



MEET GOD!

A GUIDE TO STUDYING
THE BOOK OF ROMANS



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Introduction to Romans

Welcome to this study on Paul's letter to the Romans. We hope you are ready to be challenged, changed and deeply blessed as you study this book. We pray that you will indeed 'Meet God!'. By reading this book, you follow in the footsteps of many others who found its truths utterly transforming. Luther in his preface to Romans wrote, *"This epistle is the chief book of the New Testament, the purest gospel. It deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian but to be the subject of his meditation day by day."*

This study guide aims to help you do just that and is designed to enable you to get the most out of reading Romans and contains the following:

Preparation Questions -- There is great value in studying the passage before coming to the group study. This is the time when God will speak to you through his word. The quality of your preparation also transforms the midweek meeting and enables you to get more out of the study yourself. It also enables you to serve your group better. Each study therefore has questions to help you get to the heart of the passage. Hopefully the study will lead to thinking through the implications of the passage for us today. Think hard about these questions and ask God to transform you as you read His word.

Study Tips¹ -- As you study Romans we also hope that you will learn more about how to study the Bible more effectively. We have therefore included a number of Study Tips to give you a head start when approaching a passage.

In order to get the most out of studying Romans this year, spend some time coming to grips with the whole letter **before the first study**. The following questions should help.

1. Read through the whole of Romans fairly rapidly.
2. Try and divide the letter into its natural 6-7 sections. (see the Study Tip after this study for more on why this is an important question)
3. What are the major themes of the book?
4. If possible, read the whole book through again one or two times before starting the individual studies.

¹ All Study Tips in this guide are from St. Helen's Bishopsgate study material.

An Outline of Romans ²

1:1-1:17 Introduction

1:18- 4:25 Relational Reversal: that is the heart of the gospel, being the justification of guilty sinners through faith in Jesus Christ.

5:1-8:39 Personal Transformation: that flows from the knowledge of this relational reversal, our new life in Christ on the basis of justification in Christ.

9:1-11:36 Sovereign Plan of God: His way with Jew and Gentile in relationship to Christ.

12:1-16:27 Co-operative calling of new life together in Christ: Jews and Gentiles united and serving one another.

Six Features that mark the Book of Romans

We need to keep these in mind as we read it.

It is:

- 1. Christological-**it centers on the Lord Jesus and his saving ministry and personal glory as Lord of the universe and all who put their trust in him.
- 2. Soteriological-**it focuses on the salvation that Jesus Christ brings-its basic dimensions and the difference that it must make in us.
- 3. Eschatological-**the forward looking “hope” of glory that salvation in Christ sets before us.
- 4. Ethical-**He set forward Christian standards in specific ways.
- 5. Analytical-**Paul’s method of argument is question and answer.
- 6. Doxological-**the letter is God-centered and making for God’s glory, that is, praise and adoration for God by putting all that he has done in glorious technicolour.

Because the exercise of reading Romans must lead us to worship, we need to begin with prayer. Below is a prayer you may like to use as you study.

A Prayer for use while reading Romans

(BCP Collect for the 2nd Sunday in Advent)

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

² Dr. J. I. Packer at St John’s Learners’ Exchange March 7th 2010 and April 11th 2010

Study Tip - Thinking about Structure

It is important not to think of the New Testament letters as randomly written thoughts from one person to another. All of the New Testament writers deliberately structure their books to make their points. A useful exercise, therefore, with any passage is to:

- *Divide the passage into its natural sections - ie: the ones the writer put in.*
- *Work out what is the main point of each section.*
- *Think how the sections fit together to make the main point of the whole passage (or the whole of the writer's larger unit if this is not the same as the passage you are studying).*
- *Give each section a title that reflects not just what is in the section but how it fits into the overall flow of the writer's argument.*

Study 1 - Romans 1:1-17

1. Read through 1:1-17 and break the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one. (See the Study Tip just before this study for advice on how to answer this question)

2. Read Romans 1:1-13, 15:14-24, 16:17-20

a) What do we learn about the author?

b) What do we learn about those who received the letter?

c) What is Paul's purpose for writing this letter?

In this introduction passage of Romans, we see that Paul announces his 3-fold commitment: to Christ, to the church in Rome, and to the gospel.

