

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL HOME BIBLE STUDY GUIDE The Epistle to the Romans

Introduction

On October 31, 1517, this notice appeared on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany:

"From a zealous desire to bring to light the truth, the following theses will be maintained at Wittenberg under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther."

The ninety-five theses which followed challenged the teachings and traditions of the church which had been developed over a period of a thousand years, and became the vehicle which launched the Reformation.

Martin Luther was a monk of the Augustinian order, noted for its learning and severity, and Martin entered the order on July 17, 1505, in the sure and certain hope of delivering his soul from its present conflict and of gaining eternal salvation. But this was not to be. Instead, God became for him a Being incomprehensible in His nature, unknowable in His works, and Luther grew fatalistic, almost deterministic. He felt impotent to change the fate decreed for him from all eternity, and, what was worse, unable even to know for certain whether he belonged to the elect or the reprobate.

It was his study of the Bible that delivered him from his dilemma. Romans 1:17 was the key:

In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "the righteous will live by faith."

It was not a case of God being far off in His righteousness and of man straining to reach Him. It was a case of man being far from God and God moving all the way to him, not because of man's goodness, but because of God's goodness.

Luther says: "When I realized this I felt myself positively born again. The gates of paradise had been flung open and I had entered in. There and then the whole of Scripture took on another look to me." The Great Light, Vol 4. Luther and the Reformation - Atkinson, Eerdmans

On May 24, 1734, John Wesley, having returned from America a failure and aware that he lacked inner peace, attended a Bible reading at Aldersgate Street, London. He had been unable to evangelize the Indians and had stirred up controversy among the Anglican settlers. During the reading of Luther's introduction to Romans, Wesley says:

"I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust Christ, Christ alone For salvation; and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The Radical Wesley, Snyder, IVP

These men, their lives, their ministry and their world were transformed "by the gospel of God - the gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding His Son, who as to His human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of Holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 1:2-4)

The Epistle to the Romans was written by the Apostle Paul about 58 A.D. and is a magnificent and life changing exposition of the gospel. The key statement on which his presentation rests occurs in Romans 1:16-17, where he says:

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "the righteous will live by faith."

TU	your study of this epistie, you will discover
	what the gospel is
	why it is needed in our world
	the immediate results of believing the gospel
	its long-term implications

You will also be called upon to implement what you have learned by thinking about what is actually involved in:
 being called to the obedience that comes from faith living by faith counting yourself dead to sin being alive to God in Christ Jesus living according to your sinful nature having your mind set on what the Spirit desires
This study will provide you with excellent opportunities to invite anyone to participate who is interested in knowing what it means to be a Christian. The questions in the study guide have been prepared using the New International Version of the Bible, but can be answered using the version of your choice.
All the questions can be answered from the information given in the epistle. It is very important that you do not skip questions which ask you to draw a conclusion or to express in your own words what you think a particular group of verses is teaching. These are designed to insure that you understand the argument being made. The response questions are equally important as they are designed to encourage both discussion and application which are essential parts of the learning process.
At the end of each study there is space for you to record any questions or problems which you have in regard to your study. Be sure to write them down so they can be discussed and resolved.
There are many excellent commentaries and study helps available on Romans and you may want to consult them if you have a problem. Your study leader will also be able to assist you, so please do not hesitate to contact him if you are in difficulty.
Some Commentary Suggestions:

Romans, Vol. 10, Expositor's Bible Commentary, published by Zondervan

Epistle to the Romans, The New International Commentary on the New

Testament, published by Eerdmans

New Bible Dictionary, published by Eerdmans

READ: Romans 1:1-17

- 1. List the reasons Paul gives for identifying Jesus Christ as our Lord, verses 1-4.
- 2. What was the purpose of preaching the gospel, verses 5-7?
- 3. What two important aspects of our relationship to other believers do you learn from verses 8-10?
- 4. Why does Paul want to visit Rome, verses 11-15?
- 5.a) Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel, verse 16?
- 5.b) What are the distinguishing features of the gospel, verse 17?
- 6. Verses 16 & 17 are considered the key statement (thesis) of this epistle. Why?

