

The Book of Romans: A Study of Grace In 14 Weeks

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Week One

Day 1: Romans 1:1-7 Paul introduces himself to the Romans and establishes his purpose.

- He identifies himself as a servant, an apostle, and one who is set apart. He then tells all believers they are called to belong, loved by God, called to be saints, and should be people who enjoy grace and peace.
- How do you feel God has called you to be set apart? This can be practical, physical, or spiritual. Think about your growth in the past 3-5 years; where has God set you apart recently? Is there a place where you struggle in the areas Paul says God calls all believers?

Day 2: Romans 1:8-15 Paul says he is *called* to Jews and Gentiles.

- The Greek here says he is actually indebted to share the Gospel. Do you feel any sense of responsibility, or obligation, to share your faith? What *do* you feel responsible to as a believer? If there are specific people who come to mind then renew your commitment to pray for them and to look for chances to go deep with them.
- When you are called to something how long do you hang on? Do you give up if it is too deferred? Do you do nothing if you can't do everything?
- Paul wants a harvest both in and out of the Roman church. He is subtly attacking the "us" and "them" mentality that lingers today for many groups of people. Paul says, this Gospel is for both! There is no "them" in Jesus. Can you identify your "us"? Your "them"? Do you carry toxic attitudes in you

toward certain people? Do you think you are totally unrelated to people who don't know Christ as well as you do?

Day 3: Romans 1:16-20 Paul gets to his main point: Righteousness is from God, received by faith, and revealed to all.

- Righteousness, from the Greek, means you are “made right” or are “now held in good standing.” Take a minute and journal on what comes to mind when you think of righteousness. Is it good? Boring? Moral? Uppity? Important? Impossible? This matters a lot in the coming weeks.
- Paul says R-ness *IS* revealed, meaning present tense! You have been made right and are continuing to be made right before God and others. Reflect on your life. How are you being made righteous? How are you experiencing your “in the clear”-ness before God and others? Are there areas of your life where you only see you at work instead of God actively making things new and right in your life and relationships? Take those places to Him and ask God to SHOW you where he is working!
- “Ashamed” can be translated as “offended.” If you get honest about your utter need for Jesus, does that offend a part of you? Can you stay there or do you have to dip into that truth and then get back on your own feet? Practice daily confession this week. Reflect on how it changes your desperate need for God.

Day 4: Romans 1:21-32 Paul explores what it looks like to be consumed with self instead of recognizing our need for Jesus. God's punishment for our “sinful desires” is simply “over-desire.” He gives us over to be consumed by ourselves.

- What are you likely to worship instead of the Creator?
- Over-desire can mean wanting sin and just wanting too much anything. Letting a mentality of consumption consume you. Do you see this in your own life? A good place to start is to notice where your thoughts go when you daydream; where you can easily spend money; or when you get really angry and have a pity-party.

- There is also a community piece here: When are you likely to overlook or even encourage sin in others? Are you letting your own over-desire encourage others to live with a “more more” attitude?

Week Two

Day 1: Romans 2:1-5 Review the end of Chapter 1. We have just listed areas of depravity and how we endorse such thinking. Now he addresses the “holy” among us.

- Paul lists our “over-desire” in order to humble us, not so we can point at “them” and say, “Whew! I’m glad I don’t struggle there!” In fact, Paul argues that pagan irreligion is just as bad as self righteous religion. Do you hold any of these biases?
- Are there sins (or people) who you consistently judge? What do these verses say you are really doing when you give a voice to your judgment of others? What is your response?

Day 2: Romans 2:6-16 Paul goes deeper into how faith and works work together.

- Is this a works-based gospel? Study this and compare it to Romans 1:16-17. What do you think?
- Put yourself in the place of the Jews. Are there things about your name, legacy, history, or past devotion to God that make you feel safe or secure? Confess those things as worthless! Are you convinced that you are just as bad off as anyone else? Do you recognize that your sins simply manifest differently than others’ sins? I am DEEPLY convicted by this! Pay attention to your thoughts and confess them to Jesus as they happen in your day. Can you see how this very idea is the beginning of “us” and “them” thinking? This is where you fight it!!
- Paul orients his Gospel as an extension of God’s relationship with the Jews in the Old Testament. What would change in your approach to God and others if you believed that God has chosen to mature and partner with you in order to love others well? How does your faith show up in your life and

relationships with others? If it thrives only in a vacuum (or during your quiet time), then ask God to show you his vision for others so that you can be a part of it.