3. What do we learn about the gospel from the following verses?

v 1

v 14

v 2

v 15

v 3

v 16

v 4

v 17

v 9

4. What was the significance of the resurrection for Jesus? (v 4)

5. Paul uses the phrase “the obedience of faith” in 1:15 and 16:25-26. What does he mean?

6. Chapter 1:16-17 is the key theme statement of the letter.

a) What is the “righteousness” that is revealed in the gospel?

b) Why is the gospel the power of God for salvation?

7. What is offensive about this gospel, and in what ways are we “ashamed of the gospel”?

8. What does it mean to you to “live by faith” 1:17?

A word on the term - Righteousness of God: ³

The righteousness of God carries two meanings:

- *a personal quality of God displayed in all God’s actions*
- *the gift of right status with God, righteousness from God, which is a central blessing of the gospel.*

Understanding how Paul is using “righteousness” in any particular instance, either as God showing himself righteous or meaning His gift of righteousness, is decided by the context.

³ *Dr. J.I. Packer at Learners Exchange*

Study 2 - Romans 1:18-32

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. What does the Apostle Paul teach that all humanity KNOWS about God apart from the gospel?

vv 19-20

v 21

v 32

3. What have all people done with the knowledge of God?

v 18

v 28

vv 21-23

v 32

v 25

4. What is God's response to all who reject the true worship of God in vv 24-28? (notice the 3-fold repetition)

5. Although the passage provides a devastating list of SINS (vv 26-31), what does Paul say is the BIG SIN that is the root cause of all other SINS? (vv 18-25)

6. In the light of all this, why is God's wrath fair and just, and why are we without any excuse?

7. What have we learned about the true nature of sin, and how does it differ from our conventional understanding?

8. John Calvin wrote: “humanity’s nature . . . is a perpetual factory of idols . . . Man’s mind, full as it is of pride and boldness, dares to imagine a god according to its own capacity . . . it conceives an unreality and an empty appearance as God.” *Ins. 1.xi.8.*

a) How has your deep need for the gospel been exposed in this passage?

b) How should 1:18-32 shape the way we share the gospel?

Study 3 - Romans 2:1-29

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. To whom is Paul speaking in:

vv 1-16?

vv 17-29?

3. What is his argument in:

vv 1-16?

vv 17-29?

4. Why, according to this passage, is self-righteousness so common and so futile?

5. What do you take vv 14-16 to mean? How does the larger context of 1:18 - 3:20 help us understand it better? (especially 1:18 & 3:20)

6. Working through these texts below, what do we learn about God's judgment?

v 2

v 9

v 3

v 11

v 5

v 12

v 6

v 16

v 8

7. What more do we learn about God in 2:4, 7, 11, and 29?

8. What is the great danger of relying on religion to save us (i.e. our devotion / sincerity / morality / observance / orthodoxy / niceness / education / tolerance etc.)

Study Tip - Knowing when to cross-reference

Cross-references can be key to understanding a passage, but it is also easy to misuse them. As a rule:

- *Old Testament passages pointed to are important - in Romans Paul often refers to the Old Testament, either by using a direct quote or by alluding to an Old Testament idea. Allusions are usually to important and well-known incidents or ideas, rather than to obscure ones that the reader would not be expected to know.*
- *The reason the New Testament writers refer to Old Testament passages is to make a point, not simply to show that they knew their Bible. The point may come, eg, from what the Old Testament passage is doing in its original context, and the New Testament writer wants us to understand the whole Old Testament idea the verse is pointing to. New Testament authors knew the Old Testament well and expected their readers to as well, so we need to spend time thinking about what the Old Testament passage is doing.*
- *Other cross-references should be avoided. The fact that a similar idea or phrase is used in another New Testament book is usually irrelevant. The original readers would not have had that other book and so the writer would not be expecting his readers to make a connection to it.*

Study 4 - Romans 3: 1-20

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. In vv 1-8 what are the several questions Paul addresses? How does he deal with each one?

3. In v 4 Paul quotes Psalm 51. Read the Psalm. How does this Psalm (51:1-6) show that God is absolutely fair and just in judging the unrepentant Jew?

4. What does the phrase “under sin”(ESV) in v 9 mean and who is Paul describing?

5. What are the universal human characteristics of being “under sin” according to the Old Testament references used by Paul in 3:10-18?

vv 10-12

vv 13-14

vv 15-17

v 18

6. Who is Paul speaking about and how do you know, in vv 19-20?

b) How do these verses draw together all that Paul has been saying from 1:18-3:20?

