

# A Walk through Romans

## Introduction

Saul grew up in Tarsus, Cilicia, now modern day Turkey. His was an orthodox Jewish family. When he was about 6, his family moved to Jerusalem. He was Roman by birth, and Jewish by faith. He studied under Gamaliel when he was about 10-15, and was active as a Pharisee. Saul was likely a member of the Sanhedrin as well.

As he grew older, Saul was a persecutor of the early Christians, seeing them as a cult. He stood over the stoning of Stephen, as the officer in charge, offering his approval. Later on, with letters from the Jewish Leaders, Saul was pursuing these Christ followers in order to arrest them and punish them for their faith.

On one of these trips, he was suddenly blinded by a light, and a voice called out, "Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Saul asked, "who are you, that I am persecuting?" Then the voice said, "I am Jesus."

What a shock! Saul was now blind, and the charge he had been following was now null and void. The voice told him where to go, and a man would meet him. And so it happened. The man prayed over Saul, and his eyes were opened. And from then on, Saul's pursuit was to follow Jesus.

As a learner, he immediately jumped in, gleaning as much as he could, as often as he could. Three years in the desert with other leaders helped him grow in his faith. And as a studied teacher, yet with brand new content, he began teaching and sharing his faith. He was still zealous, but now for Jesus.

His pursuit became a charge to bring the gospel to people who had never heard. His church sent him to Asia (now called Turkey) and he went from city to city. His journeys are found in the Book of Acts. Visiting Synagogues, he appealed first to the Jews, but then also to the Gentiles. As he was now working more with Greeks, Saul began using the Roman form of his name, Paul.

Holy Spirit was mightily at work too, with healings and visions, with prophecy and words of knowledge. God was building the church among the peoples, or nations, and Paul was along for the journey! He reported back to the apostles in Jerusalem, and to the church in Caesarea who sent him.

Having established groups of believers in Asia and Greece, he set his sights next to Rome. He was headed to Italy, and then with their help, on to Spain. So he wrote this letter to the believers in Rome, reviewing the faith, and asking their support to receive him and then send him along. But first a quick side trip to Jerusalem to deliver a blessing to them from the churches in Asia and Greece.

So let's dive together into Paul's letter to the Romans.

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## Chapter 1

'This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name. '

Romans 1:1-5

Paul knows who he is. And he measures himself by what the Lord has done. Missing from his resume are his studies, jobs, rank and reputation. Instead here's what is important:

- Slave of Christ Jesus
- Chosen by God
- Established to be an Apostle
- Sent to Preach God's Good News

This is who Paul is, and the only credentials he will bank on. Next is his summary of the Good News. God's message was promised long ago through the prophets in the scriptures. It's about God's own son. He descended from King David, but was shown to be God's Son by his resurrection from the dead. This was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus, God's sent messiah. And He is now in charge. He is the Lord. Through Him God has given us the privilege and authority as His apostles or sent ones, to tell gentiles everywhere what God has done, and to call them to follow and obey Jesus. And for all of this, God Himself will gain glory from all the peoples.

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'Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name. And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. '

Romans 1:5-7

What has God called people to do? We are to believe in Him, and to obey the commands of His son Jesus. We are teaching the nations to obey everything that Jesus commanded, just as He said. Take a peek into Matthew 28:18-20. It's the same! So Paul writes ahead to Rome, to the believers, and is establishing what believing and obeying means for people from every nation. This applies to every believer, every person who has been called to belong to Christ. This means you and it means me as well. And the great part? We are each one loved by God, and called as His own holy people. We are holy people. And then He pours forth His grace, and gives us His peace. Think of it. Relish the moment. Then lift your voice to praise Him!

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'Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the world. God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son.

One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you. For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours. '

Romans 1:8-12

The thanks go to God through Christ Jesus. He is the one building their faith. He is at work in Rome, and their obedience to Jesus is being shared throughout the world. We love to hear of our brothers and sisters growing and flourishing in their faith. And we celebrate with them! Daily we praise God for what He is doing.

And then we pray the Lord to give us opportunity to come alongside. Paul has Holy Spirit's work to do, and he prays that opportunity will bring him to Rome so he can work with the believers. God has plans, and Paul is all in for them. Let us keep the same mindset, seeking opportunity to serve.

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'I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News. '

Romans 1:13-15

Paul's longing is to come to Rome and preach the Good News of Jesus, and see a turning among more Gentiles. But the Lord so far has prevented him. The obligation of the Gospel is to share. Paul does it, and so must we. But the timing and organizing is up to the Lord. He holds our days, even as He works in our desires. Paul longed to come and share, but God holds the calendar. Maybe it's the same with you? Are you longing for something, and yet the Lord hasn't brought that about yet? Trust Him. He holds the calendar. And He has us too.

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'For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

Romans 1:16-17

I am excited about the Good News. I bear no shame, but exult in God's power. And not only power, but accomplishment of saving completely. Everyone who believes is saved, both Jew and Gentile. This

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means you and me. God makes us right in His eyes. Our work is believe. That's the only work, and it's fully dependent on God's sent one, Jesus. This is how we do it!

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'But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.'

Romans 1:18-20

God is angry toward people. He takes a strong stance against workers of wickedness. Their wicked pursuits suppress the truth. The truth is that God is forever powerful and absolutely divine. He is worthy of praise and honor from every person. But the wicked suppress this truth. They do know of God's power and divine nature. God made it obvious to them. The earth shows Him off! The sky demonstrates His wonders. Every day it's new, and every day He shows again! He is affirmed by everything in creation. But the wicked hide it. Truly they have no excuse for not knowing God. The entire purpose of creation is to reflect God and call people back to Him.

Sometimes we think that what we do doesn't matter. Every person stands alone. But this is far from the truth. Our worship of God carries over to our demeanor and countenance, and our treatment of others. Godly living blesses others and elevates who God is. We are living testimonies. Either we are elevating the truth or we are suppressing the truth. And one of these things makes God angry.

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'Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. '

Romans 1:21-25

Choosing to worship God makes a believer. We see Him everywhere and we thank Him for all He does. We sing His praise, and acclaim all His works. We seek Him for our own life needs. We richly adore Him.

But these did not. They disregarded all they could see and instead made up fables and myths. Their worship went elsewhere. And so God abandoned them. They do vile things with their bodies, delving into sin, and worshiping created things. They have left God far behind.

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We must worship God. And we must recognize sin, and call it out. Those who walk from God do so knowingly. So proclaim Him, glorious, and acclaim all His works. Pray for the lost, seek them out, call them to repent. That's what God did for us!