Days 3 and 4: Romans 2:17-29 Paul affirms again that God is concerned with our hearts AND how we live out of that place!!

- Do verses 17-20 describe you? Where do you see God's specific gifting of you out of this list?
- God is not just concerned with our intellectual consent or with what we say; He wants us to live consistently. How ya doin' here? A good test is to explore how often you are convicted and how you treat those who struggle. Real fruit of Christ's righteousness always starts with humble self-awareness and honest mercy for others (yep...I just made an F on the test I made up...)
- Paul is challenging them and us. Have you traded attractiveness, humility, and being "the light" for moral high ground? Are you more concerned with what God is against, or who God favors, than with begging for "kingdom eyes" so that you can see peeps the way God does (as if they are their best, already believing, redeemed by Jesus selves)?
- Circumcision is a great example for us because we so often want to rely on outward signs of our goodness. God is always concerned with our hearts. Where are you interrogating your life? Where are you depending for "righteousness" or "right standing"? It cannot be a checklist; It cannot be outward. It is a posture; It is in and by the Spirit. Ask yourself where you

place your functional trust (not your thought-about-trust or your it-should-be-here-trust, but your actual, functional, trust)?

Week Three

Day 1: Romans 3:1-4 Paul explains how Jews and Gentiles are justified.

- First, notice that Paul slows down his argument to relate to his audience. He only uses all these rhetorical questions so that he can relate on their level and invite their engagement. Think about the way you argue about theology with loved ones or talk about your faith to non-believers. Are you kind and respectful, working hard to relate to their perspective? Are you defensive and belittling? Should your approach change?
- Paul explains that God's choosing of Jews (or of us) has NOTHING to do with us, and everything to do with God's faithfulness. The truth is that He just decided to give you a very good shot at living an abundant and meaningful life as healthy, whole people. And you bring nothing to the table but dependence. How does it feel to be stripped bare? Terrifying or freeing? Can you identify the things you are not free of (earning acceptance, carrying shame, etc)?
- This might be a good time to stop and reflect. God entrusted His favor on the Jews. With what has He entrusted you? Do you have a nagging feeling of God asking you to take care of some people or places? How are you doing there? If you are not sure about this then start to sit with the truth that God HAS entrusted you with something, and ask Him to show you!!

Days 2 and 3: Romans 3:5-20 Paul explains more of the sin, grace and righteousness, and how they all work together.

- If our own junk reveals God's purity and if His sacrifice makes us righteous, then why do we get in trouble in the first place? Is it fair for God to blame us for our sin? Paul is showing the broken systems we cling to which say 1) I'm pretty good on my own or 2) God is okay with us being bad so He can show off His goodness. Do you struggle with either of these views? Either thinking you are alright or thinking you always get forgiven anyway?

- Both of these views assume that God acts BECAUSE of us. Not True! God is totally self-sustaining and chose to love and sacrifice himself because he wants wholeness for us. Respond to this here:
- Does the list in 10-18 shame you? Lead you to confession? Make you thankful He has rescued you? Sit with it and see what comes up. Notice that this list covers our approach to God, to others, our speech, our relationships, our physical actions, our thoughts...all of it!

Days 4 and 5: Romans 3:21-31 Now Paul addresses how we get made right in the first place. He debunks the idea that it comes from the law and explains that it is a gift of God through faith. This means it is not something we can take pride in.

- First, a couple of first things: 1) Christ's work and redemption did not happen because the law was broken, but because the law never could and never will make us whole! 2) Christ's sacrifice covered all sin past and future; you are justified BEFORE YOU ASK FOR IT. Forgiveness, THEN repentance. Think through this. Take it in. Thank God that He loved you before you even knew you needed it. Knowing this can you finally honestly confess your sins and weaknesses? TRY IT with God and with another.
- Now let this truth seep into relationships. Can you forgive before you are asked to forgive? Do you have some old habits? Do you see yourself or others as undeserving? Notice there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile here. If you are making distinctions in anyone around you then you are off base. Take some inventory on where you struggle here:
- Justification is outside of works. It is a done deal with Christ. That said, the law is still there—we yearn for good and to be good. Think of the law, or moral standards, or the Word, as a plum line in carpentry (Google it! It is how you set a