7. The Bible's teaching (and particularly here in Romans), about the human predicament, does not fit well with the way we think about ourselves, and others. What is so radically different about the biblical view of humanity? What difference does it make?

8. What are some of the things people imagine they will say to God on that day when they face him? What does Paul have to say about this issue in 3:19-20?

Study 5 - Romans 3: 21-31

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. What have we learned about “righteousness” so far in Romans?

a) God’s righteousness:

1:17

2:5

3:5

b) Our (un)righteousness: (some Bibles translate “unrighteousness” as “wickedness”)

1:18

1:29

2:8

3:5

3:10

3. What do we learn about righteousness “from God” (as the NIV translates it) in 3:21-26?

In v 25 Paul uses the word “propitiation” (ESV). Some translations use expiation, which is not a good translation in this instance. Propitiation is an important word and we need to grasp its meaning. The explanation below may help.

Sin is expiated, meaning ‘it is paid for’ (because sin is impersonal), whereas God’s righteous wrath is propitiated (because God is a person his righteousness must be appeased).

4. How much did it cost God to justify the unrighteous? (vv 24-25)

5. From Romans, why did Jesus have to die, why couldn’t God just forgive us?

6. What is the object of true faith and what is the result of true faith? (vv 22-26)

7. How does Paul make clear that Christ and his redeeming death is the only hope of salvation for all kinds of people in all times? (vv 27-31)

8. In v 27 Paul says the gospel should exclude boasting. What do you continue to boast in and rely on?

Several of the 39 Articles of Religion from the Book of Common Prayer speak very clearly to some of the key issues covered in Romans. We will include a few throughout this study where applicable.

XI. Of the Justification of Man

WE are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort; as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

Study 6 - Romans 4: 1-25

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. Romans Chapter 4 is about true Christian faith. In 3:27 Paul contrasts two 'principles' (or two 'laws'):

a) What are they?

b) What does Paul mean by saying a person is "justified by faith APART from works of the law" (3:28) or, that "God reckons righteousness APART from works" (4:6)?

3. What do the examples of David and Abraham illustrate? (vv 1-8)

4. The term 'counted / reckoned / credited' is key to grasping the principle of faith. Paul uses it repeatedly in this chapter.

a) Find at least 6 uses of it.

-
-
-
-
-
-

b) Try and write out in your own words what Paul means by this term.

**c) What does God do, that we may be counted righteous apart from works?
(vv 4-8)**

5. In v 9 Paul asks who this blessing of justification by faith is for. What is his answer in vv 9-16 and how does he prove his point?

6. How is Abraham the “Father of us all”? (vv 11-16)

**7. What several things do we learn about the nature of FAITH that justifies?
(vv 16-21)**

8. Who does God reckon righteous today? (vv 23-25)

**9. What have you learned from this study about the blessing of God to you
in the Lord Jesus Christ?**

Study Tip - Context

We rarely open books in the middle and expect to understand whatever we find; yet often the Bible is given precisely this treatment. Context is crucial to the meaning of any text and the Bible is no exception. We need to keep 3 kinds of context in mind:

- ***The immediate context** of the verses before and after those we are studying. This is largely a matter of good observation.*
- ***The wider context** of the book we are studying or - in most books - the section of the book our passage is in. How does the bit we are studying fit in to the overall flow of the argument? How does it help the author make his overall point?*
- ***The whole Bible context:** The Bible is one book with one story. So where does this passage fit into the grand sweep of salvation history? Does it have Old Testament background? Not the easiest context to use but essential.*

Study 7 - Review of Romans 1-4

1. Read through Chapters 1-4 and spend some time working out the flow of Paul's argument in these 4 chapters. [Note: When we correctly understand the flow of Paul's argument every verse will fit in!]

2. Why has Paul ordered his material in this way?

3. Why does Paul spend so long telling us about mankind's problem?

4. How does the solution deal with the problem?

5. Why does Paul deal with the issue(s) of chapter 4 directly after ch.3?

6. What has Paul taught us about God in these chapters?

7. How does Paul's presentation of the Gospel in chapters 1-4 challenge our presentation of the Gospel?

8. What questions are we left with at the end of this section in Romans?

Study 8 - Romans 5: 1-11

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. In this new section in Romans, Chapters 5-8, Paul spells out the many benefits that come to us, past, present and future, through justification by faith.

a) In 5:1-5, he mentions several of these benefits/transformations. What are they? Try to express them in your own words:

b) Which of these most surprises you?

