

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.
 - A descendant of David
 - Declared the Son of God through the Spirit, by His resurrection.
 - Through Him and for His name, we receive grace and calling
 - We can belong to Him
 - He is Lord
- ❖ List all the things you discover about Paul in the first 7 verses.
 - A servant of Christ Jesus
 - Called to be an apostle

- An apostle is someone who walked with Jesus; saw the resurrected Christ; called by God for a specific purpose—the original Apostles' call was to begin the Church.
- Set apart for the gospel
- Received Apostleship
- His calling was specifically to call people from among the Gentiles to obedience

- ❖ What do we learn about the gospel?
 - It came from God
 - We first heard about it through the prophets (a long time ago-not a new thing)
 - It's subject is the Son
 - It's purpose was to call people to obedience through faith
 - It's goal was to honor Christ's name

- ❖ What do we learn about the readers of this letter?
 - They are the believers in Rome—loved by God. Paul calls them "saints". The Greek word means, "holy, set apart".
 - They were called to be holy, called to be set apart.
 - They were called to an obedience that comes from faith.
 - They were called to belong to Christ.

- ❖ 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?
 - Jesus, Jesus' grace and the call to be an apostle.

- ❖ Why is Paul's calling so unique from the rest of the apostles? Why do you think he was called to the Gentiles?
 - Paul's calling was unique in that his came after Jesus had ascended into heaven, unlike the rest.
 - Also, the great commission was for the apostles to begin in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), and then take the gospel into Judea, Samaria and eventually all the nations (Acts 1:8). The original 11 had stayed in Jerusalem. God used Paul to begin taking the gospel beyond Jerusalem—into Judea and Samaria and eventually into the rest of the world.

- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: not looking for a set answer here but just a time for people to wrestle with this word calling. So, just let folks talk here and don't try to get a "set" answer.

- ❖ 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?
 - Beyond anything else I'm called to, this is my primary calling, the power in which I live by. When the Lord has not made the other clear, this one stays clear.

- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: not looking for a set answer here but just a time for people to wrestle with this word obedience. So, just let folks talk here and don't try to get a "set" answer.

- ❖ 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"?
 - You see this argument come to full fruition in Romans 12:2 when Paul explains that transformation comes from a renewing of our thinking first. We must start with faith first—it changes our actions. Our actions don't birth faith, our faith births new action.

- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: point of this discussion sets up the next section of scripture where Paul talks about how God gave those with no interest in Him over to their sin. It helps the group to begin to ponder the question “why would God do that.” So, no right answers here, just a time for the group to get to know each other more.

- **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?
 - Paul is calling their attention to his heart for them.
 - He wants them to understand that though he hasn’t been with them physically he has been with them spiritually.
 - He is building rapport and relationship with them.
 - ❖ What do we learn about the gospel in this section?
 - It’s not something to be ashamed of.
 - It is the power of God, for salvation of everyone who believes.
 - In it a righteousness is revealed (Jesus), a righteousness that comes by faith.
 - ❖ What is righteousness and where could it come from?
 - Righteousness is being in “right standing” with God. It can come from a couple of places: from self-righteousness or from God, through Christ, who “is” righteousness.
 - ❖ 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?
 - Faith in God is what drives obedience. We are obedient and righteous due to faith, not our works.
 - We are loved by God (our faith believes this) and we are obedient because of this love. This is different from earning the love of God by pleasing him with our acts.
 - The Catholic Church was driven out of obedience to earn God’s love as opposed to an obedience that was driven out of a faith that believed God loves us. It was a faith in their works.

- **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?
 - God’s wrath is his punishment and anger played out in destruction.
 - It is directed toward the godlessness and wickedness that the people hold onto.
 - It is not directed toward the people, but the things they hold onto.
 - Leader: be good to read Genesis 3:17-19. Notice that after the fall, God never curses the man for his sin but instead curses the ground.
 - In God’s love, he does not place his wrath on man but on the things that man holds to in order to separate man from those things. His hope is that man would feel the weight of that curse and separate themselves from those ways and follow him.
 - ❖ What men is Paul referring to in this section? What do we learn about them in verses 18-23?
 - Those that suppress the truth, they know the truth but refuse to live by it.
 - They are men of no faith in God. They believed in God but did not live like He is God.

- **Read Romans 1:24-32**
 - ❖ What does it mean that God “gave them over”? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
 - He let them have the very things they desired. He didn’t force himself on them.
 - God gives us the desires of our hearts.

- But again, he gave them over to this for them to see the depths of their actions and to feel the full weight of them in hopes they become disgusted and turn to worship God.

