

term 2 2025



becoming new

ROMANS 5-8

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This study owes several helpful insights to *Romans* (BECNT) by Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans For You* (The Good Book Company) by Timothy Keller, as well as the studies *The Free Gift of Life: Romans 1–5* and *The Free Gift of Sonship: Romans 6–11* (Matthias Media) by Gordon Cheng, and *Romans: Becoming New in Christ* (Life Guide Bible Studies) by Jack Kuhatschek.

series overview

The book of Romans is one of the cornerstones of the New Testament. None of Paul's other letters states so profoundly the content of the Christian gospel and its implications for both the present and the future.

Notable church figures like Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Wesley experienced dramatic transformation in their gospel understanding and faith, leading to world-changing church movements such as the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century and the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century.

A key theme of Romans is the *righteousness of God* – to be right with God; to enjoy knowing him now, and to be able to look forward to enjoying knowing him forever. As Paul explains, it's a righteousness no-one can earn or maintain themselves, but which God *gives* people 'in Christ Jesus our Lord' (6:23).

author & audience

As mentioned above, the writer of this letter was the apostle Paul. From internal and external evidence, the period it was written was probably between A.D. 55-58, possibly when Paul was staying in Corinth.

The original recipients of the letter were the people of the church of Rome (1:7), who were predominantly Gentile. Jews, however, probably constituted a substantial minority of the congregation (cf. 4:1; chs. 9–11; chs. 14–15).

purpose

Paul had varied purposes for writing this letter. However, two *concrete* reasons emerge.

One is *mission support*. Paul outlines plans to share the good news of Jesus in Spain, and he hoped that the church would rally together to support that mission (15:22–24). To do that effectively and wholeheartedly they had to be on the same page about his theology – hence his extensive unpacking of the gospel.

The other reason was to *unify the church*. The Jewish Christians were being rejected by the larger Gentile group (14:1) because the Jewish believers still felt constrained to observe Jewish dietary laws and sacred days. And so Paul wrote to explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's overall plan of redemption.

structure

I. Chapters 1–4 | Righteousness Imputed: Justification by Faith

Paul begins by surveying the spiritual condition of all humankind. He finds Jews and Gentiles alike to be sinners and in need of salvation. That salvation has been provided

by God through Jesus Christ and his redemptive work on the cross. It is a provision, however, that must be *received by faith* – a principle by which God has always dealt with humankind, as the example of Abraham shows.

II. Chapters 5–8 | Righteousness Imparted: Sanctification and New Life

Since salvation is only the beginning of Christian experience, Paul moves on to show how the believer is freed from sin, law and death – a freedom made possible by their union with Christ in both death and resurrection, and by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

III. Chapters 9–11 | Righteousness Vindicated: The Place of Israel

Paul then shows that Israel too, though presently in a state of unbelief, has a place in God's sovereign redemptive plan. Now she consists of only a remnant, allowing for the conversion of the Gentiles, but the time will come when 'all Israel will be saved' (11:26).

IV. Chapters 12–16 | Righteousness Practised: Lived-out Faith

The letter concludes with an appeal to the readers to work out their Christian faith in practical ways, both *in the church* and *in the world*.

special characteristics

How systematic it is: at times Romans reads more like an elaborate theological essay than a letter.

Its emphasis on Christian doctrine: the number and importance of the theological themes touched upon are impressive: sin, salvation, grace, faith, righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption, death and resurrection.

Its widespread use of OT quotations: Although Paul regularly quotes from the OT in his other letters, in Romans the argument is sometimes carried along by such quotations (see especially his discussion about Israel in chs. 9–11).

