



Leader Guide

The Gospel First and Always

October 1, 2023

Main Passage: Romans 1:1-17

Theological Theme

The gospel is centered on Jesus Christ, and He makes all the difference. Christians are to be like Paul, who was ready at a moment's notice to talk about Jesus and make disciples without being ashamed of who Jesus was to him.

Introduction

- ❓ When did you last have a spiritual conversation with someone outside of the church?
- ❓ What do you think stops Christians from having more gospel conversations? Why does it matter?

1. The Gospel of God (Romans 1:1-6)

Most scholars believe Paul wrote the book of Romans from the city of Corinth. The book begins with an introduction from the writer, who first described himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ” (v. 1) and then as one called to be an apostle. He said he had been set apart for the gospel of God. The book of Romans starts with a focus on God and continues that theme throughout the book.

- ❓ Why is it important to recognize the gospel has always been a part of God's plan? How does that challenge the way you've viewed the gospel in the past?
- ❓ How does the truth about Jesus surpass any accolades given to or achievements made by people?
- ❓ Application: What sticks out to you from Paul's opening words about the gospel that you need to apply to your life?

2. Encouragement for the Church (Romans 1:7-15)

No evidence points to Paul having founded the Roman church, as was the case with many of the other churches to whom he wrote letters. But Paul knew of this church and even spoke about some of the believers by name. Regardless of his type of connection with the Roman church, Paul knew God loved them and called them to be saints, along with all others who have been saved by Jesus.

- ❓ How has Jesus secured grace and peace from God for all believers? How do these gifts affect the daily lives of Christians?
- ❓ What are some countercultural ways God calls us to live for Him in a time when most people are focused on fulfilling their own desires?
- ❓ Application: How can you encourage a fellow church member this week by reminding them of the truth of the gospel?

3. Not Ashamed (Romans 1:16-17)

According to the Lifeway study mentioned in our introduction, many who profess to be Christians don't talk about their faith. One possible reason for this may be a sense of embarrassment or shame about some aspect of their faith. Maybe they are worried what people will think or worried that they won't share Jesus in the right way. Paul's words remind us that the power we trust in as we have gospel conversations is not ours but the very power of God for salvation. If we have trouble believing in the power of gospel, it may serve us well to remember who we were before the gospel and consider who we might be without it.

- ❓ What is your biggest obstacle to sharing your faith with others? How does Paul's reminder about the power found in the gospel encourage you?
- ❓ What are some ways people try to find salvation outside of Jesus today? How does trusting in God's power for salvation take the pressure off us in having gospel conversations?
- ❓ Application: How are you encouraged toward seeking further gospel conversations in response to today's study?

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).