They give you the option of coming to pick them up immediately and paying a \$10,000 bail or to leave them in jail for 2 nights to pay off the penalty. Which would you choose and why?

- **Read Romans 1:8-17.** As you read it, remember that this is a letter written to “believers/followers” of Christ.
 - ❖ Paul tells us a lot about himself in this section. Over and over you see, “I _____”. What are some of the things we learn about Paul? Why do you think Paul puts this much emphasis on himself right here in the letter?

 - ❖ What do we learn about the gospel in this section?

 - ❖ What is righteousness and where could it come from?

 - ❖ The “Reformation” was birthed out of Romans 1:17. Martin Luther was a Catholic priest that agonized over verse 17 and could not see how the things the Catholic Church was teaching fit with this verse. He discovered that the motivation behind the Church’s teaching was not the motivation behind verse 17. Compare verse 17 to verse 5 (from last week) and what do you think stood out to Luther?

- **Read Romans 1:18-23**
 - ❖ What is God’s wrath and what is it directed toward and what is it not directed toward? Why is this important?

 - ❖ What men is Paul referring to in this section? What do we learn about them in verses 18-23?

- **Read Romans 1:24-32**
 - ❖ What does it mean that God “gave them over”? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

 - ❖ What 3 things did God “give them over to” and what were the consequences of each?

 - ❖ Are there areas in your life you believe God may have given you over to? Why do you think he may have done this?

 - ❖ Are there people in your life you believe God may have given them over? Why would God do this? Is he deserting them?

 - ❖ Why do you think Paul went from talking about “faith” so much to now talking about “behavior”?

 - ❖ In these verses, Paul gives a list of symptoms to the greater disease: not glorifying God as God or giving thanks to Him. When we are around people that tend to act “wicked”, we are tempted to damn the behavior and miss the thinking that has led to this behavior. Who are friends that you have that you see a “wicked” lifestyle? What are ways, this week, that you can help them address their “beliefs” instead of their “behaviors”?

Study 3: Romans 2: 1-29

- **Activity:**
 - ❖ Has anyone in the group ever been called for jury duty and had the chance to serve on a jury? If so, describe the role of the jury and the process of the court case. What was different about the judge's roll and the jury's roll?

 - ❖ Last week we saw that the righteous live by faith. If the righteous live by faith, what do the unrighteous live by?

- **Read 2:1-5**
 - ❖ Who is Paul talking to in verses 1-5? Compare and contrast this group with those in 1:18-32.

 - ❖ The behaviors of the group in chapter 1 and those in chapter 2 couldn't look the same if one group is judging the other group. So, if the behaviors don't look the same, why does Paul say the Chapter 2 group 'do the same things'?

 - ❖ Verses 4 and 5 uncovers the issue that Paul has with this group. How does this group "show contempt" for God and how are they "unrepentant" and "stubborn"?

- **Read 2:6-11**
 - ❖ How is judgment different from salvation?

 - ❖ In light of this, do verses 6-11 contradict what we've learned so far about faith? How do faith and judgment go together?

- **Read 2:12-16**
 - ❖ What will be the measuring stick for God's judgment?

 - ❖ How does this section answer the question, "what about the person in Africa who has never heard?"

 - ❖ In verse 16, what 3 things do we learn about God's judgment?

 - ❖ Most of our lives are spent hoping to escape judgment. How could judgment possibly be a part of the gospel?

- **Read 2:17-24**
 - ❖ Describe the people that Paul now turns his attention to. How are they different than the other two groups?

 - ❖ Paul is asking these questions to make the point that the Jews are not following the law either. His point is not to show them they are not living by the law though. What do you believe is his point if it is not this?

- **Read 2:25-29**

- ❖ In Genesis 17:9-14, you see a promise made to Abraham by God. In this promise, Abraham and all the men in his family are to be circumcised as a mark that will remind them of the promise God made to them. This mark came after Abraham believed in God as a sign showing his belief in God. In light of this, what is Paul explaining in these verses?

- ❖ After hearing that the Jews are no different in this matter than anyone else, what would you think the Jews would be asking?

