

C. Michael Patton
Romans

Credo Courses

Notes for the Book of Romans

Romans : God's Righteousness Revealed

Divisions	Intro 1:1-1:17)	Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)	Righteous Reconciliation (3:21-5:21)	Righteous Transformation (6:1-8:39)	Righteous Calling (9:1-11:36)	Righteous Living (12:1-15:33)	Conclusion (16:1-27)
Theme	Sin		Salvatio n	Sanctific ation	Securit y	Service	
Focus	<i>Doctrinal</i>					<i>Practical</i>	

Session 1 & 2: Expository Overview

I. *Introduction (1:1-17)*

Sin	
<i>Introduction (1:1-1:17)</i>	Righteous Condemnation (1:18- 3:20)

A. *General Introduction (1-6)*

1. **Signature of Paul (1)**

- Paul introduces himself in his normal manner, setting forth his credentials of both Apostleship and enslavement to Christ (*doulos*). Apostleship denotes his authority in being a messenger of the Gospel. Servant (lit. slave) on the other hand denotes his humility in submission to Christ.

2. **Preview of the Gospel (2-6)**

- Paul, in verses 2-6 gives a parenthetical statement about the Gospel of God. He tells us that this Gospel of which he is an apostle is God's Gospel. This is shown by the fact that it was promised in the OT. This helps the reader to begin to understand Paul's conception of what the Gospel is. The subject of the Gospel is Christ. The phrase, "Born a descendent of David according to the flesh," not only informs us that Christ was a man, but that He was qualified to be the promised Messiah which further links Paul's message to the OT. By virtue of Christ's resurrection, He was declared (poss. "shown to

be”) the Son of God with power. Hence, it is by the authority of the Son of God that Paul and the other Apostles were commissioned with the message which he was about to proclaim. Thus Paul begins his apology (defense) for the Gospel—it is not *his* Gospel, but God’s.

Gospel of God . . .

2 **which** He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

3 **concerning** His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,

4 **who** was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

5 **through whom** we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

6 **among whom** you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

Note: The Church here seems to be composed of primarily Gentiles (5,6)

B. *Greetings to Rome (7-15)*

- Paul expresses his love for the Romans whom he has never seen. Amazingly, Paul calls God to declare the truthfulness of his statement that he is continually praying for those whom he has never meet. This is a characteristic of Paul in that he is always deeply concerned for people who are probably not too concerned about him (see 9:1 where his heart is going out to the his Jewish brethren who despise him).

Note: The Romans to whom Paul wrote *were Christians* (v. 6).

Note: Paul had never been to Rome (11, 13).

Note: Paul was not simply speaking out of formality when he states that he prays unceasingly for the Romans (9). He calls God as his witness. How often do you and I pray for those who we don’t know? How often do you and I pray for those we do know?

C. *Theme of the Book (16-17)*

- Here Paul expresses his confidence in the power of God. He equates the message of the Gospel with the power of God. Paul never draws confidence from his persuasiveness of speech (see 1 Cor 2:1-4).
- What did Paul mean by “to the Jew first” (v. 16)?
 1. Chronologically to the Jew first.
 2. Geographically to the Jew first.
 3. Historically to the Jew first.
 4. Theologically to the Jew first.
- What is the Righteousness of God (v. 17)?
 1. The possessive righteousness of God (subjective genitive).
 - An attribute of His innate character (3:25, 26)
 - His faithfulness to His promises
 2. The distributive righteousness from God (objective genitive).
 - This is the interpretation that most translations have (see NIV “from God).
 - Most common understanding since Martin Luther (see Luther Conversion handout).
 3. Both possessive and distributive
 - It is both the righteousness with which God Himself is righteous and the righteousness, which He distributes to those who believe.

Occurrences of δικαιοσύνην “Righteousness/Just”				
Book	# of occurrences	# of verses	% of verses of Book	% of New Testament
Mat	7	1068	0.66%	7.61%
Luk	1	1149	0.09%	1.09%
Joh	2	878	0.23%	2.17%
Act	4	1002	0.40%	4.35%
Rom	29	432	6.71%	31.52%
1Co	1	437	0.23%	1.09%
2Co	7	256	2.73%	7.61%
Gal	4	149	2.68%	4.35%
Eph	3	155	1.94%	3.26%
Phi	3	104	2.88%	3.26%
1Ti	1	113	0.88%	1.09%
2Ti	3	83	3.61%	3.26%
Tit	1	46	2.17%	1.09%
Heb	6	303	1.98%	6.52%
James	3	108	2.78%	3.26%
1Pe	2	105	1.90%	2.17%
2Pe	4	61	6.56%	4.35%
1Jo	3	105	2.86%	3.26%

Rev	2	405	0.49%	2.17%
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- Romans 1:17 is the key verse of the letter. In it Paul announces the theme: “the righteousness of God.” The word “righteousness” is used one way or another over sixty times in the letter (righteous, just, and justified). God’s righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. In the death of Christ, God revealed His righteousness by punishing sin; in the resurrection of Christ, He made salvation available to the believing sinner. The problem, “How can a holy God ever forgive sinners and still be holy?” is answered in the Gospel. Through the death and resurrection of Christ, God is seen to be “both just and justifier.” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Right*, The Bible Exposition Commentary [Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1977], 517).

Note: Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel. Although Paul knew that the Gospel was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1Cor 1:18-23), he also knew that it was the “power of God.”

II. Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)

Sin	
Introduction (1:1-1:17)	<i>Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)</i>

<i>Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)</i>			
Condemnation of Gentiles (1:18-1:32)	Condemnation of the Self-Righteous (2:1-16)	Condemnation of the Jews (2:17-3:8)	Condemnation of All (3:9-3:20)

A. Condemnation of the Gentiles (1:18-1:32)

1. The Reason for the Wrath (18-23)

- Lit. The wrath of God is being revealed (present tense).

- Wrath: This wrath is the righteous wrath of God, which He possesses in perfect harmony with all His attributes. It is not an explosive wrath to which Paul refers (*thumos*), but a controlled anger reserved for punishment (*orgee*). Many people have had a problem with attributing wrath to a loving God (e.g. Dodd, *Romans*, 1932, p. 21). Stott defines God’s wrath appropriately saying, “The wrath of God . . . is almost totally different from human anger. It does not mean that God loses His temper, flies into a rage, or is ever malicious, spiteful or vindictive. . . . On the contrary, his wrath is his holy hostility to evil, his refusal to condone it or come to terms with it, his just judgment upon it” (Stott, 72). In fact, Arthur Pink wrote, “A study of the concordance will show that there are more references in Scripture to the anger, fury and wrath of God than there are to His love and tenderness” (Pink, *Attributes of God*, p.82). The offended party has the right to express emotions in accordance with the offence.
- *Why the wrath comes:*
 1. The ultimate reason that the wrath of God comes is stated in verse 21: the failure of men to recognize God for whom He is and gives thanks.
 2. This rejection is in the midst of God’s **general revelation**. General revelation consists of God’s attributes being displayed through creation.
 - Question #1:** What can be realized about God through creation?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

Question #2: What things cannot be discovered?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Note: According to Romans, general revelation is sufficient only to condemn.

2. Results of God’s Wrath (24-32)

- a) God gave them over to sexual impurity (24-27)
- b) God gave them over to improper acts (28-32)

Note 1: “God gave them over” expresses God’s active participation of withdrawal from those who are not thankful. Moo expresses this well when he states, “God does not simply let the boat go—he gives it a push downstream. Like a judge who hands over a prisoner to the punishment that his crime has earned, God hands over the sinner to the terrible cycle of ever-increasing sin” (Moo, p. 111).

Note 2: Verses 24-27 express the depth of sin while verses 28-27 express the breath of sin.

B. Condemnation of the Self-Righteous (2:1-16)

Note: Paul here begins a diatribe (an imaginary conversation with an ideal representative). It is characterized by much rhetoric (i.e. the use of the first person plural, rhetorical questions, etc.).

- This section provides a scathing condemnation of those who believe that they are righteous in and of themselves. They are the ones who are watching the condemnation of the heathen in the previous section and cheering as their punishment is carried out.

1. Reason for the Condemnation (1-5)

- Condemnation is twofold: (1) Their act of self-righteous judging itself is sin (Lk 6:41-42), and (2) they are condemned for practicing the same things.

2. Results of the Condemnation (5)

- It is interesting that one judgment spoken of here is the “Day of Judgment.” The judgment for the self-righteous moralizers spoken of here is only future. It is not the same as that for the heathen Gentiles spoken of previously. The “Day of Judgment” is a technical term, which is used to speak of final judgment (see Ps 110:5; Zeph 1:14-15; Rev 6:17).
- Implication: The judgment for the self-righteous is not one of handing over, but one of “storing up” (5). Self-righteousness is an extremely deceiving sin. For some, it will not be evident until the last day of wrath. While the sexually immoral person may repent because of the immediate exposure of the sin through present judgment (e.g. STD), the self-righteous do not repent because they have blinded their eyes to their own sin. Their judgment will come as a shock.

Note: The meaning of “same things” could mean (1) the exact same things as those mentioned before, (2) their judgmental attitude is the same type of thing, or (3) it could mean both 1 and 2.

3. Judgment According to Works (6-16)

- Paul’s primary purpose here is to show that there is no partiality with God (11). All people, Jews and Gentiles, will be judged impartially according to their works.
- Problem: What does Paul mean by stating that “doing good” produces eternal life (7)?
 - a. Paul contradicts himself here and states that salvation is by works.
 - b. Paul is referring to OT salvation in which people did, by the grace of God, keep the law and earn eternal life.
 - c. Paul is stating here that works *are* necessary for eternal life, but only a Christian can “persevere in doing good.”
 - d. Paul is using hypothetical rhetoric. If a person could persevere in doing good, he would earn eternal life—but no one can (see 3:19-20). This view would refer only to the unredeemed.

Note: Paul affirms a different type of natural revelation: the human conscience (14-15).

Note: This section supports the understanding that there will be differing degrees of punishment in Hell (see also Luke 12:47-48).

C. Condemnation of the Jews (2:17-3:8)

1. Hypocrisy of the Jew (2:17-29)

- This section is primarily concerned with the condemnation of the self-righteous Jews. Harrison summarizes it best, “Here Paul begins to engage in a dialogue with a representative Jew, and his razor sharp irony is superb for its deftness. He proceeds to build up the Jew, citing his various distinctives and appearing to appreciate them (17-20), only to swing abruptly into a frontal assault by exposing the inconsistency between his claims and his conduct” (Everett Harrison, “Romans” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, p. 33).

