

GROWTH GROUP BOOKLET

R O M A N S

C O M M I N G  
H O M E



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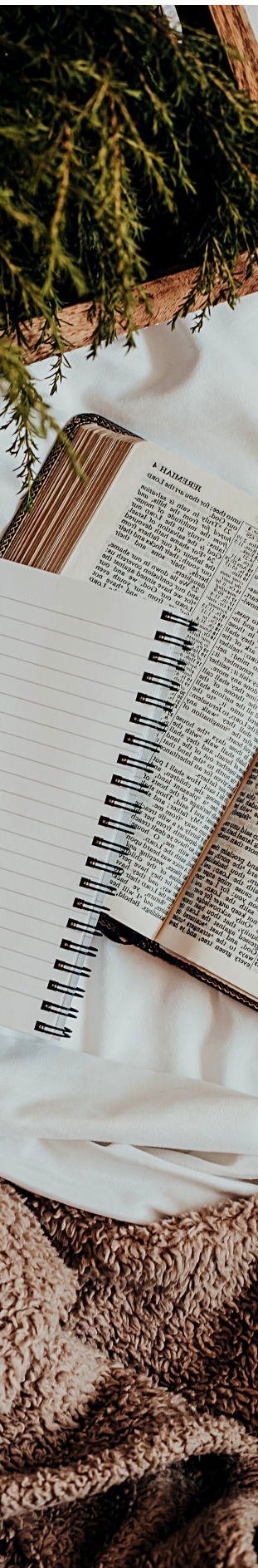
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# INTRODUCTION TO 'COMING HOME'

As we've noticed above, Paul's letter to the Roman Christians isn't a story, like the narrative in the Gospels. However, Paul explains the gospel by retelling the unfolding drama of the Bible just like the Gospels.

This drama of God is helpfully captured in one of Jesus' own stories, the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:12-31. The parable of the Prodigal Son can be understood as a story of humanity. The first half of the letter to the Roman church could be referred to as the novel version of Jesus' short story.

Jesus told the story to two groups of people. There were Gentiles (non-Jews), represented by the younger son. There were also Jews, represented by the older son. The Father, of course, is God the Father. There are many twists in the story that often lead us to think the story is all about us. It's the Father though, who has problems with both his sons. It's the Father who's love for both of them is seen in his longing for both of them to be home, to come home and be with him.

As we dig into Romans, we find Paul is talking to these same two groups. The Gentiles, younger sons, have rejected the Father (1:18-28). The Jews, older sons, wrongly pride themselves on their actions (ch 2). Yet, the Father God still calls them both home, to be sons, heirs, and to share in the inheritance (8:14-17).

As you read Romans 1-8, you might find some of the heavy going made easier by having the prodigal son in the back of your mind. Who's Paul talking to? What is their problem? What does it teach us about the Father and the lengths He goes to call you home?



# THE LETTER OF ROMANS

One New Testament scholar who has written over a 1000 pages exploring the meaning of Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome says, *'Romans is probably the most difficult of all the New Testament letters to interpret.'*

Saint Augustine also shared in the difficulty the Letter of Romans presents, as he too began writing a commentary on the letter but abandoned the project only seven verses in due to the level of difficulty. In fact Erasmus, an influential pre-reformation theologian and philosopher said of Romans, *'the difficulty of this letter equals and almost surpasses its utility.'* Although we do not need to agree with Erasmus (I know we don't), like the others, he speaks to how intimidating and difficult the letter of Romans can be. At the least this should humble us as we begin Romans and invite a willingness for our prior thoughts about Romans to be challenged, corrected, or confirmed. Yet John Calvin begins his commentary saying *'when anyone gains a knowledge of this letter, he has an entrance opened to him to all the hidden treasures of Scripture.'* Calvin, holds out a genuine expectation that we can and should pursue an understanding of Romans.

So where do we begin?