- ❖ What 3 things did God “give them over to” and what were the consequences of each?
 - Sinful Desires (vs 24), shameful lust (vs 26), depraved mind (vs 28)
 - Sexual impurity; degrading of their bodies; exchanging truth of God-worshipping created things instead of creator.
 - Unnatural relationships; homosexual behavior
 - Filled with wickedness, evil, greed, depravity; disregard all consequences and draw others into this as well.

- ❖ Are there areas in your life you believe God may have given you over to? Why do you think he may have done this?
 - Leader: this is just a question to get folks to share. It's a tough question and you may not get a lot of answers, but you are leaving the question with them to ponder.

- ❖ Are there people in your life you believe God may have given them over? Why would God do this? Is he deserting them?
 - Leader: this is a question to give people a heart for their friends and helping them to recognize what might be going on in their friend's life so they can better talk with them and pray for them.

- ❖ Why do you think Paul went from talking about “faith” so much to now talking about “behavior”?
 - He is now describing what a life looks like without faith. Without faith, one route people will take is to live a life of godless behavior. In the next chapter, Paul will talk about another route a life without faith will take.

- ❖ 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”?
 - Leader: hope here is to help folks in your group to have their hearts broken for their friends. Ideas are: pray that God might lead them to things that change their belief system; find a time to ask their friends what they actually believe that makes them act in the way they do; ask the Lord to change their own heart toward their friend and that He might make them sad for their friends beliefs instead of just angry at 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?
 - Leader: point of this activity is to understand a courtroom scene. So, if no one has ever been in a case, ask the group to describe the process of a court procedure if someone were up for murder. Ask the same questions above for the case. Point of this is to show that a person is to show that there is a case where all information is disclosed. There is then a judgment (a verdict). Only after the judgment is made is a sentencing then made.
- ❖ Last week we saw that the righteous live by faith. If the righteous live by faith, what do the unrighteous live by?
 - They also live by faith but the object of that faith is different: their object is self.

- **Read 2:1-5**

- ❖ Who is Paul talking to in verses 1-5? Compare and contrast this group with those in 1:18-32.
 - Those that pass judgment on others. Both groups know the truth but they don't live the truth and therefore God's wrath will be revealed against them. The first group approves of anyone doing the same things they do, the second judges that group.
- ❖ 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'?
 - The same thing is the attitude that both groups have. Both know God but don't follow him as God. The first group plays that out by wicked behavior but the second plays it out in damning the other group.
- ❖ 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"?
 - They have lost sight that God's kindness led them to repentance and therefore are unwilling to be kind to the first group. Paul says they are stubborn and unrepentant in their attitude toward the first group. Because of that, they are not extending the grace of God that can lead that group to repentance. It is God's grace alone that brings change, not our judgment.

- **Read 2:6-11**

- ❖ How is judgment different from salvation?
 - Judgment is the verdict. Salvation is not having to pay the penalty owed for this judgment.
- ❖ In light of this, do verses 6-11 contradict what we've learned so far about faith? How do faith and judgment go together?
 - No, we will all be judged and the facts of what we have done wrong will be revealed and a guilty verdict will come. But, for those that live by faith in Christ, we are saved from paying that penalty-by faith.

- **Read 2:12-16**

- ❖ What will be the measuring stick for God's judgment?
 - Did we obey what we heard and what we knew-not did we obey what we never heard or knew.
- ❖ How does this section answer the question, "what about the person in Africa who has never heard?"
 - Leader: at this point we want to just stir this question and not necessarily answer it. So, just let folks wrestle with it.
- ❖ In verse 16, what 3 things do we learn about God's judgment?
 - It reveals secrets, happens through Jesus, is part of the gospel.
- ❖ Most of our lives are spent hoping to escape judgment. How could judgment possibly be a part of the gospel?

- Again, judgment is different from the sentencing. None of us will escape judgment by God. One theme you see throughout the Bible is Sin—Judgment—Grace. It is judgment that leads us to grace. That is why it is part of the good news.

- **Read 2:17-24**

- Describe the people that Paul now turns his attention to. How are they different than the other two groups?
 - Teachers of the law. Those that are to lead others but might think they don't have any issues. They think they are better than all the others because they have been given the law to lead others in.
- 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?
 - They think they are better than everyone else and use the law to put themselves above everyone else instead of using it as well to humble themselves. They are using their status as a Jew to say, "we are better than you" instead of using it to bring others to God.

- **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?
 - Paul is showing that circumcision came after the decision to trust God. It was a mark showing your belief in God. But, if you are breaking the law, then even if you have been circumcised physically, it shows you have not been circumcised inwardly. Circumcision was not just a physical act. It was revealing something that had happened inwardly.
- ❖ After hearing that the Jews are no different in this matter than anyone else, what would you think the Jews would be asking?
 - Is there any point in being a Jew? Is there any difference in being a Jew? Are we still God's chosen people and if so, how are we his chosen people?