3. In light of what we read in 1:18 and 2:5, why are these benefits so remarkable?

4. According to Paul, what does the Holy Spirit do in this new relationship?

5. What is the four-fold description of all humans apart from Christ, given in vv 6, 8, 10?

6. What do we learn about the love of God in vv 6-11?

7. How does the death of Jesus Christ in the past show us God's love in the present? How is this connected to the ministry of the Holy Spirit (v 5)?

8. Paul uses the phrase “much more” or “more than that” several times (v 3, v 9, v 10). What’s the point of these comparisons?

9. Justification is the verdict of judgment day brought into the present. How does this passage support this truth? How should this truth transform how you think about that day?

Study 9 - Romans 5: 12-21

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. Why does Paul begin v 12 with “therefore”?

***3. What do we learn about the relationship between sin and death?
(vv 11-14)***

4. What is the role of the law? (v 13, vv 20-21, reread 3:20 and 4:15-16)

5. In vv 12-21:

a. How are Adam and Christ similar?

b. How are they contrasted?

**6. In v 15 Paul writes that the “gift is not like the trespass”. What gift is he speaking about and how is it NOT like the trespass? (vv 15-17)
[notice again how he uses “how much more”]**

7. In this passage two reigns (or realms) are depicted (vv 17, 21). What are they and what are the features of the two reigns? What is your current relationship to these two reigns?

8. How does the Christian view of death contrast with that of the world and other religions?

9. What have you learned about the blessings brought to you “through the one man Jesus Christ”?

X. Of Free Will

THE condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.

(39 Articles of Religion - BCP)

5. Clearly, as Christians we still sin. In what sense then can Paul mean we have “died to sin”(v 2)?

6. Paul continues to use the language of rule or reign (v 12, v 14). How does this help us understand Paul’s teaching here?

7. What are we commanded to do/not do, as a result of our new life in Christ? (vv 11-14) What does that look like in every day practice?

8. How does the death and resurrection of Jesus, and our union with him, answer Paul’s question in v 1?

Study 11 - Romans 6:15 - 7:6

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. The Apostle Paul has referred to us being “under sin” in 3:9. In this passage, Paul contrasts living “under law” with living “under grace”(6:14-15). What is the meaning and significance of these terms?

3. In 6:1-14, Paul used the picture of death and resurrection to explain the implications of our new life in Christ. What new picture does he introduce in 6:15-23?

4. Outline the two contrasting slaveries in vv 15-23:

a) who is the one served?

b) what does the slavery look like?

c) what is the result of the slaveries? (also see 7:4-6)

5. Why is this picture of freedom and slavery so vital to understanding our new life in Christ?

6. In 7:1-6 Paul introduces a third picture of our new life in Christ.

a) How would you describe this picture?

b) What practical difference does this make in daily Christian living?

7. How does 6:23 summarize all of Romans so far? Please write out the verse in your own words.

8. In real human terms, how are we to daily live out our new life in Christ? (6:19, 7:6) Take time to share your successes and struggles in this area and pray for one another.

Study 12 - Romans 7: 7-25

Two terms to notice in this passage:

Flesh—does not mean our physical body, but our old sinful nature that is in rebellion against God.

Law— is used in several ways: in v 7 it means the ‘law of God’, whereas in v 21, 23, it means ‘principle’. This is important because, in this section Paul is speaking as a Jew to Jewish Christians.

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. According to Paul, in 7:5, what is the effect of sin and why would this lead him to ask the question in v 7?

3. Paul testifies to the effect that the law of God had on him before he was a Christian. What was it? (vv 7-13)

4. How does Paul make clear that the real fault doesn't lie with the law? (vv 10-14)

5. In vv 14-15, Paul changes from describing his life in the past tense, to the present tense. What does the law continue to do in Paul (and us) even after we are converted? (vv 15-23)

6. What is at the heart of Paul's (and our) struggle and despair as Christians? What do you find most difficult about this in your own life?

7. What is Paul's answer to this struggle? (Read 7:24 - 8:1)

8. Throughout this section, Chapters 5-7, what has Paul told us about:

a) what has changed for us as Christians?

b) what has not changed?

c) what our part is in living the new life in Christ?

d) what we hope for?

Study 13 - Romans 8:1-17

Note: The phrase “in Christ” carries the sense of both ‘in union with’ and ‘through the work of’.