<i>Jew's Advantages</i>		<i>Jew's Hypocrisy</i>
Relation with God	1. Bore the name "Jew" (children of Abraham). 2. Rely upon the Law 3. Boast in God 4. Know God's will 5. Approve the best things	1. They are untaught teachers: "Blind leaders of the blind" (Matt 5:14) 2. Broke the 8 th commandment (stealing) 3. Broke the 7 th commandment (adultery) 4. Broke the 1 st commandment (idolatry)
Relation with People	6. Guild to the blind 7. Corrector of the foolish 8. Teacher of the immature	Summary: They boast about the things of the Law but yet they break the Law as well.

- "Circumcision" is used in the place of "Jew" (metonymy) in this section. The gist of what Paul is saying is that appearance and nationality do not gain favor with God. Outward circumcision is only good if it evidences a circumcision of the heart (see Ezek 44:9; Jer 9:25). Paul at this point has not mentioned salvation by grace though faith. It is still his purpose to state that the Law is not able to establish righteousness (3:19-20); all are guilty. There is still hopelessness expressed in his argument. Who can one circumcise his own heart? The answer is an implied "nobody." People at this point have a major dilemma. The silence that Paul's argument is producing is deafening.

2. Faithfulness of God (3:1-8)

Question #1 (3:1-4): Paul, at this point, feels compelled to bring up the issue of the faithfulness of God in regard to his people (Israel). He will further develop this in chapters 9-11. The question that Paul fears may be brought up at this point is, "how does the faithlessness of the Jews effect the faithfulness of God?" *It does not!* Even though/if all act in a faithless manner (e.g. lying), God will still be true (v. 4). The main point here is that man's faithlessness will never catch God off guard. Even if the whole world turns against God (and Paul will reiterate that this is the case in the next section), God will act in faithfulness to His word. To put it another way, Paul states here that God makes promises to people and when these people (you and I) turn against Him, He still remains true to His word. God cannot be unfaithful!

Question #2 (3:5-8): Paul now senses a hypothetical mocker. This mocker states that God receives glory when He punishes righteously, like a righteous judge at the

courthouse. This being the case, why then are we still judged since God receives glory in His judgment? This is a type of “the end justifies the means” mentality. This is a cop-out to which Paul gives little attention. He simply states that these objectors are justly condemned for their idiocy. He may, as well, have postponed the majority of his answer until 6:1 (see Moo, 195).

D. Condemnation of All People (3:9-20)

“The verdict is in . . . and it’s not good”

- These verses are among the most scathing and offensive in the Bible with regard to human nature. Notice the references to the sinfulness of the body parts, “throat,” “tongue,” “lips,” (v. 13), “mouth” (v. 14), “feet” (v. 15). They are above all others the strongest attestation to the doctrine known as total depravity. Man’s entire being is depraved and in rebellion to God.
- This section serves as a summary of Paul’s argument from 1:18-3:20. His conclusion is that all stand before a holy God with shut mouths. His usage of courtroom terminology is evident and powerful. The Judge has concluded that all are condemned.

Note: Paul strings together no less than seven Old Testament passages (Ps 14:1-3, 53:1-3; 5:9, 140:3, 10:7; Is 59:7f; Ps 36:1) in verses 10-18.

John Stott summarizes this section well:
 “. . . This is the point to which the apostle has been relentlessly moving. The idolatrous and immoral Gentiles are ‘without excuse’ (1:20). All critical moralizers, whether Jews or Gentiles, equally ‘have no excuse’ (2:1). The special status of the Jews does not exonerate any exception, [and they] are inexcusable before God . . . And now the reason is plain. It is because all know something of God and morality, but all have disregarded and even stifled their knowledge in order to go their own way. So all are guilty and condemned before God.

<i>Characteristics of the Four Groups of People to Whom Paul Refers</i>			
Heathen Gentiles	Moralizers	Jews	All People
1. Outward sin 2. Unthankful 3. Do not acknowledge God in their daily lives. 4. Sexual sin	1. Self-righteous 2. Judgmental 3. Do not understand the holiness of God. 4. Exaltation of man 5. Inward sin 6. Unrepentant	1. Hypocrisy 2. Blasphemers 3. Unfaithful 4. Abandoned the covenant.	1. Not righteous 2. Not understanding of the truth 3. Do not seek God 4. Turned away 5. Become useless 6. Not one who does

***THE GROUND IS NOW
LEVEL!***

Romans : God's Righteousness Revealed

Divisions	Intro 1:1- 1:17)	Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)	Righteous Reconciliation (3:21-5:21)	Righteous Transformation (6:1-8:39)	Righteous Calling (9:1-11:36)	Righteous Living (12:1-15:33)	Conclusion (16:1-27)
Theme	Sin		Salvation	Sanctifica -tion	Security	Service	
Focus	<i>Doctrinal</i>					<i>Practical</i>	

Session 3 & 4: Expository Overview

III. Righteous Reconciliation (3:21-5:21)

Salvation		
<i>Righteous Reconciliation</i>		
Justification by Faith (3:21-31)	Old Testament Justification (4:1-25)	Imputed Justification (5:1-21)

Leaving the previous section, it is doubtless that the readers would be at a loss as to how justification before God can take place except though His wrath and condemnation being directed toward them. All mankind has been deemed guilty. Those who put their confidence in the Law have been laid low. Paul has used the phrase “righteousness of/from God” (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) over and over in the previous section. He now begins to use the verb form of the same word, “righteous” (δικαιῶ). The best translation of this word is “to declare righteous” or “to justify.”¹ The significance of this transition is that Paul is now concerned with informing his readers how it is that this righteousness, which only God possesses, and which He Himself requires, is attained by sinful man.

Occurrences of δικαιῶ “To make Righteousness/To Justify”

¹ [UBS] δικαιῶ put into a right relationship (with God); acquit, declare and treat as righteous; show or prove to be right; set free (Ac 13.38; Ro 6.7).

[Louw-Nida] δικαιῶ
 (a) to put right with
 (b) show to be right
 (c) acquit
 (d) set free

Book	# of occurrences	# of verses	% book	% of New Testament
Mat	2	1068	0.19%	5.13%
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Act	2	1002	0.20%	5.13%
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Gal	6	149	4.03%	15.38%
1Ti	1	113	0.88%	2.56%
Tit	1	46	2.17%	2.56%
Jam	3	108	2.78%	7.69%

Occurrences of δικαιοω
“To make Righteousness/To Justify”
in Romans

Chapter	# of occurrences	# of verses	% chapter	% of book
2	1	29	3.45%	7.14%
3	6	31	19.35%	42.86%
4	2	25	8.00%	14.29%
5	2	21	9.52%	14.29%
6	1	23	4.35%	7.14%
8	2	39	5.13%	14.29%

These statistics show us that this verb, “to declare righteous,” is more dominant in Romans than in any other book of the Bible. As well, they show us that Romans chapter 3 has more occurrences of the term than any other chapter. Romans chapter 3 is truly the most “righteous” chapter in the Bible. The importance of this term cannot be underestimated. If proper exposition of this section is to be done, it must start with a firm grasp of what it means to be declared righteous.

The last section ended with the frightful denouncing of what seemed to be the only hope—the Law: “. . . by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (δικαιοω) in His sight.” **Is there hope for mankind?**

*Romans
Chapter 3 is
truly the most
“righteous”
chapter in the
Bible!*

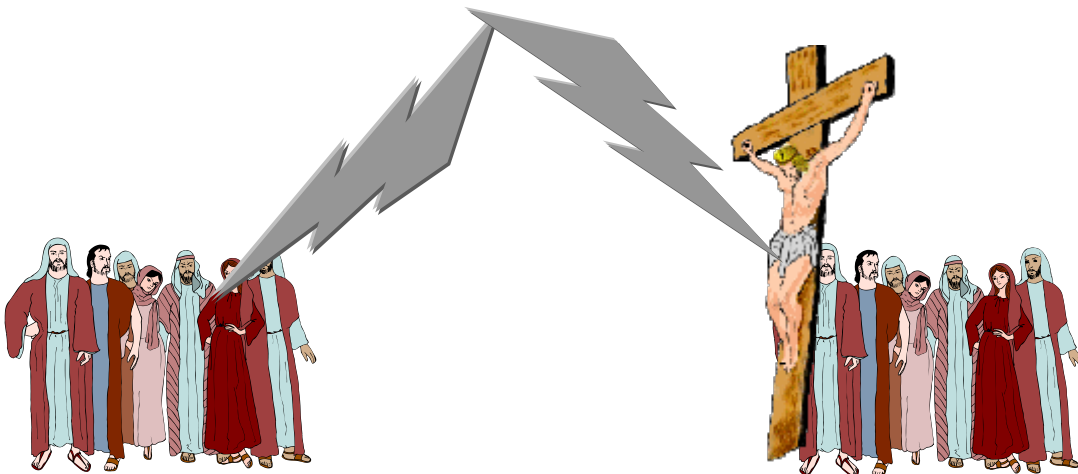
Note: The word “Law” in the previous section does not contain a definite article. What are the implications of this?

A. Justification by Faith (3:21-31)

1. The Path of Justification (21-28)

- Justification comes by way of the righteousness of God. Notice that God does not bypass his righteousness in order to justify. Contrary to popular belief, there are some things that God *cannot do*. What are some of the things that God cannot do? (i.e. Titus 1:2)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Just as God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18, Num 23:19), He cannot act against His nature. God cannot neglect His justice. That is what makes the cross so necessary (Christ's prayer in the Garden demonstrated this).
- There are two avenues for God's righteousness to be carried out against sinful man. Paul has already demonstrated avenue number one—to personally experience God's wrath. The second avenue is introduced in this chapter—allow Christ to experience God's wrath in your place.

God's Righteousness



As John Stott puts it, “This [the Cross] is the righteous basis on which the righteousness of God can ‘righteous’ the unrighteous without compromising his righteousness” (Stott, 115).

- At this point, there are three important words, which are introduced: grace, propitiation, and faith. All are involved in the justification process.
 1. Grace (χάρις): Free, unmerited favor, which God bestows on whom He will. Grace is never earned. There is nothing within a person which causes God’s graciousness. If any work is added to grace, grace is no longer grace (see Rom 11:6).
 2. Propitiation (ἰλαστήριον): The removal of divine wrath. In the present context of God’s wrath, it means that Christ was the means by which God was satisfied.
 3. Faith (πίστις): To believe in something, to place trust or confidence in.

- Paul’s basic argument has not changed. He does not present God as having to alter His nature to justify sinful man. God justifies sinners by taking their punishment. Christ was displayed publicly so that all would be able to see evidence of God’s righteousness.¹ This public demonstration vindicates God of any accusation that would have been made against Him that He did not deal in a just manner with the sins of the OT saints who were forgiven (“Ps 32:1-2, “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity . . .”). This public demonstration also shows that He has not passed over the sins of the saints of the present time either. **Now God is both just, and He is the justifier** (v. 26)—there was no other way.