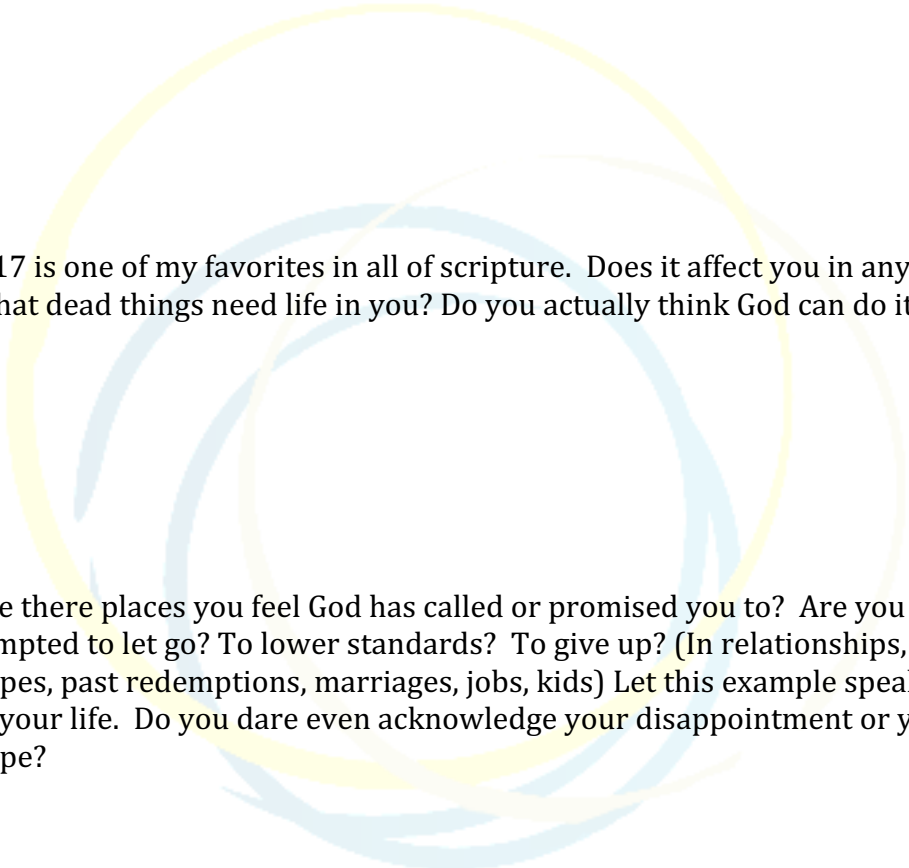
foundation or build anything straight). Your life could be like a talented artist who uses the rules of her craft AND her own creativity to make beautiful things. How do you hold the law and grace together? Where do you lean?

Week Four

Days 1 and 2: Romans 4:1-12 Paul gives 2 examples of how faith and works might justify us by looking at David and Abraham. Even in these giants of our tradition, Paul reminds us that they were not justified by their obedience, intentions, or hard work.

- Reflect for a minute on your standing before God. Are you comfortable walking before Him with nothing but your need? On what do you think His affection for you depends? (seriously...what are the things that make you feel like a failure OR like you are pretty important in God's Kingdom?)
- Examine your relationship with God to see if it is transactional. Do you give Him obedience since He gave you life? Do you think that is actually what Jesus wants? Abraham was counted as righteous BEFORE he was circumcised. David was chosen BEFORE he became great. What are the implications here? That God can be most unleashed in our lives when we openly recognize our need for Him and get out of our own ways!
- There is also a community implication here. Ponder your relationships. Are you transactional in the way you love others? Do you keep score? Do you keep no record of wrongs? If God has called our worthlessness uber-valuable, if God has forgiven us before we even had the courage to ask for it, then how should we care for others? What needs to change in your approach to others?

Days 3 and 4: Romans 4:13-25 Paul goes on to clarify the law, faith, forgiveness, and the family of God. Read through these verses thinking about the purpose of the law and how it is related to faith.

- On what does God base His commitment to us?
 - How is the law valuable here? What is “the law” for you in your everyday life? What do you use it for?
 - V 17 is one of my favorites in all of scripture. Does it affect you in any way? What dead things need life in you? Do you actually think God can do it?
 - Are there places you feel God has called or promised you to? Are you tempted to let go? To lower standards? To give up? (In relationships, future hopes, past redemptions, marriages, jobs, kids) Let this example speak to this in your life. Do you dare even acknowledge your disappointment or your hope?
 - Again, there is a community implication here. God’s promise to Abraham was primarily to benefit others, not just him. God’s faithfulness to you might not just be for you but for others down the road. How does this affect you? Can you see the truth in this?
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Week Five

Day 1: Romans 5: 1-5 A Jewish proverb states: “The more Torah, the more life.” Jews thought that God brought the law to help Jews stop sinning and to give them life. This rejects that.