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'That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.'

Romans 1:26-32

Choosing depraved living over a relationship with God is a whirlpool of evil that destroys lives. When men and women refused their relationship with God who made them, they began seeking evil, committing atrocities and destroying others along the way. Sexual sin permeates. But this is only the beginning.

Because they abandoned God, He abandoned them, Their living descended into every kind of depravity, from foolish thinking to every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, and more. These people are Haters of God, they are proud on their own. Pride Month flows right out of this. And so does backstabbing, hatred, gossiping, deception, malice and even newly invented ways to sin.

Friends, call people out of sin, and into relationship with the Lord. Repent and seek Him, and He will receive and redeem them. Relationship is still available. But people must turn from sin. And We know the answer. Today, turn back to the Lord while you still can!

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## Chapter 2

'You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things? Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? '

Romans 2:1-4

And we are under the same condemnation. We fall in sin, and discover we are no different.

So look at God. He is kind. He is tolerant. He is patient. He is gracious toward us, to cause us to turn back to Him. His wrath is set against us and all who continue in sin. But His grace is ever ready to wash us clean when we turn to Him.

Today. Turn to Him!

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'But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will judge everyone according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism. '

Romans 2:5-11

Yes, there's trouble coming. God is a judge of works, because works reveal the heart. How can anyone escape? There's a secret, hidden from the lost. Jesus. He's the secret. He taught, He demonstrated, and established others as well. He stepped into punishment, and carried it on Himself. No longer are my bad works on me. Jesus has removed them from me, and given His life where mine was required. I've been washed clean in His blood, and am now able to stand. And when Father God sees me, He sees a clean, person with no sin. The only works left on me are the right ones.

Make the trade today. Give all of you to Him, and let Him redeem you. There is a cost. Your life is now in His hands, and your duty is to follow Him lovingly. Do it.

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'When the Gentiles sin, they will be destroyed, even though they never had God's written law. And the Jews, who do have God's law, will be judged by that law when they fail to obey it. For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's

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law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. '

Romans 2:12-15

God has written His law into our hearts. We know what is right. And we are judged by it. Whether we know God's Word, His truths are still inside us. And we will be judged accordingly. Jews and Christians have God's Word, and will be further scrutinized because of it. Friends, let's commit to dig into God's Word, and to obey what He commands. There's no better way to live!

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'And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life. You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, and you boast about your special relationship with him. You know what he wants; you know what is right because you have been taught his law. You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for people who are lost in darkness. You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that God's law gives you complete knowledge and truth. Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples? You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it. No wonder the Scriptures say, "The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you." '

Romans 2:16-24

Judgment is coming. And we will be judged because we know God's Word, and yet we break it. Jesus really does care about the details. Do we obey what he teaches? Or are we cutting corners? Take some time and scrutinize. Are there areas we need to turn? Let's do it.

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'The Jewish ceremony of circumcision has value only if you obey God's law. But if you don't obey God's law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile. And if the Gentiles obey God's law, won't God declare them to be his own people? In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God's law will condemn you Jews who are circumcised and possess God's law but don't obey it. For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.'

Romans 2:25-29

It's not that the Jews cut a foreskin. It's that their heart is made right with God, and they obey Him. The same is true of gentiles as well. It's true of you and me. God wants relationship, and we die without it. Come to Jesus!

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## Chapter 3

'Then what's the advantage of being a Jew? Is there any value in the ceremony of circumcision? Yes, there are great benefits! First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God. True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful? Of course not! Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say about him, "You will be proved right in what you say, and you will win your case in court." '

Romans 3:1-4

What a gift, being entrusted with the whole Word of God! It's not the foreskin that mattered, though it was a sign. What is really important is carrying the whole Word of God, so that all peoples may join into God's family on God's terms. Carrying a legacy to the nations - that's Israel's role! We must treasure it as well.

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"But," some might say, "our sinfulness serves a good purpose, for it helps people see how righteous God is. Isn't it unfair, then, for him to punish us?" (This is merely a human point of view.) Of course not! If God were not entirely fair, how would he be qualified to judge the world? "But," someone might still argue, "how can God condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness and brings him more glory?" And some people even slander us by claiming that we say, "The more we sin, the better it is!" Those who say such things deserve to be condemned. '

Romans 3:5-8

God didn't need my sinfulness in order to show His amazing character, purity, value and glory. No He's been revealing this since day one, and all men already have glimpses of His glory. But His eternal pursuit of drawing men and women into relationship with Him will continue throughout history, as He works to bring every nation and people into relationship with Him. His purpose is not just to wash my sin away, but far more, to bring me to worship Him and join in His eternal work. Suddenly all the history and current global activity makes sense as He works for the whole world to join in wonderful relationship and worship with Him. And we are invited for that journey too. Walk from sin, take time to worship, and then see who else could use such wonderful relationship. Invite them along too.

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'Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. As the Scriptures say,

"No one is righteous  
— not even one.  
No one is truly wise;  
no one is seeking God.  
All have turned away;  
all have become useless.  
No one does good,

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not a single one.”  
“Their talk is foul,  
like the stench from an open grave.  
Their tongues are filled with lies.”  
“Snake venom drips from their lips.”  
“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”  
“They rush to commit murder.  
'Destruction and misery always follow them. '  
They don't know where to find peace.”  
“They have no fear of God at all.” '

Romans 3:9-18

God's redemption isn't earned. Neither Israel nor the gentiles have standing on their own. Looking through words and deeds, we find we are all utterly corrupt. But this is only half the story, the part about our need. The Epic from Creation to Eternity is how Magnificent God created people in His image, and how He works throughout history to draw all peoples to Him to find their ultimate fulfillment in relationship with Him, and elevating His glory in worship. He will bring people to Himself from every tribe, tongue, nation and family. Every man, woman, boy and girl who comes to Him will relish His love, and sing His praises. The story isn't about which sinner is better, it's about God's eternal work, and our invitation into joining Him in it.

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'Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. '

Romans 3:19-22

When God silences my excuses, I am dumb struck. I become silent. My guilt is complete, and I am stuck. In humility, I look up and am amazed. For God has shown a way back to Him. A way of forgiveness, of redemption, of restoration, of joy in worship of Him. I am made right. We are made right. There's a place of joy filled worship where all my junk is gone, and God's sent one, Jesus, carries all the burden away. Instead we see Him for who He is – great, mighty, loving, forgiving, rescuing, powerful, magnificent. And we worship. Oh this is the quest for which I have been made. And you as well! Draw near! The invitation is to join Him. He is taking the message to the nations! We are invited!