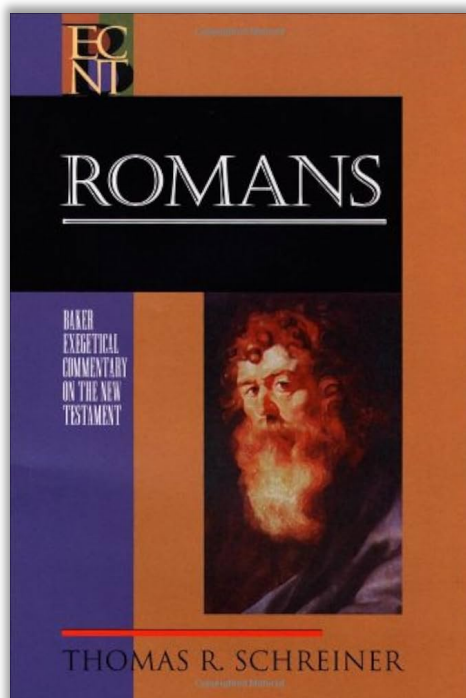
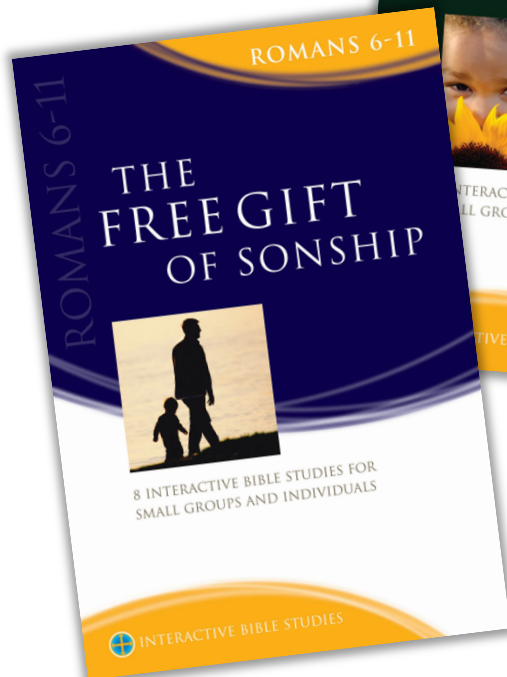
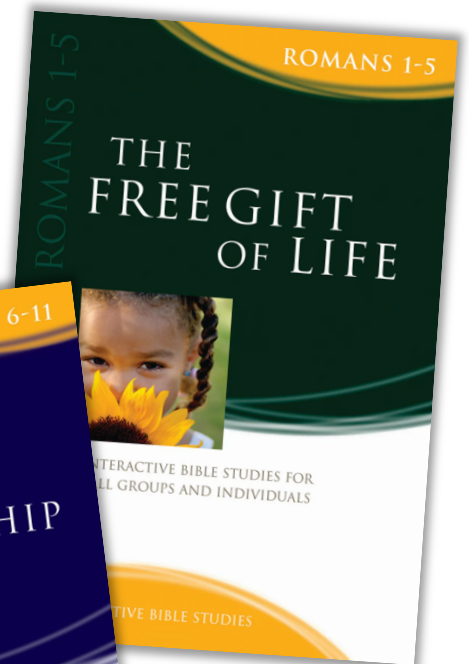
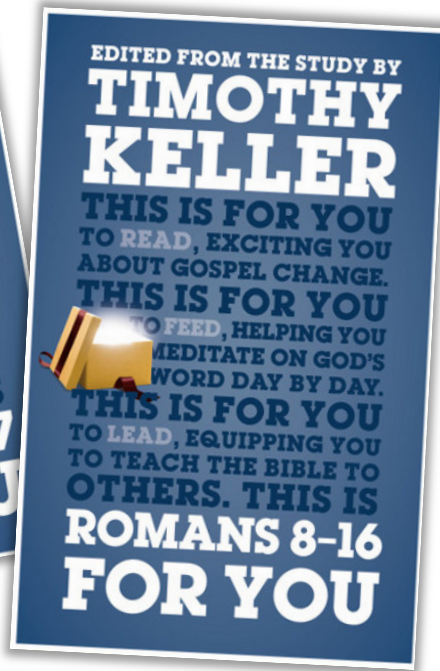
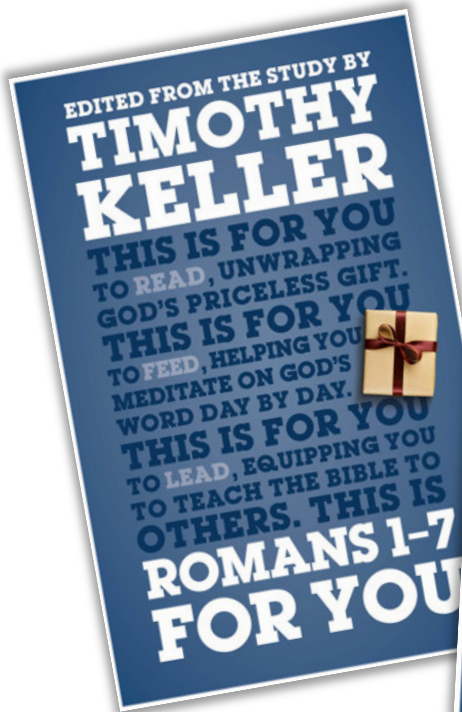
becoming new: chapters 5–8

