

Romans: Introduction

But no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20,21). That makes it incumbent upon us to be reverent to a degree with what the prophets wrote. The Epistles are not the cogitations of men of extraordinary spiritual genius, but the posthumous work of the ascended Christ and they have therefore peculiar significance in the program of redemption. The Holy Spirit used these men, with all their personal idiosyncrasies, to convey God's message of salvation to the world. Our Lord, so to speak, incarnated Himself in them - the message of God must always be incarnated but it remains the message of God. The Epistles are the exposition of why God became manifest in the flesh, and when by submissive reception I commit myself to that revelation, the Holy Spirit begins to interpret to me what Jesus Christ did on the cross. *Oswald Chambers - Conformed to His Image 1930*

This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes..... Up to now it has been darkened by glosses [explanatory notes and comments which accompany a text] and by many a useless comment, but it is in itself a bright light, almost bright enough to illumine the entire Scripture. *Martin Luther - Preface to Romans 1545*

Romans is a classic. To the unsaved it offers a clear exposition of their sinful lost condition and God's righteous plan for saving them. New believers learn of their identification with Christ and of victory through the power of the Holy Spirit. Mature believers find never ending delight in its wide spectrum of Christian truth: doctrinal, prophetic and practice.

An excellent way to understand the Epistle to the Romans is as a dialogue between Paul and some unnamed objector. As Paul sets forth the Gospel, he seems to hear this objector raising all kinds of arguments against it. The apostles' replies to his opponent's questions one by one. By the time he is finished, Paul has answered every major attitude that man can take regarding the gospel and the grace of God. *William MacDonald - Believer's Bible Commentary*

Romans is the greatest and most influential of all of Paul's Epistles, the first great work of Christian theology. This doctrinal exposition of the meaning of the cross of Christ has had an immense effect on the thought of the west from Augustine's time on. It was the bulwark of the reformation the great corrective against the errors of medieval Catholicism, the protective against modern cultism. The divinely revealed gospel of God in Romans is the antidote for the babel of false gospels of our day or any day. Called the profoundest and yet the simplest document, the epistle is for sinful mankind as it is. It points out how lost, helpless humanity can find deliverance in Christ and what this deliverance includes. All focuses in Christ's cross. Christ's redemption is shown to be humanity's only hope. But what a glorious, exhilarating hope! *The New Unger's Bible Handbook - Moody Press, 1988*

Outline of Romans

1. Doctrinal: The Gospel of God (Chaps. 1-8)

- A. Introduction to the Gospel (1:1-15)
- B. The Gospel Defined (1:16 & 17)
- C. The Universal need for the Gospel (1:18 - 3:20)
- D. The Basis and Terms of the Gospel (3:21 - 31)
- E. The Harmony of the Gospel with the Old Testament (Chap. 4)
- F. The Practical Benefits of the Gospel (5:1-11)
- G. The Triumph of Christ's work over Adam's Sin (5:12-21)
- H. The Gospel's Way to Holy Living (Chap. 6)
- I. The Place of the Law in the Believer's Life (Chap. 7)
- J. The Holy Spirit as the Power for Holy Living (Chap. 8)

2. Dispensational: The Gospel and Israel (Chaps. 9-11)

- A. Israel's Past (Chap. 9)
- B. Israel's Present (Chap. 10)
- C. Israel's Future (Chap. 11)

3. Dutiful: The Gospel Lived Out (Chaps. 12-16)

- A. In Personal Consecration (12:1,2)
- B. In Serving Through Spiritual Gifts (12:3-8)
- C. In Relation to Society (12:9-21)
- D. In Relation to Government (13:1-7)
- E. In Relation to the Future (13:8-14)
- F. In Relation to Other Believers (14:1 - 15:13)
- G. In Paul's Plans (15:14-33)
- H. In Appreciative Recognition of Others (Chap. 16)

Outline taken from William MacDonald - Believer's Bible Commentary

Outline of This Study

- Study #1 - An Overview
- Study #2 - A Servant's Mentality
- Study #3 - Not a Pretty Picture
- Study #4 - Judgement for All
- Study #5 - Oh, The Bliss of the Glorious Thought!
- Study #6 - God's Credit System
- Study #7 - Tale of Two Men
- Study #8 - Dead and Alive
- Study #9 - Mind .vs. Flesh
- Study #10 - Spirit Led or Dead
- Study #11 - Predestined Suffering
- Study #12 - Not No Ordinary Election!
- Study #13 - Faith Talk
- Study #14 - Remnant Chosen By Grace
- Study #15 - Transforming Grace
- Study #16 - Designer Clothes
- Study #17 - Agreeing to Disagree
- Study #18 - God's Ambition
- Study #19 - Examples and Exhortations

STUDY #1

ROMANS: AN OVERVIEW

All of Romans

Read the following questions and then, before answering them, read through the Letter to the Romans. It will take about 45 minutes.