Beginning with the obvious, Roman's is a letter, and although letters are different to the narratives we find in the New Testament they do share some similarities: an author with an audience, a message that moves you, conflicts, tensions, resolutions that makes you stop to think and feel.

The letter of Romans is written by the Apostle Paul to Christians living in the city of Rome. Paul's letter was written to real people with real problems. People who saw the same sun rise and set as we do. People who heard the same sound of children playing. People who smelt the scent of seasonal flowers blooming as we do. People who tasted home cooked meals as we do. People whose feet touched and walked on the earth we do. People who felt joy, sadness, fear, and shame as we do.

These real Christians faced real problems. Although the church in Rome has been there since the earliest days of the church. When Jewish believers travelled to Jerusalem from Rome they heard Peter preaching the Gospel at Pentecost they believed and we would assume returned home to Rome (Acts 2:10). Although Paul has never been to Rome (Romans 1:8-15; 15:14-33), the Roman church has become well known (Romans 1:8; 16:19) and by the time Paul writes this letter -- some time during his third missionary journey in the region of Corinth recorded in Acts 19:22 and 20:1-3 (57-58 a.d.) -- the church in Rome has faced some real problems. >



What was once more than likely a church community with a Jewish majority and Gentile minority has completely changed when all Jews were kicked out of Rome in 49 a.d. by Emperor Claudius who issued that all Jews were to leave because of their fighting and debating over 'Chrestus,' the Jewish messiah and if Jesus was the expected messiah. This change happened overnight, like the enforcement of new Covid restrictions, all Jews, Christian and non-Christian (Acts 18:2), were kicked out of home and Rome. Such a change like this would transform any church overnight and for this church in Rome it became a Gentile congregation overnight.

But once Claudius died in 54 a.d., some 5 years later, Jews began to return to Rome and so Jewish Christians returned and back into a church community that many would have memories of as an Jewish church but is now very much a Gentile church. Romans chapter 14 and 15 describe the tension and conflict as Jew and Gentile believers seek to reconnect. A tension and conflict that Paul takes seriously enough to write Romans 1-12 to resolve it. To put it differently, the profound thoughts of God that Paul puts on paper must surely then serve the primary goal of resolving the conflict. In this way, the letter of Romans is no different from any other of Paul's letters, Paul's theology always had a pastoral implication, he had a formational agenda.

One expert writer on Paul wisely counsels us, 'our reading of Romans depends to a significant degree on the part of the letter one sees as most important and as most revealing of the story behind the letter...If Romans is a theological treatise on justification, sanctification, and glorification; there is no particular story behind the letter, only the grand story of salvation.' So again, we need to come to Romans with humility to not reduce the letter of Romans down to grand theological ideas (which there are) to distract us from the real people and real problems we face. As God himself reminds us that His word is '*alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*' (Hebrews 4:12). God intends to impact the particular and unique story of our lives, his agenda for transformation, as Paul says in Romans 8:29, '*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*' Paul begins and ends his letter making his purpose clear – 1:18 and 16:26 are almost exactly repetition of one another – to make known to all people the good news of Jesus that brings about the '*obedience of faith.*' >

Although the conflict within the church is obviously an important purpose behind the letter, it also doesn't mean or ought to mean there's no other purposes for Paul's letter. Or in other words, one purpose doesn't and ought not exclude any other purpose which there are:

- The basic sense of Paul's story behind the letter is that Rome is the end of the third missionary journey, his mission to deliver funds to judean believers, and then his intention to visit Rome en route to Spain.
- A personal introduction. Even though Paul knows many members of the believers in Rome, Paul neither founded nor visited the Roman church.
- An opportunity to correct any misrepresentations and misunderstandings people may have of him or the Gospel.
- The fulfilling of his ministry and then turning to what's next and seeking support.