RESPONSE

- 1. Often people do not think of faith as involving obedience, but in verse 5 Paul ties them together when he says that from among the Gentiles people are being called to the obedience that comes from faith. What do you think this means and what are its implications as far as your own life is concerned?
- 2. How do you fulfil your responsibility to encourage others in their faith?

READ: Romans 1:18-32

1. Why is God's wrath being revealed from heaven, verses 18-20?

Note: Notice the present tense, "God's wrath is being revealed". As you consider the rest of this chapter, see if you can identify the ways in which God's wrath is being manifest.

- 2. What happens when people reject the visible evidences of God's existence, verses 21-23?
- 3. How is the rejection of God's authority manifested in people's behaviour, verses 24 & 25?
- 4. What do you think the statement, "God gave them over" means, verses 24, 26, 28:
- 5. What do the expressions: "sinful desires", "shameful lusts", "depraved minds" indicate about what happens to a society that turns away from the knowledge of God, verses 24, 26, 28?
- 6. In what way do people prove they have been mastered by evil, verses 29 & 30?

RESPONSE

- 1. Verse 18 says "God's wrath is being revealed." What evidence is there in the world that this is true?
- 2. How do you avoid entanglement in the sins of our society?

READ:	Romans	2:1-	-16
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- 1. To whom is the argument of this passage addressed?
- 2. What is the difference between man's judgment and God's, verses 1-4?
- 3. Why does Paul warn against having stubborn and unrepentant hearts, verses 5-6?
- 4. On what evidence is the conclusion "God does not show favouritism" based, verses 7-11?

Note: The paragraph beginning in verse 12 contains a parenthetical argument (verses 14 & 15) which adds force to the point being made about God's judgment.

- 5. What do you learn about God's judgment from verses 12-16?
- 6. Why are the Gentiles who do not have the law nevertheless held accountable to God, verses 14-15?

RESPONSE

- 1. It would appear from verses 6-11 that people can earn eternal life. What is your response to such a statement?
- 2.a) from the information in these verses, what do you learn about the character of God?
- 2.b) How should this knowledge affect your behaviour?

READ: Romans 2:17-29

- 1. List the reasons why the law was such a significant factor in the life of the Jews, verses 17-20?
- 2. Read the paragraphs in which Isaiah 52:5 (Isaiah 52:3-6) and Ezekiel 36:22 (Ezekiel 36:22 & 23) originally occurred and explain why their quotation here is appropriate.
- 3. Why do you think Paul introduces the subject of circumcision, verses 25-27?
- 4. Read Genesis chapter 17 and list the things you learn about the significance of circumcision in the life of the Jews.
- 5. What does circumcision not do, verses 25-27?
- 6. What point is being made in verses 28 & 29?

RESPONSE

- 1. Why do you think a person who is involved in religious ceremonies or religious activities runs the danger of being deceived by them?
- 2. How can you protect yourself against making the same mistake the Jews made in regard to your own relationship to God?

READ: Romans 3:1-20

- 1. What advantage did the Jews have over the rest of mankind, verses 1 & 2?
- 2. Read Psalm 51 from which the quotation in verse 4 is taken and explain why "their lack of faith" does not nullify God's faithfulness, verses 3-4.
- 3. Why is the argument, "Let us do evil that good may result" rejected, verses 5-8?
- 4. In what way are Jews and Gentiles alike, verse 9?
- 5. To support the above conclusion, Paul chose some statements from the Old Testament. Read these and list from the context in which they occur the adjectives used by the writer to describe these people:

Psalm 14:3

Psalm 53:1-3

Psalm 5:9

Psalm 140:3

Psalm 10:7

Isaiah 59:7 & 8

Psalm 36:1

Ecclesiastes 7:20

6. What is the purpose of the law according to verses 19 & 20?

RESPONSE

- 1. How would you prove to someone that the Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" is not the basis of acceptance before God?
- 2. List the ways in which you think God's faithfulness is being expressed today even though many people do not have faith.