- What are the listed realities of being “justified by faith”? Which of these resonates with you? Are you not experiencing any of these? Think about why and let’s discuss them!
- What are the listed results of being “justified by faith”? Which of these resonates with you? Are you not experiencing any of these? Think about why and let’s discuss them!
- In case this helps, use these correct translations as you study and pray: Hope=conviction; perseverance=single focus; character=tested and proven confident. Do any of these change your perspective on these verses?

Day 2: Romans 5:6-11 Paul reminds us that while we were weak and broken, God died for us.

- Pray you can read this with new eyes. Why do you think Paul included this section? What is the point of this assurance, and does this (or how should this) assurance change your behavior toward yourself and toward others?
- Paul reminds us that Jesus reconciled us in His death and saved us from a broken life in His resurrection. Are you living a reconciled, healthy and whole life? Where are you not?
- Take a step back. Are you known for being a divider or a reconciler? In big ways and tiny ways, take some time to examine your behavior. (This is where the fruit of the spirit starts!!) What do you see? What needs to

change? Invite Jesus into those places (remember the Romans theme...you are already forgiven, now live like it!)

Day 3 and 4: Romans 5:12-21 Paul backs up to look at the big arc of history by comparing Adam and Jesus.

- Paul really wants us to understand our extreme brokenness and our constant sin. Why is this so important to his overall argument? Do you downplay your sin? (Happy to see my similarity to Jesus: Adam...not so much...)

- There are dangers in downplaying the reality of our sin. It leads to liberalism, or thinking we don't really need saving all that badly. There are also dangers in downplaying our acceptance. It leads to legalism, or thinking we still need to work our booties off to be proven right or righteous before God and others. Which of these is easier to fall into? Do you struggle with downplaying one or the other? Take some time to fully examine the effects of your wrong-thinking in this area. Be aware of it and correct your instincts!

Week 6

Paul explains a believer's true relationship to the law, to sin, and to grace (and the mistakes we make in these relationships).

Day 1: Romans 6:1-11 Because of Jesus, our deepest understanding of ourselves is to be known, forgiven, and alive to God and His purpose for us. It is NOT to be a person pursuing OR paying defense against sin. Sin does still have power, but it cannot reign in you because God has given you a way to resist it.

- How would you describe yourself? As working really hard to have more discipline so you can avoid sin? Seeing how close you can get to sin and often re-evaluating standards you previously had? As free and living as an extension of the Spirit in you?

Tim Keller says we are always moving toward something...either sin or selflessness.

- How could a close friend or observer describe the difference in your "old self" and you now? What or who are you becoming like?

Day 2 and 3: Romans 6:12-19 Slavery is the only option. Slave to sin or slave to righteousness.

- Is this depressing to you? What image does this truth give you?

- Keller says every situation gives you a chance to choose who you are a slave to. Try using this perspective and see how it changes your motives and reactions. What do you notice?

- Sin only operates one way: with Dominion. It absolutely dominates everything it touches. The only way out is to a) Acknowledge the broken deadness of your path. b) Put your functional trust and hope in Jesus and claim the freedom he promises as yours. c) Do this every morning! d) “Become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed” (v 17). In other words, study the word, study your life, and commit yourself to becoming more like Jesus. Could this give you life?

Jesus did not call us to defense, but to pursuing Christ, which leads to freedom from sin.

- It is hard to be a slave to Christ who is transformed and sanctified if you don't commit yourself to obeying God. Are you committed to scripture?

Day 4: Romans 6:20-23 Your life is either ongoing lawlessness or progressive sanctification. Your choices (and slavery) either produce destructive fruit or healthy, sanctified fruit.

- Where have you made progress and found freedom?
- Where are you tolerating sin?
- Ask God to reveal the fruit of your life to you. Pay attention and respond!
- Reflect on these questions to get started:
 - + Are people super comfy talking to you about major mistakes in a celebratory way?
 - + Do people call you more to vent and bitch or when they are broken and confused and at the end of themselves (i.e. ready to change)?
 - + Do people ask you to pray for them?

Week Seven

Day 1 and 2: Romans 7:1-6 The law “arouses...sinful passions.” Not only does sin not lead to life, it never even stops with the sin (it grows and demands more of you). The law and sin thus “hold you captive.” The law also reveals your need and makes you desperate for Jesus.

- Try to describe your relationship to sin.
- Try to describe your relationship to the law.
- What do you notice? Do you feel better about one or the other?