- 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"
 - Leader: All 3 statements are false, but don't give the answers yet. They are to just get folks talking before you go through the study. At the end, tell them you will come back and ask the same questions and see their answers. But, here is why all 3 are false: 1) we are saved through "faith" in Christ; 2) all who "believe" are justified; 3) the law is "upheld and fulfilled".

- **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?
 - The Jews were given the privilege of carrying God's word with them. They were chosen to bring that word to the rest of the world! Wow! What an honor. Being God's chosen people meant they were entrusted with his word and set aside to bring his good news to the world. Even when they were unfaithful in this, God stayed faithful to them. But they thought it meant they were better than the rest and everyone had to become like them to be loved by God.

 - ❖ What is the argument that Paul brings out in 5-8? Can you understand where this argument comes from?
 - Does God make us sin to show off his glory? It's an excuse to get out of the responsibility we have for our sin. Our thinking is that because God's glory is more clearly seen in our unfaithfulness, then why not keep being unfaithful to bring him more glory. It puts us into the thinking that we control the amount of glory God receives. But God's glory is that he could actually turn our unfaithfulness around-not an excuse to be unfaithful.

 - ❖ 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?
 - Leader: just an opportunity here for the group to talk about how grace can lead into the confusion of giving liberty to sin. Paul gets deeper into this in the next few chapters, so just let folks put out their thinking here.

- **Read 3:9-20**
 - ❖ List all the ways that all of mankind is described in verses 9-18. Does this describe you?
 - All of mankind is under sin; no one better than another
 - No one righteous; no one who understands; no one who seeks God; all turned away; all worthless; no one does good.
 - Tongues are graves; deceitful; poison on their lips; cursing; bitter; swift to kill; ruin and misery; no peace; no fear of God
 - Yes, it describes me (before faith in Christ). I don't escape this! This is the judgment-the summary!

 - ❖ What does 19-20 tell us about the purpose of the law and what its purpose is not?
 - Its purpose is to silence all of mankind and put all of mankind under the accountability of God. In other words, no one has an excuse; no one can say they have earned God's love and deserve something more than another. It levels the playing field.
 - The law's job is not to declare righteousness but to declare that we are all sinful! Its purpose is to reveal our sin.

 - ❖ If you were reading this letter and it stopped right here, what would you feel like? What would you think about God?
 - Leader: just a chance for folks to not jump too quickly to the next thing. Don't allow the group to jump to the good news of Jesus yet. We need to sit in the misery of our condition before God and understand the distance from God. It will help the group to understand the extent of what God's love has done to fill the chasm.

- **Read 3:21-31**
 - ❖ This section begins with a big "BUT". What all do we learn about the "righteousness" talked about in 21-22?
 - It comes "from God" and has now been made known. It is not new-the Law and the Prophets all testified about it.
 - It comes "through faith" in Jesus.
 - It comes "to all who believe".

- ❖ Verse 26 uses the language “justifies”. What does it mean to be justified?
 - To prove or show to be just; to vindicate; to show as right before the law.

- ❖ 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?
 - Pardoned means we look the other way. Punishment is not applied because of looking the other way, putting it off. Justified means the penalty is paid in full and not just looked beyond.
 - Interestingly, the New Testament never uses the word “pardon” but the Old Testament does use Pardon in the sense of God pardoning our sins. This puts verse 25 in the right light.

- ❖ 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?”
 - The only way God can declare the unrighteous as righteous is by completely declaring that punishment cannot be applied to the person because that person is no longer guilty. The only way to declare that person as not guilty is by having the punishment due that person paid in full. To simply say they are not guilty without payment is to just look the other way. But to remain just, God had to have the full payment for man’s sin paid.

- ❖ 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?
 - God is in control of all of this.
 - God shows grace by extending redemption through His son Jesus.
 - God presented Jesus as a sacrifice
 - God did it to demonstrate his justice now to punish sins that were left unpunished.
 - God didn’t punish the sin then to show that he is just to all through Jesus.
 - God gave grace to those that came before Jesus by punishing their sin with those after Jesus through Jesus.

- ❖ What is Paul’s point in all of this that he explains in 27-31?
 - None of us have anything we can boast about. All of us are at God’s mercy. This has nothing to do with what we do but everything to do with what God has done?

- ❖ So, because of God’s grace, is the law done away with?
 - No, we are now able to uphold it. Also, Paul says that man is not justified by the law but by faith. He doesn’t say we shouldn’t observe it, he just says we are not justified by it. Before the grace of God through Jesus, none of us were able to follow the law one bit. Paul goes into the “why” behind this even more in the next chapters.