The Epistle to the Romans Study #6 READ: Romans 3:21-31

1.	What is	the	significance	of Paul's	reference	to	the l	law	and	the	prophets,	verse
21	?											

- 2. On what basis do people become righteous before God, verse 22?
- 3. Why is there no difference between the Jews and Gentiles, verses 23 & 24?
- 4. Explain how God can be just and still justify the person who believes in Jesus, verses 25 & 26?
- 5. Why are there no grounds for boasting, verses 27 & 28?
- 6. Explain the argument of verses 29-31 in your own words.

RESPONSE

- 1. In explaining the gospel, how would you use the law and the prophets since few people have any knowledge of what they say?
- 2. Explain how the sacrifice of atonement made by Christ Jesus (verse 25) demonstrates God's justice (verse 26).

READ: Romans 4:1-25

- 1. Why do you think Paul draws the attention of his readers to the experience of Abraham and David, verses 1-8?
- 2. What is the crucial point made in answering the question, "Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?", verses 9 & 10?
- 3. On what grounds does Paul argue that Abraham is the Father of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised, verses 11 & 12?
- 4. What are the differences between the law and the promise, verses 13-15?
- 5.a) What was God's promise to Abraham (see Genesis 15:1-6)?
- 5.b) Why was Abraham's acceptance of the promise such a remarkable response, verses 16-21?
- 6. On what basis is righteousness credited to any person, verses 22-25?

RESPONSE

- 1. Explain how you would use the information in this chapter to support the belief that righteousness is yours through faith apart from works.
- 2. Why is faith in God not a gamble?

READ: Romans 5:1-11

- 1. What are the immediate benefits of being justified, verses 1 & 2?
- 2. By what process is hope strengthened in the life of a person who has been justified, verses 3 & 4?
- 3. What distinguishes this kind of hope from wishful thinking, verse 5?
- 4. Identify the ways in which God's love is different from ours, verses 6-8.
- 5. Put in your own words the argument of verse 10.
- 6. What is the result of justification, verse 11?

RESPONSE

- 1. What do you think it means to:
- a) "Rejoice in hope" (verse 2)?
- b) "Rejoice in suffering" (verse 2)?
- c) "Rejoice in God" (verse 11)
- 2. Explain why you believe that your reconciliation to God is something that is going to last.

READ: Romans 5:12-21

1. Do we die because of Adam's sin, verses 12-13	1.	Do w	e die	because	of Adam	n's sin,	verses	12-13
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Explain your answer.

- 2. In what way was the situation of the people who lived between Adam and Moses different from ours, verse 14?
- 3. List the ways in which the gift differs from the trespass, verses 15-17?
- 4. What do you think verses 18 & 19 mean?
- 5. Why was the law given, verse 20?
- 6. What is the difference between sin and grace, verse 21?

RESPONSE

- 1. Based on the information contained in these verses, to what conclusions can you come in regard to mankind?
- 2. Why is it possible for a person to say with confidence, "I have eternal life."?

READ: Romans 6:1-14

1. Why is	the	response	to the	grace of	of God	"Let	us go	on	sinning	that	grace	may
increase"	not	an accept	able re	esponse	e, verse	es 18	<u>& 2?</u>					

- 2. What do you think is the meaning of verses 3 & 4?
- 3. List the results of being united with Christ in His resurrection, verses 5-7.
- 4. Express the argument of verses 8-10 in your own words.
- 5. What is involved in "counting yourself dead to sin", verses 11-14?
- 6. What is involved in "counting yourself alive to God in Christ", verses 11-14?

RESPONSE

- 1. Why is it possible For you to make the statement, "I am dead to sin."?
- 2. What is the reason you continue to commit sins?