As Jesus said, no one can serve 2 masters. If you love Jesus, you cannot live for sin OR self-righteousness. As we discussed last week, every situation gives you a chance to choose who you are a slave to.

- Where do you struggle? Living for the law (legalism; earning your standing among your peeps and before God) or Living to please yourself (indulging and putting self at the center of everything)?

Day 3: Romans 7:7-25 Paul explains the purpose of the Law.

- What does it do according to this chapter?
- Which parts (for good or bad) do you see happening in you?

Paul offers a binary view of the Spirit vs. the Law. He explains that the law speaks to the Spirit, but we are of the flesh. Flesh allows sin to grow so that you do what you don't want to do.

- Where is your "flesh" most alive?

- What do you keep doing that you don't want to do? Where are the chronic problems for you?

Day 4 and 5: Romans 7:7-25 According to Tim Keller, "Becoming a Christian is a complete change in relationship or allegiance."

- Try to honestly reflect on your time, energy, reactions, and relationships. Where is your allegiance? Self (sin or pleasing others) or Christ (actively pursuing the Spirit and asking him to make you alive in Christ alone as you pursue others).

If your allegiance is not always with Christ, then check this out:

- + The first step is acknowledging that you don't have the ability to carry out the good you want to do.
- + The second step is discovering the "depth motive", or the motive underneath your sin. Is it discontentment or needing gratification for your wants? Is it you wanting to be God or to replace God?
- + The third step is to change your perspective: Instead of repressing flesh, pursue the Spirit. You already know your flesh is alive and greedy for more; what can you do to make the Holy Spirit alive and greedy for more of you?
- + What is your fourth step? Let's talk....

Week Eight

Day 1: Romans 8:1-4 Paul offers a quick recap of all of Romans so far.

- Can you describe the takeaways here?

- Even as we are dragging Romans out, can you join me in praying that God would use this study to transform your heart? Can you pray that God would allow you to see His heart for your community underneath all this theology? Write it here, and be expectant!

Day 2: Romans 8:5-17 God renews the old and makes it new. He does not throw our bodies (and all of our weaknesses) out...he miraculously renews and redeems us.

- What does it mean specifically to live differently? Think through the transformation process when you set your mind on Christ.

- Pray to God to renew and redeem your desires, your focus, and your life. Confess anything that needs to change.

Day 3: Romans 8:18-23 This reality, of adoption instead of slavery, gives us perspective.

- Try to quantify how this perspective change could change your life and outlook. Where do you need God to transform your perspective?

Day 4: Romans 8: 24-30 Paul gives us the truth about hope.

- How does the Spirit help us in our weakness? What is Paul asking us to believe?

- v28-9 God has been working for your good. He created you, pursued you, redeemed you, accompanies you. If he foreknew you, he predestined you to be like Jesus, justifying you and eventually glorifying you. Foreknew is the opposite of rejection; it means known and pursued and planned for. This chain cannot be broken. How do you feel? How do you respond?

- What do you hope for? Where are you groaning in your life?

Day 5: Romans 8:31-39

- What should be the result of believing everything we just read? He has already chosen to give his Son “for us all.” What would change if you allowed his view of you to be YOUR starting and ending point

- for your thinking about yourself?
- for your thinking about others?

- Paul assures us that “nothing can separate you.” In other words, no one can mess with you. Do YOU mess with you? Do you live as a person separated or not separated from God’s love (at your worst or at your best)?

Week Nine

Day 1: Romans 9:1-5 Paul has just argued that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. Now he acknowledges that God's love does not quit!

- Paul is in anguish because God's chosen people have decided to deny Him. Does this mean that God is not powerful? Does He compel us to love Him back?
- Even though they have denied Him, Paul still uses the present tense to talk about their reality. When do you ignore the truth about who you are in Christ? What does it take for you to come back to the truth about yourself?
- Can you view other people under the reality of Who they are in Christ (Instead of the broken, denying people that they are)?

Day 2: Romans 9:6-18 Paul is arguing here that God has not failed, but that the people God has "chosen" are His to choose.

- His choice is not based on our privilege, our family standing, or our merit. It does not even depend on your desire or effort, but solely on God's mercy (v16). "Before [you] had done anything good or bad" (v11), he loved and redeemed you. How do you respond to this? Do you feel God's endorsement of You?
- Full disclosure, it does appear that Paul is making God defend himself and that He only chooses a few. This is hard. We simply don't know. Allow yourself to think through the possibility that God's love is exclusively for some, but not for all. God doesn't need us to defend him, and he also doesn't need us to sugar coat His approach toward us. We will discuss...