- We end this Chapter with all 3 groups of people sitting in the same position: guilty before God. That is our judgment. The first group is no better than the 2nd and 3rd and the 2nd and 3rd no better than one another or the 1st. None of us will escape judgment. So, to end this study, sit humbly before God, accept your judgment. Spend time in prayer recognizing that on your own works, you have not made the relationship between you and God right. Then ask him, as the Judge, to show mercy.

Study 4: Romans 3:1-31

- **Activity:** Think about the following statements and tell if they are true or false and why you gave that answer:
 - #1: “We are saved through Christ”
 - #2: “All mankind is justified freely by the grace of God”
 - #3: “Through faith in Christ, the law is nullified”

- **Read 3: 1-8**
 - ❖ Last week we ended the study with the question, “Is there any advantage to being a Jew?” How does this section answer that question? How do you think Paul’s answer is different from what the Jews thought?

 - ❖ What is the argument that Paul brings out in 5-8? Can you understand where this argument comes from?

 - ❖ Paul shows in verse 8 that his explanation of the good news of Jesus has brought confusion. Many have accused him of giving people the liberty of just going out and sinning. How have you seen God’s people (the church), make this same argument today?

- **Read 3:9-20**
 - ❖ List all the ways that all of mankind is described in verses 9-18. Does this describe you?

 - ❖ What does 19-20 tell us about the purpose of the law and what its purpose is not?

 - ❖ If you were reading this letter and it stopped right here, what would you feel like? What would you think about God?

- **Read 3:21-31**
 - ❖ This section begins with a big “BUT”. What all do we learn about the “righteousness” talked about in 21-22?

 - ❖ Verse 26 uses the language “justifies”. What does it mean to be justified?

 - ❖ In verse 25, it tells us that God left sins unpunished. What does it mean to be “pardoned” and how is this different from being justified?

 - ❖ How can a righteous God declare the unrighteous to be righteous without either compromising His righteousness or condoning their unrighteousness? In other words, “Why can’t God just pardon man? Why does he have to justify man?”

 - ❖ We have seen that none of us measure up and have fallen short: we are guilty! Verses 23-26 tell us why those that believe are justified. Who is in control of all that happens in 23-26 and what all is done?

 - ❖ What is Paul’s point in all of this that he explains in 27-31?

 - ❖ So, because of God’s grace, is the law done away with?

- ❖ To end our time, think about the following statements again and tell if they are true or false and why you gave that answer:
 - #1: "We are saved through Christ"
 - #2: "All mankind is justified freely by the grace of God"
 - #3: "Through faith in Christ, the law is nullified"

- Last week, we ended with asking God to show mercy. Spend time this week in prayer thanking God for all the mercy and grace he has extended to you. Recognize that you have nothing to boast about. Let Him know you are grateful for his mercy.

Study 5: Romans 4:1-25

- **Activity:** Talk as a group about your thoughts on this quote by C.H. Hodge. Specifically discuss the difference between condemnation and justification:

“To condemn is not merely to punish, but to declare the accused guilty or worthy of punishment; and justification is not merely to remit that punishment, but to declare that punishment cannot be justly inflicted.”

- **Read 4: 1-8**

- ❖ Paul carries on his point from chapter 3 by bringing up 3 sources. What are those sources and why does he use them?
- ❖ In verses 2-6, Paul uses the word “works” 4 times? How does he define works in these verses?
- ❖ What does this argument tell you about the nature of all that Paul is sharing? Is it a new message?
- ❖ How has the fact that this good news has been around been affirmed in other places in Romans so far?
- ❖ In reference to Abraham, the Jews had 4 primary events in mind of great things Abraham did:
 - He moved from Ur to an unknown land. (Genesis 12)
 - He was promised a son at a very old age. (Genesis 15)
 - He had himself circumcised and all the males in his family circumcised to honor God. (Genesis 17)
 - He was willing to sacrifice his son. (Genesis 22)

Where could Abraham possibly boast? Where in reality is he able to boast?

- ❖ In what ways do you hear Christians today fall into the trap of “boasting” in a manner that seems that God owes them things?