The Epistle to the Romans Study #11 READ: Romans 6:15-23

1. Express the argument of verses 15 & 16 in your own words.
2. How were those who were slaves to sin set free, verses 17-18?
3.a) What are the two kinds of slavery, verse 19?
3.b) How do they differ?
4. What kind of life do those who are slaves to sin lead, verses 20-21?
5. What are the results of being set free from sin, verse 22?
6. Why is the summary statement of verse 23 important?
RESPONSE
1. What do you learn about the Christian life from the way in which the word "offer" is used in these verses?
2. How does freedom from sin become operational in a believer's life?

READ: Romans 7:1-25	READ:	Romans	7:1-25
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1. What important doctrine from chapter 6 is Paul reinforcing in verse 1?
2.a) When is a married woman free from the law of marriage, vs 2 & 3?
2.b) When is a person free from the control of their sinful nature, verses 4-6?
3. Make a list of the things which the law does, verses 7-13.
4. What is the source of the conflict that is described in verses 14-20?
5. Why is a person who knows what is good unable to do good, vs 21-23?
6. How is the cycle of sin and death broken, verses 24-25?
RESPONSE
1. Based on the information in this chapter, what conclusions can you come to about the law?

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

2. Of what use to you is the information in this chapter?

READ: Romans 8:1-17

- 1. Why is there no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, verses 1 & 2?
- 2.a) Why is the law powerless, verse 3?
- 2.b) How can the righteous requirements of the law be met, vs 4?
- 3.a) List what you learn about the sinful nature from verses 5 to 8.
- 3.b) Why are people controlled by their sinful natures?
- 4.a) List what you learn about the mind controlled by the Spirit from verses 5 to 8
- 4.b) How do people live in accordance with the Spirit?
- 5. What do you understand verses 9-11 to be teaching?
- 6. Verse 12 tells believers that we have an obligation. What is our "obligation" and how do we fulfill it?

RESPONSE

- 1. If you were to tell unbelievers that they are not free, rather they have their minds preset and pre-programmed to sin, what might be the reaction that you would receive to that choice of words? Why?
- 2. What do you thinks are the benefits from being an heir of God? What might it mean "to share in His sufferings?"

READ: Romans 8:18-27

- 1. Having established our relationship as children, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, why do you think that Paul now raises the issue of suffering?
- 2. Why should you not be discouraged by suffering in the present experiences of your life, verses 18 & 19?
- 3. What are the conditions under which you live and what explanation is given as to why the world is in this condition, verses 20 & 21?
- 4. What do you learn about our present experience from verses 22 & 23?
- 5. Why is hope an essential element in the Christian life, verses 24 & 25?
- 6. List the ways in which the Spirit of God acts on your behalf when you pray, verses 26 & 27.

RESPONSE

- 1.a) Why is there suffering in this world?
- 1.b) Why are Christians not exempt from it?
- 2. From the insights into prayer given in verses 26 & 27, choose the one that helps you most and explain why.

READ: Romans 8:28-39

- 1. What does verse 28 tell you about the circumstances of your life?
- 2. For what purpose is a person predestined by God, verse 29?
- 3. List the means by which God conforms believers to the image of His Son, verse 30?
- 4. On what basis is God able to do these things, verses 31 & 32?
- 5. What is the final answer to the objection against finding all your security in Christ, verses 33 & 34?
- 6.a) Identify two categories into which the troubles of this life can be separated.
- 6.b) Explain why neither can affect your relationship to God, verses 35-39.

RESPONSE

- 1. Based on the information in these verses, explain what it means for you to be predestined by God.
- 2. Reread these verses and list the verbs which describe the present activity of God and Christ on your behalf.

Which of these encourages you most at this point in your Christian life and why?

READ: Romans 9:1-33

- 1. What is the dilemma in which Paul finds the people of Israel, verses 1-5?
- 2. List the reasons why their problems could not be attributed to the Failure of the Word of God, verses 6-13.

NOTE: In order For you to understand the arguments which follow, it is essential that you be aware of the circumstances in which this word from God to Moses and Pharaoh was spoken. Please read Exodus 33:14-23 and Exodus 9:13-20 before proceeding.