So how can we sum up our brief introduction to the letter of Romans? Romans is a letter-essay, a treatise, a real letter written to real people addressing a real situation. Paul invites us to join in the drama of God, story saving grace of toward sinful humanity, both Jews and Gentiles, that creates, in Christ, a multicultural Christlike community of faith, love, and hope by responding to the gospel that is powerfully proclaimed.



# GROWTH GROUPS: THE REAL ME WITH THE REAL GOD

There will be many ways God will use the letter of Romans in our life and in our church but how might God use the Letter of Romans to shape Growth Groups at Southside?

One overarching way this letter shapes Growth Groups at Southside is how the letter reminds us of the core reason of Growth Groups: growing in our spiritual maturity. Although the letter of Romans unpacks many grand theological truths, God's never intended them to be detached from or distract us from who we really are, the problems we really face and God's intentions to impact the particular and unique story of our lives through our spiritual adoption. For example Paul says in Romans 8,

*'The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children...For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.'* (Rom 8:15-16, 29)

Paul goes to great lengths to help us who we really are as God's adopted children, who our Heavenly Father really is and how he's really at work in our life. All the rich theological truths caught up in our adoption, like how God in love chooses us and justifies us, is to provide us a secure loving-relationship with Him that we might have assurance and hope as we face the remaining presence of sin in our life and participate in how God is *'comforting us to the image of His Son.'* Although we can be assured that God is attuned, attentive, and affectionate toward us, we can often be distracted and detached from what God is wanting to do in us as we arrive at Growth Group, collapsing in the chair, with a heart full of unnoticed, unhealthy and un-Christlike thoughts, feelings and actions lingering for our day.

One *simple* and *short* process (that might feel a little *strange* at first) we will be introducing at the beginning of Growth Group is a short moment of guided prayer and reflection to help us get in touch with how you are really going. After all, this is the very place God wants to speak into and change. The simply and short process looks like:

- Pray, *'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me'* (Ps 139:1).
- Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, *If your heart could speak what would it say?* Taking a moment to reflect, then write down your reflection (See Appendix, for guide to emotions)
- Prayer, *'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting'* (Ps 139: 23-24).



# WEEK 1 | THE STORY OF GOD

## GOD'S SUPREMACY PERSONAL GROWTH ROMANS 1:1-17

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life 4 was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power 5 by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. 6 And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. 11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, c that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. 14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

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# GROWTH GROUP | THE STORY OF GOD

*Definition of Supremacy:* the state or condition of being superior to all others in authority, power, or status.

*Reflect* for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, *If your heart could speak what would it say?* (write down your reflection)

*Pray:* 'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me' (Ps 139:1).

## **Read Romans 1:1-17**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

How is God's supremacy seen at work in vs 1-6?

How does God's supremacy and Paul's decision making work together in vs 7-17?

There is a hint of tension between the Jews and Gentiles Paul is writing to. We'll learn more about what's going on later in the letter.

Discuss what you know about these two groups?  
(The prodigal son is a helpful story)

And why does Paul treat them differently when he calls them both out regarding their need for the gospel of Jesus (vs 5-6)?

If God is in control of all things, all the time, why does Paul work so hard? Why should plan or work when God achieves what he wants anyway?

Does the passage show us anything about how God the Father thinks, feels, or acts towards us?

How do you think God's Supremacy speaks into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine"* (Isaiah 43:1)



# PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?



# GROWTH GROUP | THE REBELLIOUS CHILD

*Definition of Sin:* any human action that fails to glorify God, and it leads to death, both bodily and spiritually.

Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, *If your heart could speak what would it say?* (write down your reflection)

Prayer *'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting'* (Ps 139: 23-24).

## **Read Romans 1:18-2:5**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

How would you describe what sin is from these verses?

How does it look?

How does it reflect our understanding of God the Father?

How does Paul's explanation of sin stand in contrast to what we discussed last week about the supremacy of God?

Is it a legitimate excuse for people (then and now) to say, 'What about people who never had an opportunity to know God' (vs 18-20)? How would they have an opportunity?