- **Read 4:9-12**

- ❖ The Jewish leaders believed that Abraham was righteous because of his act of circumcision and the actions he took to honor God. What role does Paul say circumcision played in Abraham’s righteousness? Why is this good news?

- **Read 4:13-17**

- ❖ When Paul talks about the “law” he is talking about any commands by God. When you see the word “Law” with a capital “L”, it is specifically referring to the Mosaic Covenant (the 10 commandments). In these verses, Paul is saying that Abraham didn’t receive the promise of being heir of the world because he obeyed a command. If the promise of God came because of obeying a “law”, what are the consequences?
- ❖ Imagine you are driving down the highway 10 miles over the speed limit. Do you realize you are breaking the law more or less when a policeman pulls behind you off an exit? What is your response?
- ❖ Why would Paul say that “law” brings wrath and “where there is no law, there is no transgression”?

- ❖ After answering these questions, you should be left with the question, “Then if the promise brought righteousness and the law brings wrath, then why in the world would God give us the law?” If this is your question, then you are tracking well with the writing of Paul. Give yourself a pat on the back!!! (But don’t boast! 😊) We will get to this question in a later lesson.
 - ❖ Why does Paul say it is so important that the promise come by faith?
- **Read 4:18-25**
 - ❖ In 18-22, Paul gives a great description of what it means to live life putting your trust in God. What are all the ways he describes this kind of life through the example of Abraham?
 - ❖ In looking at this description, describe a time where you watched some of the things be true of you. Which of these descriptions do you hope will grow more in hard situations you may be in right now?
 - ❖ If you are familiar with the story of Abraham, you will know that Abraham slept with his maidservant to have a child because God had not given Sarah and him a child. (Genesis 16) In light of this story, how can Paul say that Abraham “did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God”?
 - ❖ What are times you took steps because you did not trust God to come through? What did life look like?
 - ❖ Now, what are examples in your life that you trusted God fully, you knew he would take care of you, but you just didn’t know HOW? What steps did you take, or tempted to take, to sort out the “How” God would come through? What is the difference between this situation and the last question?

Study 6: Romans 5:1-21

- **Activity:** Talk as a group about the following:
Many Christians use the word “saved” or “salvation”. When you think of the way this word has been used and the way you might even use it, what do Christians mean when they say they have been “saved”? In light of this description, why do many people **not** want to be “saved”?

- **Read 5:1-8**
 - ❖ In Romans 1:18-3:20, we talked about our need for justification. Romans 3:21-4:25 talked about how we are justified. In 5:1, Paul uses the word “therefore” which shows a connection of all that he has just explained with what he is now about to explain. He now talks about the “fruits” or “results” of our justification. List all the results he gives in 5:1-5.

 - ❖ Each of us has friends that do not follow Christ. What do you think they long for in life? How do the results you just listed speak to those things?

 - ❖ Much of the time we think of salvation as an escape from hardship. How does Paul describe suffering for the person of faith?

 - ❖ So far we have talked about our need for justification, how we are justified, and the results of justification. The only question we have not answered is “Why did God justify us?” According to these verses, “Why did God justify us?”

- **Read 5:9-11**
 - ❖ How do these verses add to your definition of “salvation”? What are we saved from according to these verses?

- **Read 5:12-21**
 - ❖ This section can be broken into 4 parts: 12-14 is summary of what Paul just described; 15-17 is a contrast between Adam and Christ; 18-19 is a comparison between Adam and Christ; 20-21 shows how it all fits together. Before digging into all of this, 20-21 tells us why Paul unpacks it. What question is he answering in this section?

 - ❖ Again, Paul uses the word “therefore” to show the connection between this section and what he just spoke of. In 12-14, what is the outline Paul paints concerning sin and the law?

 - ❖ What is the difference between Adam’s Sin and the sin that was in the world between the time of Adam and Moses?

 - ❖ In 15-17, Paul tells how the ‘trespass’ of Adam and the ‘gift’ of Christ are different. How are they different?