1. What do you learn about the writer from this letter? To whom is he writing?
 2. Identify at least two possible themes in this letter. Provide verses to support your suggestions. As a group come to a consensus as to what is the primary theme of the Romans?
 3. What controversial issues are raised in the Letter to the Romans? Which of these are issues relevant to your life?
 4. There are 4 or 5 verses in this letter that are key to explaining the gospel to someone. They are commonly called the "Roman Road". List the verses and what part of the gospel they explain?
 5. What do you find in Romans that would justify God going to all of the trouble of keeping this book around for you to read it in your current life situation?

STUDY #2
A SERVANT'S MENTALITY
Romans 1:1-17

1. Discuss the significance of Paul's description of himself in verse 1. Identify what he says in the rest of the passage to affirm being called a servant and apostle? Do you see yourself as a servant or a (small "a") apostle (even in a small way)?

2. Discuss the description of Jesus in verses 3 and 4. Identify the promises God made through the prophets referenced in verse 2.

3. Paul describes 3 things he would gain by going to Rome. What are they and how are they a benefit to Paul? Is there a person or group that you could be involved with (go to), whereby you would gain something similar? If such a group does not come to mind, should it? How would you go about developing such a group to which you could serve?

4. The word "gospel" is used 5 times in this passage. Define what Paul means by that term. Do you think what the church calls the "gospel" today is different from what Paul presents as the "Gospel Of God". How so? What ought we to do about the difference?

5. What does it mean when Paul says he is "obligated" to people? Do you ever feel "obligated" in a good way? Do you ever feel ashamed? Describe some situations when you have felt ashamed (most everyone has at some point). What are some of the common characteristics of your situations and how could they be addressed? What does Paul describe in verses 16 and 17 that might give us more courage?

6. What is a "righteousness from God" (v. 17)? How has it been revealed by faith? How do you as a "righteous" person, live by faith?

STUDY #3
NOT A PRETTY PICTURE
Romans 1:18-32

1. Compare what is being revealed in verse 17 and what is being revealed in verse 18. What is the significance of the fact that God's wrath is against the wickedness of men, not against men?

2. How are God's invisible qualities clearly seen (especially if they are invisible)? Do you think someone who sees these qualities without the message of Christ will go to heaven (ie. the person in the remote village)? Give an example of man's thinking that could be considered "futile" (v. 21) or a "lie" (v. 25)? Why do people come up with these futile or false ideas?

3. Three times in this passage, Paul says that God "gave them over" to something bad. What did He give them over to and what does it mean for God to do that? Is God abandoning people? Isn't he then somehow responsible for the evil they get into? Is this similar to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 9:12, 10:27) or handing someone over to Satan (1 Corinthians 5:5)?

4. Paul suggests that the list of actions and attitudes in verse 29-31 come from a depraved mind. How does that compare with current secular thought?

5. What does the Bible say about premarital sex and homosexuality? (Genesis 2:24, Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Matthew 15:19, 19:5, 1Corinthians 6:12-20, 1 Thess. 4:3-5)

6. Is it possible that verse 21 works two ways: if you do as it describes you end up on the ugly side of life, but if you do the opposite, you end up on the good side of life? If that is true what ought you to do and how? Could this be a start to finding an answer to the sin we fall into all the time?

**** Bonus question if time allows:*

Do you ever see verse 32 happening amongst Christians? Why do we do that?

STUDY #4

JUDGMENT FOR ALL

Romans 2:1-28

1. How do I condemn myself when I judge someone else (v.1)? Isn't it proper to judge between right and wrong and to point out to people when they do wrong? Why is it that people often will feel judged when we choose to not be involved in their behavior, even if we don't say anything about the behavior? How am I to react to evil in the world, in my friends, in other Christians?

2. Discuss the basis for God's judgment given in verses 2, 4, 6, 11, 16. What's good and what's scary about God's judgment? Do we as Christian's still face a judgment for the good and bad that we have done or is that all wiped out by Christ's forgiveness?