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'For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did

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this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. '

Romans 3:23-26

Oh the rich grace of God, providing a sacrifice to fix what I couldn't. And that was just the first step. He made me clean, and right with Him. Next He welcomed me into fellowship with Him, worship of Him, and partnership in His pursuit of all the peoples of the world. It's that "what He would do in this present time" which continues until His return. And then there will be people from every tribe, tongue, nation and kindred together worshipping Him. Yes He saved me, saved us. And then we were enjoined into His All-time Pursuit of All Peoples. And the result will be incredible worship, acclamation, joy and rich fellowship with Him!

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'Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.'

Romans 3:27-31

Our acquittal is based on faith alone. We couldn't do it. But God's gifted sacrifice of His Son covered everything we needed. By faith we join Him, accepting His work, worshipping and praising Him, and joining in His pursuit of all people, Jews and Gentiles alike! And then look, our hearts are changed and we end up fulfilling the law!

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## Chapter 4

'Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. '

Romans 4:1-5

Abraham set the foundation, and teaches us that being right with God is completely a gift from the Lord. It's not anything that we craft or create or make. We don't earn it. And yet we are completely saved by our loving Father, and walk in relationship with Him!

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'David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it: "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin." '

Romans 4:6-8

Where do I find my joy? Is my joy from recognition? Is my joy from what I make? Where do I find delight?

Did you know, God who made the heavens, the earth, the planets, He made a way for me, personally, to know and walk with Him? Now, here is real joy! He walks with me, invites me into His presence. He leads me, works in me, and even through me. He speaks, and I obey. I love His word. I love His world. I love His pursuit of all peoples. And He invites me to join. And so I do!

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Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. But how did this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Romans 4:9-12

The blessing is for all people, as Abraham is both father of the uncircumcised believers and the circumcised believers. Both Gentiles and Jews can stand with Abraham by their faith alone. Believing

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in God and following Him is the only qualification to be in God's family and experience such wonderful blessing. Faith alone!

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'Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing. '

Romans 4:13-17

God's plan for the world was to bless Abraham and all who would place their faith in God. This gathering of all nations includes everyone who believes. They all join into a right relationship with Father. He is magnified by them, and they follow and love on Him. Their hope is completely His, and their life is incredibly rich. They are in right relationship with Father, and finding their world blessed immensely. Enter in by faith, there's room for you too!

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'Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.'

Romans 4:18-25

God's reaches out to Abram with a call, and Abram believed Him. God's glory was at work, blessing Abram, and he in turn placed all his trust in God who promised. He followed, despite age, despite barrenness, despite the whole hard situation. God had promised, and Abram believed Him. The results from Abram's trust was worship and glory of God.

God's call to you and me is not just for blessing, but relationship. His call results in worship, trust, obedience, relationship with Him. Through all this, we take our part among all peoples who worship and relish relationship with God! Our faith is accounted as righteousness.

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## Chapter 5

'Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. '

Romans 5:1-2

Believing in God, and counting on His provision of a savior, we have entered into an amazing relationship. We are at peace as we walk with God, and share in His glory. Oh worship Him! He is holy, and mighty, and majestic, and caring and loving. We share in that with Him, and we join His pursuit of bringing all peoples to Himself. This is stunning. He is awesome. And He welcomed us into His eternal work!

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'We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. '

Romans 5:3-5

We are at peace with God and yet we have challenges, problems, trials and even opposition. So God's message in these is that He is yet working, strengthening us, building endurance and boosting our confidence in Him. He dearly loves us and is quietly but powerfully at work! And Holy Spirit fills us to steady our hearts and bolster our love and worship of Him!

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'When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. '

Romans 5:6-8

We were in a mess. We made the mess. And we were stuck. Our resources gone, depleted, we were people without hope.

And a most amazing thing happened. God Himself sent His Son in our place. He carried the punishment for me, and gave me His life, eternal life. No more judgment, rather justified righteousness with God.

It's all new, and nothing terrible remains. I am saved. You who received His amazing Son are also saved! We couldn't. He did it for us!

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'And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of

## A Walk through Romans

his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. '

Romans 5:9-11

Friendship restored. This is a huge improvement on "avoiding condemnation." This is new! Our Father welcomes us! He has placed His Spirit in us and His Son's life is beginning to live out in us.

Relish Him. Adore Him. Worship His great name! Tell the nations! Oh what restoration does for our soul. We are brought back into relationship with God. What He is doing, we are doing. Where He is going, we are going. And we know where that is!

Ps 46:10 says "Be still and know that I am God." But it doesn't stop there, "I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Over and over he tells us of His elevation among all peoples, and we are part of that going! We are saved into a parade that reaches the ends of the earth. SO let us pick up our part and follow Him to every people, so that all may lift up His name!

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'When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. '

Romans 5:12-17

It's time to live in triumph over sin. Jesus is God's gracious gift, covering the sins of many, covering the sins of many who will come to God for restoration, forgiveness, washing. All who receive Him will live in triumph over sin and death. It's time! Receive Him, and live in triumph over sin!

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'Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all

## **A Walk through Romans**

people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Romans 5:18-21

God's wonderful grace rules over sin. Ongoing, continuous, He pours His grace over me, over you, and over everyone who turns to Jesus. And He gives life that goes forever with Him. We are renewed, changed, and in relationship with Him. Where He goes, we go. What He says, we obey. His agenda becomes our agenda. His glory becomes our praise. And His pursuit becomes our life.

And oh how we thrive in this new amazing life with God!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 6

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:1-4

We have died friends, dead to sin. In God's amazing grace, He raised us to life in Christ. And guess where we are going next? He has raised us to a commission, that is, a Co Mission. We are joined into His mission. From the beginning of time, He set out a mission to show His glory and make His name great to all peoples. And He has brought us to Himself so that we can praise His name, lift His name high, and join in fellowship with Him. We find our fullest life, not in sin, but in elevated worship and co-working in His work. I am finding my place in His great mission to reach all peoples of the earth, and bring some from every people into His worship.

Get a glimpse: Revelation 5:9 for example. This is where He is going. And he loves us and brings us into that mission. So no more pursuing sin, we are dead to it. Let's get after this new life with Him, Start your day with worship!

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'Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. '

Romans 6:5-11

Sin is a bully who has been removed. Sin has lost its power over me. There is no longer a persecuting force, it's gone. All because of Jesus. I have no more need to obey sin. My life is free. I am free. And you are free too.

So where will we run? I am running to Christ, to His great love and call. Where are we going? He has this eternal pursuit, to bless the nations, to glorify Himself, and to bring His Kingdom. I am going with Him! He knows the specifics, but it's all part of His story - history, culminating in heaven! I'm with Him.