Note: “. . . and fall short of God’s glory” in verse 23 is in the present progressive tense. A better translation would be “. . . and are presently falling short of God’s glory.”

Note: The legal terms of this section cannot be overlooked: “justified,” “displayed publicly,” “righteousness,” “demonstrate,” “just.”

Note: The term “faith” is used in 35 verses in the book of Romans. That makes up 15% of its usage in the NT. The only other book which comes close is Hebrews in which it occurs in 31 verses (13% of NT). Our current section of Romans contains over

¹ One great question that there has always been may be answered in this section. “Why did God have to have Christ die on a cross? Why not have Him stoned or beheaded?” It is very possible that God had this public demonstration of His righteousness in mind. What better way to show God’s righteous requirements being carried out than this way of execution where there would be many witnesses?

50% of its total usage in the book. Not only is our section a “righteous” section, but it is also a “faith-full” one!

2. The Process of Justification (28-31)

- Paul here gives a succinct statement of justification. There is no boasting. God is the God of all people, Jews and Gentiles. He justifies all the same way. Verse 28 is one of the great faith alone (*sola fide*) statements. Paul removes all means of justification other than faith. Stott again states it well, “Indeed, ‘justification by faith alone’, *sola fide*, is one of the great watchwords of the Reformation. True, the word ‘alone’ does not occur in Paul’s text of verse 28, where Luther added it. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that the Roman Catholic Church accused Luther of perverting the text of Holy Scripture. But Luther was following Origen and other early Church Fathers, who had similarly introduced the word ‘alone’. A true instinct lead them to do so. Far from falsifying or distorting Paul’s meaning, they were clarifying and emphasizing it” (Stott, 117). By stating that justification is “apart [χωρὶ, without, with no relation to] from the works of law,” he has removed all human effort of any kind.
- How is it that we establish the Law (v. 31)?
 1. “Law” means the OT in general; we establish it because it taught salvation by faith.
 2. “Law” means the Mosaic system (i.e. Ten Commandments, Sabbath, etc.); we establish it by using it for its intended purpose—to expose sin (3:20).
 3. “Law” is a general term that speaks of all that God demands (OT and NT); we establish the Law because we now have the ability to do so (6:1-2).
 4. “Law” is a general term that speaks of all that God demands (OT and NT); we establish the Law only through our faith in Christ. He is our fulfillment. His righteousness, which we receive, has established the Law. Just as we are declared righteous, we are declared “establishers of the Law.”
 5. All are true and in the mind of Paul.

B. Old Testament Justification (4:1-25)

Having established that justification is by faith alone, without any reference to works of the Law, it is now Paul's purpose to defend the fact that justification by faith alone is always the way in which God has worked. This section can be thought of as a continuation of his diatribe. It is as if there was a heckler in the audience who stood up and yelled, "If this is true, what about the people in the OT, weren't they saved by works? Paul then chooses what would be the greatest representative of the OT. Tradition had it that Abraham sat at the gates of Hell preventing entrance of any circumcised person. Paul's argument displays not only the fallacy of this presumption, but also that Abraham himself was justified because of faith, not works. Harrison clearly sees Paul's argument when he states that, "If Paul can establish as true that the father of the nation of Israel was justified by faith rather than by works, he will have scored heavily, especially with his Jewish readers" (Harrison, *Expositors Bible Commentary*, 47).

Abraham was not justified by works, but faith (1-8)

Abraham was not circumcised when declared righteous (9-12)

Abraham did not have the Law when declared righteous (13-17)

Abraham's faith in action (18-25)

1. Abraham was not Justified by works (4:1-8)

- Paul assumes that his readers know the story of Abraham and that they believe Abraham has something to boast about. Paul explains that wages come in two different ways: (1) because they were earned, and (2) because they were given as a gift. Abraham's righteousness was a gift. Paul quotes Gen 15:6 to prove that Abraham was justified by faith and that

If the portion of the book that we have covered so far were to be written in summary dialogue form, it might look something like this:

Paul: I would like to share God's Good News with you. God is righteous. He is going to punish all the ungodly for their unthankful prideful heart. He must do this because of His righteousness?

Self-righteous: But I am not like those people. I am righteous because I do not do any *really* bad things.

Paul: But you have broken God's law in many ways. Just by saying this you show that you are prideful and arrogant. God must punish you for this. God is righteous.

Jew: What about me? I am a Jew. God does not punish Jews. We have the law *and* circumcision.

Paul: God is not concerned with outward appearances. You may have been given the Law, but you do not follow it. You may be circumcised in the flesh, but what about your heart? You have become a hypocrite. God must punish you. God must remain righteous.

Jew: Fine! How about this then: since God's righteousness is displayed more when He punishes people; let us all give Him more reason to punish us so that He will be shown to be more righteous!

Paul: That's a stupid statement; I'll deal with you later (6:1).

God has declared all people guilty. He cannot do otherwise. But there is good news! God has satisfied his own righteous requirements by sending His Son to take the punishment for our sin. By simply placing faith in Him anyone, both Jews and Gentiles (for God is not partial), can receive justification.

Jew: OK then wise guy, if God now justifies people by this new thing you keep talking about, "faith," what about those people in the OT—how were they justified?

the righteousness which he possesses is an alien righteousness.

Note: The term “reckon” (λογίζομαι *logizomai*) used here is an accounting term, which was used in business dealings. Of the 40 times that it is used in the NT, 19 occur in Romans. Romans is also a “reckoning letter”! The emphasis that this term places on justification is that in justification, an alien righteousness must be “reckoned” or accounted to us.

2. Abraham was not circumcised when he was justified (9-12).

- Paul now continues his rhetoric with more questions. His main point in this section is that Abraham was justified while uncircumcised.
- Implication: Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe.

3. Abraham did not have the Law when he was justified (13-17).

- Paul continues his argument that Abraham’s faith is not only a Jewish faith. This is an argument from the particular to the general. Paul has just stated that Abraham did not have a certain command (circumcision) before he was justified, now he goes on to state that Abraham did not even have the Mosaic Law before he was justified. If the Law is what justifies, Paul argues that Abraham was not justified. If this is true, the statement about Abraham’s faith is meaningless (“made void”) as well as the promises. Paul’s protesters were probably not ready to debate the validity of his argumentation. They would have to deny the inspiration of Scripture.

4. Abraham’s faith in action (18-25)

- This section is interesting in that Paul feels compelled to give the reader a more elaborate explanation as to the nature of Abraham’s faith. This is a good illustration to show what faith looks like.
- Martin Luther stated about these verses, “In these verses, the whole of Christianity is comprehended” (Boice, 494). Charles Hodge said that this verse (25) is “a comprehensive statement of the whole Gospel (Hodge, *Romans*, 129).

- There is slight difficulty in the interpretation of v. 25. Namely, what does the phrase mean, “he was raised for our justification.”
 1. It could mean that the resurrection had atoning/justifying value.
 2. It could mean that he was raised “because of” our justification. This would teach that our justification that Christ bought on the Cross was shown to be approved by the resurrection of Christ.
 3. It could simply be a parallelism in which Paul was stating the same thing as the previous statement, “he was delivered for/because of our transgressions.”

Note: v. 20 tells us that when we believe what He says He receives glory.

Note: v. 25 seems to be, because of its structure (parallelism), either an early creed or a Pauline creedalization (Harrison, 55).

Note: Notice how belief in v. 24 is directed to the Father. This evidences the interchange that exists among the members of the Godhead.

Note: The verb “delivered over” has reference to the Father who spared not His own Son (see 8:32). Moo calls it a “divine passive” (Moo, 288). This being the case, it is a clear reference to the substitutionary atonement.

Comparison of Abraham’s Faith and Ours

Abraham’s	Ours
v. 19: Abraham considered his own ability. He was too old	We are too sinful
v. 20: God had promised to do something for him (i.e. give him a child)	God has promised to do something for us (i.e. forgive and justify)
v. 20: Although Abraham was not assured of his own ability, he was assured of God’s.	Although we know that we cannot save ourselves, we trust in God’s ability to save us.
v. 17: Abraham trusted that God could bring the dead to life (i.e. Isaac).	We trust in God to bring the dead to life (i.e. Christ, us)

C. Imputed Justification (5:1-21)

In this section Paul seems to pick up where he left off in 3:28. Again, Paul is acting as an apologist giving a defense for the Gospel. We must remember that Paul has been traveling as an itinerant preacher for some time now. We are told in the book of Acts that it was his practice to visit the Jewish synagogues before taking the Gospel to the Gentiles. As we will see in chapters 9-11, Paul's greatest desire was that his Jewish brothers would accept the Gospel. With these facts being understood, one can see why Paul is always stopping in the middle of a presentation to give a defense to what he has just stated. He knew all the objections. He has listened to them time and time again. In fact, some of these objections may be the very ones which he himself raised before coming to the faith. Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, vindicates God's righteousness. Or better put, the Holy Spirit, using the pen and personality of Paul, defends Himself.

The emphasis on the unity or solidarity of all believers continues in this section. Abraham was identified in chapter 4 as the father of all who have faith. Now we are more succinctly identified with Adam and Christ.

1. Righteous Reconciliation (1-11)

This section gives us six immediate fruits of our justification.

1. We have peace with God (1)

This peace is a peace that takes us from the courthouse to the home. We have been reconciled with our Father-creator. With this come all of the benefits of being heirs of God (8:17).

2. We stand in Grace (2a)

This is not the grace which saves us but the sphere of grace in which we stand. Stott expresses it well, "Justified believers enjoy a blessing far greater than a periodic approach to God or an occasional audience with a king. We are privileged to live in the temple and in the palace. The perfect tense expresses this. Our relationship with God . . . is not sporadic but continuous, not precarious but secure. We do not fall in and out of grace like courtiers who may find themselves in and out of favor with their sovereign, or politicians with the public. No, we stand in it, for that is the nature of grace. Nothing can separate us from God's love." (Stott, 140).

Note: It is interesting to note that Paul does not say that we have access to God as one might expect, but that we have access to grace. Grace in this statement is substituted for God (metonymy). This is an incredible and vivid statement of the change of attitude which God now has for us. Before we stood in the presence of a God characterized by wrath, now we stand in the presence of a God characterized by grace. Our situation has truly changed.

3. We rejoice in hope of the Glory of God (2b)

Paul informs us here that another benefit of salvation is that we begin to have pleasure to see God glorified. It becomes a hope within us that God would receive the recognition that He deserves.