- ❖ 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”
 - Leader: see notes from first question in this study

- 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.”

- Leader: This quote is to get the group thinking again about last weeks study. It's also to help the group to separate out the difference between being condemned and being justified.

- **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?
 - Abraham, Scripture, David: he is touching the sources the Jews turned to for guidance and showing the way they have read these sources have been wrong.
- ❖ In verses 2-6, Paul uses the word “works” 4 times? How does he define works in these verses?
 - Works: Abraham was not justified by works; work does not credit a gift but obligation; when you work for something, you are owed something. We are not owed righteousness. We trust God instead of works for justification; God credits righteousness by faith in God and not our works. It is a gift not based on anything we or Abraham did.
- ❖ What does this argument tell you about the nature of all that Paul is sharing? Is it a new message?
 - It's not new. What Paul is describing has been the case since the days of Abraham. It's just been warped and lost.
- ❖ How has the fact that this good news has been around been affirmed in other places in Romans so far?
 - Chapter 1: God's invisible and visible qualities have been known. It's not a matter of being known or not, it's a matter of being warped or not. People do not have a proper thinking about God. Our minds need to be renewed.
- ❖ 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?

- They could say Abraham did all these great things and that is why God loved him. But, Paul makes the point that Abraham only believed that God would do what God said he would do. Because he believed God, he then acted in these ways. But, he didn't do any great work to get his righteousness. He simply believed. God gave Abraham righteousness as a gift, not as something that Abraham earned.
- ❖ In what ways do you hear Christians today fall into the trap of “boasting” in a manner that seems that God owes them things?
 - Leader: lots of answers to this. This question is here to help the group to take more personal what Paul is talking about. Even in Christianity we fall into thinking that if we behave a certain way then God owes us something. It is the root of the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” We are beginning to learn that none of us are good (Romans 1-3) and the only reason anything “good” happens is as a gift from God.

- **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?
 - Leader: this could be a good time for the group to read Genesis 17 if many are unfamiliar with the circumcision story. Circumcision did not play any role in Abraham's righteousness. He was credited as righteous before his circumcision. The circumcision came “after” in order to give Abraham a physical reminder of what happened inwardly. A seal. It's good news because being a part of the descendants of Abraham is for the circumcised and uncircumcised.

• **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?
 - Faith has no value and the promise is worthless because it is based on man's works, God owes it to man. But law brings wrath and not promise.
- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: fun time to talk about what happens when the law is in full view. The fact that we are breaking the law is even more clear when a policeman is in view.
- ❖ Why would Paul say that “law” brings wrath and “where there is no law, there is no transgression”?
 - The point is that during the time of Abraham and up until Moses, there was no law from God revealing the depth of sin mankind was under (read Galatians 3:17-25). Sin was not recognized as sin because there was no law to break. But once the law came to Moses (430 years after Abraham), sin was recognized and hated. God's wrath is revealed against sin. See the discussion about God's wrath in week 2's study.
- ❖ 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?
 - So that all of us are under God's grace and we are all included, no one left out of God's grace. It fulfills the promise that God made to Abraham all the way back in Genesis.

• **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?
 - Even in hopeless situations you have believe that God is your hope.
 - Your faith does not weaken even when you face the facts of your hardship.
 - You hold firm to promises of God.
 - You even find your faith growing in strength.
 - You are able to glorify God even in the hardships.
 - You are fully persuaded that God has the power to do the things He said He would do!
- ❖ 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”?
 - Paul knew this story very well so it's not an issue of him not knowing the story. Abraham did not question if God would give them a child or not. He did not question if God would keep His promise. He just did not know HOW God would do this. This is not an issue of wavering in belief. It's an issue of not knowing how God would keep his promise. Abraham slept with his maidservant because he wondered if that would be the way that God would fulfill the promise. It became clear in Genesis 17 that this was not the way.
- ❖ 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?
 - Leader, the last 2 questions are to help people understand the difference between trusting God and seeking the How as opposed to not trusting Him at all. The last question is the journey of “seeking” God-a good place to be!

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”?
 - Leader: point of this is to discover what people in your group believe about the “salvation” we receive through our faith in Christ. It’s also to get them to begin thinking about why some of their friends (or even themselves) have no interest in being “saved”. So, just let discussion go where it might. No right or wrong answers at this point.

- **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.
 - We have peace with God; Christ gave us access to this grace by faith; we now stand in grace.
 - We can rejoice in the hope of God’s glory.
 - We rejoice even in suffering because it even produces good things in us.
 - God has poured out His love in us by the Holy Spirit-He gave us His Holy Spirit.