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Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under

## A Walk through Romans

the law, but under grace.

Romans 6:12-14

Don't let it rule. Don't let the monster have any place. Do not allow sin to take you. Instead bring yourself to God as a lovely gift. Let Him rule, and we follow. Let Him take glory as we lift Him up. And He will guide, we will follow. We were dead, and He gave us life. So we give Him ourselves, as a tool for righteousness. We are now His instrument, and He will use us, place us, take us, right where we are going. We are now giving Him glory, and He is co-laboring. He is taking us into His amazing pursuit of all peoples. Give Him you!

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'Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. '

Romans 6:15-18

Freed from sin by Christ. We are free to choose whom we shall obey. And there are only two choices. There is sin which destroys and brings death. Or there's Christ who covered everything. His great love brings us freedom from bondage. He's going to the nations, so that all peoples may share His glory and acclamation. And we are going with Him, in full obedience. But wrapped around all of this is His love for us. So go in, all in for His glory!

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'Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Romans 6:19-23

We have only one master whom we serve. He used to be called sin, and so we were all in for sin. We had no obligation for righteous living, only for sin. But now God has saved us from sin by Jesus, and now we are obligated to serve Him. He has broken the chain to sin, and we are free to live for Him. Sin pays out with death, but those in Christ receive instead, eternal life. And so, we are all in for Him!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 7

'Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.'

Romans 7:1-6

We are united with Christ. He rose from the dead and broke the power of the law. He is supreme over the Law. We who walk with Him are also dead to the Law. There is no more obligation to the Law, because we are united to Christ. Our leading is from Him, our work is Him working in and through us. Our direction is His Spirit leading, and our assurance is the constant overwhelming love of the Father to us. We serve Him in the living of the Spirit!

Take some time today to worship Him. Speak of His greatness. Offer Him praises. Take silence to hear Him speak to you. Read His word, and put that into practice. Tell Him that you love Him.

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'Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "You must not covet." But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power.

At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life, and I died. So I discovered that the law's commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me. But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good. But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death.'

Romans 7:7-13

You know, sin ruins everything. The law was there to help me, but sin grabbed me and we pushed against the law until we broke it. Sin broke me. I couldn't break away.

## A Walk through Romans

Until that day God's Son died for me, and then drew me to Himself. He carried all the sin, took the full burden, and washed me anew. In Christ I am freed. Walking in Him I find I actually obey the law as well!

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'So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good.

So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. '

Romans 7:14-20

Sin living in me is the culprit. Sin works to pull me in and then condemn me. Oh what a weighty condemnation. Even walking with Jesus, filled with Holy Spirit, I get tempted. Sin wants to rule.

Worship draws me to the Lord. Grace washes me clean. Seeking Him, singing His praise subjecting me to Him - that's the answer. And He is faithful to cleanse me, wash me anew, fill me with His Spirit, and lead me forward. It's a wonderful walk even with the struggle.

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'I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.'

Romans 7:21-25

I live on the battlefield. My heart loves and yearns for God's word. His law is where I want to thrive. But there is a battle going on inside of me. The sin that still lingers is fighting, striving to pull me away. Misery is living between sin and heaven, and it's a battle I must win.

Holy Spirit in me is the only answer. Jesus Christ won the battle, and Holy Spirit draws me to worship, to praise, to confession, to cleansing. He is the answer for me. He is the answer for you. Jesus Christ is the more-than-sufficient sacrifice, and His Spirit, Holy Spirit, indwells, and leads. Oh worship the Lord. We can because the whole debt has been paid. We are His!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 8

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

Romans 8:1-4

Completely paid. The law holds nothing over us, as Jesus fully satisfied the just requirements. Everything is paid, and hell's gates cannot claim us any longer.

Holy Spirit lives in us, and we relish the fellowship with Him. Life-giving Spirit empowers us – we are free. Stop and say thank you. Stop and consider Him, and offer praise to Him for this great gift. It's a forever gift that never fades. And it comes out of His great love for us, for you, for me.

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Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

Romans 8:5-8

When I am controlled by the Spirit, I naturally think about things which will please Holy Spirit. He pours God's love into me, and my soul yearns to offer love back to Him. I find life and peace as I follow and obey Him. This is where real life begins. There's an adventure following Him too. Get onboard!

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But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Romans 8:9-11

Wow, there are only two kinds of people. Some have the Spirit of God living in them. The others don't. This is about real life with God leading. There is only one alternative, life where God is not leading.

## A Walk through Romans

For me, it's the first, Holy Spirit living in me, leading, speaking. And I am worshiping, listening, praying, following.

Spirit is speaking to me, leading, guiding, and managing so many events around me too. This God and me relationship is everything to me. And He wants it to be everything to you too. Speak to Him, talk about the day. Ask what He wants for you today. Ask where He is going, and taking you with Him.

And share with your friends too. Oh how much He wants to fill their lives with Himself. We all can see His amazing majesty, power, and work. We are going with Him.

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'Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.'

Romans 8:12-14

There are two paths. Live by sin or live by the Spirit. One kills. But the other pours fresh life into you. Live by the Spirit, and crush the sin that tempts. You will live. You will thrive. You will relish your time with the Spirit, praising God the Father and thanking Him for His Son. This is how we live.

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'So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.'

Romans 8:15-17

I am speechless. God who made the whole world has adopted me. He chose me as His own. Washed and redeemed, He poured Holy Spirit into me and is creating a whole new life. My spirit cries out "Daddy!" with incredible joy. All He has is mine, is ours, as His heirs. What an amazing gift and relationship. Relish it! Then buckle your seat belt, there is suffering too. We live in a world that hates God, and will hate us for being His family. So relish the joy, but expect the pain too.

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'Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it.)'

Romans 8:18-24

## A Walk through Romans

Creation groans waiting. The whole world was made as God's delight, but has been subjected to death and decay. All because of sin. But one day, when sin is eradicated, and death with it, the earth will rejoice. And we will rejoice with it, exulting in life. When we were saved, the promise for our future was established. But we have not experienced its fullness yet. But one day! Rejoice my friend!

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'But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently. And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. '

Romans 8:25-30

God has called us to Himself, and filled us with His Spirit. Even when we don't know what to pray for, Spirit prays for us in groanings, and His prayer is perfectly in line with God's plans. God is at work, and is bringing all things together for His glory.

So we worship Him and glorify Him. And then something happens, He gives us His glory. We are becoming more like Him in character, as we walk with Him and worship Him.