Day 3: Romans 9:19-26 Paul begins with an AWESOME question! Why indeed?!

- God's love is consistent and intentional, and it is not our place to question Him. And yet, it can feel unloving. Again, allow yourself to "go there" and think through what Paul is saying.
- Paul says it is possible that God chose to create people only to 1) show his wrath 2) show his power 3) show His love and glory for the ones He loves. You can react to this honestly. Pray that you can land on the truth that God's ways are not ours, and that He is much more loving and much more Holy than we dare to imagine.
- The fact that God has made us, redeemed us, and called us His people is absolutely beautiful. It is only hard when we think about Him NOT doing it for others. Again, pray you can land in a place of gratitude, passion for Christ and others, and hope in His restoration.

Day 4: Romans 9:27-33 God chooses to save a remnant of Israel. The point here is that God is untouchable and is totally in charge.

- Gentiles, in general, only depended on faith. Jews, in general, only depended on their love of the law. When you depend on yourself, you stumble. Every single time....What, in general, are you likely to depend on? Where and when are you likely to stumble instead of needing Christ?

Week Ten

Day 1: Romans 10:1-4 Even as Paul gives himself to the Gentiles for ministry, his heart is for the Jews.

- Do you choose to whom you give your heart? Ask God, reflect upon, if you have the capacity to care for anyone more than your “chosen people”? Do you give/serve/love defensively?
- Paul recognizes that the Jews are well-meaning, but their passion is based on bad information. Do you passionately argue for (and even root your life in) things that might not be true? In your speech and action and prayers, take care to root yourself in truth.
- Where are you most likely to “establish your own righteousness”?

Day 2: Romans 10:5-13 Paul reminds us that our lives are not a matter of working our way up to Jesus.

- Because of Jesus, we get to simply abide. Do you know that the “word is near you”? How can you remind yourself each day of this reality?
- Paul says that when your heart believes, your mouth confesses. How does your mouth reflect what your heart knows/thinks to be true? If your mouth gets you in trouble a lot, what is happening in your heart? Look there for the root of your trouble!

Day 3: Romans 10:14-21 This is a call to share God’s truth with other people.

- Do you? With whom are you a truth teller? (What do those words evoke for you? Mean honesty? Gentle illumination? Conviction? Confession?)
- God very clearly gave the Israelites a shot, but they would not listen. The Gentiles accepted, while Israel was obstinate. Which are you? Are you open to what God (or other key people in your life) might teach or are you stubborn and difficult?

Week Eleven

Day 1: Romans 11:1-6 Did God give up on Israel? NO! He is not a God who gives up!

- At times, we feel so alone. Paul reminds us that like Elijah, we are never abandoned. Can you fight real, honest feelings or fears of abandonment with this truth? What will make it real and dependable for you?

- Paul can't resist throwing in his truth about Grace and Works! It is foundational for him to be absolutely convinced that we cannot earn God's favor! Can you own this? What prevents you from knowing it in your marrow?

Day 2: Romans 11:7-12 God's original plan was to use His love of Israel to redeem the world.

- While Israel missed it, through Christ, God opened his message to the world! This means that God absolutely plans for us to be in community! Are you aware of who God might be wanting to reach through you? Be aware of this in your life. Your redemption is not meant only for you, but so you can move toward others whose lives are not whole. Do you approach your faith this way? Do you approach others this way?

Day 3: Romans 11:13-21 The Gentiles should be so thankful for the Jews, and expectant that they accept Christ. Even we are rooted in Christ through His love of Israel!

- When you see people who have rejected Christ, how do you respond? Can we respond with such compassion and gratitude that God helped us see the Light? Can we always be aware of those who are so hurt that they can't imagine love and security from God?

Day 4: Romans 11: 22-36 Paul reminds us that we do not understand the mystery of salvation.

- He does give His kindness to so many; be thankful you understand how much you need Christ! Ultimately though, God's mind is unknowable. Does this frustrate you or free you?
- Paul again makes the case for community. We "got it" b/c Israel stumbled, and now they will "get it" because of how we love each other! Can you see the beauty and reality of this interdependence we have among God's people? No us vs them!!
- Do you want to be fully integrated, humbly connected, to a community? Or do you need to draw some lines? What are they? Where can you surrender and commit to people even when it is uncomfortable?

Week Twelve

Day 1: Romans 12: 1-2 Paul asserts that the foundation of every single thought and action we ever take should be a response to and awareness of God's mercy.

- What does it mean to you to be a living sacrifice?