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation . . .” is one of the pinnacle statements in the whole bible, and we recommend you learn v 1-4 by heart.

a) For whom is there no condemnation?

b) From what and from whom is there no condemnation?

c) Why is there no condemnation?

d) What does this mean in daily living?

3. *What are the marks of someone who has Christ in them? (vv 5-11)*

4. *Why does Paul say that it is impossible to please God apart from being in Christ, in vv 7-8? (If you want help, consult Article 13 below from the BCP.)*

XIII. Of Works before Justification

WORKS done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

5. *This chapter celebrates the fact that, as Paul said in 7:24, “Christ will (future) deliver us from this body of death”. What encouragement for the present struggle is there while we wait for that day of deliverance, in this section? (vv 9-11)*

6. Paul again argues why Christians must serve Christ and not the flesh. What is his reasoning in vv 12-17?

7. What are the grounds and nature of our future hope? (vv 11-17)

8. Apart from three earlier references in Romans, this chapter is marked by a celebration of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. What does this text teach us about the Holy Spirit and his role in our new life in Christ, present and future?

9. This is a deep and practical chapter.

a) What do you think it means to “set your mind on the Spirit”, in the light of the rest of what we have read in Romans?

b) How do we practically “put to death the deeds of the body”(v 13)?

Study 14 - Romans 8:18-30

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. How can 'glory' possibly outweigh our suffering? (vv 17, 18, 21, 30)

3. What more do we learn about the deliverance from 'this body of death' (7:24) that Christ will bring about? (vv 18-24)

4. What's up with creation? (vv 19-23)

5. Creation groans, we groan, and the Holy Spirit groans in vv 22-27. What are we all groaning for?

6. How does God's Spirit help us as we wait for the redemption of our bodies in vv 26-27? What is the weakness Paul speaks of here? (Recall Chapter 7)

7. What is the "good" (v 28) that God is working all things toward for those who love him? (hint: answer is in v 29)

8. What are the grounds for our certain hope that we will indeed obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God? (vv 28-30)

9. If God's great purpose for us is to conform us to the image of his Son, giving Jesus many brothers and sisters, how does this challenge your life goals? How can we practically make God's purpose our purpose in suffering or success?

Study 15 - Romans 8: 28-39

Predestined = God's act of choosing, literally 'pre-identified and marked out'

Called = God's act of drawing to Himself those he has predestined

1. *Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.*

2. *In v 31 Paul asks "What then shall we say to these things? (one of his favourite questions!) What five 'things' has Paul just said God does for us in vv 29-30? What does each one mean?"*

3. *To finish Chapters 1-8 the Apostle asks essentially 3 questions of amazement and wonder.*

a) *Question one in 8:31-32. How does God demonstrate how determined he is to bring us to glory and what difference does this make for you?*

b) Question two in 8:33-34. How does what Christ has done, and is doing, address the fears of v 33?

c) Question three in 8:35-39. How would you describe the 7 things in v 35, and the 9 things in vv 38-39 that threaten to separate us from Christ's love? Why do they threaten to separate us from Christ's love?

4. Why is Paul so convinced of the power of Christ's love? How does God stand behind his love for us?

5. Why does Paul quote Psalm 44:11-22 in v 36? How does it help us understand suffering and glory?

6. Paul describes Christians as “those who love God” (v 28). What have we learned about the love of God so far in Romans 1:7, 5:5, 5:8. Why does Paul return to the power of Christ’s love at the end of this chapter, in vv 35, 37, 39?

7. Paul has taught us a great deal to help us live in confident hope rather than paralyzing fear. Choose three of these truths and share them with your group, explaining why they are a great encouragement and comfort to you.

How do we bring the loving justifying grace of God to bear on our fears?
Share . . .

XVII. Of Predestination and Election

PREDESTINATION to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God’s purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God’s mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons and such as feeling in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s Predestination is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation or into wretchedness of most unclean living no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God’s promises in such wise as they be generally set forth in Holy Scripture; and in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.

(39 Articles of Religion - BCP)

Study 16 - Review of Romans 5-8

1. Read through chapters 5-8 and note down all the major conclusions Paul reaches.

2. How do these conclusions fit in with what Paul said in chapters 1-4? (particularly the problem as laid out in 1:18-3:20. This question is difficult but important.)

3. So what is the main thing Paul is doing in chapters 5-8?

b) Why do you think Paul is seeking to accomplish this?