4. We rejoice in our suffering (3-8)

Amazingly, in the midst of these evident blessing, we have a blessing pronounced which does not seem to naturally fit the category of the other mentioned by Paul. Suffering is what people fear the most. Death of a loved one, physical ailments, and poverty are all things that cause us to suffering. Paul is not telling us that the sufferings themselves are the benefits of salvation, but the hope that comes in the midst of the suffering is. This is one of the key characteristics that distinguish believers from non-believers—not that we do not have troubles but that we hope in the midst of them.

5. We shall be saved through Christ (9-10)

Seeing as how both of these verbs (“to save”) are in the future, Paul is now speaking of the future salvation that still awaits us.

- a. We shall be saved from the coming wrath of God (9).
- b. We shall be saved from a life without God (10).

6. We also rejoice in God (11)

This speaks of our daily rejoicing that we have because of our relationship with God. Boasting in God involves the gift of knowing who God is. God reveals Himself to us so that our rejoicing comes naturally. First and foremost our rejoicing comes in the fact that He is our hope and salvation.

Let us trace exactly what has happened to us in our justification:

1. We have been forgiven
2. We have been saved from the wrath of God
3. We have been declared righteous (justified)
4. We have been reconciled
5. We have imputed righteousness of Christ charged to our account.

2. Righteous Imputation (12-21)

- Paul now turns to the means by which Christ has represented us in this salvation. A comparison is now made between Adam and Christ. Both represent two groups of people. The connection of this section with the last is evident because of the “therefore.” The “therefore” could be translated in this instance as “in order to accomplish this [salvation] . . .” This would suggest that Christ’s representation is the basis of the salvation which was spoken of previously. Paul does not seem to be compelled to speak on this matter because of his imaginary diatribe with the heckler. It is improbable that someone would be have a problem as to how one could relate to Adam and still be a believer. **This information, which Paul gives here, is probably unsolicited new revelation.**
- This passage is a good candidate for being the most troublesome and debated passages in the entire Bible. This passage speaks of original sin. Although the words “original sin” are not contained in this section the concept is. “Original Sin” refers two things: (1) the sin, which Adam committed in the Garden, and (2) the sin, which was passed on to his posterity. Both are not exclusive for one depends on the other. This concept is not only hard to understand but also quite disturbing. It is because of this Pascal wrote:

“Without doubt, nothing is more shocking to our reason than to say that the sin of the first man has implicated in its guilt men so far from the original sin that they seem incapable of sharing it. This flow of guilt does not seem merely impossible to us, but indeed most unjust. What could be more contrary to the rules of our miserable justice than the eternal damnation of a child, incapable of will, for an act in which he seems to have so little part that it was actually committed 6,000 years before he existed? Certainly nothing jolts us more rudely than this doctrine . . .”

Through Adam’s Sin	Through Christ’s Righteousness
Sin Entered (12)	
Physical and Spiritual Death (12)	
Judgment (16)	Free gift (16)

Condemnation (16)	Justification (16)
Death Reigned (17)	Life Reigned (17)
One Transgression=Condemnation of All (18)	One Act of Righteousness=Justification of All (18)
Adam's Disobedience=Many Were Made Sinners (19)	Christ's Obedience=Many Were Made Righteous (19)

Is it fair that we are condemned for something we did not do?

1. It does not seem like it is, but God is God, and what He says goes.
2. Yes, because we all actually sinned with Adam because we were literally in Adam. Therefore, we did commit this sin.
3. Yes, because we would have done the same thing.

Why didn't God give us our own chance?

	Pelagius	Arminian	Roman Catholic	John Calvin	Federal (Traditional Protestantism)	Augustinianism/Seminal/Realistic
Meaning of “all sinned”	All sin in the same manner as Adam and therefore die.	All sin when they agree with Adam and sin thereby inheriting his guilt.	All sinned in the inheritance of Adam’s sinful nature.	All sinned in the inheritance of corruption.	When Adam sinned, we sinned in and with him (corporate identity).	When Adam sinned, we sinned in him.
Mediate/ Immediate	Neither, no transfer of sin.	Nature=immediate Guilt=Mediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate
Strengths	All people are responsible for only their own actions.	We only inherit guilt by agreement.	Recognizes the inheritance of a sinful nature	Recognizes the inheritance of corruption	Recognizes the force of the passage. Context and analogy supports this view.	Recognizes the force of the passage. Heb 7:9-10 supports the idea.
Weaknesses	Does not recognize the force of the historic aorist nor the passage’s emphasis on the one sin of Adam.	Does not recognize the force of the historic aorist. Undue separation of guilt and nature.	Hard to see how the inheritance of a nature could be described by stating that “all sinned.”	Hard to see how the inheritance of corruption could be described by stating that “all sinned.”	Difficult to see the justice in being punished for a sin that was not personally committed.	The analogy of Christ and Adam does not support this view. If we actually sinned in Adam, we must have actually been righteous in Christ.

Romans : God's Righteousness Revealed

Divisions	Intro 1:1-1:17)	Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)	Righteous Reconciliation (3:21-5:21)	Righteous Transformation (6:1-8:39)	Righteous Calling (9:1-11:36)	Righteous Living (12:1-15:33)	Conclusion (16:1-27)
Theme	Sin		Salvatio n	Sanctific ation	Securit y	Service	
Focus	<i>Doctrinal</i>					<i>Practical</i>	

Session 5 & 6: Expository Overview

IV. Righteous Transformation (6:1-8:39)

Sanctification		
<i>Righteous Transformation</i>		
Life in Relation to Christ (6:1-23)	Life in Relation to the Law (7:1-25)	Life in Relation to the Spirit (8:1-39)

Having just finished explaining how it is that a person is brought into relationship with a righteous God, it is now Paul's purpose to explain how the new believer is to live the Christian life. The believer is to enter into a process called sanctification¹ (6:19, 22). There are three stages to Paul's explanation of the sanctification process. First, it is Paul's purpose to further explain that which he began in the previous chapter—our identification with Christ (chap. 6). It is because of our vital union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection that this sanctification process can begin. Second, Paul feels compelled to explain the believer's relationship to the Law (chap. 7). In doing so Paul will argue that the Law has no more purpose in our sanctification than it did in our salvation. Finally, Paul explains what the true driving force of our sanctification is—the Holy Spirit (chap. 8).

Note: One key word to note in this section is “sin” (ἁμαρτία, *harmartia*). The term occurs more times in the book of Romans than in any other book of the NT (48). It occurs more times in chapters six (16) and seven (15) than in any other chapter in Romans. Paul is clearly ready to deal with the issue of sin in the believer's life.

¹ “Sanctification” (ἁγιασμός) is taken from the Greek word for “holy.” Literally it means “to make holy.”

A. Life in Relation to Christ (6:1-23)

1. Baptized with Christ: Objection #1 (1-15)

- Governing this section is the initial question that Paul supposes that some may be asking: “Are we to continue to sin that grace might increase?” Paul dealt with a similar question in 3:8 (let us do evil that good may come). It seems to be that Paul has saved the answer to this objection until now because he knew that a presentation of the concept of justification by faith alone would make the objection even more relevant in the eyes of the objector. Traditionally, those who promote sin for the sake of increasing grace have been called “antinomian” (“against law”).
- The key argument which Paul gives to the rhetorical objection in 6:1 is that we do not continue to sin because we have had a change in nature. This change has been brought about through our forensic (legal declaration) identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
- Schreiner states it well when he says, “Jewish opponents of Paul’s Gospel contended that freedom from the law opened the door for sin. Paul turns the tables on them by insisting that it is those who are under the law who are in bondage” (Schreiner, 345).
- There are three results/purposes that show knowledge of our identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection is important:
 1. So that we might walk in the newness of life (4).
 2. So that the “body of sin” might be done away with (6).
 3. So that we would no longer be slaves of sin (6).

Someone confronted Martin Luther, upon the Reformer’s rediscovery of the biblical doctrine of justification, with the remark, “If this is true, a person could simply live as he pleased!”

“Indeed!” answered Luther. “Now, what pleases you?”

Three Primary Imperatives

<i>Know</i> your present identification with Christ (3-10)	<i>Consider</i> yourselves dead to sin (11)	<i>Present</i> your members as instruments of righteousness to God (14)
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Note: What does Paul mean that we have “died to sin?” (6:2).

1. We cannot sin.
2. All inclination to sin is gone.
3. We cannot sin when filled with the Spirit (see 8:13).
4. We are positionally dead in Christ (see 6:10-11).
5. Sin is no longer the controlling factor in our lives.

Note: The term “Old Man” refers to the person that we were in Adam. It is used two other times in the New Testament (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9). We have had a decisive change in identification. This decisive shift, however, does not mean that we cannot continue to act according to the old man (see Eph 4:22).

2. Enslaved to God: Question #2 (16-23)

- This section continues the argument of the previous section. This time, however, the rhetorical question has changed slightly. The question feeds off the final verse of the last section, “you are not under law but under Grace.” Paul does not feel the need to explain what he means by this statement “you are not under Law” which has perplexed many theologians (see below). He simply is compelled to answer the objector who feels that the subtraction of Law equals the addition of sin.
- Paul continues to speak of our “emancipation” from sin. But added to this is our enslavement to God. Both of the enslavements pay wages. Enslavement to sin pays death; enslavement to God pays eternal life (23). There is no benefit in returning to our old employer (sin) because he never paid well!
- Paul’s final answer to the question raised in v. 16 is that there was no benefit in it then, and there is no benefit in it now.

Note: There is a decisive change of enslavement at conversion. Verse 18 shows that this change is positional. We have been set free from sin (aorist) and we have been enslaved to God (aorist). Both acts took place at conversion; both acts are forensic and final.

Note: Paul expresses that it is possible for us to return to our former master (sin).

Additional Note: The Christian and the Law

One of the most perplexing issues in the New Testament is the Christian’s present relation to the Law. There are many differing opinions that seek to answer this difficulty. Romans 6:14 states that the Christian is not “under Law but under grace.” What does it mean that Christians are not under Law? Does this mean that Christians are to throw out the Law all together? If so, we no longer need many of the books of the Old Testament. Is Paul just speaking of being under the Law’s curse? Or does he mean that we are not under the ceremonial law only (i.e.

sacrificial system, circumcision, etc). Here is a chart of the views held throughout history concerning this issue.¹

The Christian and the Law		
	<i>Apply</i>	<i>Discard</i>
1. Marion (2 nd century)	No laws of the OT apply to the Christian.	The entire OT because of its inferiority to the NT
2. Dispensationalism	Only the laws that the NT repeats (i.e. love the Lord your God; all of the Ten Commandments except the fourth, keeping the Sabbath.	All of the Law (ceremonial, civil, and moral). OT was given for a people under a different dispensation with a different relationship and responsibility to God. ²
3. Covenant Theology	All of the Law.	Only what the NT repeals (e.g. circumcision, sacrificial system, etc.). The 613 laws are divided into three categories (tripartite division): ceremonial, civil, and moral. The ceremonial laws have been abolished because of Christ's fulfillment. The Civil laws have been abolished because they were meant for Israel's former theocratic state. All that remains is the moral/timeless laws (i.e. Ten Commandments, love of God, etc.)
4. Seventh Day Adventists	Moral laws, dietary laws, all the Ten Commandments.	Ceremonial and civil
5. Christian Reconstructionism (theonomy)	Moral and Civil laws. They believe, for example, that capital punishment should take place for adultery, homosexuality, apostasy, and children who are disrespectful.	Ceremonial laws

***Do this and live the Law demands
But it gives me neither feet nor hands***

***A better word God's grace doth bring
It bids me fly and it gives me wings***

¹ These views have been adapted from David A. Dorsey's article "The Law of Moses and the Christian: A Compromise," *JETS* 34/3 (September 1991) 321-334.