As outlined above in the structure section, chapter 5 marks the beginning of the second key stage in Paul's letter (chapters 5–8).

Having emphasised the problem of universal human unrighteousness before God, as well as God's gracious response in Christ, Paul turns to some of the deeper implications of this saving faith. He highlights the hope that belongs to those who are right with God, and the new life and identity they have received.

Our hope is that in these eight studies you'll discover what being righteous means for our future and our present – the great and wonderful difference this new life and identity makes now and into eternity.

helpful resources



1

you see, at just the right time

ROMANS 5:1–11

READ Romans 5:1–5

1. How does verse 1 begin? What does this tell us?
2. What does it mean to be 'justified'? And why is it 'by faith'?
3. What benefits of 'justification' does Paul list in vv.1–2? What do you think they each mean?
4. What difference does Paul say being justified makes to our experience of suffering? Why does it make this difference, do you think?

We can think unhelpfully about 'rejoicing' and suffering. Paul's urging to rejoice *in* our sufferings – that is, in the *midst* of them – is not a call to *masochism* (enjoying the fact that suffering has come) or *stoicism* (gritting your teeth and just 'getting through'). It's a call to remember what God has done for us, now and forever, and therefore to rejoice that that he is always working for the good of those he loves, whom he has called according to his purpose (8:28).

- How does suffering show where our hopes and dreams really lie?

READ Romans 5:6–11

5. At what 'time' did Christ die for us? What does Paul mean by this?
6. What was our spiritual state when Christ died for us?
7. In what ways does this emphasise the love God has for us (see esp. vv.6–8)?
8. How do vv.9–10 assure us that God accepts us completely in Christ?

final thoughts and application

9. When suffering occurs:
 - What do *we* need to remember?
 - How can we remind *other* Christians about these truths when they suffer? What needs to be some important pastoral considerations?
10. A Christian friend comes to you anxious that they are not right with God, despite having believed in Jesus' death for their sins. They are not aware of any specific serious wrongdoing in their lives.
What could you say from Romans 5 :1–11 to encourage them?

2 death through adam, life through christ

ROMANS 5:12–21

READ Romans 5: 12–14

1. How did sin and death come into the world? What is the connection between the two?
2. Whom does death affect, and why?
3. What do you think Paul means when he speaks of 'death'?
 - Does he mean just physical death, or something more? If so, what?
 - Do you think this means that physical death didn't exist at all prior to Adam and Eve's sin?
4. Paul says in v.13 that *sin is not taken into account when there is no law*. What, then, is the relationship between sin and the Law (of Moses)?

What Paul is teaching here is the doctrine of federal headship – the truth that we are represented before God by someone else, who acts on our behalf. Tim Keller writes:

Western societies are highly individualistic. The Bible, however, inhabits a radically different 'environment' – that of human *solidarity*. This means that you can have a relationship with a person in which whatever they achieve or lose, you do, too. They represent you – a little like if the leader of your country declares war, then you are at war.

In this passage, then, Paul is saying that all humanity is represented by one of two men: Adam or Christ.