 - ❖ In 18-19, Paul tells how the ‘trespass’ of Adam and the ‘gift’ of Christ are alike. How are they alike?

 - ❖ Paul now answers the question of “why would God give the law” in 20-21. How does he answer this question?

 - ❖ Put yourself in the shoes of the Jewish people reading this letter. What do you think would be their reaction to what Paul has just said? Is your thinking about the law the same as the Jewish people?

- ❖ After reading this last section, we notice that to increase sin is to increase grace. What question naturally comes up?

- ❖ Can you remember a time in which you did something that you thought might be wrong, but you continued to do it and then later were caught? What did it feel like to be caught?

- ❖ When you were caught, what was the reaction of the person/people that caught you? If eventually they forgave you and showed 'grace' to you, would you go back and do it again? Why or why not?

- ❖ Can you remember a time in your own walk with Christ where you discovered something you had been doing was actually not something that honored God? Tell about that time and what happened when you discovered it was not good? How did you feel? How did you react? Have you gone back to doing it again? Why or why not?

Study 7: Romans 6:1-21

- **Activity:** Talk as a group about the following situations:
 - ❖ In what ways can a married person live like they are single? Does living this way make them a single person?
 - ❖ In what ways can a parent live like they do not have children? Does this mean they do not have children?
 - ❖ In what ways can a person live like there is no truth? Does this mean that there is no truth?
 - ❖ In what ways can a Christian live like they are not a Christian? Does this mean they are not a Christian?

- **Read 6:1-7**
 - ❖ Paul is picking up on his last chapter and the question we were left with in the last lesson. Why does he say that we should not go on sinning?

 - ❖ From last week's discussion, what control did sin have over man before the law? What control over man did it have after the law? What control does it have over those that died with Christ? What does this tell you about the role of the law?

 - ❖ Who does Paul say died? What happened to sin? What is our relationship with sin now?

 - ❖ In verse 6-7 Paul says those that died with Christ no longer are slaves to sin-it no longer has power over us. Then why do we sometimes feel like it does have control over us? Think about this question in light of the activity at the beginning of this study.

 - ❖ Paul uses the word "free" in this section and lots of imagery of freedom. This section actually describes what John Calvin and Calvinist would define as "free-will". What is your definition of free will and does this section challenge it in any way?

- **Read 6:8-14**
 - ❖ How is this section similar to Romans 5:9-11? What's the emphasis of both?

 - ❖ What are all the ways Paul reminds the believer they are like Christ?

 - ❖ Paul understands that the Christian can live like they are not free from sin. But he also understands that just because we don't live like we are free from sin doesn't mean that we are not free from sin. How does Paul encourage the believer to live like who they are?

 - ❖ So, Paul tells us that we should not sin in order to increase the grace of God. He says this is foolish thinking. It's foolish to live under the very thing Christ freed us from. In light of this, what are areas in your life that you continue to give sin control and you need to live in the truth that it has no power over you? Share these with the group if you are comfortable but also share them to expose them to the grace of Christ and not hide in the darkness of sin.

- **Read 6:15-23**
 - ❖ Paul continues with the questions he knows his readers are asking. He has told us to not sin in order to increase grace. He now asks if we should sin because we are not under the law but under grace. Paul brings both of these questions up because many Jewish Christians accused Paul of giving people freedom to sin because he told them they were free from the law. Where do you see these same accusations in churches today? How do these verses help you to answer these accusations?

 - ❖ What reason does Paul give now to not continuing in sin? What has changed and what has not changed now that we are in Christ?

- ❖ How does this section tackle the belief that “man can be his own god?”

- ❖ What does Paul say is the difference in our slavery to righteousness than our slavery to sin? How does this encourage or discourage you?

- ❖ Finish by spending time in prayer asking God to help you to believe what is already true about you-that you are no longer in slavery to sin. Ask that he might allow you to believe it so much that you would no longer give yourself to sin. Thank him for the benefits of holiness and eternal life!

Study 8: Romans 7:1-25

- **Activity:**

In the TV show “Cops”, you see a number of people arrested and they are extremely mad at the police. The police are simply doing their job, yet the people are extremely angry with them.