- Does “no longer conforming” to the pattern of this world require? Do you view the world as the enemy?

- How do you “trust and approve God’s will” in your own life?

Day 2: Romans 12: 3-8 When you “daily renew your mind”, you automatically become humble and are sobered about who you are.

- Step back and consider how “you think of yourself.” Are you prone to undervaluing or overvaluing yourself?

- Do you resonate with one of the gifts he lists? Why?

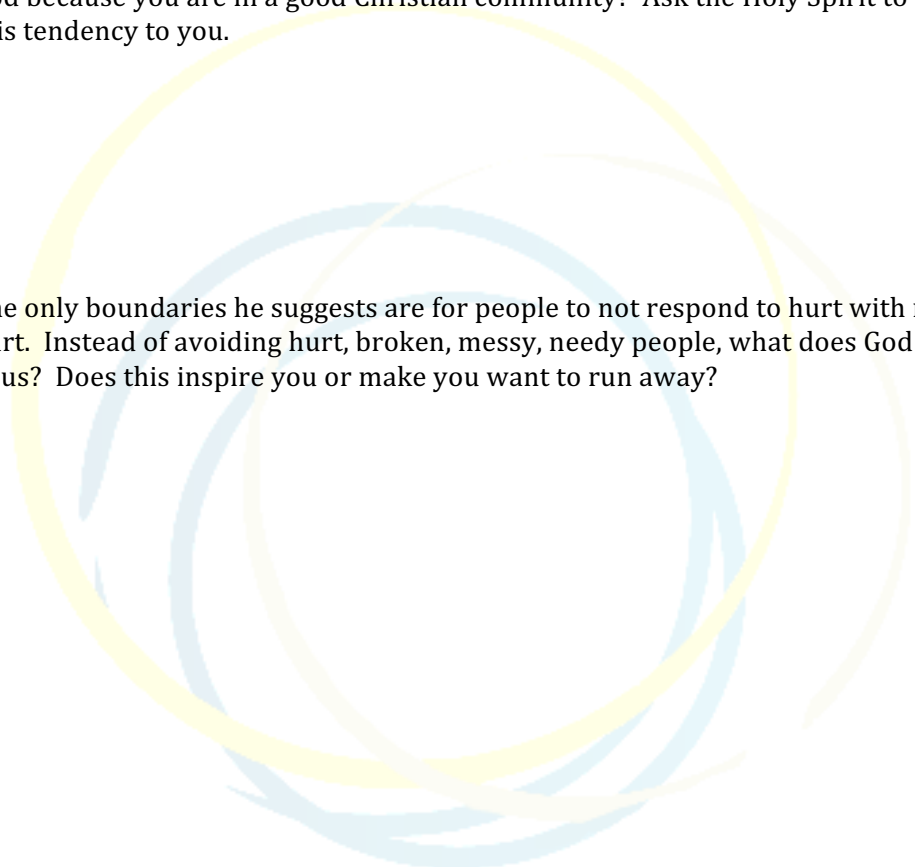
- In what area of your life do you need to be reminded that you are called to be in a community, where everyone has different gifts?

Day 3 and 4: Romans 12: 9-12 These verses explain how this community has to work and function.

- What do you learn about God's design of us when you notice that each command is a mix of personal spiritual matters and living well with others? What does God care about?

- Are you guilty of being a lone wolf or of leaning toward thinking you are all set with God because you are in a good Christian community? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal this tendency to you.

- The only boundaries he suggests are for people to not respond to hurt with more hurt. Instead of avoiding hurt, broken, messy, needy people, what does God expect of us? Does this inspire you or make you want to run away?



Week Thirteen

Day 1: Romans 13:1-14 Paul bookends this section on government with passages about how to treat others.

- Could it be that our government is one of the way God provides for His people? Can we think of government, and every group of people, as part of our neighborhood? What convicts you about this passage about government?
- Paul is writing to the Roman believers, who feel abused and abandoned by the Roman Empire. He offers two perspectives: a) Consider the idea that God may be at work in ways that we don't understand. b) The role of a believer is absolutely to care for and connect with those who are not being cared for well by our government. This said, when does a believer need to challenge the status quo? He ends the chapter by raising the stakes. If Christ took us to heaven tonight, are we clearly spending our energy in the right places?
- If you could live in a more focused way, where do you see the need for reform in the way you approach community? Your neighbors? What will you do?