3. Verses 7-10 seem to suggest that we gain eternal life by doing good. How do you explain these verses in light of the concept of salvation is by faith, not works? (Romans 1:17, 6:23, 10:9-10, 11:6, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5)

4. In verses 17-29 Paul describes people who are outwardly one way and inwardly something different. Explain his accusations against these people. If someone was going to accuse your church about being hypocritical, what would they point to? What if they were accusing you personally of being hypocritical, what would they point to? Is it possible that God's name is blasphemed at times in the world because of us (v. 24)? If so, give examples.

5. Identify one area or part of your life that you would prefer not to take to judgment. Confess it and ask God for help to overcome it.

STUDY #5
OH, THE BLISS OF THIS GLORIOUS THOUGHT
Romans 3:1-30

1. Have two people read verses 1 to 8, with the first person reading verses 1, 3, 5, and 7 and the second reader reading in response verses 2, 4, 6 and 8? Summarize the argument described by Paul to allow some people to continue in sin. Is this an argument that would be used today? When Christians are involved in sin, do you think it is deliberate, complete with a supporting argument like this, or is most of our sin "accidental"? If we were to use an argument to support sinning, what would it be?

2. Define the following terms in your own words, find where and how they are used in this chapter and at least one other verse in the Bible:

A. <i>to sin;</i>	B. <i>righteous</i>
C. <i>justified</i>	D. <i>redemption</i>
E. <i>atonement</i>	F. <i>justice</i>
G. <i>faith</i>	

3. From verses 10-18 list what is said regarding human thought, direction, speech and action. How does this list make you feel? What does it mean to fall short of God's glory? Why is it important for us to realize that at one time we were all sinners, and that we still are all sinners? Would most of your classmates or workmates acknowledge they are sinners?

4. Do you think the law is "descriptive", like a thermometer, or "prescriptive" like medicine? What is the prescription for sin described in this passage? How does that resolve our sin ailment? If we have this other prescription, why do we still uphold the law (v. 31)?

STUDY #6
GOD'S CREDIT SYSTEM
Romans 3:31-4:25

1. Why is circumcision so significant to the church in Paul's day? Is there a modern day issue equivalent to circumcision? Do you think the church has some special "work(s)" that they require to show you are a Christian?

2. Why do so many people want to believe our sins are dealt with by earning merit? Explain the importance of forgiveness being a gift and not a prize to be earned.

3. What is the promise Paul refers to in verse 13, 14, 16, 20 and 21? If the promise is realized through faith, why do Christians emphasize proper activity and behavior so much? If faith is the key to realizing on the promise, how do I gain more faith, or is it something I either have or don't have?

4. Review Abraham and Sarah's example of faith. What are the similarities and differences between God calling them to believe in a son and God calling us to believe in a Son?

5. Why is Jesus' resurrection, rather than his death , given credit for our justification?

6. Is your life driven by faith or works?

STUDY #7
TALE OF TWO MEN
Romans 4:25-5-21

1. As a result of our justification, we experience peace, grace, hope and love. Find the verses that substantiate this in today's passage and then find verses in other parts of your Bible that help to explain these gifts from God. Give examples as how these have played out in situations in your life. Which of these four blessings is the most important to you right now? Why?

2. The word "sufferings" used in verse 3 means: afflictions, distresses, pressures, something we have all experienced in one form or another. What is it about suffering that should cause me to "rejoice"? Provide an example how suffering, going through all the steps described in verse 3 and 4, ultimately produces hope? Can a person see this happen as they are experiencing suffering, or only after the fact?

3. Describe at least three things you learn about God's love from verses 5-11, and the significance of each. Summarize the argument Paul uses to assure us that God's love is poured out into our lives without limit.

4. From verses 12-21, parallel what we have as a result of the sin by Adam and what we have as a result of the gift through Christ, both the similarities and the differences?

ADAM

CHRIST

SIMILAR/DIFFERENT

5. What can you rejoice about from this chapter? Write a short chorus to celebrate this?

STUDY #8
DEAD AND ALIVE
Romans 6:1-23

1. What is the meaning and significance of being united with Christ in His death? In His resurrection? And in His life?

2. Three times in this passage Paul makes it clear that sin leads to death. Describe all of the nasty results of sin that a person can experience because of his or her sin. How do these relate to "death"? Is the consequence of "death" relevant to the Christian who sins? How so?