READ Romans 5:15–21

5. What is the 'gift' (v.15)? With what is it contrasted?
6. How are Adam and Jesus *similar*?
7. The *difference* between Adam and Jesus is far greater. Go through vv.15–21 and fill in this table:

effects of the trespass/sin	effects of the gift/grace

8. Why is it good news that God deals with us through a representative?
 - So: as a descendant of Adam, what is the right response to God/Jesus?

final thoughts and application

9. How would you use Romans 5:12–21 to help or challenge a non-believer:
 - who is worrying about dying?
 - who says, 'I'm OK. I'm not a bad person'?
10. How might a misperception of sin affect our *Christian* lives?

3

dead to sin, alive in christ

ROMANS 6:1–14

READ Romans 6:1–7

1. What question does Paul ask in v.1? Why does he ask this question?
2. What is Paul's answer to this question, and what is his reason?
3. What does it mean that we have *died to sin*?
4. What illustrations does Paul use in vv.3–7 to explain this?

In New Testament times, baptism so closely followed conversion that the two were spoken of as part of the one event.

5. What do you think it means to be 'freed from sin' (v.7)?
 - What do you find encouraging about the truth that in Christ we have 'died to sin' and are 'freed from sin'? What do you find challenging about it?

READ Romans 6:8–14

6. Because Christians 'died with Christ', what do we now *know* (vv.8–10)?
7. What crucial fact does Paul include about Jesus' death 'to sin'? What are the implications of this?
8. Paul summarises his teaching in v.11: *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus*. For the Christian believer, then, what is the application he draws in vv.12–14?

Negatively?

Positively?

final thoughts and application

9. Tim Keller writes that, 'If I fall into sin, it is because I do not realise who I am in Christ'. Does this resonate with you? How is it a good summary of Paul's message here?
10. Have you found obeying God to be a source of joy and liberation? How?

4 obedience, commitment and freedom

ROMANS 6:15–7:6

READ Romans 6:15–23

1. What question does Paul ask in v.15? Why does he ask it – and what is his answer?

2. To what does Paul compare both our old life and our new life?
 - (i) What do you think is involved in being a 'slave to sin/impurity'?

 - (ii) What do you think is involved in being a 'slave to righteousness/of God'?

3. Spiritually speaking, what point is this analogy making about human freedom?

4. How does Paul compare and contrast these two masters in:
 - v.19?

 - vv.21–22?

 - v.23?

5. How does this help us to answer the following views?

I just couldn't help sinning in that way

I'm determined not to sin. I just think to myself: 'Just say no!'

I find myself envying the freedom of my non-Christian friends

God is working in me to change me, so I just let him get on with it.

READ Romans 7:1–6

6. To what metaphor does Paul now switch?

7. What does this image teach us about:

A believers' relationship to the *law*?

A believer's relationship to the *Lord Jesus*?

8. In what ways does getting married mean being *less free*? And yet: why is a good marriage still a *joy*?

final thoughts and application

9. 'Since we're saved by grace, why bother obeying God?' How would you answer this question from:

- 6:15–23?

- 7:1–6?

5

struggling with sin

ROMANS 7:7–25

READ Romans 7:7–12

1. Once again Paul begins with a question that anticipates objections to his argument: *What shall we say then?* What is the question, and what prior remarks might have led to it (cf. vv.4–6)?
2. Paul emphatically rejects the idea that the law is sinful (*Certainly not!*). So what, according to Paul, is the connection between law and sin?
3. What do you think Paul means when he says in v.9, ‘Once I was *alive apart from the law*’?
4. The consequence of this ‘sinful response’ to the law is *death* (vv.10–11). What is tragically ironic about this?

It’s worth noting how Paul characterises ‘sin’ in these verses: it’s *active*, with agency and intent; it’s a corrupting *influence*; it’s *deceptive*. This personification reminds us that there *is* an agent – a *being* – behind sin: *Satan* – the deceiver who prowls around like a lion looking for people to devour (cf. Revelation 12:9; 1 Peter 5:8).

