



BOOK 45 · NEW TESTAMENT · EPISTLE

The Letter to the Romans

The Gospel of God — Righteousness, Grace, and New Life

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

— Romans 1:16

CONTENTS OF THIS STUDY PACK

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 01 | Visual Overview Infographic
A panoramic lens on the theological flow of Romans. | 02 | Chapter-by-Chapter Narrative Arc
Four sections: Condemnation, Justification, Sanctification, Ethics. |
| 03 | Key Themes & Theological Insights
Righteousness, Justification, Spirit, and Israel unpacked. | 04 | Symbolism & Imagery
Olive Tree, Armor of God, Slave & Son, and more. |
| 05 | Small Group Discussion Guide
Eight questions with guided prompts and note space. | 06 | Key Characters
Paul, Abraham, Adam, and Phoebe — portraits in faith. |
| 07 | Practical Application
Living the truths of Romans in everyday life today. | | |



THE BOOK OF ROMANS: THE GOSPEL UNVEILED

Justification, Grace, and the Power of God for Salvation

SECTION 1: SIN & CONDEMNATION (CH. 1-3)



**Universal
Sinfulness**
(Ch. 1:18-32)

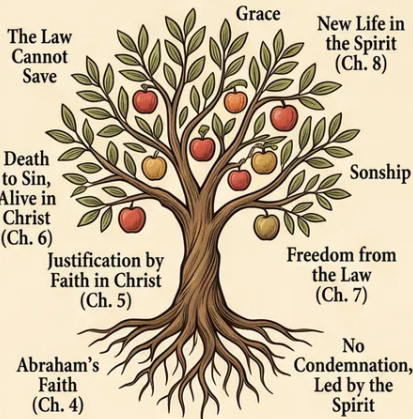


**God's Righteous
Judgment** (Ch. 2)



**All Under Sin,
No One Righteous**
(Ch. 3:9-20)

SECTION 2: JUSTIFICATION & FAITH (CH. 4-8)



SECTION 3: LIFE IN CHRIST (CH. 9-16)



**God's Sovereign
Choice & Israel**
(Ch. 9-11)



**Living Sacrifices &
Using Gifts** (Ch. 12)



**Love, Submission,
and Unity**
(Ch. 13-15)

KEY VERSE & REFLECTION



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

- Romans 1:16

The Book of Romans powerfully expounds on God's righteousness revealed in the Gospel, offering salvation through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, transforming lives by His grace and Spirit.

Full-page visual overview — four movements, key doctrines, and theological flow at a glance

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Romans is Paul's most systematic theological letter — a comprehensive exposition of the gospel from universal condemnation (1–3) through justification by faith (4–5), sanctification by the Spirit (6–8), Israel's place in God's plan (9–11), and the ethics of the new community (12–16).

SECTION 1

Romans 1–3 THE PROBLEM — UNIVERSAL CONDEMNATION

- 1:1–17** Paul's greeting and thesis: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (1:16). The righteousness of God is revealed through faith.
- 1:18–32** The wrath of God against human wickedness. Gentiles who suppress the truth in unrighteousness are without excuse — creation itself testifies to God's eternal power and divine nature.
- 2:1–3:8** Jews are equally condemned. Having the Law does not justify — it only increases accountability. "God does not show favoritism" (2:11). Circumcision is of the heart, not the flesh.
- 3:9–20** "There is no one righteous, not even one." Paul strings together Old Testament quotations to demonstrate universal sinfulness. "Through the law we become conscious of our sin."
- 3:21–31** The solution: justification by faith. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (3:23–24).

SECTION 2

Romans 4–5 THE FOUNDATION — JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

- 4:1–25** Abraham as the paradigm of faith. He was justified before circumcision — proving that righteousness comes through faith, not works or ritual. "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (4:3).
- 5:1–11** "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The five benefits of justification: peace, access, hope, endurance, and the love of God poured out.
- 5:12–21** Adam and Christ — the two federal heads of humanity. "Just as sin entered the world through one man... so also through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous." Grace superabounds over sin.

SECTION 3

Romans 6–8 THE POWER — SANCTIFICATION AND THE SPIRIT

- 6:1–23** "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!" Baptism unites us with Christ's death and resurrection. We are dead to sin and alive to God. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."
- 7:1–25** The inner conflict: "I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing." The Law is holy and good, but it cannot deliver us from the power of sin. "Who will rescue me?"
- 8:1–17** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The Spirit gives life. We are children of God, co-heirs with Christ. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

8:18–39

The great crescendo: present suffering is not worth comparing to future glory. The Spirit intercedes. All things work together for good. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ...neither death nor life... shall be able to separate us."