- ❖ Talk about a time in which you were pulled by a police officer or caught doing something wrong by someone and found yourself very mad at them. Why were you mad?

- **Read 7:1-6**

- ❖ Who is it that Paul is speaking directly to in this section and what is his point with them?
- ❖ What is Paul's summary point to the example he gives in 2-3?
- ❖ Who does Paul say we now belong to and what will that produce? Who did we belong to and what did it produce?
- ❖ What is the tense that Paul uses in 4-5 and what does that tell us about his audience?
- ❖ Paul is talking about 4 major powers in this section: us, the law, Christ and sin. Which of these died? What happened to the others and why?

- **Read 7:7-13**

- ❖ Why would Paul bring the question he brings in verse 7?
- ❖ What is the order of the events that Paul describes in 9-12 and what do we learn about the law in this?
- ❖ What do we learn about the power of sin in verse 13?

- **Read 7:14-20**

- ❖ Paul has just finished explaining how sin turned the law into death. He now explains it again but in a more personal level. What is the tense he is speaking in now? Why do you think he does this?
- ❖ What verse gives it away that Paul is “not” talking about himself in the present but how this process plays out with someone that knows and lives by the law?
- ❖ You can break this section into 2 parts (14-17; 18-20) and each states the same thing. How are verses 14 and 18a similar? What do they both declare?
- ❖ How are verses 15 and 18b similar? What do they both declare?
- ❖ How are verses 17 and 20 similar and what does it tell you about this person?

- **Read 7:21-25**

- ❖ What verses in this section again give away that Paul is “not” talking about himself in the present period of time, even though he uses present tense?
- ❖ Paul speaks the answer of freedom from the life that lives in this tension. What is the answer?
- ❖ Many people believe that their journey as a follower of Jesus is a journey of 2 animals waging war inside of them: “a good dog and a bad dog. Whichever you feed the most will be the strongest.” How does Chapter 7 say that this is very bad theology?
- ❖ Looking at your own journey, how much of it is spent in this kind of thinking—that every time I want to do good, evil is right there with me and I give into it? What specific situations do you wrestle with this?
- ❖ Before we head into chapter 8, spend this next week thinking about the tension of that kind of life. Recognize the places this next week that this kind of thinking seems to pop up for you. Next week, Paul talks about the life we now live in Christ and how different it is from this type of thinking. But to appreciate it more, you have to recognize the frustration of a life that chapter 7 describes.

Study 9: Romans 8: 1-17

- **Activity:**

Below is a quote by John Stott in his commentary on Romans:

“So in practice, we should constantly be reminding ourselves of who we are. We need to learn to talk to ourselves, and ask ourselves questions: ‘Don’t you know? Don’t you know the meaning of your conversion and baptism? Don’t you know that you have been united to Christ in his death and resurrection? Don’t you know that you have been enslaved to God and have committed yourself to his obedience? Don’t you know these things? Don’t you know who you are?’ We must go on pressing ourselves with such questions, until we reply to ourselves: ‘Yes, I do know who I am, a new person in Christ, and by the grace of God I shall live accordingly.’”

John Stott, *Romans; God’s Good News for the World*, p 187

- ❖ What does this quote stir in you? What was he trying to get at and address in this quote?

- ❖ What does it tell you about the power of knowing the truth?

- **Read 8:1-4**

- ❖ Paul again uses the word “therefore” to refer back to a point that he just made. In light of the last chapter, what do we know now in these verses and what is the “new” law Paul speaks of?

- ❖ Paul refers to this new law back in Romans 6:14. Why didn’t he just write this section immediately after? In other words, why did Paul write 6:15-7:25?

- ❖ How is this new law different from God’s law in 7:14-25?

- ❖ What words, phrases does Paul use in this section to show the person that he talked about in chapter 7 is not the present him?

- **Read 8:5-11**

- ❖ Paul shows clearly that there are two types of people in these verses. Compare those who live according to the sinful nature and those that live in the Spirit.

- ❖ What is the criteria that Paul gives for someone knowing they are controlled by the Spirit? What are the different names he gives this Spirit?