According to vs 21-32, what are the results of sin? How can you see that today?

Why would a loving God hand people over to their evil desires? Same question, different story, why does the Father in the Prodigal son give the younger son what he wants and lets him go, instead of punishing him there and then?

How does the passage show us how God the Father thinks, feels, or acts towards us?



How does understanding sin speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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# GROWTH GROUP | MYTHS WE SHOULDN'T BELIEVE

*Definition of Judgement:* a person able or qualified gives a ruling on something.

Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, *If your heart could speak what would it say?* (write down your reflection)

Pray 'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me' (Ps 139:1).

## **Read Romans 2:1-3:20**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

How do we see what judging looks like from this passage (esp. 2:1-3)?  
How do you see this today?

In this passage, who is judging who? How does having the law or being circumcised make them believe they should be the judge of others (2:5-30)?

What is the problem people have with the idea that a loving Father God would sit on the judgement seat (3:5-8)? How is the Father God the only one worthy to be the judge of all humanity?

How does the passage show us how God the Father thinks, feels, or acts towards us (3:9-20)? Is he exaggerating? Why is this hard to hear?

How is the person Paul is talking to (Jews), the same as the older son in the prodigal son story?

How do you see that same attitude in our society today?

How do you see it in churches today?

How do you see it in yourself?

How does understanding God the Father as Judge speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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# GROWTH GROUP | HOW CAN A LOVING GOD ALLOW PEOPLE TO GO TO HELL?

*Definition of Justification:* the action of showing something to be right or reasonable.

*Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, If your heart could speak what would it say? (write down your reflection)*

*Pray 'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Ps 139: 23-24).*

## **Read Romans 3:21-32**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

Have a go at giving a short summary of the letter so far (use the prodigal son story if it's helpful). Why is it all bad news so far (apart from the opening verses)?

The way the word 'justification' is used in the Bible is a legal term. How does Paul describe how we are justified, historically and practically?

How is God the Father both the perfect judge and also a loving God by what redeeming His people?

Why did the Father choose to send His son Jesus to die on the cross to justify sinners? What other ways could the Father justify His people?

How does the passage show us how God the Father thinks, feels, or acts towards us? Why do you think the Father relates to you this way?

How does our justification in Jesus speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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# GROWTH GROUP | HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH?

*Definition of Faith:* complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

*Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, If your heart could speak what would it say? (write down your reflection)*

Pray 'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me' (Ps 139:1).

## **Read Romans 4:1-25**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

In what ways are people trying to justify themselves in vs 1-15 (three ways)? In what ways can we be tempted to do the same things today?

How does the passage describe what faith means?  
How is Abraham a helpful example?

Are faith and works in opposition to each other, or both are necessary, or complimentary? How are we to understand them?

Abraham had faith in the promises of God. What promises from our Father God are we to have faith in (past, present and future, from other parts of the Bible)?

How hard is it to 'not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God,' for us today? And why?

How does the passage show us how God the Father thinks, feels, or acts towards us? Why do you think the Father relates to you this way?



How does understanding being justified to God by faith in Jesus speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

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Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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# GROWTH GROUP | THE POWER OF LOVE

*Definition of Grace:* a manifestation of favour, especially by a superior.

Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, *If your heart could speak what would it say?* (write down your reflection)

Pray *'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting'* (Ps 139: 23-24).

## **Read Romans 5:1-21**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

How would you define 'grace' from the passage?

What do we gain when we have faith in Jesus (there are many answers in 1-11)?  
How do we gain it?

In times of suffering we can feel like God is far from us, or even displeased with us. How does Paul explain suffering in the life of a believer?

Why is it easy to believe God is punishing us, or at least holding good things back, when we experience suffering?

How does our (christian) culture feed this way of thinking?

How is this a misunderstanding of grace?

How does the right understanding of grace help?