- To what extent can you identify with the experience Paul describes in these verses?
- Given what Paul says here, how might ‘the law’ be useful in evangelism?

READ Romans 7:13–25

5. What are the competing desires Paul describes in these verses? Do you think Paul is describing here the experience of a non-Christian or a Christian? Why/why not?
6. In ch.6 Paul stated that Christians are no longer slaves to sin. Yet here he claims to be a slave to sin (v.14). How would you explain the difference?
7. What does all this show us about the law and sin, and about what we rely on to be holy?
8. Consider Paul's self-assessment in vv.24–25. How can Paul be both 'wretched' and hopeful ('thankful')?

final thoughts and application

9. Based on this passage, what should we expect the rest of our lives on earth to be like?
10. How would you use this passage to:
 - Challenge a Christian who is *complacent* about their sin?
 - Encourage a Christian who is *burdened* by their sin?

6

life through the spirit

ROMANS 8:1–17

READ Romans 8:1–4

1. Paul begins with *Therefore*. What is his conclusion, and why is it his conclusion?
2. What has ‘the law of the Spirit of life’ done for Paul (and all Christians)?
3. How did God do this? And what is the result for those in Christ? (vv.3–4)
 - How might this truth help motivate us to live God’s way?

READ Romans 8:5–14

4. Listed below are the four verses in Romans up to this point that mention the Holy Spirit. Summarise what they teach about him.

1:4

2:29

5:5

7:6

5. In vv.5-8 Paul divides all humanity into one of two categories: those who live according to the sinful nature (lit. 'flesh') and those who live according to the Spirit.

In your own words, what are the characteristics of each group? If it helps, use the table below.

live according to sinful nature	live according to the spirit

6. What do vv.9-11 tell us about Christians?

In v.12 Paul says that we have an 'obligation' to live according to our new identity. His words here should be understood in context. Paul isn't saying, 'Obey the Spirit and you will live; disobey the Spirit and you will die.' Living according to the Spirit includes all that Paul has previously described: trusting in the sin offering of God's Son (v.3), setting our minds on what the Spirit desires (v.5), submitting to God's law (v.7), and belonging to Christ (v.9). These are all characteristics of God's children (v.14). Conversely, those who live according to the sinful nature don't trust in Jesus in the first place and so don't value the Spirit's work.

7. Paul climaxes in v.14 by describing the identity of those led by the Spirit as 'sons of God' – part of God's own family.

Have a look at vv.15-17. What are the privileges of being an adopted son of God?

In vv.14-17 (and 18-25) Christians are alternately called 'sons of God' and 'children of God'. This alternating is intentional: it's a reminder that both men and women belong to God's family. But Paul also uses 'sons' deliberately, because (a) it is through Jesus' unique 'Sonship' that we come into God's family (we're *sons in the Son*), and (b) in the Greco-Roman world 'sonship' was a status of privilege and power – one which was often conferred through the legal practice of adoption. In using 'sons' as Christians, Paul is saying that all believers, both male and female, are now God's heirs. As Tim Keller observes:

Christian women should not object any more to being called 'sons' than Christian men should object when called Christ's 'bride'.

- What difference does it make to you that we know God as *Father*, not simply as 'a master'?

final thoughts and application

8. As much as you feel comfortable sharing: what evidence do you see of your life being controlled by the Spirit?
9. Consider Paul's exhortation to 'put to death the misdeeds of the body' (v.13):
 - What do you think this means/looks like?
 - What motivations throughout the passage have there been to do this?
 - How can we motivate ourselves to do this?
 - How can we encourage others to do this?

7

present groaning and future glory

ROMANS 8:18–27

READ Romans 8:18–27

1. Paul speaks in v.18 of ‘our present sufferings’.
 - (i) What might some of these sufferings be?
 - (ii) To what does Paul compare our present sufferings?
2. What does Paul say in vv.18–25 about the *present* (‘this present time’) and the *future* (‘to be revealed’)? If it helps, use the table below.

the present	the future

According to v.20 the whole creation has been ‘subjected to futility’. This is a reference to Genesis 3, and how God’s judgement on sin includes creation being a harder place for people to inhabit; our efforts to make the most out of living on earth are often *futile* – they produce no truly lasting outcome. Paul’s point is that, while God has dealt with this judgement in Jesus’ death for sin, we will never experience true relief from futility and suffering in this life.