- ❖ So, if we are no longer the person described in chapter 7, who are you? Do you know who you are?

- **Read 8:12-17**

- ❖ Once again, Paul ties this section into his last argument with the “therefore”. How does Paul describe our obligation?

- ❖ How are we to put to death the misdeeds of the body?

- ❖ What do we learn about those that are led by the Spirit?

- ❖ What is the difference in the cry of the person in chapter 7:24 and the cry of the person in 8:15?

- ❖ This is an amazing section of truth about who we are now. Think about what it means that we are “co-heirs” with Jesus. What are all the ways you can think of that we are “co-heirs” and a child of God just like Jesus?

- ❖ Paul tells us that we will share in the sufferings of Christ. In what ways did Jesus suffer that we will need to share?

- ❖ When we think of our present sufferings, we try to arrange life in a manner in which we do not suffer at all. To end your time today, discuss all the ways in which you try to avoid suffering. What are sufferings you are convicted of to “not” try and rush through but to endure? What will enable you to do so?

Study 10: Romans 8: 18-39

- **Activity:**

The week before Christmas could probably be defined as the most “anticipating” week of the year. In that, the week seems to go by extra slow for kids because of all the anticipation of the “big day”. One of the greatest Christmas movies is “A Christmas Story” and tells the story of a boy named Ralphie that lived in agony for that big day in hopes of getting a Red Ryder BB gun.

- ❖ Take time to remember back to a Christmas in which you waited and waited in anticipation. What were you waiting for? If you can't remember one for yourself, if you have kids, tell about a Christmas you've watched them anticipate.
- ❖ In light of this story you just told, how would you define hope?

- **Read 8:18-27**

- ❖ What the point of Paul's writing this section?
- ❖ What are all the pictures of “anticipation” Paul paints in this section?
- ❖ What do you think Paul means when he talks about creation?
- ❖ How does Paul define hope?
- ❖ A child finds the week before Christmas very hard to persevere through but keeps their eyes on the prize to make it. What does Paul say helps the believer to keep their eye on the hope?
- ❖ What do we learn about the Spirit and it's role in these verses?
- ❖ What has been your own understanding of the Holy Spirit and in looking at this description, what is surprising or new to you? What brings you the most comfort to know?
- ❖ Before moving into the next section, we need to recognize that we are now half-way through the book of Romans. Congratulations! Looking back over the first section, how would you define God and his relationship with mankind? How has your image of God changed?

- **Read 8:28-30** (when reading this next section, make sure you focus on what you “do” know more than what you “don't” know. This section uses some “hot topic” language but if you only focus on it, you miss the bigger point of the section.)

- ❖ Paul begins this section with “we know”. What are five things that Paul tells us we know in this section?
- ❖ After reading this section, our thoughts want to turn immediately to those that have “not” been called. What are your thoughts around those “not” called and what does this section of Scripture say about them?
- ❖ Think back to some of the first studies when we looked at the Jews. The Jews were also chosen by God. What did they think “being chosen” meant and what did God choose them for?

- ❖ Now, Paul talks about another people God foreknew and are predestined and called. This time, they are predestined to be like his Son and then called. What is God's Son, Jesus, like? What was he called to?

- ❖ In light of looking at what we do know, what would you guess is the relationship of those that are called to those that are not?

- **Read 8:31-39**
 - ❖ Remember that verse 18 tells us Paul's point in writing all of this is to help the saint work through suffering. So, how does Paul call the saints to respond?

 - ❖ Using questions and answers, Paul describes the life the saints are living in that time. How does he describe it?

 - ❖ Though most of our lives are no where close to the physical dangers these saints faced, our lives are spiritually under the same attacks. In what ways does Satan attack the believer through charges against them, trying to separate from God, troubles, hardship, etc...?

 - ❖ Much of our Christian lives seem to centered on fighting to "keep God loving us". How do verses 37-39 speak completely opposite to this belief? How does this give you hope?

 - ❖ Close by praying a prayer of thanksgiving through the things Paul lays out in verses 37-39.