² Charles Ryrie, "The End of the Law," *Bsac* 124 (1967), 239-247).

B. Life in Relation to the Law (7:1-25)

In this section Paul continues to build on the question that was put forth in the last section (“Shall we sin because we are not under Law but under grace”). Paul feels the need to further explain the believer’s relationship to the Law. Paul’s argument design seems fairly clear. He has previously established that the Law could not bring about salvation (chap. 4); now it is his purpose to show that the Law cannot bring about sanctification. As Paul placed the unbeliever on the horns of a dilemma in chap. 3 wondering, “how then is one to be saved,” so now he places the believer in a similar dilemma, crying out “how am I to live the Christian life?” Paul is setting the stage for chap. 8.

1. Separation from the Law (1-6)

- Here, Paul uses a familiar marriage analogy. It was illegal for a woman to divorce her husband but not for a husband to divorce his wife.
- In the analogy, Christians are represented by the woman. Christians are married to the Law. If we were to marry another (Christ) while still being married to the Law we would be guilty of breaking the Law. There has to be a separation from the Law before a union with Christ can take place. Paul’s point is that a Christian cannot be under the Law at the same time as being united (or under) Christ. This is the reason why we are not under the Law any longer.
- The purpose of all of this is clear—service. God wants to enable us to serve in the “newness of the Spirit” (further developed in chap. 8), not the “oldness of the letter,” which was never adequate for true heart-driven service.

Note: The analogy breaks down when strictly adhered to. We (the wife) are the ones who died to the Law (the husband). Some (e.g. Dodd) have seen a flaw in Paul’s usage of this analogy, misunderstanding that Paul’s purpose is perfectly accomplished without strict adherence to the analogy.

2. Purpose of the Law: Question #3 (7-12)

- Paul now anticipates another question. Naturally people would have been getting a bitter taste in their mouth for the Law, which seemingly deceived them. They believed that the Law could do something that it could never do and was not designed to do. The question is now “Is the Law sin?” (7). Paul goes on to state that the purpose of the Law was to expose sin. His conclusion is that the Law is “good,” “holy,” and “righteous.” It

reveals the true character of God for only God possesses these qualities.

- Problem: Paul states that he was “once alive” without the Law (9). There are two questions: (1) who is the “I” and (2) how could this “I” have been alive when we know that all people are born spiritually dead (Eph 2:1)? Three primary solutions have been brought forth.

	Adam	Israel	Paul
Pros	Theological correctness: Adam is the only one who was ever “alive” apart from the Law.	Rom. 4:15 supports this idea.	Fits the grammar (“I”) and the passion of the presentation. Reference to the 10 th commandment seems personal.
Cons	Tenth commandment was not given to Adam. Does not fit well with grammar (“I”).	Rom. 5:13 does not support this. Rom. 4:15 is speaking of transgression (παράβασις), not sin (ἁμαρτία).	Difficult to see how Paul could state that he was once alive apart from the Law.

- Considering the use of the first person personal pronoun and the personality of the section, it seems conclusive that Paul is referring to himself. As Morris puts it, “He is speaking from the standpoint of a convinced Christian and telling us from his own experience what happens to any sinner who is confronted with the Law” (Morris, 277). As to the problem of how it is that Paul could be alive apart from the law, the “alive” must not be taken theologically. He simply means that he was alive in the sense that he was without conviction. He died in the sense that the conviction of the Law (specifically the tenth commandment) destroyed his emotional bliss.

3. Result of the Law: Question #4 (13-25)

- Before an overview of this section can be done, a couple of primary questions need to be answered. We have already ascertained that in the previous section (1-12), Paul is speaking of himself, therefore we approach this section assuming that Paul has not here switched the referent of the “I.”

-Problem #1: Is Paul speaking of himself as a believer or an unbeliever?

<i>Unbeliever</i>	<i>Believer</i>
<p>1. It seems hard to see how a believer can be dominated by sin the way that Paul describes himself here.</p> <p>2. Paul has just stated that we are free from sin (6:18, 22), but here he states that he is “sold into bondage to sin” (7:14, 23)</p> <p>3. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit here in this passage. It is hard to imagine the Christian struggle without the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>1. Present tense is used throughout this section. It seems that Paul would have used the past tense if he were referring to his former unregenerate life.</p> <p>2. Hard to see how an unregenerate person could be so aware of his sinfulness (14) and hate it (15).</p> <p>3. Paul never had this perspective of himself in his unregenerate state. In fact, he expressed confidence in his own ability (Gal. 1:13-14).</p> <p>4. This tension between the old man and the new is common to Christian experience.</p> <p>5. Context: Paul is dealing with sanctification. His purpose is to show that sanctification cannot be accomplished by the Law. This is Paul’s own personal testimony of his struggle with the Law in the Christian life. Probably occurred while he was in Tarsus.</p>

It seems conclusive that Paul has his own struggles in mind, which he experienced as a believer.

-Problem #2: Is Paul presenting the normal Christian experience?

<i>Normal Christian</i>	<i>Ideal Christian</i>	<i>Fleshly Christian</i>
Paul is describing what all Christians can and should expect to go through from time to time.	Paul is describing what should be the ideal Christian experience. The more mature one is, the more one will be convicted by the Holy Spirit and have these feelings.	Paul is describing the Christian life apart from the Spirit. This Christian is trying to be sanctified by the Law.

- It seems clear, considering the context and Paul’s argument design, that Paul is describing his own Christian experience under the Law and devoid of the Spirit (with this in mind, one can see why Paul displays so much passion to the Galatians).

- Paul is attempting to show the dichotomy between the flesh and the Law. This section is a defense of the Law. But at the same time it further expresses the weakness of the flesh. The flesh is “sold into bondage to sin” while the “Law is spiritual” (14).

Note: It is impossible to understand this text without having a firm grasp on Paul’s argument design. One must take into account the victory through the Spirit in chap. 8.

C. Life in Relation to the Spirit (8:1-39)

This chapter should not be seen simply as a solution to the dreadful state in which Paul left the Christian in chapter 7, but also a culmination of all that has been stated since chapter 3:21 (Constable, *Notes on the Book of Romans*, 69). Until this time in Romans the Holy Spirit has only been mentioned five times. In this chapter alone, however, the Holy Spirit is mentioned 21 times. This section could easily be titled “the Spirit’s life in us,” for it is Paul’s purpose to show that what the law could not do (i.e., save and sanctify), God has to do in and through us. It is interesting that there are no imperatives in this section. Paul does not give us a new list of rules to live by to replace the old ones. Rather, he continues to tell us of the benefits of salvation. God wants us to know who we are (i.e., children of God, v. 16) so that we will act in accordance with our new nature.

1. Life in the Spirit (1-30)

- 1-8: Life in the Spirit is characterized here by Paul to be in opposition to life in the flesh (2). Paul’s first statement is that the cross of Christ is not only responsible for our salvation but also our sanctification (3). When we accepted Christ, the “requirement of the Law” (4) was fulfilled in us by virtue of our identification with Christ. Now the characteristic life of a believer is described as those “who do not walk according the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (4-8).
- 9-13: Paul tells us decisively that Christians are not in the flesh (although we can act as if we were-Gal. 5:6) but in the Spirit (9). If the Spirit of Christ dwells in a person, he or she will be led by the Spirit (this is a benefit, not an imperative). A characteristic of a person who is led by the Spirit is that he is “putting to death” (present active indicative) the deeds of the flesh” (13). It is not that we become Christians and immediately the flesh is rendered completely inoperative, but that we begin a lifelong process of putting to death the deeds of the flesh.

- 14-17: Paul now tells us another benefit, which characterizes our behavior—we are children of God. The adoption, which we have undergone, is in opposition to the slavery from which we came.
- 18-25: This section is connected to v. 16 and explains how it is that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are believers. The primary way that this happens is through our groanings and hope. Paul’s argument is that it is natural for us to groan within knowing that something is not right with the world; we are suffering (18). To prove this Paul says even all of creation (i.e. plants, rocks, trees) groans waiting for the revealing of God’s sons (believers) (19-22). The primary reason we groan is because the Holy Spirit dwells within us (23) witnessing to us that there is something more, that this suffering is not the way things are meant to be. Amazingly, this groaning is now the cause for our hope (23-25). In addition, this text tells us that this type of suffering can only occur within Christians.
- 26-30: “And in the same way” either refers to the hope in the proceeding verse, or to the witness of the Spirit (16). It seems better to put it with verse 16 although the outcome is the same. Paul tells us here that in our groanings the Spirit intercedes and groans for us. These groans are different than our groans for they are according to the will of God (27). God acts upon these groans by causing all of our sufferings to work together for good. This is a blessing that only believers can claim (28). The reason why we can be assured that all things work together for good is because God had predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son (29).

Note: The KJV adds the phrase “who do not walk . . .” to verse 1. This was more than likely a transcription mistake, considering the fact that the best manuscripts do not contain this phrase. The scribe probably let verse 4 influence his transcription of verse 1 (dittography).

Note: The emphasis in verse 28 tells us that not only do all things work together for good for those who love God, but that all things work together for bad for those who hate Him.

Note: Verse 30 tells the believer that our hope in this life is assured. He wraps all of our blessings up in statements using the past/complete tense (aorist). God sees our final glorification as so complete that it is as if it has already occurred.

2. Shouts of Joy (31-39)

- One cannot help but recognize the excitement that Paul feels at this time. Our salvation and sanctification are secure in the hands of God. “What shall we say to these things?” *Hallelujah!!* Considering all of these things, what fear can we have? God is for us.
- Paul now further develops the security we have in God with seven rhetorical questions. These questions are designed to show that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Nothing can separate us from all the blessings, which have been freely given to us by faith alone! Praise God!