 - ❖ 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?
 - Leader: point of this is to help the group make the connection between the deep longings their friends really have with the deeper things that our justification gives. We tend to look at salvation from the surface level and also look at our friend’s desires from the surface level.

 - ❖ Much of the time we think of salvation as an escape from hardship. How does Paul describe suffering for the person of faith?
 - Rejoice in them. Don’t just try to escape them.
 - They produce fruit: perseverance; character; hope.
 - Therefore, salvation is not an escape from hardship. It’s a freedom from being controlled by those hardships.

 - ❖ 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?”
 - Because God wanted to demonstrate his love for us (vs 8). We are justified because God loves us.

- **Read 5:9-11**
 - ❖ How do these verses add to your definition of “salvation”? What are we saved from according to these verses?
 - We are saved from God’s wrath-that is good. Paul’s point is that salvation through Jesus’ blood made us right with God when we were his enemies. But now that we are no longer his enemies, how much more will we be saved through Jesus’ life. Salvation is much more than just being made right with God and more than not just going to hell.

- **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?
 - Paul is answering the question: “If the law brings wrath, then why would God give us the law?”

 - ❖ 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?
 - Sin enters the world through 1 man: Adam; death enters the world through sin; death comes to all mankind because all mankind sinned.
 - Paul says this to show that sin was in the world even before the law (vs 13) but the weight of it was not felt; taken into account.
 - Though sin/death was not taken into account, death reigned from time of Adam until Moses; it just wasn’t recognized.

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

- Adam broke an outright command from God—"don't eat from the tree" and because of that he recognized death immediately. There were no outright commands from God from Adam till Moses for people to break—therefore, death is not recognized. Doesn't mean sin was not there—just means people didn't see their death in their sin.

- ❖ In 15-17, Paul tells how the 'trespass' of Adam and the 'gift' of Christ are different. How are they different?
 - One is a gift; the other is a sin.
 - All died by the trespass; grace came to all by the gift.
 - Judgment followed the sin and brings condemnation; the gift followed the sins and brought justification.
 - One man's sin allowed death to reign; the gift brings life!

- ❖ In 18-19, Paul tells how the 'trespass' of Adam and the 'gift' of Christ are alike. How are they alike?
 - One act can bring condemnation to all so therefore one act can bring justification to all.
 - Disobedience of one can make all sinners so therefore Obedience of one can make all righteous.

- ❖ Paul now answers the question of "why would God give the law" in 20-21. How does he answer this question?
 - It was added so that the weight of the one man's trespass would increase. And where it increases, grace increases even more.
 - To increase them both was to show how sin reigned in death and now grace reigns in righteousness.
 - Paul is telling us that sin and death reigned even before the law. We just didn't know it. The law was given to show how much sin and death reigned. It would then allow us to see how much we needed a Savior. So, no matter how much sin and death reigned, God's grace reigns even more!
 - Therefore, the law didn't bring sin and death; it just exposed it for what it really was.

- ❖ 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?
 - They would have a hard time with this. They believed the purpose of the law was to make us right with God by us keeping his law. If you kept the law, you were righteous before God. They would never have believed that the law was to show our sin.

- ❖ After reading this last section, we notice that to increase sin is to increase grace. What question naturally comes up?
 - Then why not sin even more so that grace will increase even more. Paul gets to that in the next chapter.

- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: this question and the next 2 are here to help people identify with the feeling of condemnation when they are caught but also to wrestle with how you react to grace.

- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: point of these questions is to get people to see that many times we decide the reality of something by the behavior or someone. The goal is to get us thinking about what is reality and what is living in unreality. A married person can live in unreality by acting single; a parent can live in unreality by acting like they have no children; a person can live in unreality by believing there is no truth; a Christian can live in unreality by not acting like 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?
 - Leader: this type of thinking Paul is showing is called Antinomianism. This means that we have no responsibility to any law whatsoever. Being free from the law means we should do whatever we want. Paul says that we should not give into sin because we died to it. Not only did we die to it, but we were buried with Christ and raised from the dead with Christ.

 - ❖ 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?
 - Sin controlled man before the law but man didn't realize it. Sin controlled man after the law but man now realizes it. Sin has no control over the one that died with Christ. The law revealed the control that sin had over man to show man they needed a savior.

 - ❖ Who does Paul say died? What happened to sin? What is our relationship with sin now?
 - We died with Christ. Not sin. Sin is still very much alive; it no longer has control over us- we are no longer slaves to it.

 - ❖ 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.
 - We can live like sin has control over us but the truth is that those that died with Christ are not controlled by sin. The journey with Christ is learning to live like what is true of us-we are free from sin's power. We don't have to give into it. But even if we do, it does not mean that we are slaves to it.