- 3.a) Why do you think the word of God to these men was so different?
- 3.b) What is wrong with the question, "Then why does God still blame us?", verses 19-21?
- 4. What do you learn about the character of God from verses 22-24?
- 5. The quotations from the Old Testament which follow have a common theme. Sum it up in your own words (verses 25-29).
- 6. What is it that determines a person's relationship to God from verses 30-33?

RESPONSE

- 1. What have you learned about God's purpose in election (verse 11) from this chapter?
- 2. From the analogy of the potter and the clay what do you learn about God and yourself?

READ: Romans 10:1-21

1. Why is a zeal for God by itself not effective, verses 1-4?

NOTE: The argument developed in verses 5 to 8 is based on quotations from Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30: 11-14. You should read them before proceeding.

- 2. What important point is being made in verses 5-8?
- 3. List the two actions which are essential before any person can claim to be saved, verses 9-10.
- 4. What do you learn about the character of the Lord from verses 11-13?
- 5. Why is public testimony or preaching about Jesus necessary, verses 14-15?
- 6. Why do you think these particular quotations from the Old Testament are used by Paul concerning Israel, verses 16-21?

RESPONSE

- 1.a) What steps can you take to avoid being involved in only a <u>silent witness</u> of life for Christ?
- 1.b) What steps can you take to avoid being involved in only a <u>vocal witness</u> for Christ?
- 2. In what actual ways do you support your confession that "Jesus is Lord"?

READ: Romans 11:1-36

1. List the reasons Paul used to reach the conclusion that God has not rejected His people, verses 1-5.

NOTE: The quotations used in verses 8-10 seem to imply that a person's own attitude has no influence on their ultimate fate. Read the verses chosen to support the statement made in verse 7 in their original setting, Isaiah 29:9-16 and Psalm 69:19-28.

- 2. What do you learn about those who were hardened from these Scriptures?
- 3. Put the argument of verses 11-24 in your own words.
- 4. Why is Paul so confident as to the future of his people, Israel, verses 25-27?
- 5. List the things which you learn about God's character from verses 28-32.
- 6. Look back over the last three chapters and choose from them the things which you think led Paul to conclude this section of Romans with this magnificent doxology.

RESPONSE

- 1. In verse 29 the statement "For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable" is made. What does this mean and what is its significance insofar as your own relationship to God is concerned?
- 2. The doxology with which this chapter closes contains quotations from Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11. To enhance your own appreciation of God, please read Isaiah 40:9-26, which begins with the reason for proclaiming the good news with the statement "Here is your God!" and Job 40:1-10; Job 41:11. From the information given, record the characteristics of God for which you too can praise and glorify Him.

READ: Romans 12:1-21

Note the word "therefore" which indicates that the responses now to be urged upon the readers are based upon an appreciation of what God has done for them in Christ.

- 1.a) What response is called for, verses 1 & 2?
- 1.b) What are the steps in this process, verses 1 & 2?
- 1.c) What is the result, verses 1 & 2?
- 2. What two factors are to guide you in determining your understanding and acceptance of your particular place in the Christian community, verse 3?
- 3. Why do you think the human body is used as an analogy of our relationship in Christ, verses 4 & 5?
- 4. What do you learn about service from verses 6-8?
- 5. List the actions and attitudes which are to become part of your life, verses 9-16.
- 6. What is your responsibility to others in an evil society, verses 17-21?

RESPONSE

- 1.a) Explain how your body can be presented as "a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God"?
- 1.b) Explain why this is called an "act of spiritual worship"?
- 2. According to verse 3 you are to think of yourself with sober judgment. Do this insofar as the attitudes and actions listed under question 5 are concerned. Are there areas in which you are weak? List them and commit yourself to change as you are enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

READ: Romans 13:1-14

- 1. Why must you submit yourself to those who govern, verses 1 & 2?
- 2. What is the role of those to whom God has committed authority in society, verses 3 & 4?
- 3. What is the responsibility of a disciple of Christ in his or her particular society, verses 5-7?
- 4. Express in your own words what you understand verses 8-10 to require of you.
- 5. Why is this kind of behaviour appropriate, verses 11 & 12?
- 6. List those activities which cannot be included under the heading of decent behaviour, verse 13.