4. How do these chapters challenge your understanding of the gospel?

5. What difference will this make in:

a) living the Christian life day by day?

b) your perspective on the future?

c) your presentation of the gospel?

6. What questions should we be left with at the end of this section?

Study 17 - Romans 9:1-29

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. Paul shifts here, from an incredible picture of assurance in 8:31-39, to a tone of deep personal sorrow.

a) What is the issue that grieves Paul so deeply in vv1-5?

b) Why does he need to deal with this issue here?

3. What are several points that Paul makes, in vv 1-5, to highlight the tragic situation of these Jews?

4. How do the Old Testament examples in vv 6-13 show that God's word, his promise, has not failed(v6)?

b) Why is this point relevant to Paul's hearers and to us today?

5. Why exactly does the question in v 14 arise? How are vv 15-18 an answer to this question?

6. How would you describe the fundamental difference between God having mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and God hardening the heart of whomever he wills? (Recall 1:24, 26, 28)

7. What point is Paul making in vv 19-23? How does this develop his case?

8. To whom has God's mercy been extended in vv 24-29? How does Paul confirm this point and why is this important for his argument?

9. Summarize the main point Paul is making in this chapter.

10. Is your heart as grieved as Paul's, for those you know, who seem hostile to the gospel? Spend time praying together for opportunities to win them for Christ.

Study Tip - The Bible is Right!

When faced with difficult verses or passages it is easy to treat the Bible as a confused ancient text “and it’s up to us to make the best of it”. Remember that the Bible is God’s perfect word and if we don’t understand it, the problem is with us, rather than the text. Work at it and pray for understanding!

It is also tempting to ignore or reject the bits we don’t like. But doing this is rebelling against God. God has given us more than enough clear evidence of His goodness, so as Christians who acknowledge Him as Lord we need to accept even the bits we don’t like and bring our thinking into line with God’s. When we do we will realize that even the things we initially did not like reveal a good, loving, merciful, faithful and wise God. As you study Romans 9-11 it is worth reading and praying in 11:33-36.

5. Paul flushes out the truth of v 4, in vv 5-13. What do we learn, in these verses, about the difference between righteousness based on the law and righteousness based on faith?

6. How is 'the word' summed up in vv 8-9?

7. Describe the chain of events that Paul considers necessary for the word to be heard and believed. (vv 14-17)

8. From vv 16-21, what reasons can Israel *not* give for unbelief?

9. In the light of how heavily Paul relies on the Old Testament scriptures to support his teaching in this chapter, how would you respond to someone who told you that they don't think the OT is relevant today?

10. Summarize the main point of this study. What does this add to Paul's focus on God's sovereignty in salvation in 9:1-29?

Study 19 - Romans 11:1-36

1. Divide the chapter into parts and summarize each section.

2. Paul continues, in this chapter, to build a case of assurance for his hearers. What points does Paul make to argue that God has not rejected his people? (vv 1-10)

3. How does what we learned in 9:31-10:4 help us to understand the truth of 'hardening' described in vv 7-10?

4. What is surprising about the answer Paul gives to the question he asks in 11:11?

5. Look carefully at the stages of God's plan to include more Jews, which Paul describes in vv 11-16.

a) How will it be that more Jews come to faith in Christ?

b) Why do you think it is that some of the Jews should become 'jealous/ envious'? (v 11)

c) Think about your own life and church. Is God's grace so reflected in your life and in your church that others are 'envious' of what you have in Christ?

6. Paul addresses the Gentiles directly for the first time in Romans (v13) and admonishes them for boasting (v 18).

a) What reasons does he give for why the Gentiles should not boast over the Jews? (vv 17-32)

b) What warning does he give the Gentiles? How is it also a warning to us today?

7. In this chapter, Paul once again uses the phrase 'how much more' (v 12, 24). How is God's abundant grace and mercy, in his salvation plan, revealed here?

8. What exactly does 'all Israel' in v 26 mean? (This isn't an easy question! Note - your answer must fit in with what Paul has already said in 9:6-7)

9. Why does Paul end with a doxology of praise in vv 33-36?

Study 20 - Review of Romans 9-11

Having begun chapter 9 on a note of deep anguish at Israel's unbelief, Paul ends chapter 11 with a glorious doxology of praise and glory to God! Let's review these two chapters to clarify exactly what has enabled Paul to make that shift.