 - ❖ 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?
 - For many, free will is defined as "God lets us make our own choices without any involvement at all." Calvinism states that before the fall of Adam, Adam and Eve had freedom to choose the ways of God. Nothing kept them from choosing the ways of God. After the fall, there is nothing within man that can choose God's ways outside of God enabling them. Man was held bondage to sin and unable to choose God. Therefore, the only way for man to choose Christ is through the grace of God. After choosing Christ, man once again is not in bondage to sin-it once again is free to be what they were created to be. Therefore, they believe free-will is not the freedom to choose what we want. Free-will is once again being free from the bondage of sin to be able to choose the one thing we were created to do-worship and obey God. Before Christ, man had no free-will (as shown in Romans 5 and 6).

- **Read 6:8-14**
 - ❖ How is this section similar to Romans 5:9-11? What's the emphasis of both?
 - Both turn our attention not to just being reconciled to God but to the life we are now able to live. It stretches our definition of salvation of understand that salvation is now having the freedom again to live like we were originally created to live.

 - ❖ What are all the ways Paul reminds the believer they are like Christ?
 - We died with him, we live with him; we cannot die again; death does not master us any longer; we died to sin once and for all; we live a life to God.

 - ❖ 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?

- Don't let sin reign-we can choose to give it a power it does not have. Don't offer parts of body to sin. Offer yourselves to God. He lastly reminds them of exactly what is true: sin is not your master because you are under grace!

- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: just a time to make Paul's point a little more realistic for today and to see how these have not gone away.

 - ❖ 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?
 - His reason is because we are no longer slaves to sin but we are now slaves to righteousness. What has changed is our master. What has not changed is our slavery-that we as human beings have never had the ability to act and do anything completely out of disconnect with something/someone greater than us.

 - ❖ How does this section tackle the belief that "man can be his own god?"
 - Like it or not; live like it or not- the truth is we are always slaves to something-wickedness or righteousness.

 - ❖ What does Paul say is the difference in our slavery to righteousness than our slavery to sin? How does this encourage or discourage you?
 - As slaves to sin, we benefited nothing-we only received shame and death. But now, we benefit holiness, eternal life! This should be great news even to the person that might not like the thought of being a slave-having any kind of master.

 - ❖ 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?
 - Leader: point of this is to show how our image of "what is good" can instantly change to believe it is bad when it is actually doing it's job. We are mad at the police because we were caught doing something wrong. Easier to see them as the bad person instead of admitting that we were doing something wrong. Works this way as kids as well and their view of their parents.

- **Read 7:1-6**

- ❖ Who is it that Paul is speaking directly to in this section and what is his point with them?
 - To those that know the law. He is speaking about the law and helping those in the church that know the law the best to see the big picture of it. The law only has power over man while that man is alive.
- ❖ What is Paul's summary point to the example he gives in 2-3?
 - We died to the law (that you must obey everything perfectly to have life/righteousness—the written code) and are no longer under this law.
- ❖ Who does Paul say we now belong to and what will that produce? Who did we belong to and what did it produce?
 - We now belong to Jesus and we can now produce fruit to God.
 - We used to belong to sin and produced death.
- ❖ What is the tense that Paul uses in 4-5 and what does that tell us about his audience?
 - He uses past tense-this was who they used to be! Leader-this is extremely important as you go to the next verses of chapter 7. Bring folks back to this in the next section.
- ❖ 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?
 - Christ died and we died with Christ. The "power" of the law and sin are gone over those that died but the law and sin are very much alive still. They just have no power over those that died.

- **Read 7:7-13**

- ❖ Why would Paul bring the question he brings in verse 7?
 - Because just like the example with "Cops", many think the law is the bad thing because it exposes the wrong.
 - When the wrong is exposed, we look for others things to call bad instead of the wrong.
- ❖ What is the order of the events that Paul describes in 9-12 and what do we learn about the law in this?
 - I was alive apart from law.
 - The law came and brought sin alive and I died.
 - The law was to bring life and in that brought death.
 - Sin seized the opportunity to turn what is good into death. That's what sin does.
 - The law is holy, righteous and good.
- ❖ What do we learn about the power of sin in verse 13?
 - It is so sinful that it can turn the holy, righteous and good law into death.
 - It is utterly sinful!

- **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?
 - Paul is speaking in present tense yet he is not talking about the present. He is jumping back to how this all plays out with someone when they first are introduced to the law. He is helping those that know the law see it more personally.

- ❖ 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?
 - Verse 14: Paul just told us he is no longer a slave to sin in chapter 6. But, here, he says this person is a slave to sin.