Surely grace has its limitations. But what does vs 20-21 mean? How does this fit with the seriousness of sin back in 1:18-32?

In the prodigal son story, when the younger son comes home the older son says, “when this son of yours has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!” Why does the Father do this over the top welcome to the younger son? Why do you think the Father thinks and acts this way towards you?

How does understanding grace from our Father God speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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# GROWTH GROUP | NEW LIFE IN THE OLD BODY

*Definition of Sanctification: to make holy; set apart as sacred; consecrate.*

*Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, If your heart could speak what would it say? (write down your reflection)*

*Pray 'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me' (Ps 139:1).*

## **Read Romans 6:1-7:25**

*(Yes, this is a long passage. It might be helpful to picture Paul talking to the older brother in the Prodigal son story. He's a law abiding, good guy, who loves rules to show he's a good Christian. His problem with grace is that it means you're allowed to sin, because it doesn't matter!)*

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand? (you might read it a few times over another time to get the full flow of Paul's argument)

How does this passage help us understand what sanctification means?

How is the Law (everything like the 10 commandments) helpful for us? How can they be unhelpful?

In 6:2, it reads like Paul expects us to be sinless. Yet, how does Paul describe his life in 7:19-20? Is Paul a hypocrite? What advice would you give Paul if he shared this with you?

Understanding 7:21-25:

How does Paul feel about his sin?

How does Paul understand his identity?

How can someone be both a slave to God's law and yet still have a sinful nature that leads us to sin? (look back at 6:11-14)

What attitude should believers have to sin? What advice would you give a fellow believer who can't break the stronghold of sin?

How does understanding sanctification (growing in christlikeness) speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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# GROWTH GROUP | COMING HOME

*Definition of Adoption:* the action or fact of legally taking another's child and bringing it up as one's own, or the fact of being adopted.

*Reflect for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, If your heart could speak what would it say? (write down your reflection)*

*Prayer 'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Ps 139: 23-24).*

## **Read Romans 8:1-17**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

What themes are in vs 1-11 that have already been talked about? (This might be Paul's way of giving summary notes)

We are given a visual picture of what this all means for how we can relate to our Father God. What is the significance of the language of adoption? How does that look in the life of a believer both theologically and practically?

Read Luke 15:17-24 (Jesus telling of the Prodigal son)

What is the son hoping for when he returns to his father?

What status does the Father give him?

Why is this a ridiculous welcome?

If the son knew how his father felt about him, do you think he might have come home sooner? Or never left home?

Read Rom 8:14-17 again. In what ways are you the younger son coming home to our Father God? How does His welcome make you feel?

Adoption isn't a mere metaphor! Adoption reveals the truest nature of our relationship with God as our loving Father and us his loved children.

What does that tell you about how our Father God feels about you?

What about when we sin against him?

Should we hide our sin from him, or run to him? Why?

How does understanding adoption into the family of God speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1)

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How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?



# GROWTH GROUP | HOME: ARE WE THERE YET?

*Definition of Eschatology:* is a part of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity. This concept is commonly referred to as the "end of the world" or "end times".

*Reflect* for a minute, close your eyes, take three deep breaths and reflect on the question, *If your heart could speak what would it say?* (write down your reflection)

Pray, 'You have searched me, Lord, and you know me' (Ps 139:1).

## **Read Romans 8:18-38**

What jumps out at you from the passage? Is there anything that's hard to understand?

Explanation: there is a range of views regarding eschatology.

- An 'over-realised eschatology' is a belief that God loves us so much that we should expect the rewards or blessings of being a Christian here and now in this life (also referred to as the 'prosperity gospel').
- An 'under-realised eschatology' is when someone believes rewards or blessings will only be experienced in heaven and don't expect anything in this life.

And churches sit on a spectrum between those views.

What view do you think Paul holds to? And why?

How does this passage help us understand the connection between God's love and suffering? How would you encourage a believer when all they feel is pain?