So walk with Him. Worship Him. Trust Him in the unknown. Praise Him in the things we do know! Let Spirit have His way. And anything He directs, obey and follow!

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'What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. '

Romans 8:31-34

God is for us. He went after us to rescue, to redeem, and to restore. He loves us, and we love Him. Everything we need - He is giving us. Every obstacle, Jesus is pleading for us. Our Father, Jesus our brother, and Holy Spirit in us, they are working for our best. And the response is this, worship, adoration and intimate fellowship. We are going where He is going, and we are celebrating all that He is!

# A Walk through Romans

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'Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Romans 8:35-39

Nothing can separate us from God's Love. He chose us, and He will see us all the way home. And in that day I will stand with Joash, with Dad Pearson, with David, with Tom, with Saniah, with John, and we will celebrate His amazing love, goodness and care.

Satan comes up empty, and we come up saved and in joyful fellowship! Jesus wins.

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 9

'With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them. They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.'

Romans 9:1-5

God brought His plan of redeeming the nations through Israel. To see them far from God is very sad, dreadful. And Paul, a rabbi and teacher longs that the Jews might have hearts of worship for God. Longing that they would worship Jesus as their savior, and be restored - that's his longing. Pray today for Israel and all Jewish people, for restoration and joy in Christ for them.

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'Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God's people! Being descendants of Abraham doesn't make them truly Abraham's children. For the Scriptures say, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted," though Abraham had other children, too. This means that Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God.

Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham's children. For God had promised, "I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins. But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.) She was told, "Your older son will serve your younger son." In the words of the Scriptures, "I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau."'

Romans 9:6-13

Not all of Abraham's descendants are children of promise. God was narrowing down the lineage. And He kept doing so until he reached one. Jesus. The seed of Abraham.

And anyone along the way who sought God and hoped in His salvation, was actually waiting on Messiah. Everyone who hopes in the Lord is actually part of the promised ones. It is Jesus who makes it so. Our hope has always been in the Son. Read Isaiah 53 again!

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'Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! For God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose." So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it. For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, "I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to

## A Walk through Romans

spread my fame throughout the earth.” So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen. ’

Romans 9:14-18

Simply, God shows mercy to whom He shows it. He hardens hearts. Know this, He is a great and good God. He is loving and faithful, and promises blessing to all who will turn to Him. Hold fast to Him for His character, because the discussion might frighten you!

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’Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven’t they simply done what he makes them do?”

No, don’t say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, “Why have you made me like this?”

When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn’t he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction.

He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory. And we are among those whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles. ’

Romans 9:19-24

Some will never respond to the Lord. They were never His. But some of us are. He worked it out long ago. Why would he choose me? I don't know. But the Riches of His Glory shine down on me, and it's amazing. Turn to Jesus my friends!

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’Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea, “Those who were not my people, I will now call my people.  
And I will love those  
whom I did not love before.”

And, “Then, at the place where they were told,  
‘You are not my people,’  
there they will be called  
‘children of the living God.’”

And concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out,  
“Though the people of Israel  
are as numerous as the sand of the seashore,  
only a remnant will be saved.  
For the Lord will carry out his sentence  
upon the earth quickly and with finality.”

## A Walk through Romans

And Isaiah said the same thing in another place:  
“If the Lord of Heaven’s Armies  
had not spared a few of our children,  
we would have been wiped out like Sodom,  
destroyed like Gomorrah.” ’

Romans 9:25-29

We were utterly hopeless, even as the children of Israel had no hope. Only the grace and mercy of God can change this. Both the Gentiles and the Jews are lost on their own.

We were stuck.  
But now we have standing.

Our God has made us His children.  
He has poured His grace and glory on us.  
And so we worship Him.  
And we go with Him as He pursues the nations!

We were hopeless, now we are assured!

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‘What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not trying to follow God’s standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place. But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, “I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.”’

Romans 9:30-33

Anyone who trusts in Him will not be disgraced. God has never justified anybody by the law. He gave the law so we would discover our deep need of Him. His cornerstone, Jesus, is the one whom we all hoped in, trusted in. And anyone hoping for God's rescue finds it. It's trusting in God, faith in His supply and provision, that gets it done. We are His children, all because of what He has done. We believe!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 10

'Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.'

Romans 10:1-4

Oh we humans want to work our way to Heaven's gates. And we can't. We are blind to the knowledge that God Himself knows our need, and solved our greatest problem. He made the way for us to be right with Him. His love is amazing, beckoning, and sufficient. Receive it, draw near to Him because of what He has done. Israel needs it! Every nation and people need it. And that's where He is going, to all the nations. Join Him!

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'For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."

And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."

Romans 10:5-11

It's really simple. Believe in Jesus in your heart, and declare Jesus as your Lord. You are saved. It's always been simple. This is all of it!

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'Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him?  
And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him?  
And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?  
And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?

That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"'

Romans 10:12-15

# A Walk through Romans

Everyone! Call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. This is the free gift of God. It's for everyone.

And yet there is a going and a sending required. How can anyone call on Him if they haven't heard of Him? And how can they hear unless someone tells them? And how can anyone tell them unless he goes? And how can he go unless believers send him?

So there is a blessing for the goer.  
And there is a blessing for the sender too.

Believing in Jesus draws us to worship. And it draws us to joining in His great enterprise of declaring the good news to all people. He invites us into His work! What a blessing!

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'But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "Lord, who has believed our message?" So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

But I ask, have the people of Israel actually heard the message? Yes, they have: "The message has gone throughout the earth, and the words to all the world."

But I ask, did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God said, "I will rouse your jealousy through people who are not even a nation. I will provoke your anger through the foolish Gentiles."

And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God, saying, "I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me."

But regarding Israel, God said, "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they were disobedient and rebellious."

Romans 10:16-21

Faith comes when we hear God's message. He has spread His invitation throughout the world, and we have opportunity to hear. There's a choice before us. We open our ears, and hear it. Or we close our ears and refuse it. In all of God's amazing plan and work, He gives us opportunity to choose.

Hear Him! Believe. Put all your heart into depending on Him. That's Faith.

But He will make the non-hearer jealous. He wants all nations to join in His worship. But He will provoke those who are turning away.

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 11

I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel? Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning. Do you realize what the Scriptures say about this?

Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said,

“ Lord , they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.”

And do you remember God’s reply? He said,

“No, I have 7,000 others who have never bowed down to Baal!”

It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel have remained faithful because of God’s grace—his undeserved kindness in choosing them. And since it is through God’s kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God’s grace would not be what it really is—free and undeserved. '

Romans 11:1-6

The Lord does have His people in Israel. And He has His people among the nations too.