- ❖ 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?
 - They both acknowledge that he’s not spiritual and nothing good lives in him (my old self). Again, Paul is jumping back in time here.

- ❖ How are verses 15 and 18b similar? What do they both declare?
 - He can’t do the very thing he wants to do because nothing in him gives the power to do that. It’s a picture of the slavery when the power of the law and sin both exist.

- ❖ How are verses 17 and 20 similar and what does it tell you about this person?
 - It is sin in the person that is doing the things a person does. It is a picture of a person that is in slavery to sin. A person that cannot, no matter how hard they try, can do good-even if they want to. This is what it means to “not” have a freedom of will.

- **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?
 - Vs 21: the law is still at work in the person
 - Vs 24: who will rescue me from the body of death-those in Christ are alive!
 - Vs 25: this person is a slave to law and a slave to sin: both things a person that is in Christ died to.

 - ❖ Paul speaks the answer of freedom from the life that lives in this tension. What is the answer?
 - God’s answer through Jesus Christ!

 - ❖ 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?
 - This is the life of someone that is living by the law as opposed to the life of someone that has put their faith in Christ. In Christ, we have died and so both of those “dogs” have no power over us at all. Living by the law is a person that in their mind wants to obey God but they can’t because those very laws bring sin to live in their body. Chapter 7 is not the story of a person living by faith in Christ but a person that lives by the law.

 - ❖ 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 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?
 - Leader: Just want to get your group to respond and talk around this quote. It stresses that the key to living like who you are is to remind yourself of who you are. Paul will talk about the "new life" we now live and the goal is that people know who they are and live accordingly. Behavior sometimes changes belief but belief always controls behavior.

- **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 talked about the process of the law revealing our sin, putting us in slavery to death and showing our slavery to God's law reveals our slavery to sin. But praise be to God for Jesus.
 - NOW, there is no condemnation for those in Jesus
 - NOW, the law of the Spirit has set us free (this is a 3rd law we have seen)
 - NOW, we are free from the law of sin and death (1 law)
 - NOW, the requirements of the law of God (2nd law) have been fulfilled.
 - So, through Jesus, the law of the Spirit, set us free from the law of sin and death because Jesus met the requirements of the law of God.
 - The law of God has been fully met in those that don't live by the law of sin and death but according to the law of the Spirit.
 - The law of God was powerless to do all this so God sent his Son to be an offering to accomplish this.
- ❖ 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?
 - He had to make sure those who knew the law were tracking. He deals with a human argument and the thinking of those under the law and then comes back to his initial argument. Therefore, the therefore is tying us back to 6:14.
- ❖ How is this new law different from God's law in 7:14-25?
 - We are not living in condemnation now-God's first law showed our slavery to sin and condemned us to death.
 - We are free from both the laws in our mind and law in our flesh
 - Man was not condemned as in the first law, but sin was condemned in the new law.
- ❖ 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?
 - This person is free from the law of sin and death; unlike in chapter 7:25b
 - This person lives according to the Spirit and not the sinful nature

- **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.
 - Sinful nature: mind set on that nature's desires; mind is death; hostile to God; does not submit to God's law and can't; cannot please God
 - Spirit: mind set on what the Spirit desires; life and peace; spirit is alive though the body is dead; our mortal bodies will even be raised from the dead through 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?
 - If the Spirit of God lives in you is the only criteria.

- Called the Spirit of God; The Spirit; the Spirit of Christ; Christ in you.
- ❖ 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?
 - Obligation is not to live according to the sinful nature any longer.
 - It is to live by the Spirit and by it, put to death the misdeeds of the body
 - ❖ How are we to put to death the misdeeds of the body?
 - By the Spirit. We are unable to do this on our own. Only by the Spirit is it able to happen.
 - ❖ What do we learn about those that are led by the Spirit?
 - In the Spirit you can put to death the misdeeds of the body.
 - Sons of God
 - No longer a slave to fear
 - Received a spirit of sonship
 - We call God “Father”
 - The Spirit testifies that we are children of God
 - Therefore we are heirs of God; co-heirs with Christ
 - We will need to share in his suffering to share in his glory.
 - ❖ What is the difference in the cry of the person in chapter 7:24 and the cry of the person in 8:15?
 - Chapter 7 is a person under law crying out who will save them. Chapter 8 is a person under the Spirit crying out Daddy!
 - Moved from separation from God to God being their daddy-relationship!
 - ❖ 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?
 - The way we approach the father-confidence and not fear
 - Changes our prayer life and way we look at sin
 - We are loved with the same love God has for Jesus
 - We will reign in glory with him
 - Leader: this is just a time for the group to imaging the “bigness” of this statement!
 - ❖ Paul tells us that we will share in the sufferings of Christ. In what ways did Jesus suffer that we will need to share?
 - He was tempted with sin and suffered through this temptation but overcame it.
 - He died to himself and chose to follow the will of the Father even over his earthly desires (see his prayer in Matt 26:36-42)
 - He took on the burdens of others at great cost to himself.
 - ❖ 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?
 - Leader: don't let the group get off the hook here. Ask them to really wrestle with all the ways they try to avoid suffering without having to say we should keep suffering in them all. But help them also see that suffering is not always to be rushed through. Talk about things they can learn in different sufferings if they “share” with Christ in it.
 - Living by the Spirit will be the only way to share in it. Telling ourselves the truth of who we are!