3. Identify each of the phrases that Paul uses to say "stop sinning"? The answer to verse 2 for many of us is "quite easily!". Paul keeps saying we're free from sin, but our Christian reality does not reflect that. Why? He says we're dead to sin, but it seems like we're very much alive in the sin world. What keeps that happening? What needs to happen to give this passage reality in our lives?

4. Identify each of the phrases that Paul uses to say "be righteous"? How does the fact that we are slaves to righteousness relate to the idea that Christ has made us free? Isn't being slaves to righteousness just another form of bondage? How can that be a good thing? How do I do what verse 13 and 19 tells me to do? Why the focus in these verse on body parts, not on the mind? Describe in detail the benefits set out in verse 22.

5. How does the knowledge of being dead to sin, but alive to righteousness affect your struggle with sin and how can it affect your prayer life?

STUDY #9
MIND vs. FLESH
Romans 7:1-23

1. Which of the following would best describe the reason we were given the law:
 1. For a means to be saved;
 2. To recognize we need to be saved;
 3. Something to follow once we are saved;
 4. To make us relieved we live under grace.

2. From where in this passage (or anywhere else in the Bible) do you support your answer? Do you feel at all responsible to the law? Should you?

3. Explain Paul's use of the illustration of marriage to show the Christian's relationship to the law. How is the illustration continued by allusion in verses 4-6 through references such as "belonging to another", "being controlled", passions aroused", bearing fruit and "serve in the new way"?

4. How does the law help us to understand sin? Twice Paul uses the phrase "seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment" to describe the action of sin. What does this mean? Is Paul saying without the law there would be no sin, or just a lot less sin?

5. All of us should be able to relate to Paul's frustrating struggle in verses 14-24. Is Christ's rescue (vs. 24-25) available now or only in heaven? What can we do, if anything, to make the war between our mind and our sinful nature more or less intense?

6. If a Christian friend came up to you and expressed his or her frustration with the sin of lust or jealousy, including the fact that it kept occurring over and over and the fact that he or she thought as a Christian they should be able to just get rid of the sin once and for all time. What would you say to them based on this passage and your life's experience?

STUDY #10 SPIRIT LED OR DEAD Romans 8:1-16

1. What did God do that the law could not? How did He do it? What was causing the law to fail?
 2. Illustrate what verses 5-8 say are the differences between the sinful mind and the Spirit controlled mind? Provide some specific examples of the difference between what the sinful nature might desire and what the Spirit desires. Are Christians susceptible to being controlled by their own sinful mind? How do you know when it's the sinful nature and when it's the Spirit?
 3. Verses 9-11 suggest that the Spirit life occurs when we have Christ in us. How does it come to happen that we have Christ within us? Is that all it takes to be Spirit controlled? How does the Spirit help us to live our lives in the home, the workplace, the sporting field, at the party, etc.? Give examples.
 4. What is the significance of us being described as sons of God? Why might it be important for someone that the Spirit confirms us as children of God? How would the Spirit do that?

STUDY #11

PREDESTINED SUFFERING

Romans 8:17-39

1. What type of suffering is Paul talking about in verse 17? Give some examples. What does it mean to be an heir of God and how is being such an heir dependant on our sharing in Christ's suffering? How do verses 18-25 expand on this idea of us being children of God with something to look forward to?

2. What kind of situation would cause us not to know how to pray? What does the Holy Spirit do for us when we do not know how to pray? How do you feel about the Spirit praying in your stead in these situations? Can you give an example of when this has happened for you?

3. What relevance does verse 28 have to verses 17 and 18? Describe some of the ways verse 28 is misunderstood and then describe how it should be understood? Are there preconditions to the realization of the promise implied in verse 28?

4. Give examples of how the forces described in verses 35-39 could disrupt your trust in God's love? When has it been the hardest for you to believe in the truth of verse 28 and 37? If nothing separates us from God's love, why do we feel separate at times?

BONUS QUESTION:

Referring to verses 29 and 30, explain how a Christian is foreknown, predestined, conformed, called, justified and glorified. What is the practical reality of all of this?

STUDY #12
NOT NO ORDINARY ELECTION!
Romans 9:1- 29

1. Why is it important to remember the scope of the promise given to Abraham? Were the sons born to Abraham through Hagar or Keturah part of the promise? For the sake of context and to learn a bit of History; who were these other sons? Why is their role (or lack of role) in the promise significant? What do you think Paul is getting at in the first eight verses?