RESPONSE

- 1.a) What activities of the government would you consider as those to which a Christian could legitimately protest?
- 1.b) Do you think a Christian has the freedom to assist in the violent overthrowing of an evil government? If not, why not?
- 2.a) Explain what you think it means to "cloth yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ".
- 2.b) Why is what you think about important?

READ: Romans 14:1-23

- 1. What is to be the determining factor in our acceptance of one another, verses 1-4?
- 2. List the things which fall under the heading of disputable matters, verses 1-6.
- 3. Why do these issues have such power to disrupt the fellowship of believers, verses 3, 4 & 10?
- 4. For whom are you responsible before the Lord, verses 9-12?
- 5. In matters of conscience, summarize your responsibility, verses 13-22.
- 6. What is to have priority in your service for Christ, vs 17-19?

RESPONSE

- 1.a) What would you list as disputable matters today?
- 1.b) Based on the directions given in this chapter, how would you resolve such a dispute?
- 2. In matters of dispute where you have a clear conscience, what is your responsibility?

READ: Romans 15:1-13

- 1. Under what obligation is a person who considers himself strong, verses 1 & 2?
- 2.a) Read Psalm 69:6-12 from which the quotation in verse 3 is taken. What motives are given for Christ's acceptance of reproach?
- 2.b) Why is this same motivation essential in our relationships?
- 3. Of what value is a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures (verse 4)?
- 4. Why is a spirit of unity among Christians important, verses 5 & 6?
- 5. What attitude is essential if there is to be unity in any fellowship of believers, verses 7 & 8?
- 6. List the results that flow from the work of Christ on behalf of God's truth, verses 9-13.

RESPONSE

- 1. What are the ways in which God gives you encouragement and endurance?
- 2.a) What do you think is involved in "trusting Him" in order that the God of Hope may fill you with all joy and peace?
- 2.b) What does it mean to "overflow with hope"?
- c) How is this possible in our present world?

READ: Romans 15:14-33

- 1.a) What do you learn about the believers in Rome from verse 14?
- 1.b) Why does Paul bother to write to people like this, verses 15 & 16?
- 2. Why was Paul successful in his ministry to the Gentiles, verses 17-22?
- 3. On what grounds does Paul argue that Gentile Christians have an obligation to the Jewish believers, verses 26 & 27?
- 4. Outline Paul's proposed itinerary, verses 23-28.
- 5. List the reasons for which Paul asks the Christians in Rome to join him in prayer, verses 30-33?

NOTE: Refresh your memory of the events which led to the formation of Paul's travel plans by reading Acts, chapter 21-27 for the details of what actually happened before proceeding.

6. Choose from the record of actual events as recorded in Acts those in which you see God at work answering these prayers, verses 30-33.

RESPONSE

- 1.a) From the information in these verses in chapter 15, what do you learn about the relationship of Christians to each other?
- 1.b) List the benefits which you personally have experienced from fellowship with other believers.
- 1.c) In what ways do you contribute to the refreshing of your Christian community?
- 2. What have you learned about prayer from this study?

READ: Romans 16:1-27

- 1. Why is the church at Rome to welcome Phoebe, verses 1 & 2?
- 2. What do you learn about the relationships of believers from the list of greetings in verses 3-16?
- 3. What guidelines does Paul give to protect these Christians from people who cause divisions and put obstacles in their way, verses 17-20?
- 4. What do you learn about Paul's ministry and work for God from the greetings in verses 21-23?
- 5. By what means does God establish believers, verse 25?
- 6. Why was the proclamation of Jesus Christ a message in which they could take confidence, verses 25-27?

RESPONSE

- 1.a) What do you think is your best defence against false and divisive teaching?
- 1.b) What do you think it means "to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil."?
- 2. In what ways do you contribute to the glory of God?