We all get here because of God's grace - free to us, and undeserved!

God loves you so!

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'So this is the situation: Most of the people of Israel have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have—the ones God has chosen—but the hearts of the rest were hardened.

As the Scriptures say,

“God has put them into a deep sleep. To this day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear.”

Likewise, David said,

“Let their bountiful table become a snare, a trap that makes them think all is well. Let their blessings cause them to stumble, and let them get what they deserve. Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see, and let their backs be bent forever.”

Did God’s people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! They were disobedient, so God made salvation available to the Gentiles. But he wanted his own people to become jealous and claim it for themselves. '

# A Walk through Romans

Romans 11:7-11

Most of the people disobeyed and God hardened their hearts. The Good News of Jesus then came to the nations...

But note two secrets in the last verse. God's people are not beyond recovery. And through the Gentiles God intends to make his own people jealous, so that they come back and claim their real faith.

He is at work. We are afforded opportunity. And He wants all the peoples to come to Him, even His own people Israel.

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'Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the people of Israel turned down God's offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share when they finally accept it. I am saying all this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles. I stress this, for I want somehow to make the people of Israel jealous of what you Gentiles have, so I might save some of them.

For since their rejection meant that God offered salvation to the rest of the world, their acceptance will be even more wonderful. It will be life for those who were dead! And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their descendants will also be holy—just as the entire batch of dough is holy because the portion given as an offering is holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too. '

Romans 11:12-16

Imagine how beautiful when they all return. This is Paul's hope. And it's the hope I hold for my family too. Oh that one day, they will be drawn back - and what wonder as they look up and exclaim the thrill of relationship and worship of God Himself! One day... a return is coming.

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'But some of these branches from Abraham's tree—some of the people of Israel—have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God's special olive tree.

But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root. "Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me." Yes, but remember—those branches were broken off because they didn't believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. For if God did not spare the original branches, he won't spare you either. '

Romans 11:17-21

We have a place, made for us. But we got it by grace, not that we deserved it. God's gift made a place. So respect the foundation, and be kind. Stay humble and joy filled, because of an opportunity in God's Kingdom. We are here because He made a way. His love brought you in.

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## A Walk through Romans

'Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree.

You, by nature, were a branch cut from a wild olive tree. So if God was willing to do something contrary to nature by grafting you into his cultivated tree, he will be far more eager to graft the original branches back into the tree where they belong. '

Romans 11:22-24

We are grafted into God's tree. He is willing to separate those who wish to leave by disobedience, but He is also eager to add back any who wish to walk with Him in obedience.

There is an awful lot of personal choice here! If you are on the edge, come back! And if you feel too far away, it's a simple turn to return!

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'I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ. And so all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say, "The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness. And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins."

Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News, and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people he loves because he chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. '

Romans 11:25-29

God's gifts and His call can never be withdrawn! What assurance and hope for Israel. And what delight for us, that God made a place and pulled us in to His family. God is in the ever pursuing business, bringing sons and daughters to Himself. We join in celebration, praise and worship, and we go with Him as He pursues people from every tribe, tongue, kindred and people!

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'Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the people of Israel rebelled against him, God was merciful to you instead. Now they are the rebels, and God's mercy has come to you so that they, too, will share in God's mercy. For God has imprisoned everyone in disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.

Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! For who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.'

Romans 11:30-36

## **A Walk through Romans**

We don't know on whom He will show mercy. But we do know Him. Once He has lifted someone up in His mercy, He never forgets that person. Nobody steals them out of His hand. For His who are far away - pray for them. Oh, Return! Let's exclaim the amazing mercy of our Lord!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 12

'And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. '

Romans 12:1-2

Jesus take all of me, unreserved. I am yours. Make today what you want it. Focus me on your heart, and your mission. Let me worship you, exclaim your greatness, and declare your majesty! Then take me with you as you reach every man woman, boy and girl with your amazing love! I am yours.

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'Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. '

Romans 12:3-5

We are part of each other, and every person plays their part. Play well. Respect others. We all get there together! We need you. You need me. It's a whole bunch of parts, the Lord put us together.

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'In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. '

Romans 12:6-8

The gifts are from God, and the character comes from Holy Spirit working. So use them! Use them well. Prophecy with faith! Serve well. Teach well. Encourage much. Give generously. Lead responsibly. This is how we do it. Remember, God has given us these! He plans to use them - so we must!

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'Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. '

Romans 12:9-13

## A Walk through Romans

Putting our faith into practice is not easy. Love and serve each other! And not just for the ones who agree with you. Pour out love and service on the brothers and sisters.

Going through hard stuff? Really hard stuff? We have a confident hope. Rejoice in that hope. Be patient in trouble. We have lots of troubles. Some are very deep. Be patient, and keep on praying. God's people are in need. Help them. And we may be in great need. Hang in there. Receive help. Practice hospitality eagerly! This is how we do it!

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'Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.'

Romans 12:14-18

How do we live in a day of persecution and terror? Paul gives an answer to the ragged group of believers living under Rome's torment. He uses words like "Bless" "Pray" "Be Happy" and "Weep". We are to invest in everyone around us, despite the terror. Accept and encourage everybody. We don't have ranks or classes. And when we are persecuted, bless them too. God's grace is enough for them too, and His future for us is assured. This life has hardship. So live peacefully!

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'Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,  
"I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord .

Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.'

Romans 12:19-21

Never. Never take revenge. Ours is to trust the Lord and do good. Ours is not revenge or self-delivered justice. Instead we do good, we bless all, and we let God set the records straight.

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 13

'Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.'

Romans 13:1-5

Live unto the Lord and do what is right. The government authorities are placed by the Lord to lead people. They are sent for good, and we must live this way.

Oh so many thoughts about excess, injustice and manipulative decisions come to mind. My case needs to be with the Lord for change, for justice. And my actions need to be within the boundaries of civic duty. So I work for change, for the betterment of my society. And I follow the Lord always. This is how we do it.

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'Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority. Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.'

Romans 13:6-10

Love for the Lord means love for the neighbors and respect for the government. Pay the taxes and pour out for others. It's fairly simple. Do your duty!

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'This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.'

Romans 13:11-14

## **A Walk through Romans**

It's a new day, time to live for Jesus. Put away the old ways and dark deeds, and clothe yourself in Christ's shining armor! Let His presence fill you and use you. Let's go!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 14

'Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.

For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't.