SECTION 4

Romans 9–16 ISRAEL, ETHICS, AND THE GOSPEL COMMUNITY



9–11

The mystery of Israel's hardening and future restoration. God's sovereignty in election does not nullify human responsibility. "All Israel will be saved." The doxology: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

12:1–2

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice." The hinge verse of the letter — theology becomes ethics. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

12:3–15:13

Practical ethics: love without hypocrisy, honor one another, serve the Lord, bless persecutors, live at peace, submit to governing authorities, love your neighbor. The strong bear with the weak.

15:14–16:27

Paul's travel plans, greetings to 29 named individuals (including women leaders), and the closing doxology: "To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen."

KEY THEMES

Romans is the most systematic exposition of the gospel in the New Testament — four foundational doctrines that have shaped Christian theology for two millennia.

⁰¹ JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE



01

Romans is the most systematic exposition of **justification** in the New Testament. Paul argues that no one — Jew or Gentile — can be made right with God through moral effort, religious ritual, or ethnic identity. The only basis for **justification** is the **righteousness** of Christ, received through **faith**. "A person is justified by **faith** apart from the **works** of the law" (3:28). This was the theological heart of the Protestant Reformation and remains the foundation of evangelical Christianity.

MODERN APPLICATION

Justification means your standing before God is not based on your performance — it is based on Christ's performance credited to your account. This frees us from both self-righteousness and despair.

"A person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." — Romans 3:28

⁰² THE UNIVERSAL SCOPE OF SIN AND GRACE



02

Romans 1–3 builds a comprehensive case that all humanity — both Gentiles who reject natural revelation and Jews who have the Law — stands condemned before God. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23). But the universality of **sin** is matched by the universality of **grace**: "the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him" (10:12). Romans 5 frames this in terms of the two Adams: as **sin** and death spread through **Adam**, so **grace** and life spread through **Christ**.

MODERN APPLICATION

The doctrine of universal sin is not pessimism — it is the prerequisite for universal grace. No one is too far gone; no one is good enough on their own. The playing field is level at the foot of the cross.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." — Romans 3:23

⁰³ LIFE IN THE SPIRIT



03

Romans 8 is arguably the most celebrated chapter in the New Testament. Paul describes the Spirit-filled life in contrast to life "in the flesh" — not physical existence, but existence oriented around self rather than God. The **Spirit** gives life, assures **adoption**, **intercedes** in our weakness, and guarantees future **glory**. The chapter ends with the great declaration that nothing in all creation can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

MODERN APPLICATION

The Christian life is not primarily about moral effort — it is about the Spirit's work in and through us. "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (8:14). Ask: am I walking in step with the Spirit today?

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." — Romans 8:1



Romans 12:1–2 is the hinge of the entire letter — the point where Paul's theology becomes ethics. "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper **worship**. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed** by the **renewing** of your **mind**." The Greek word for "transformed" is metamorphoo — the same word used for the Transfiguration. Transformation begins in the **mind**.

MODERN APPLICATION

What we think shapes what we do. Renewing the mind means deliberately filling it with truth — through Scripture, prayer, community, and worship — so that our desires and decisions are gradually reshaped toward God's will.

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." — Romans 12:2

SYMBOLISM & IMAGERY

Romans uses four powerful symbolic concepts — righteousness, wrath, adoption, and sacrifice — each one illuminating a different dimension of the gospel.



RIGHTEOUSNESS (DIKAIOSYNE)

SYMBOL 01

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Greek word **dikaioyne** appears 34 times in Romans — more than any other New Testament book. In the Greco-Roman world, **dikaioyne** referred to conformity to a standard. In Jewish thought, it described covenant faithfulness. Paul weaves both meanings together.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

In Romans, righteousness is both a **gift** and a power. It is not merely legal acquittal — it is the restoration of right relationship with God, which then produces right living.



THE WRATH OF GOD

SYMBOL 02

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Paul opens Romans with "the **wrath** of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people". In the ancient world, divine **wrath** was understood as the personal, active response of a deity to moral violation — not blind rage, but **principled opposition** to evil.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

God's wrath in Romans is not the opposite of His love — it is an expression of it. A God who is indifferent to injustice and evil is not loving. The **cross** is where God's wrath and love meet: sin is fully judged, and sinners are fully forgiven.