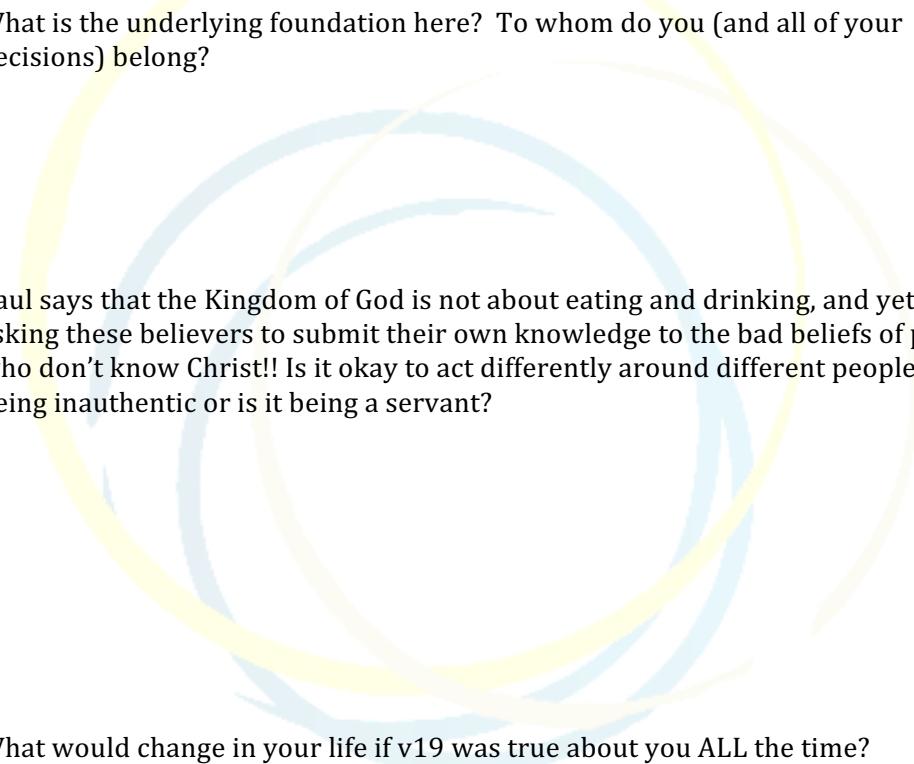
Day 2: Romans 14:1-8 Paul continues to explain community and how we should approach it.

- What is the foundational principle beneath these practical pieces of advice? What does Paul assume is true underneath these ideas?
- In Rome there were so many perspectives; Paul basically says, "your understanding of God's standards is not universally true." Is there a person or type of principle you are likely to judge?

Day 3: Romans 14:9-12

- We can act like this is about God, but these verses are actually about our own judging of others. Do you judge because of the sin of others or because you have a need to judge? Do you hear the difference?

Day 4: Romans 14:12-22

- What is the underlying foundation here? To whom do you (and all of your decisions) belong?
 - Paul says that the Kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking, and yet Paul is asking these believers to submit their own knowledge to the bad beliefs of people who don't know Christ!! Is it okay to act differently around different people? Is this being inauthentic or is it being a servant?
 - What would change in your life if v19 was true about you ALL the time?
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Week Fourteen

Day 1: Romans 15:1-13 We love as imitators!! This is the defining reality of knowing Christ.

- What is the underlying principle here?
- How do we imitate Christ in the way we love? How do you do it?
- Is your primary motivation in life a response to what God has done for you or because of your will?

Day 2: Romans 15: 14-33 Paul explains how and why he writes. He is convinced of their goodness.

- Everything he does is a response. Can we model him?
 - be convinced of the goodness and competency of others?
 - speak boldly out of our own experience with God?
 - give our lives to showing a people Jesus who have no access to him?
 - to glory in Jesus in my service to God?
 - to not speak except about what Christ has done?
 - to lead others to obey based on what he says and does?
- Of the above, which is hardest for you? What can you give your life to?

Day 3: Romans 16: 1-27

- How can we be creators of community for others in the way he was with Phoebe and others?
- How crucial were women to the establishing of the early church? Do you personally feel crucial to establishing God's work in your church, community or home? If so, then where and how? In not, then why not?
- In general, can you live in such a way that withdraws from those who cause divisions? Can you balance this command with knowing and pursuing Christ by loving the unlovable?

Day 4 and 5: Review of Romans

- Take a few mornings reading over your notes, remembering what you have learned, creating some space for the truths that will impact your life. Allow yourself to believe what you have learned and experienced.
- What will you believe about God, yourself and others after studying Romans? What is your responsibility toward God, yourself and others?