And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. '

Romans 14:1-6

We all follow Christ. Our nuances are just that, and Jesus loves and welcomes us. Whether all days are the same, or some are more holy, accept the brother. Jesus does. If it's certain foods, then it's certain foods. Again, Jesus does. We love the Lord, and we welcome others!

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'For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead. '

Romans 14:7-9

We live for the Lord! If we die, we die for the Lord. It's all about loving and obeying Him, and it plays out in loving and serving others! Let's do it!

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'So why do you condemn another believer ?  
Why do you look down on another believer?

Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For the Scriptures say, “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord , ‘every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God. ’”

Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. '

Romans 14:10-12

# A Walk through Romans

We disagree. That's OK. Let's bow before the Lord. Let's declare He is our God. Let's let Him lead each of us!

He is calling every people to Himself, to walk together, to worship, to tell of His excellencies.

The things we disagree on - that's His to worry about and I don't condemn those different from me. You do the same too. His worship is worth it!

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'So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died. Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good.

For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. '

Romans 14:13-18

Running my race means being aware and considerate of those around me. My race isn't against them. This is not a competition. We are in a team sport, and we all must get to the finish together! So I will run strong, but aware. I will make my choices, but in consideration of my brother and sister. I'm focusing on a life of goodness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit is where it's at!

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'So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble. You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God.

Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right. But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.'

Romans 14:19-23

Do what the Lord lets you do by His grace. But if this causes your brother to trip, then skip it. Always live by His grace, but also caring for those around. Harmony is how we live with our brothers.

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 15

'We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me." Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. '

Romans 15:1-4

We consider others. We step in, even to carry the insults sent toward them. Christ did this. If it's someone calling them a "meat eater" then we step in and carry that. We help others do what is right, and we carry the burden from it. Our brothers and sisters grow as they learn more and more of God's riches and grace toward them. We are doing the long wait, patiently seeking God as He fulfills His promises. Our hope is in His certainty. So step in for others, and let us all grow in Christ together!

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'May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. '

Romans 15:5-6

Join together in one voice, praising God, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This is what we are about! We join. We are together. We lift our praise, we glorify God our Father and His son, Jesus Christ! This is how we do it. Together!

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'Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them.

That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote:

"For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."

And in another place it is written,

"Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles."

And yet again,

"Praise the Lord , all you Gentiles. Praise him, all you people of the earth."

And in another place Isaiah said,

"The heir to David's throne will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on him." '

Romans 15:7-12

## A Walk through Romans

Yes, Accept one another. Jesus came to show that God keeps His promises to the Jews. And He seeks His glory among the gentiles as well. He is for every person, every tribe, every language, every people. And He is for you! So accept one another, all of you!

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'I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them. '

Romans 15:13-14

Living in Joy and Peace is the fruit of trusting in the God who gives hope. Even while we may be facing many trials, our God gives us hope. He overcomes, and brings us through as well. His power gushes through us, and confidence comes as a result! Roman believers were full of hope as they trusted in God and His power. In fact, the Romans knew all these things Paul has spoken about, and they were fully capable of teaching each other. This is Paul's confidence. So may you be filled with joy and peace, and resting with confidence in our hope in Christ!

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'Even so, I have been bold enough to write about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder. For by God's grace, I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit. So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God. '

Romans 15:15-17

Paul, a messenger, sent one, a newsboy for God, an Apostle. He brings the good news of redemption, so that he might present these gentiles to God as an offering - a product of Paul's work. And they are made holy by the Holy Spirit! All of this is cause for gladness and celebration. We love being tapped by God with His message to lost people. We go there, and tell His story. And they will believe, being made holy as well. This is a wonderful enterprise. Sometimes there are bumps and hiccups. That's OK too. All of it is worth it!

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'Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them. They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. '

Romans 15:18-19

Paul's only boast is that Christ is made known among the peoples where He had never been heard. God's glory was shared and received among new peoples. Holy Spirit worked in power, with healing, and signs, and many turned to repent and worship the Lord. This is Paul's boast. This is God's great mission, and when we join Him, it's our commission. Let's make His name great among the nations!

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## A Walk through Romans

'My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else. I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says,

“Those who have never been told about him will see, and those who have never heard of him will understand.”

In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places.

But now I have finished my work in these regions, and after all these long years of waiting, I am eager to visit you. I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey. '

Romans 15:20-24

Paul has been following the Biblical model of taking Jesus and declaring Him among peoples who have never heard. By this he has been preaching from Jerusalem throughout Asia and Greece. And now he comes to Rome.

This is the reason for the letter. He is sharing ahead with these believers so they know his message. And he will come to them, and together they will harvest fruit, more believers!

And after that, he asks them to send him on to Spain. This is a missionary ask. This is a partnership in the gospel, so the nations may hear!

Who are you sending? Who are you partnering with to grow the Church? How do you invest? How do you encourage, join in? This is the result of the Gospel. Together we pursue the nations with God's great message!

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'But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers there. For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. They were glad to do this because they feel they owe a real debt to them. Since the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel the least they can do in return is to help them financially. As soon as I have delivered this money and completed this good deed of theirs, I will come to see you on my way to Spain. And I am sure that when I come, Christ will richly bless our time together. '

Romans 15:25-29

The Greeks wanted to share in the needs of the believers in Jerusalem. Israel's treasure had brought salvation in Macedonia and Achaia, yet the believers in Jerusalem had great need. So an offering was gathered and funds sent to help. Delivering for the need was crucial, and immediate. The trip to Rome would have to be deferred, but for a season.

Paul is also showing how believers provide for other believers. And he is preparing those in Rome for their participation in the spread of the gospel too. This is how we do it!

## A Walk through Romans

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'Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to join in my struggle by praying to God for me. Do this because of your love for me, given to you by the Holy Spirit.

Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God.

Pray also that the believers there will be willing to accept the donation I am taking to Jerusalem.

Then, by the will of God, I will be able to come to you with a joyful heart, and we will be an encouragement to each other. And now may God, who gives us his peace, be with you all.  
Amen.'

Romans 15:30-33

Workers cannot work without their brothers and sisters joining in the work. The apostles, or sent workers, absolutely need the prayer support and financial support of the rest of the Church. This isn't a program, it's personal engagement. Every believer walks with Christ, because someone else went the distance to bring the good news of Jesus.

Paul asks for prayer protection as he struggles. He runs into a lot of interference, and many who would just as soon kill him. But the news of Jesus must get out.

So you and I ought also to pray, to become involved with, and to support our sent ones. If you are looking for whom to support, we can point out many! But join in, find your place as part of the global gospel work today!

# A Walk through Romans

## Chapter 16

'I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.'