- 3.** Paul speaks in vv.22-24 of 'groaning' – both 'the creation' and 'we ourselves'.
- (i) How do we see and experience the 'groaning' of creation?
- (ii) When we groan, what are we groaning for?
- 4.** To what does Paul liken the 'groaning' of creation? What is he saying with this analogy?
- 5.** Paul also uses the agricultural metaphor of 'firstfruits' (the first appearing of fruit that indicates what the rest will be like). How is having the Spirit like the 'firstfruits' of what's to come?
- 6.** How does this all help us understand the nature of the hope in which we've been saved (v.24)? How does this help us cope with the sufferings and struggles of life?
- What do you find challenging about these truths?
 - What do you find encouraging?
- 7.** How specifically does the Spirit help us 'in our weakness' (vv.26-27)? What do you think 'with groans that words cannot express' means?
- How might this change how you pray and what you pray for?

final thoughts and application

8. When do you find it hardest to wait 'eagerly' and 'patiently' for the hope of future glory? What difference would being eager and/or patient make in those moments?
9. 'Groans that words cannot express' is an emotion-laden term. And yet many people know something of that experience and the suffering that produces it. If you feel comfortable sharing:
 - to what extent has this been your experience?
 - What did you find helpful spiritually and pastorally?
10. For brothers and sisters in Christ who are experiencing this sort of suffering and grief, how might we be of help:
 - as individuals?
 - as a discipleship group?
 - as a church?

8

more than conquerors

ROMANS 8:28–39

READ Romans 8:28–30

1. What does Paul say Christian believers can *know*?
2. What *is* God's good purpose for us?
3. Consider the verbs *foreknew*, *predestined*, *called*, *justified* and *glorified*.

What do you think each of them means, and how do they help us understand the way God accomplishes his purpose for us?

- In your experience, what good purposes does God work out of any situation, even the most difficult?
- Regarding these verses:

How can they be helpful in comforting Christians who suffer?

How might they also be pastorally *unhelpful*? That is, should they always be used when comforting Christians who suffer? Why/why not? When/when not?

The word 'predestined' often raises many questions, such as what the relationship between God's sovereignty and human responsibility is. These are worthwhile philosophical questions, and it may be that you want to explore them (even here and now!).

But it's worth noting that a key purpose behind the idea of predestination as it appears in the Bible is to comfort and strengthen believers concerning the love, care, power, goodwill and generosity of God. That's how Paul uses it here; he wants to give us confidence about who we are and what God has done and will do for us.

READ Romans 8:31–39

4. Paul sums all this up by saying 'God is *for* us' (v.31), which he asks in the form of a rhetorical question. What is the question – and what is the answer?
5. What does Paul add to give weight to this conclusion? What's the logic of his argument?
6. In vv.33–34 Paul imagines a courtroom scene in which God is the judge (*the One who justifies*), Jesus is the defence barrister (*interceding for us*), and someone is bring charges and accusations against us.
 - (i) Who/what might seek to charge us with guilt and condemnation?
 - (ii) What do you imagine the response of God the judge would be to these charges?
7. Paul concludes chapter 8 reflecting on the reality of suffering. In v.36 he quotes Psalm 44:22. What does it show?

8. Consider the final question he asks in this passage (v.35). How might trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or the threat of death cause us to question God's love for us?

final thoughts and application

9. Consider Paul's questions and answers in vv.31-39. How do they help us when we:
- are afraid?
 - are unsure we will keep going as Christians?
 - feel guilty?
 - worry whether God loves us?
10. When suffering and hardship loom large in our lives, how does this passage helpfully tell us:
- who we are?
 - whether living for Jesus is worth it?
 - whether we might get 'lost' on the way to our home with our heavenly Father?