Romans : God's Righteousness Revealed

Divisions	Intro 1:1-1:17)	Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)	Righteous Reconciliation (3:21-5:21)	Righteous Transformation (6:1-8:39)	Righteous Calling (9:1-11:36)	Righteous Living (12:1-15:33)	Conclusion (16:1-27)
Theme	Sin		Salvatio n	Sanctific ation	Securit y	Service	
Focus	<i>Doctrinal</i>					<i>Practical</i>	

Session 7 & 8: Expository Overview

V. *Righteous Calling (9:1-11:36)*

Security		
<i>Righteous Calling</i>		
Israel's Past Election (9:1-33)	Israel's Present Rejection (10:1-21)	Israel's Future Restoration (11:1-36)

Section Introduction

This section is a necessary continuation of Paul's presentation of the Gospel. He concluded the last section with a glorious affirmation of our security in God's program. Those whom God foreknew were predestined. Those whom He predestined, He will effectually call and justify in time. Finally, those whom He justifies will also be glorified. Nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of Christ, which is expressed in these spiritual certainties. Why this section then? Because there is one question, which was on many of the readers' minds concerning the character of God: *what about the nation of Israel?* Wasn't Israel given many promises? Weren't they recipients of blessings from God? This being the case, how can you account for their rejection of the Gospel? Basically, you could boil this entire section down to a response to this question: CAN WE REALLY TRUST GOD IN LIGHT OF THE PRESENT STATE OF ISRAEL? Are we really secure? It is a question of God's character. Verse 14 states this exact thing, "There is no injustice (ἀδικία *adikia*) with God, is there?" Paul's response throughout the section is to defend his emphatic "Μὴ γένοιτο)." So dominant is this theme of vindicating God that John Piper's definitive work on Romans 9 is titled "*The Justification of God.*"¹

¹ Note needs to be made that it has been the contention of some (i.e. Sunday, Lloyd-Jones) that this section is somewhat of an appendix or an excursus and not part of Paul's argument flow. Recently, however, the overwhelming consensus of scholarship has rejected this view (see Moo,

If this section were to be boiled down to a series of questions and answers the dialogue might look something like this:

Chap 9

Paul: God will accomplish what He has promised to those whom He has chosen.

Objector: Oh yeah, what about the nation of Israel? He made a lot of promises to them and now He seems to have gone back on them.

Paul: God's promises to Israel have not failed. You fail to realize that there are two types of Israelites: (1) the chosen Israelites to whom the promises were given and (2) the rest who were not chosen. Let me demonstrate. Remember that Abraham had two sons and only one was chosen. As well, Rebekah had twins and only one of them was chosen. In fact, Jacob was chosen before either one of the twins had done any good or bad. This demonstrates that God's promises to Israel are true, but these promises are only to those whom God chose beforehand.

Objector: This, then, demonstrates unrighteousness in God.

Paul: Not at all, it shows that God has the right to choose who will be recipients of His love. It does not depend upon the works of man, but upon the mercy of God.

Objector: How can God still fault people then? People just do what God wants them to do.

Paul: Wrong again. Who are you to question your Creator? God demonstrates His wrath upon some and mercy upon others. He has that right. You fail to recognize the relationship of the Creator to the created.

Chap 11

Objector: Well then, has God rejected Israel forever because of their unbelief, right?

Paul: No. I am an Israelite. God had not rejected me. There is a remnant of Israelites who believe today. In fact, there has always only been a remnant.

Objector: What about the rest of Israel who do not believe?

Paul: God had hardened their hearts so that they cannot believe.

Objector: Why would God do such a thing?

Paul: So that the Gentiles can take their place in the blessings of God.

Objector: What then of Israel? Will they ever come back to God as a whole?

Paul: Yes! Once God's plan with the Gentiles is through, all of Israel will be saved. So you see,

"The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29).

A. Israel's Past Election (9:1-33)

It is Paul's purpose here to demonstrate that God is righteous in spite of Israel's rejection of the Gospel. Paul argues that God always keeps His promises. What needs to be realized is that God is not bound to promises that He never

made. He never gave promises to all of Israel, only to those within Israel whom He chose. Paul argues that God has the right to choose whom He will. This, Paul states, is a prerogative of the Creator.

1. Intro: Paul's Love for Israel (1-5)

- 1-3: Paul here expresses his love and grief that he has for his fellow Israelites. Although most of the Israelites who were unbelievers hated Paul (Act 22:22), he desired that if possible, he could take their place and damned. So sincere was Paul in this statement that he verified his statement by stating that the Holy Spirit testifies of its truth (see also 1:9 where he calls God to witness for him about his prayer for the Romans).
- 4-5: Here Paul lists eight blessings which were given to Israel.
 1. Adoption: not the same as our adoption. Israel was called God's son (Ex. 4:22; Hos 11:1).
 2. Glory: the glory of being God's representatives to the nations (Ex 19:5-6).
 3. The Covenants: the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New Covenant.
 4. Law
 5. Temple services
 6. The promises
 7. Fathers: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.
 8. The lineage of Christ: Christ was an Israelite according to the flesh.

2. Not all of Israel is true Israel (6-13)

- Paul uses two examples here to demonstrate that Israel is made up of both those who are chosen (true Israel) and those who are rejected.
 1. Isaac: Both Isaac and Ishmael were children of Abraham but only Isaac was chosen by God.
 2. Jacob: If there was any confusion about the first example, seeing as how both Isaac and Ishmael had different mothers (Sarah and Hagar), Paul now uses the example of Jacob and Esau. Not only did these two have the same mother, Rebekah, but also they were twins. Paul states that God chose Jacob before either of the twins had a chance to do good or bad. This demonstrates that God's choice is in no way dependent upon the character of the individual.

Note: Problem: Did God really hate Jacob?

1. Refers to nations: Israel and Edom
2. God truly hated Esau because he was not redeemed.
3. Antithetical: Hate is simply used as the antithesis to love (Lk 14:26).
4. Love and hate are not emotions but actions: God did not choose (hate) Esau but he chose (loved) Jacob.

Note: Some deny that these verses speak not of individual election but of corporate election. While it is possible that Jacob and Esau refer to nations, Paul is still teaching individual election. Sproul rightly states, “Some have tried to get around this position by saying that Jacob and Esau were representatives of nations. On this interpretation Paul is not talking about the election of individuals but of nations. Even if that were the case, all the questions that surround the problem of predestination of individuals would still apply to the predestination of nations, only on a higher scale” (Sproul, 165). Plus, the next examples that Paul gives (Moses and Pharaoh) are unquestionably individuals.

3. Is there injustice with God because of election (14-18)?

- Paul’s statements about election may have caused some to question the justice (righteousness) of God. Paul now gives two further examples to explain that God’s sovereign choice to have mercy on some while hardening others is His prerogative. God told Moses that He would be merciful and compassionate to those whom He chooses. The recipient of compassion and mercy in this instance being Moses. Pharaoh is used to show God’s right to harden whom He desires. In both illustrations Paul brings out the resulting truth about God’s choice. Both results are expressed by, “So then . . .” God’s mercy does not depend upon the will of man (16) and he has mercy on whomever He desires (18).

Note: Problem: How did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?

1. God actively made Pharaoh have no other choice but to sin.
2. God only hardened Pharaoh’s heart after he hardened his own heart first.
3. God simply withdrew His common grace from Pharaoh, which allowed him to act out his own depravity.

Additional Note: Election

It is important at this point to discuss the key theological issue, which arises from this section of Scripture—Election. Did God really elect some individuals irrespective of their choice? There are two primary views concerning predestination: unconditional election and conditional election.

	Conditional Election	Unconditional Election
Definition	God’s choice is conditioned upon His foreknowledge. God simply looked ahead through the corridors of time and elected those whom He foresaw would believe.	God’s choice is unconditional. God chose who would believe before the foundation of the world. His choice is based on His sovereign will.
Adherents	Jacob Arminius, John Wesley, Albert Barnes, Adam Clark, Clark Pinnock, most Pentecostals, Nazarenes, and Methodists.	St. Augustine, John Calvin, Spurgeon, R.C. Sproul, John Piper, John MacArthur, DTS, and Paul himself.
Pros	Emphasizes man’s responsibility.	Emphasizes God’s sovereignty, it harmonizes with the biblical doctrine of total depravity, and there is an overwhelming amount of biblical support.
Cons	God is not sovereign. Man must make a choice that the Bible says he is unable to make (Rom 3:11 “none seek for God”).	Man does not seem to have a free will. How can God require all to make a choice that they do not have the capability to make?
Scriptural Evidence	No direct Scriptural support. Based off the presupposition that if God desires all to be saved (1 Tim 2:4), He has provided a way for all to be saved (i.e. exercise faith).	Rom 9:6-29, Eph 1:4, Phil 1:29, 2 Thess 2:13-14, Jn 15:16, 2 Tim 2:10, Ex 33:19, and Deut 7:6-7 are good representatives of unconditional election.

4. Why does God still hold people accountable (19-30)?

- 19-23: The question naturally arises here of responsibility. If salvation does not depend in any way upon man, how is it that God can find fault in unbelievers? As the NLT puts it, “Why does God blame them for not listening? Haven't they done what he made them do?” Here Paul uses the analogy of the Potter and the clay to show that God has the right to do what He pleases with His creation (see Isa 45:9). Some were made for honorable use and others for common use. Some demonstrate His wrath and some His mercy. Paul does not give us the theological explanation that we desire; he simply says, “Who are you to question God?” Paul’s argumentation is not unlike that of God’s to Job, “Will the fault finder contend with the Almighty?” (Job 40:2) Our answer to God should be like that of Job, “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to you? I lay my hand on my mouth.” God is far more sovereign and righteous than we can imagine. We do not know all of the things that God knows. We stand silent before our Creator.

Our answer to God should be like that of Job, “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to you? I lay my hand on my mouth.” Job 40:4

Note: It is interesting to note here that if the conditional election were right, then there is no warrant for this question. The question itself would simply evidence the responder’s complete misunderstanding of Paul’s argument. If this were the case then Paul would simply correct that misunderstanding. But this is not the case; this is a question which one would come up with *only if Paul were teaching unconditional election.*

Note: It is not our place to question God. The harsh rebuke of v. 20 demonstrates our place of submission to the plan and care of the Creator. God will never act in an unjust manner; this is one of the themes of the epistle. We are to simply trust and let God be God.

Note: Problem: Some have seen what has been called double-predestination or reprobation in these verses. Verse 22 states that the vessels of wrath were “prepared” for destruction. The doctrine of double-predestination or reprobation would state that as God chose some for salvation before the foundation of the world, so He chose some for

damnation before the foundation of the world. There are good arguments both for and against this doctrine.