ADOPTION (HUIOTHESIA)

SYMBOL 03

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Roman **adoption** was a serious legal act that transferred a person completely from one family to another, with full rights and obligations. An adopted son had the same legal standing as a biological son — including **inheritance rights**. Paul's audience would have understood the weight of this metaphor.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

"You received the Spirit of adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, **Abba**, Father". Adoption in Romans means believers are not servants or strangers — they are full heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. The intimacy of "**Abba**" signals the personal, familial nature of this relationship.



THE LIVING SACRIFICE

SYMBOL 04

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the Old Testament, sacrifices were killed animals offered on an altar. Paul's phrase "**living sacrifice**" is deliberately paradoxical — a sacrifice that does not die, but continues to live in daily obedience. The Temple and its sacrificial system were still operating when Paul wrote Romans.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The living sacrifice is the New Covenant equivalent of Temple **worship**. Instead of bringing an animal to the altar, believers offer their entire lives — bodies, minds, relationships, work — as an act of **worship**. This is "your true and proper worship".

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

These 8 questions are designed for a 60–90 minute small group session. Begin with the icebreaker, then work through observation, interpretation, and application questions. Close with the prayer prompt.

ICEBREAKER

Think of a time when you received something you did not deserve — grace, forgiveness, a second chance. How did it make you feel? How did it change how you treated others?

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01

OBSERVATION

Read Romans 3:21–26 aloud. Paul uses three metaphors for salvation: justification (law court), redemption (slave market), and propitiation (temple). What does each image add to our understanding of what Christ accomplished on the cross?

Leader's Note:

Justification = declared not guilty. Redemption = bought out of slavery. Propitiation = the wrath of God satisfied. Together they paint a comprehensive picture of atonement.

02

OBSERVATION

Romans 5:12–21 compares Adam and Christ as two "federal heads" whose actions affect all who are in them. In what ways are you still experiencing the effects of Adam's sin? In what ways are you experiencing the effects of Christ's obedience?

03

INTERPRETATION

In Romans 7, Paul describes an agonizing inner conflict: "I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do." Is Paul describing his experience before or after conversion? What does this passage tell us about the ongoing struggle with sin in the Christian life?

Leader's Note:

This is one of the most debated passages in Romans. The key insight is that the struggle Paul describes is evidence of spiritual life, not spiritual death — a dead person does not groan under the weight of sin.

04

INTERPRETATION

Romans 8:28 says "all things work together for good for those who love God." What does "good" mean in this context (see 8:29)? How does this promise hold up in the face of genuine suffering and tragedy?

05

APPLICATION

Romans 12:2 calls us to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind." What specific thought patterns, media inputs, or mental habits in your life need to be renewed? What would it look like to intentionally replace them with truth?

06

APPLICATION

Paul ends Romans with greetings to 29 named individuals — including women like Phoebe (a deacon), Priscilla (a church leader), and Junia (an apostle). What does this tell us about the diversity and inclusion of the early church? How does your community reflect this?

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07

PRAYER PROMPT

Close by reading Romans 8:38–39 together: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Have each person name one thing they have been afraid might separate them from God. Then pray together, declaring that nothing can separate you from His love.


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08


KEY CHARACTERS

Paul the Apostle




Author of Romans — a former Pharisee and persecutor of the church who became the greatest missionary of the first century, writing the most systematic theological letter in the New Testament.

Abraham




The paradigm of justifying faith (Romans 4). Justified before circumcision, he is the father of all who believe — both Jew and Gentile — demonstrating that righteousness has always been by faith.

Phoebe



A deacon of the church at Cenchreae (16:1–2), likely the carrier of the letter to Rome. Paul commends her as a benefactor (prostatis) — a term implying leadership and financial support.

Adam



The first federal head of humanity (Romans 5:12–21), through whom sin and death entered the world. His disobedience is the foil for Christ's obedience — the greater Adam who brings life and righteousness.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION — LIVING IT OUT TODAY



Rest in Justification

You are declared righteous before God — not because of what you have done, but because of what Christ has done. Live from this identity, not toward it. Stop trying to earn what has already been given.