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?
 - Leader: This weeks lesson talks a lot about hope and anticipation of something greater. Having the group share this story will help them understand a little more but also lets the group get to know each other more.

- **Read 8:18-27**

- ❖ What the point of Paul's writing this section?
 - To put our present sufferings in perspective of something greater in order to encourage his reader to persevere.
- ❖ What are all the pictures of “anticipation” Paul paints in this section?
 - Creation waits for sons of God to be revealed
 - Creation will be liberated from bondage to decay
 - Whole creation groaning
 - The first followers of Christ that have been given the HS groan awaiting adoption as sons and redeeming of bodies.
- ❖ What do you think Paul means when he talks about creation?
 - He is talking about everything that God created has been affected by the fall of man and everything will be redeemed. God is not just about redeeming “man” but all of his creation. It tells you that all of God's creation had purpose and value.
- ❖ How does Paul define hope?
 - We are saved in it
 - It is not seen.
 - It is not what we already have.
 - We wait patiently for it.
- ❖ 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?
 - Being patient; The Spirit helps us.
- ❖ What do we learn about the Spirit and it's role in these verses?
 - The Spirit helps us in weakness.
 - He helps us to pray for what we need to pray for.
 - The Spirit is not an “it” but a “him”
 - He intercedes for us when words can't express our desires.
 - He has a mind and intercedes for the saints in accordance to God's will
- ❖ 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?
 - Leader: there is not a single right answer here. This is just a time for folks to make these verses a little more personal and even begin to discuss their own views of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ 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?
 - Many of us think that God is a mean God and just trying to get man to do all the things he wants them to do, to be his puppets. We many times think that God is just interested in punishing sin and us. Yet Romans makes it clear that God is much more interested in freeing his creation from bondage and freeing them to be who he created them to be. God is a God of love that is in an endless pursuit to enable all that he has created to become fully what he created them for. This brings him glory!

- **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?
 - In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who’ve been called according to his purpose.
 - Those God foreknew he predestined to be like his Son.
 - Those he predestined, he also called.
 - Those he called, he also justified.
 - Those he justified, he also glorified.
 - ❖ 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?
 - This section says nothing about them. We assume that it is saying God doesn’t love them when the passage is only focused on those that do love God. We assume that God predestining some to be like his Son means he predestined others to be condemned. That may or may not be true, but this passage says nothing about that. Stay focused on what you do know.
 - ❖ 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?
 - They thought that being chosen meant that God only loved them and that if people wanted to be loved by God, they had to become like the Jews. So, chosen for them meant, we are the best and God doesn’t love the rest of you. But Jesus made it clear in his time on earth that the Jews were chosen to go and bring others into the kingdom. God predestined them to be the ones that honored Him, in order that others might worship and follow Him as well.
 - ❖ 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?
 - Jesus is the Son that honors his father and suffered for all to know his father. Therefore, those God called are also called to suffer for the sake of others coming to know the father. We, like Jesus, are justified and glorified like Jesus. Jesus was called to be the vehicle by in which all would come to the father. We are called to be the vehicle in which others would come to know Jesus.
 - ❖ 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?
 - We are called to be the vehicle in which others would know Jesus. And this will be hard and will put us under hardship just like Jesus.
- **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?
 - If God is for us, who can be against us?
 - God will give us all things- we will lack nothing.
 - ❖ Using questions and answers, Paul describes the life the saints are living in that time. How does he describe it?
 - People/powers are against them.
 - Charges are being made against them.
 - They are being condemned and trying to be separated from the love of God.
 - They live in troubles, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and the face of death.
 - ❖ 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...?
 - Leader: this is just a time for the group to talk about all kinds of ways they feel the temptation to not grasp God’s love.
 - ❖ 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?
 - We have to fight really, really hard to get God to not love us. The power of Jesus’ death and life is way too powerful!
 - ❖ Close by praying a prayer of thanksgiving through the things Paul lays out in verses 37-39.