Reprobation	Single Election
1. The vessel analogy seems to suggest that the same Potter is preparing both vessels.	1. Only when speaking of the vessels “prepared for mercy” does Paul add the modifiers “He” and “beforehand.” This suggests that the vessels of wrath were not prepared
2. The passive voice suggests that God did the preparing.	“beforehand” and not by the “He” of v. 23.
3. The idea that God (the Potter) prepares some for honorable use and some for dishonorable use is parallel to the problem passage.	

- 24-29: The “even us” connects back to the vessels of mercy. Paul now demonstrates that the “vessels of mercy” are chosen from among both the Gentiles (25-26) and a remnant of the Jews (27).

5. Why the Law is not fulfilled by Israel (30-33)

- Just so we don’t lose sight of man’s responsibility in salvation, Paul now turns back to the instrument that God requires to impute righteousness—faith. Why didn’t Israel find righteousness? Because they pursued it by works. Why did the Gentiles? Because they pursued it by faith. The subtraction of works and the sole requirement of faith is the stumbling block of the Gospel (33).

Note: Some have stated that Paul contradicts himself in this section having just stated that salvation is by God’s sovereign choice and now he states that it is by man’s faith. Martin Lloyd-Jones gives relevance to these verses, “In verses 6-29 he explains why anybody is saved; it is the sovereign election of God. In verses 30-33 he is showing why anybody is lost, and the explanation of that is their own responsibility” (Lloyd-Jones, vol. 9, p. 285).

B. Israel’s Present Rejection (10:1-21)

Paul is still in the process of dealing with the nation of Israel. The context is the same. Paul’s primary concern is still the vindication of God regarding Israel’s current rejection of the Gospel. Here he picks up where he left off in 9:32 speaking about the part that human responsibility has to play in the current status of Israel. The reason why Israel is not saved is because they pursue their own righteousness rather than God’s. Paul is now dealing with the present status of

Israel. Paul quotes the OT nine times. He does this to demonstrate that the OT teaches the Gospel. If one were to boil this section down to a response to a question, the question may be, “Why isn’t Israel saved?”

1. Israel: Seeking the Wrong Gospel (1-13)

- 1-3: Paul expresses deep concern for his nation once again. It is interesting to note that Paul does not cease to pray for his nation even though He knew that their salvation was dependent upon God’s sovereign choice (chap 9). Paul plainly states here that Israel’s present rejection is due to the fact that they seek to establish their own righteousness, thereby rejecting God’s righteousness.
- 4-10: This section begins by stating that Christ is the end of the Law for *everyone* who believes. It ends by stating that “*whoever* shall call upon . . .” This immediately takes the message of God out of the possessive hands of the Jews and distributes it to all. The contrast here is between the righteousness based upon the Law (4-5) and righteousness by faith (6-13). The righteousness based on Law is unattainable; the righteousness that is by faith is near (8) and easily attainable (9-10).

Note: Problem: Paul uses Lev 18:5 stating that, “The man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall *live* by that righteousness.” How is it that a person can “live” by practicing the law?

1. Law was an OT way of salvation; to “live” means spiritual life.
 2. Paul states this verse hypothetically (see 2:13). It could then be translated, “If a man could accomplish all the requirements of the Law (and we know that he can’t), then he would live. “Live” here, again, would be taken to mean spiritual life.
 3. Paul uses it the way that it is used in Leviticus in that “to live” must be taken temporally. The emphasis that Paul would be then making is not on the word “live,” but on the contrast between “practicing”(v.5) and “faith” (v.6).
- 11-13: Paul is emphatic here, stating that this righteousness that is by faith is available to all. The emphasis is on the “whosoever” (11, 13). This offer of righteousness, which is attainable for *all*, is in distinction to the offer of Moses which was attainable by *none*.

2. Israel: Denying the Right Gospel (14-21)

- Although the nation of Israel is still Paul’s primary concern, Paul now turns his attention to five absolutely necessary actions that God has ordained, which must take place before the one can “call on the name of the Lord” (14-17). He then applies these necessities to the nation of Israel in order to demonstrate that Israel’s fall is solely due to their own disobedience (18-21).

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Avenue of the Gospel (14-17)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Avenue of Israel’s disobedience (18- 21)</i></p>
<p>(1) One must call on the Name of the Lord (13-14). But in order to call . . .</p> <p>(2) they must believe (v.14). But in order to believe . . .</p> <p>(3) they must hear (v.14). But in order to hear . . .</p> <p>(4) they must have a preacher (v.14). But in order for the preacher to preach . . .</p> <p>(5) he must be sent (v.15). But in order to be sent . . .</p> <p>(6) he must have financial support (mine—not inspired, just true), but in order to have financial support . . .</p> <p>(7) the Church must give.</p>	<p>(1) They heard (18)</p> <p>(2) They understood (19)</p> <p>(3) They were disobedient and obstinate (21)</p>

C. Israel’s Future Restoration (11:1-36)

1. Israel: Not Rejected, Only Stumbled (1-10)

- 1-6: Paul now directly deals with the question that pervades the entire section: “Has God rejected His people?” Again, Paul answers with a strong negative, “May it never be.” In order to demonstrate this Paul offers four pieces of evidence (Stott, 292).
 - Personal* (v.1): Paul says that he himself is a chosen Israelite. God has not rejected him.

2. *Theological* (v.2): God foreknew (foreloved) Israel. He had a plan for them before time began, and this plan will be accomplished.
3. *Biblical* (v.2b-4): In Elijah's day God only had a remnant that He kept for Himself.
4. *Contemporary* (v.5): There is a believing remnant now.

Note: v.6: Paul here gives us an important definition of grace. According to Paul, any addition of works nullifies grace. This is the basis for our understanding of *Sola Fide*.

- 7-10: Paul here distinguishes two groups within Israel: those who were chosen (v.7), and those who were hardened (7b-10). Paul tells us that God is the one who hardened (same word used for Pharaoh in 9:18) those who were not chosen ("the rest" of v.7).

2. Gentiles: The Reason for Israel's Stumbling (11-24)

- 11-15: Paul begins by stating that Israel's stumbling (lit. transgression) is not final. They still have a part in the future plan of God. But, says Paul, their present stumbling has allowed the Gentiles a more prominent place in God's plan.

Note: v. 15: Paul states that the future restoration of Israel has even more benefits for the Gentiles than they are presently experiencing. He describes their restoration in terms of "life from the dead." As to what it means that Israel's restoration will bring "life from the dead," there are three primary possibilities:

1. New Birth: Paul is speaking of Israel's spiritual regeneration.
 2. Parousia (Second Coming of Christ): When Israel turns to Christ, then Christ will come. Moo describes it as a reference to the "climatic end of salvation history" (Moo, 696). This occurs after the Tribulation (Matt 24:30-31).
 3. Metaphorical: Paul uses the term metaphorically to refer to "unimaginable blessings" (Stott, 298).
- 16a: Paul now uses two metaphors to illustrate the positions of the Gentiles and the Israelites. The first is that of a piece of dough (probably "first of the ground meal" Num 15, Morris, 411) which is offered to God (see Num 15:18ff). By virtue of it being offered to God it is holy. When the first piece of dough (first fruits) is offered then the rest of the batch is considered holy as well. The believing remnant is the "first piece" (first fruits), while the dough (made from the first-fruits) is the group of Israelite believers who will be saved.

- 17b-24: The second illustration is that of two olive trees. The wild olive tree represents the Gentile. It is wild because it has no blessing from God. The second olive tree is the rich root olive tree (cultivated). It is rich because it contains the blessings of God. It is difficult to tell what blessings are encompassed in the richness of this tree. There are many possibilities:
 - A. Certainly the gift of God’s saving grace is one of the blessings.
 - B. Primary part in the program of God.
 - C. Spiritual blessings of Abraham.
 - D. Christ.
 - E. The Church.

Paul tells the Gentile believers that they have been grafted in to this olive tree and now share with the remnant of believing Israel in these blessings (v.17). He then warns them that they should not become arrogant for they are there only because of God grace. God can (and will, 25-27) graft the fallen branches (the rest of unbelieving Israel) back into the olive tree.

Note: Paul is here (chap. 11) speaking of nations, not individuals. When he states the possibility of being “cut off” (22), he means the nation as a whole, not the individual’s loss of salvation.

Note: All of Israel here refers to the entire nation as a whole, not every individual without exception.

3. The Coming Restoration of Israel (25-32)

- 25-29: Paul now tells of a mystery.¹ The mystery is not that the hardening has happened to Israel, for he already spoke of that in v. 7. The mystery is that this “partial hardening” has happened *until the fullness of the Gentiles has occurred*. The hardening is only partial in that there is a remnant still being saved. The “fullness of the Gentiles” refers to all the chosen among the Gentiles. Once this happens then “all of Israel will be saved” (v.26).
- 30-33: God shows mercy to all only when disobedience is manifested.

4. Doxology (33-36)

- Paul cannot contain the praise created by such magnificent plans that God has revealed. All of God’s plans will be carried

¹ A “mystery” in the NT is not a secret. It is something that has not been revealed until now, but is now being revealed.

to completion. He will never be found guilty of unrighteousness (contra 9:14). None can give God council and none can answer back to God because no one can know His wisdom (v.34). None have given to God—salvation is by grace alone (v.35). Indeed *Soli Deo Gloria* (“To God alone be the Glory”).

Romans : God's Righteousness Revealed

Divisions	Intro 1:1-1:17)	Righteous Condemnation (1:18-3:20)	Righteous Reconciliation (3:21-5:21)	Righteous Transformation (6:1-8:39)	Righteous Calling (9:1-11:36)	<i>Righteous Living</i> (12:1-15:33)	<i>Conclusion</i> (16:1-27)
Theme	Sin		Salvation	Sanctification	Security	Service	
Focus	Doctrinal					Practical	

Session 9 & 10: Expository Overview

VI. Righteous Living (12:1-16:27)

Service			
<i>Righteous Living</i>			
Christian Living within the Church (12:1-21)	Christian Living within Society (13:1-14)	Christian Living with Regard to Liberty (14:1-15:13)	Conclusion (15:1-16:27)

Section Introduction

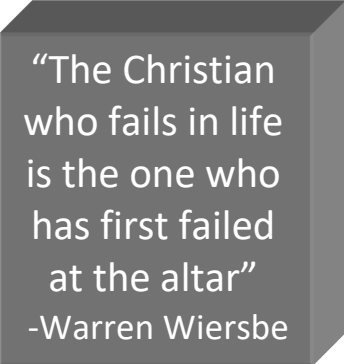
With a view to his previous presentation of the Gospel, Paul now proceeds to speak concerning the Christian's conduct. This conduct cannot be separated from the preceding "mercies of God" (12:1). It is only because of God's grace that the believer is now motivated to serve in the newness of life. In fact, Paul's appeal in 12:1 makes it clear that all of our conduct following salvation is only pure and rightly motivated if it is done with God's mercies in view. God has saved us, we have begun a process of becoming Christlike, and our future is secure in the hands of God. What greater motivation could there now be to serve God?