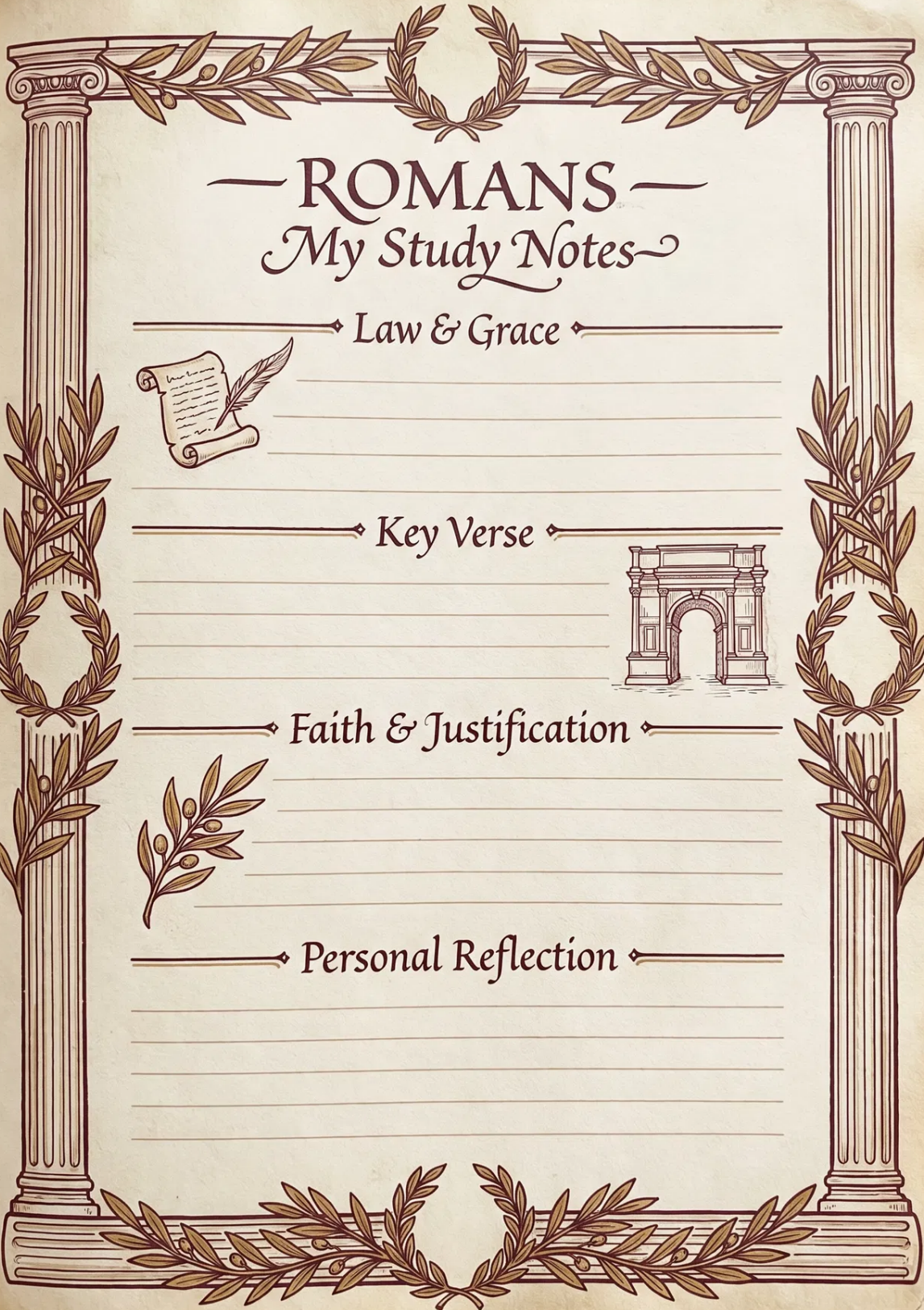
Walk in the Spirit

Romans 8 describes the Spirit-filled life as the normal Christian experience. Ask the Spirit to lead you today — in your decisions, relationships, and responses to difficulty. "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (8:14).




Renew Your Mind Intentionally

Transformation begins in the mind (12:2). Identify one area where your thinking does not align with the gospel, and commit to one specific practice — Scripture memorization, prayer, or community accountability — to renew it this week.




— ROMANS —
My Study Notes


— Law & Grace —



— Key Verse —



— Faith & Justification —



— Personal Reflection —

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“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

— Romans 8:1