2. Why is Paul, in verses 4 & 5, pointing out the what Israel has? Is this significant to his argument? Why is that?

3. Why is *God's Choosing* not based upon personal desire or effort? Is God's way of election at all similar to man's way of promoting (usually based upon merit)? Why is it important to realize that it is not by works but by God's grace that we have been saved? Compare Rom 9:11 to Eph 2:8 & 9 in your response.

4. Jacob & Esau both formed nations: Israel and Edom. How do you see God's love of Israel and hatred of Edom played out in their histories? Refer to some Old Testament prophecies to support your answer.

5. Do you have a very good understanding of God's mercy? What do you think that God's mercy is based on (relying SOLELY on this chapter)? What traps do people fall into regarding God's Election of some and damnation of others? How do you balance God's Sovereign Choice and our Human Responsibility? With our finite understanding of an infinite God - can we ever totally understand this conflict?

6. If we overemphasize divine election to the extreme that God is drawing the "chosen" towards Himself - what would be the result related to the Church's evangelistic efforts? Why?

7. If we overemphasize divine election toward human responsibility, what is the result?

STUDY #13 FAITH TALK Romans 9:30-10:21

1. How did Israel pursue righteousness? What was the basic problem with this approach (see 3:20, 7:7-11)? How would the attitude of a person coming to God on the basis of performance differ, for better or worse, from those coming to Him by faith?
 2. Some say "what you believe doesn't matter as long as you are sincere". In light of this passage, what do you say in response to this? Is verse 2 suggesting that it is possible for our enthusiasm for God to be a bad thing? Explain.
 3. What does confessing, which sounds like "works", have to do with belief? What does it mean to confess "Jesus is Lord"? What would be the more common confession of people around you, Christian or not: _____ is Lord! (Fill in the blank)
 4. What are the promises made in verses 11 and 12? We know Christians who are "shamed" or do not look "richly blessed". How do you explain that in light of these verses?
 5. What is Paul's point in raising all the questions in verses 14-17? Doesn't his earlier point of predestination make the whole idea of evangelism redundant? In verses 18-21, Paul suggests that there may be people who will claim they did not hear (v. 18) or they didn't understand (v. 19), but most likely it's a matter of choice (v.21). What would you say would be the reason people in your world do not believe? What can you do about it?

STUDY #14
REMNANT CHOSEN BY GRACE
Romans 11:1-36

1. What two examples does Paul give to refute the suggestion that God has rejected Israel? What kind of situations lead God to give up on people (ie. cut out branches)? Does that scare you at all?

2. The passage refers to Israel being hardened, despite seeking earnestly (this is a different type of hardening than was done with Pharaoh). What four characteristics of hardening are given in verses 8 and 9? Explain each of these. Could this happen to us? What protects against it?

3. How has Israel's failure caused salvation to come to the Gentiles? What is there about saved Gentiles that could cause Jewish people to be envious? Do you think people look on our lives or our salvation and are envious in a good way? What might we have to change to increase their sense of envy?

4. Explain Paul's discussion of the olive tree in terms of his direction that Gentiles should be fearful, not arrogant. In what ways do you see arrogance among us or in yourself? What thoughts from this passage could curtail that?

5. How does the song in verses 33-36 relate to the issues raised in chapters 9-11 of Romans? Which line is especially meaningful to you? Why?

BONUS QUESTION: (only to be done if at least some people in your group have thought about this before hand) What does it mean when it says "all Israel will be saved"? Are they exempt from needing to believe in Jesus for salvation? Does this protect every Jewish person?

STUDY #15
TRANSFORMING FAITH
Romans 12:1-21

1. How can you offer your “body” as a living sacrifice? Why do you think he wants your body or is that just symbolic for all of you? Verse 2 suggests God also wants your mind. How is your mind transformed? Give an example of being conformed to the pattern of this world. How do you balance Paul’s warning not to conform, with his own testimony that he would be whatever is necessary to win people to Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23)?

2. Within the church body we are to accurately assess ourselves. Do you think the average person in the church thinks higher or lower than they ought to of themselves ? How does the illustration of the body fit with the direction to not be arrogant? Is it important for you to know where you fit in the body? How could you find that out, or do you just know?

3. Take each of the commandments in verses 9-21 and rephrase them and give an example of each one? Think of a relationship in which you could implement each command?