It is important to note that this section does not promote a "new law," but a "new liberty." Many of the exhortations of this section are in the imperative (command form) and we need not take away from their force because of our understanding of our relationship to the Law. The "law of the Spirit" can be expressed this way. But we must not see these commands as replacements of the Law from which we have been delivered. The former laws/commands were given to a people whose nature was opposed to the Law. These commands are given to a people whose new nature that is able to obey from the heart (1 Jn 5:3).

A. Christian Living within the Church (12:1-21)

1. Prerequisite to Service (1-2)

- These first two verses are of primary importance to living the Christian life. Only after one has acted in accordance with the exhortation to “present” himself “before God as a living sacrifice” can one expect to be able to properly follow the imperatives that follow.
- Paul tells us that we are to “present” ourselves. This presenting is motivated by “the mercies of God.” “The mercies of God” consist of all that has been stated in chapters 1-11. It is only because of these mercies that we are motivated to serve God. This presenting is to come in the form of a living sacrifice. We are to act as the priests who do the presenting and the animal that is sacrificed. This sacrifice is “living” in the sense that our lives are sacrificed not in death (although this may be the calling of some), but in life. This, Paul says, is the only reasonable¹ thing we can do seeing all that God had done for us.²
- Closely tied to the presenting of ourselves is the command not to be conformed to the world, but to have our minds renewed. J.B. Phillips translated the first part of this verse, “Do not let this world squeeze you into its mold.” Although Paul does not tell us how to renew our



“The Christian who fails in life is the one who has first failed at the altar”
-Warren Wiersbe

¹Verse one ends with the phrase τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν. The NAS translates it, “Which is your *spiritual* [λογικὴν] service of worship.” The NIV and NRSV have similar translations. While λογικὴν can be translated “spiritual,” it can also be translated “logical” or “reasonable.” This translation seems to best fit the context of Paul’s argument. He is not telling us that the presenting of our bodies is our “spiritual service,” but our “logical service.” The NET, NLT, and KJV all translate it this way. Understanding the “mercies of God” should motivate us to give ourselves completely to Him in service; it would only be logical. The NLT captures the sense well: “When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?”

² Previously in chapter six, Paul exhorted the Romans to “present” themselves as “instruments of righteousness” (6:13). This should not be distinguished from what is here stated in 12:2. Paul is just restating what was stated earlier using a different analogy. The primary difference in 12:2 and 6:13 is that in 12:2 Paul has finished his presentation of the Gospel and uses the reader’s understanding of the complete Gospel as motivation for their presenting themselves to God for service.

minds, we are told elsewhere that it is through the Word and the Spirit (Stott, 324).

Note: The command for the Romans to present themselves to God is in the aorist tense. This suggests that it is to be a decisive decision. It does not necessarily mean that this will only happen once in your life but its force points to a specific act (Cleon Rogers, *New Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 338).
Note: The command to renew the mind is in the present tense, which suggests a daily renewal that is a lifelong process (Moo, 756-757).

2. Christian Service in General (3-21)

Paul now turns to more particular exhortation. This exhortation comes by the authority of the “grace given” to Paul (v.3). Paul appeals to this authority for the rest of his exhortations to Christian service.

a) Functioning within the Body (3-16)

(1) Spiritual Gifts (3-8)

- 3: Paul tells us that we are to have a humble attitude. The reason we are to have this attitude is because God is the One who has allotted to each the faith that he or she has.
- 4-8: Paul gives the analogy of the body to illustrate how the Church is to function. This analogy comes under the heading of v.3, “not thinking too highly of oneself.” It is precisely because we all have to work together to function as a body that we are to be humble. We all need each other (see 1 Cor 12-14). Paul’s list of gifts here is not meant to be exhaustive, just representative. The emphasis is not on the gift itself, but how the gift is to be exercised—faithfully.

Grouping of Spiritual Gifts¹

<i>1 Cor 12:8-30</i>	<i>Rom 12:6-8</i>	<i>Eph 4:11</i>	<i>1 Pet 4:11</i>
Word of Wisdom Word of Knowledge Gifts of Healing Miracles Prophecy Discerning of Spirits Tongues Interpretation of Tongues Apostles Teaching Helps	Prophecy Teaching Service Encouraging/Exhorting Giving Leading Mercy	Prophecy Apostle Teaching Evangelist Pastor	Service Speaking

(2) Characteristics of Love (9-16)

- These verses give a series of exhortations that may seem unrelated. It seems good though to see them as descriptions of how love is displayed “without hypocrisy” (v.9a).

(3) Christian’s Love for their Enemies (17-21)

- Here Paul gives us a series of exhortation that tell us what our attitude should be toward our enemies (i.e. those cause evil upon us).

Note: Paul has several allusions to Christ’s teaching in this section. Compare 12:17, Matt 5:39; 12:20, Mark 12:14.

B. Christian Service within Society (13:1-14)

This section focuses on the Christian’s obligation to society. This obligation is expressed in two ways: (1) obligation to submit to the government, (2) obligation to society in general.

¹ Adapted from Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*, 70

1. Obligation to Government (1-7)

- The Christian is to submit to the governing authorities. The reason Paul gives for this is because all authorities have been established by God. God uses the government to control lawlessness. It should be characteristic of a Christian to receive praise from the government for obedience (v.3).

Note: Acts 4:19 clearly teaches that people are to obey God when governing authority conflicts with His revealed will.

Note: Paul gives this exhortation while Nero was Caesar. Nero would soon begin the first Roman persecution of Christians. During this persecution and the many to follow, Christians were known to submit to their deaths.

Question: Was the American Revolution forbidden by Romans 13?

2. Obligation to Society (8-14)

- Christians here are exhorted to love one another. This love is to be given to the outside world as well as within the Church. Our motivation for this is because Christ's arrival is soon (v.12). We are to behave as if that day has already arrived (v.13).

Note: v.10: What "law" does love?

1. Mosaic Law
2. Law in general
3. Law of the Spirit

C. *Christian Living with Regard to Liberty (14:1-15:13)*

This section contrasts the strong Christian and the weak Christian. Its primary focus is to things that are *amoral* (neither right nor wrong). The weak Christian is regarded as one who believes that it is sin to practice certain things that are amoral (e.g. eating meat sacrificed to idols). The strong Christian is one who knows that amoral acts are not necessarily wrong. Paul gives both groups warnings not to judge the other.

1. Do Not Judge Your Brother (1-12)

- Paul's primary purpose in this section is to promote unity of faith. We are not to judge one another for practices that we believe to be wrong but are not

directly dealt with in Scripture. These matters are relative upon the situation and the audience. Paul uses two examples in this section to demonstrate such amoral practices. The first one has to do with the dietary preferences. The second with days which one regards as higher than another (e.g. Sunday). Paul clearly states that these matters are matters of “opinion” (v.1). There are three reasons why we are not to try to correct one another in these situations: 1) the acts are amoral, 2) the acts are done for the glory of God (7-9), 3) God is the one who will ultimately judge us (10-12).

2. Principle of the Weaker Christian (14:13-15:13)

- Paul now turns to the “strong” (the one who knows that all things are clean) and gives him a principle to live by concerning the weak. Using the example of food once again, Paul states that all food is clean. But if you flaunt your liberty around one who does not believe that all food is clean, this is an act of evil.

D. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

In typical epistolary fashion, Paul now proceeds to conclude his letter. In 5:14-21, Paul further explains and defends his Apostleship. Paul then mentions his intentions on coming to Rome and his plans in the interim (22-33). Paul greets 26 people by name (16:1-16). Finally he gives a warning concerning those who create dissensions (16:17-20). He concludes with a greeting from his companions and the final of his benedictions of the letter (16:21-27).

Additional Note: Relative Matters

Read the definition list below and take this test. This may help you to be able to better discern the matters that Paul is speaking about in this section. It is important for us to realize that there are situations that you and I face which are relative.¹

	Relative		Objective	
	Situational	Autonomous	Essential	Nonessential
1. Best Song		X		
2. Christ's deity			X	
3. Pre-, Mid-, Post-, Tribulation				X
4. Men having long hair	X			
5. Belief about Predestination				
6. Homosexuality				
7. Abortion				
8. Being a drunkard				
9. The color of carpet in church				
10. Republican or Democrat				
11. Belief that Christ bore the wrath of God in our place				
12. Trinity				
13. Home schooling				
14. Having a glass of wine/beer				
15. Belief about inerrancy (that the Bible is infallible and without error)				
16. Sleeping until noon everyday				
17. Smoking				
18. Saying a curse word				

¹ Understanding this section is particularly necessary in today's postmodern society where all things are considered relative.

1. **True Relativity:** Everything that exists in this category is relative in one way or another. It is either completely independent of right or wrong, or the right or wrong is determined by the situation.
 - a. *Situational Relativity:* The right and the wrong of those in this category are dependent upon the culture, time, situation, or some other variable. Women not wearing a head covering (1 Cor. 11:5) is a good example. While there is an underlying sinful principle that the women who did not wear a head covering were expressing, the wearing of the head covering itself was not right or wrong. Its sinfulness was dependent upon the cultural expression. The same sin may be expressed in our culture but in a different way.
 - b. *Autonomous Relativity:* This category contains those that are truly relative. There is no right or wrong. This category is filled primarily with opinions and autonomous customs that are not related to right or wrong. One's opinion on his or her favorite song is an example of something that is autonomously relative. There is no one correct answer that exists by itself — it is always relative.
2. **True Objectivity:** True objectivity has a definite right or wrong answer. There is always an objective truth that is true regardless of who believes it. It is not dependent upon time, culture, or any situation. It exists as true or false in-and-of itself. All biblical principles and doctrines belong on this side.
 - a. *Essential Objectivity:* This category contains only those that are *essential for salvation*.¹ It contains only those truths that one believes a person must accept to be considered a true Christian.
 - b. *Nonessential objectivity:* This category contains both doctrinal and non-doctrinal issues that are not necessary for one's salvation. A good example might be whether or not one believes in the cessation of the gift of tongues. Tongues either ceased or they did not cease. The truth is objective. But at the same time, it is nonessential because it is not necessary to believe one way or the other as a prerequisite to salvation.

¹ Essential could also be broadened by stating that this category only contains those things that are essential for Christian living. While it may be valuable to do this, it is important for now to reserve this category only for the essential for salvation.