1. What are the main issues Paul has been tackling in chapters 9-11?

2. What have been the main steps in Paul's argument through these chapters?

3. What have these chapters taught you about:

a) God?

b) God's plan to save a people?

c) The way the Jews and Gentiles fit into this plan?

d) The way the OT promises, Law and events fit into this plan?

4. *So how do chapters 9-11 fit into the rest of the letter?*

5. *How will understanding chapters 9-11 change you and your attitude to God and what he is doing?*

6. *How should chapters 9-11 help to shape your prayers?*

7. *What big question are we left with by the end of chapter 11?*

Study 21 - Romans 12:1-2

Chapter 12 is a pivotal point in Paul's letter, where he shifts to exhorting the Romans to respond to the marvelous grace of God that Paul has laid before them in chapters 1-11. Therefore, he begins this section by urging them "by the mercies of God (in view of God's mercy, NIV) to present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."

1. What have we learned about God's mercy in chapters 1-11?

2. What does Paul mean by "present your bodies as a living sacrifice"? (Recall 6:13 and 6:19)

b) Why is the language of sacrifice so appropriate?

3. What name does Paul give to our response to God's mercy?

a) What does v 1 teach us about what true worship is?

b) What is it not?

4. What does it mean to be conformed to this world?

b) In the light of what Paul has said in chapters 1-11, why is it wrong to be conformed to this world?

5. What does it mean to be transformed by the renewal of our minds?

b) How does this fit in with what Paul has told us about our minds in 7:14-25 and 8:5-8?

6. What is 'the will of God (v2b)? (Note: your answer should fit in with what we have learned so far in Romans about God's will)

b) How will being transformed by the renewal of our minds enable us to test and discern God's will?

7. Think about how we are encouraged to conform to this world. (eg. in terms of how we use our money and our free time, how we plan for the future, our priorities for our children, our conversations, relationships, and commitments, to name a few). What will it practically mean for you to avoid conforming and have a transformed attitude to these things?

8. What is the main thing you have learned from this passage? How will it change how you pray?

Study Tip - Application is Vital

The product of any Bible Study should be a change in our lives. God gives us many warnings about the folly and danger of not doing what the word says. (Matthew 7:26-27, James 1:22-24).

We can't correctly apply the Bible unless we understand what God is saying in it, but after we have understood it we must work out how it should change us and then live in the light of this. Don't let any personal or group study go by without time given to implications/applications. (We need to help one another with this).

There are two things we need to do to be better at applying the Bible:

- Come to the group study having put time into the prep. questions on application. Don't be satisfied with the first thought that comes to mind.*
- Spend time on your own after the group study thinking through how the passage should affect you personally. This is what the Bible calls meditating on what God has said and it is key to being changed by what we study.*

Study 22 - Romans 12: 3-21

1. Paul has urged his hearers to be transformed by the renewal of their minds in verse 2.

a) What do we learn in v 3 about how they (and we) are to think of themselves?

b) What do you understand “the measure of faith” to mean?

c) In the light of what Paul has been saying in chapters 1-11, why do they (we) need to think of themselves in this way?

2. What illustration does Paul use and what point is he making in vv 4-8?

3. How do you see Paul’s teaching here, regarding grace gifts, as being related to “spiritual worship”(v 1)?

7. What do you find to be the most challenging practical implications of this passage?

8. It is not unusual to find an attitude, within the church, of thinking that the church should 'serve and fulfil me'! Think about your own attitude. Does your thinking need to change in any aspect? Spend some time together as a group in prayer.

Study 23 - Romans 13:1-14

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. Paul's teaching in vv 1-7 may seem hard to understand at first. Always remember when reading the Bible that context is crucial. (Recall Study Tip re: context on p. 22)

a) How does Paul's exhortation in Chapter 12:1 help you to understand these verses?

b) Think about the historical, political context for the Roman Christians. What does it add to your understanding of Paul's teaching here?

3. What reasons does Paul give for why we should submit to the governing authorities? (vv 1-5) What should our motivation be?

4. What are the consequences for our lives?

5. How should we apply this teaching in areas where Christians live under corrupt or oppressive regimes?

6. Why does Paul return to the subject of love in vv 8-10?

7. How do we see in these verses that love fulfils the law?

8. Why does Paul bring up the subject of the Law here when he has already said that we have died to the Law and have been released from it (7:4-6)?