COMMAND

EXAMPLE

RELATIONSHIP

4. Of the commands listed in this passage, which two are the easiest for you to follow and which two are the most difficult? What would help you in obeying the more difficult ones?

STUDY #16
DESIGNER'S CLOTHES
Romans 13:1-14

1. How does verses 1 and 2 relate to a Christian's involvement in civil disobedience? Other than Acts 5: 27-32, are there biblical examples of Christians not submitting to governing authorities? In what way is a godless politician "God's servant" (v.4)? Does verse 21 of chapter 12 cast any light on the issue of civil obedience? Create a policy statement covering the Christian's view of both obedience and disobedience to government.
2. What does it mean to love your neighbor? Who is your neighbor?
3. What is Paul suggesting we should understand about the "present time" (v.11)? What does he mean by "salvation is nearer" and "the day is almost here"? A skeptic would say this is God's carrot dangling in front of Christians to keep them motivated. How should you respond to that kind of statement?
4. Of all the sins Paul could have mentioned in verse 13, why does he choose the ones he does? What significance is there to the clothing reference in verse 14? What can you do to clothe yourself with Jesus?
5. What area of your life (eg. driving) could be affected (transformed) by the content of this chapter? How so?

SO WHAT?

STUDY #17

AGREEING TO DISAGREE

Romans 14:1-15:7

1. Paul is writing about "gray areas" issues over which equally committed Christians disagree. What are some controversial gray areas in your life, family, small group or church?* How do you know when it is important for Christians to agree on an issue and when is it not important? What is the overall objective of this passage?

2. Why do we judge each other? Is it because we want to make sure people do what is right, or to confirm our own behavior as right? Is there a right time and wrong time to judge? How do you tell the difference?

3. Paul calls us to four overriding principles in 14:13, 14:19, 14:22 and 15:2. What are they and give a practical example of each one of them in action. Which is the hardest for you to carry out? Discuss whether any of these principles could be taken too far, and how do we find balance in applying them in our lives.

4. What does it mean to stumble another person? How much do you worry about stumbling other people? How much should you let this control your life or your behavior?

SO WHAT?

*this question was taken from the Serendipity New Testament Bible Guide

STUDY #18
GOD'S AMBITION
Romans 15:7-33

1. What is the significance of Paul pointing out to the people in Rome that the Gentiles are part of God's promise to the Jewish patriarchs? In verses 9, 16, and 18, Paul expresses what he hopes the Gentiles will do? What is it and how could we live this out? Be as practical and specific as you can.

THE VERSE

THE TASK

THE HOW

Verse 9

Verse 16

Verse 18

2. Why do you think Paul encourages the reader in verses 13-14 in the way that he does? What has he said to them to this point in the book that would make this encouragement especially relevant? Could someone say verse 14 to you? Where, if at all, would the shortcoming be?
3. What is Paul's ambition? How does that compare to you? Over the past month or six months, what would your actions and your thought life suggest is your ambition? Without a similar experience to Paul (ie. Damascus Road), how do we gain a sense of God's ambition for us?
4. The example of the passage from verse 23 to 33 suggests that there are two ways to participate in other people's ministry without actually being there. What are they? Are either of them a command in the Bible? Is one easier than the other for you? What could you do in your life to help you increase your participation in both of these areas?

SO WHAT?

STUDY #19

EXAMPLES AND EXHORTATIONS

Romans 16:1-27

1. What two characteristics are most commonly attributed to the people mentioned in Romans 16 and what is the significance of each of these two characteristics? What in your life would lead someone to describe you in the same manner? Should they be able to describe you that way? If you had to choose one person in this list to be like, which one would it be and why?

2. To what does Paul attribute divisions in the church? Give examples of Paul's teaching (especially in Romans) that would refute people causing divisions. What type of person does Paul suggest is more susceptible to following a smooth talker? How do we avoid being just a smooth talker or susceptible to one? How do we hold on to both the truth and unity?

3. What does mean to you be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil? What would have to change in your life, if anything, to make that sentence more descriptive of your life? Does the latter part of the phrase suggest we should be naive to evil? How does verse 20 relate to verse 19? (An aside: Doesn't the reference to God as "God of Peace" seem to contradict the idea of Him "crushing" Satan?)

4. It is suggested that verses 25-27 can be seen as a summary of what is taught in Romans. Break verses 25-27 down into understandable phrases and find verses throughout Romans that expand on each phrase.

Bonus Question: Why don't we do the "holy kiss" thing anymore?

SO WHAT?