Romans 16:1-2

Hey Romans, welcome this woman! She is a key leader in Cenchrea, a Deacon. She is well loved, and is one who pours out for many. Her "Helpfulness" was as a benefactor, someone who spent and donated for others.

Phoebe was likely the one who carried Paul's letter to the church in Rome. She was likely the one to read it, to clarify and to teach from it too. Paul knows her well, and trusts his message to faithfully be delivered by Phoebe.

American church struggles with patriarchs, ignoring many of the key leaders the Lord has given. Many of these are called women. Let's welcome whom the Lord has given to the church!

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'Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus. In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches. Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home.'

Romans 16:3-4

Priscilla and Aquila were dear friends and co-workers with Paul. They had been chased out of Rome in 52AD when Caesar kicked all the Jews out. They came to Corinth, and worked together as tent makers. Paul met them there, and worked with them. Paul had been with them for 18 months, teaching in the synagogue and then in the home of a Titus Justus. Can you imagine having Paul teaching God's Word daily? Well these two were able to be a part of the team, learning, and working together with Paul. When Paul left Corinth, these two went with him. What a great example of love and leadership are Priscilla and Aquila. No wonder Paul sent greetings to them, and also to the believers who met at their home!

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'... Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ. Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit.'

Romans 16:5-6

Epenetus was the first believer to come to Christ in Asia. Ephesus was the capital of Asia, the province encompassing most of modern day Turkiye. This man likely came to Jesus through the teaching of Priscilla and Aquila, and then joined in the outreach and teaching work with them, including the move to Rome to help the church there.

Mary was a hard worker, diligent in serving the church in Rome as well. All of these are friends and co-laborers with Paul, and he cherishes their friendship and partnership.

## A Walk through Romans

Rome was a big church, a distributed meeting in several places. This effort would not and could not have been done without the diligent work of faithful men and women in the Gospel.

So greet the workers who pour into you! Commend each one, and speak of their character and diligence, much like Paul does. And build deep relationships with them too, again like Paul does. This is how we do it!

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'Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. '

Romans 16:7

Greet the two apostles, Andronicus and Junia! They perhaps were the ones who helped teach Paul. They were leaders, and were highly ranked among the apostles. They were active declaring the faith, establishing churches and suffering arrest and prison because of it. They are husband and wife, both apostles.

Note that God has called women apostles as well as men. Junia is one of my heroes! Women leaders have been at the forefront of spreading the Gospel for centuries. God has always called men and women to His work! Let's commend and welcome them!

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'Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus. '

Romans 16:8-10

"My dear friend in the Lord." What a testimony of love and care. "Co-worker." "Dear Friend." "Good Man." "Christ approves." Such affection and care by Paul.

When we bring the good news of Jesus, we are not conducting a transaction. No we are welcoming people to the Lord and into relationship with us as well. We care for others, with much affection. This is how people will know that we are Jesus' disciples, because we have love for one another.

Build into each other. Care, help, guide, love. This is a whole new Kingdom, begun by God Himself, and welcoming all of us in. Oh what amazing love He pours out, and lets us pour out with Him too. Love one another! This is how we do it!

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'Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet the Lord's people from the household of Narcissus. Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord's workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord. Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.'

Romans 16:11-13

## A Walk through Romans

The family of God is about Loving God, and caring for one another in Christ. Look at the people who Paul greets. Every one is a personal relationship to him. Herodion is a fellow compatriot. Maybe he was from the very same place as Paul. There's several people following Jesus at the home of Narcissus. There are people working so hard for the Lord, pouring into others, including Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis. Greet them! And Rufus who the Lord had a special anointing on, calling him to Himself. And Rufus' mom became a mom to Paul too. Just look how this great family cares for each other. Oh we can do this too. In fact, we must do this!

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'Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who meet with them. Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers who meet with them. Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings. '

Romans 16:14-16

What wonderful coworkers. Each one has brothers and sisters who meet with them. And Paul sends personal greetings to each one. He asks them to greet each other with a holy kiss. These are the family of God. Jesus has called each one to a new restored relationship with Father, and with each other too. Our family meets in many homes and places, and we pour ourselves out for each other.

Don't miss that these are real people. They have a multiplicity of backgrounds and cultures. Some were really messed up. The others were only less messed up. And there is all the baggage that comes with them. And yet we love each other, care for each other, overlook the things the Lord is working on, and we grow as a family. Oh we love each one. And each one loves you too.

The great secret of Christ, is that theology is a minor player as God builds His family of loved ones in every tribe, tongue, people and every family. Oh yes, we do get to delve deep into the mysteries of how God did it, the restoration of the peoples to Himself. And all the players, whether Holy Spirit, or Jesus and His work, and even Father and all His creation and plans, they all come together. And they are all crucial and important. But the grand result is a global family who loves and cares for each other, and pours themselves into bringing worship and glory to the Father!

And He draws us into His work, together reaching for the nations who have yet to hear. We are on commission with Him. We call it the Great Commission!

So relish each one, greet each one, and keep loving on each one as we grow together and work for His glory!

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'And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. '

# A Walk through Romans

Romans 16:17-20

Stay away from the dividers, the people who wish to separate God's family. They want you to pick sides, and be contrary to others. Their teaching will draw some away from the gospel, so beware. Their smooth words and arguments and false commendations are actually personally motivated. They don't love God, or His people, and they are trying to deceive you.

We all know of your true faith, obedience to Christ, and your love for others. And we are so happy for that, we are filled with joy. Hang in there! Soon our God will crush Satan under your feet. May God's grace continue to carry you!

Keep on in the faith, loving one another.

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'Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord's followers. Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.'

Romans 16:21-23

Timothy also sends his greetings, to each and every one of these church hosts and leaders. Lucius does as well. And also Jason and Sosipater. All of these Jewish background believers and leaders send greetings to all of these leaders and hosts in Rome. And the greetings are for all who meet there. God's family is big, and diverse. But more than that, God's family loves and cares for each other, worldwide.

Tertius also, who scribed the letter for Paul, sends his greetings. May we all be like these believers, loving and caring for the church worldwide.

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'Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.'

Romans 16:25-27

All of God's work pulls together in bringing Glory of God. We proclaim glory to God. This is why He made us, to bring Him glory. We acclaim Him because of all He has done. We see His work to bring the gospel and redeem men. This is the path by which we all relish His Glory. God's plan has always been to bring the gentiles alongside Israel, together as one whole family of God. The plan was kept secret from the beginning of time, and then suddenly is now actively being pursued for the nations. We are still in this pursuit. So we offer glory to God for this amazing family He is building! Glory to you our Father!