9. What is significant about the imagery that Paul uses in vv 11-14?

10. From vv 11-14, how should our understanding of the *present time*, shape the way we live our lives?

11. What does it practically mean for you to 'put on (clothe yourself with) the Lord Jesus Christ' (v 14)?

Study 24 - Romans 14:1-12 (read up to 15:13)

Since 12:1, Paul has been calling the Romans to live as a church shaped by grace, in response to God's mercy; the mercy he has spelled out in the first 11 chapters. In this passage, he addresses issues that appear to be specific to the Roman church, but as is always the case, has clear implications for all hearers.

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. Paul is addressing two groups in this passage. From vv 1-5, how are the two groups described and what seems to be the issues that are dividing them?

3. Who, do you think, specifically are the 'weak' and the 'strong' in this passage? How are they in danger of treating each other wrongly?

4. Paul's teaching here is grounded in several theological truths that he has already established in Romans. How do the following truths shape his argument to persuade them to change their attitude?

a) Jesus is the Saviour of all believers (vv 1-3)

b) Christ is the Lord and Master of all believers (vv 4-9)

c) God is the judge of all believers (vv 10-12)

5. Paul is speaking of 'disputable matters' (matters of *opinion* v1) in this passage. What biblical guidelines do we have for deciding what constitutes a matter as 'disputable' or 'indisputable'? (See also Gal. 1:8-9)

6. What 'disputable' matters are in danger of dividing us today? How, in practice, should we treat those with whom we disagree?

7. What is the main thing you have learned from this passage? How will it change the way you live?

Study 25 - Romans 14:13-15:13

In this passage, Paul continues to exhort the Roman Christians to live as a welcoming community of believers whose lives are characterized by love for each other (12: 9-16) and to live as people transformed by the renewing of their minds (12:2).

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. In 14:13-23, what indications are there that Paul's instruction is meant to be taken very seriously?

3. a) What is meant by causing a fellow believer to stumble (14:13, 21) or be destroyed/ruined (14:15) or by destroying the work of God (14:20)?

b) What sort of actions lead to God's work being destroyed and his people harmed?

4. What change of focus does Paul call for in v 17?

5. As Paul addresses the 'strong' in 15:1-13, unity in Christ continues to be his main concern. What reasons does he give

a) to encourage them/us not to please themselves, but their neighbour instead? (vv 1-6)

b) as he concludes his exhortation, to welcome one another? (vv 7-13)

6. What is significant about Paul using these four Old Testament quotes in 15: 9-12?

7. How does Paul's thinking in 14:13-15:13 challenge the thinking of the world? How has it challenged your attitude to other Christians?

8. How do Paul's prayers (15:5-6, 13) sum up themes in his letter as a whole? Spend time in prayer together.

Study 26 - Romans 15:14-16:27

1. Divide the passage into its natural sections and summarize each one.

2. As Paul begins to sign off his letter to the Romans (whom he has not yet met!), he returns to the opening themes from the first chapter. In 15:14-21, how do we see his 3-fold commitment to

a) the Roman church?

b) Christ?

c) the gospel?

3. How does what he says in 15:14-21 authenticate his authority to write such a 'bold' letter?

4. What do we learn about Paul's personal plans and expectations in 15:22-29?

5. By the list of greetings Paul sends in 16:1-16, we know that this was a personal letter. What observations can you make from the names on this list?

6. What are the characteristics of the false teachers in 16:17-20? What is Paul's approach to them? What relevance does this teaching have for us today?

7. In 16:25-27, what does Paul pray about God's revelation? What is its purpose and why is this important?

8. How has Romans moved you in your understanding of giving all the glory to God?

Study 27 - Review of Romans 1-16

Before the study, read right through Romans again and think back to what you have learned. (Dr. J.I. Packer recommends reading Romans aloud to yourself!)

1. Work out a structure for the whole book by dividing it into its main sections and giving each section a title that reflects its content. (This should not be detailed!)

2. Summarize briefly the main points Paul has made in the letter. Why is each of these important?

3. What do you think Paul was seeking to achieve by writing the letter? (i.e. What is its focus?)

**4. What have you learned about:
God?**

Jesus?

The Holy Spirit?

God's plan?

Hope?

Justification?

Faith?

The Christian life?

5. What has been the single biggest lesson that you have learned from Romans this year?

6. What have you found to be the most challenging passages and points? Why?

7. What do you want to thank God for as we end Romans?