Christians are described as 'more than conquerors' and 'glorified'. What image comes to mind when you hear this? But how does Paul see this playing out in each of our lives? Why is it worth it?

How would you respond to someone who holds to a 'prosperity gospel' (over-realised eschatology)? What are the dangers of believing this?

How has society become a 'now' culture compared to generations past?

Has this made it harder for Christians to hold to 'delayed gratification'? How do you see or experience this?

How does this passage help us in those moments?

How does understanding God's plan for us eschatologically speak into your life and how you are going at the moment (Remember what you wrote down at the start)?

How will this change how you relate to God?

How will this change how you relate to others?

Speak with God about what has impacted you from His word.

Now, let God have the final word to us, *But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine"* (Isaiah 43:1)

# PRAYER

How has God been at work in your life this week?

How are you going with God?

How are you going with others God has placed in your life?

Something God's put on your heart from the passage?

Who are the people you are on mission to?

What can we pray for them this week?



A top-down photograph of a person reading a book, holding a cup of coffee, with a plant and a cookie nearby. The scene is set on a light-colored surface. The person is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and a light-colored, ribbed sweater. The book is open, showing text. The cup is filled with a dark liquid. A small potted plant with green leaves is visible in the upper right. A round, dark cookie with seeds is on a black plate in the lower left.

APPENDIX



# A DOCTRINE BETWEEN TWO HERESIES (TIM KELLER, ROMANS)

1 - God is holy, so our sins require that we are punished. The gospel tells us: You are more sinful than you ever dared believe. To forget this leads to license and permissiveness – to what we might call liberalism.

2 - God is more gracious, so in Christ our sins are dealt with. The gospel tells us: You are more accepted in Christ than you ever dared hope. To forget this leads to legalism and moralism.

<b>Legalism (Elder Son)</b>	<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Liberalism (Younger Son)</b>
God is holy	God is holy and love	God is love
Earn your own righteousness	Receive God's perfect righteousness	You don't need perfect righteousness
Matter is bad and we are fallen – be suspicious of or reject physical pleasures (asceticism)	Matter is good yet we are fallen – physical enjoyment is good, but live wisely	Matter is good and we aren't fallen – satisfy your physical appetites
Sin only affects individuals – just do evangelism	Sin affects both individuals and social systems – do both evangelism and social action	Naive about depth of human sin – just do social action
People can't change/ change is easy	People can change, but there are no quick fixes	People don't need to change
Go into guilt – work it off	Go through guilt – rest in Christ	God away from guilt – convince yourself you're OK
Repent of sins	Repent of sin and self-righteousness	Repent of neither

# GOD'S SUPREMACY / SOVEREIGNTY

## DEFINITION

The supremacy/sovereignty of God is the same as the *lordship* of God, for God is the *sovereign* over all of creation. The major components of God's lordship are his control, authority, and covenantal presence.

## SUMMARY

The sovereignty of God is the fact that he is the Lord over creation; as sovereign, he exercises his rule. This rule is exercised through God's authority as king, his control over all things, and his presence with his covenantal people and throughout his creation. The divine name, *Yahweh*, expresses this sovereign rule over against the claims of human kings, such as Pharaoh (Exod. 3:14). Because God is tri-personal, however, his sovereign control is not impersonal or mechanical, but is the loving and gracious oversight of the king of creation and redemption.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# SIN

## DEFINITION

Sin is the quality of any human action that causes it to fail to glorify the Lord fully, which was first present in the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which has corrupted all people except for Christ, and which leads to death, both bodily and spiritually.

## SUMMARY

Sin is the failure to keep God's law and to uphold his righteousness, thus failing to glorify the Lord fully. While there are many different manifestations that sin can take, they are all rooted in the initial disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden. All those who have been born afterwards, other than Jesus Christ, have been born into sin and cannot escape the guilt and punishment that sin incurs apart from the freedom found in Christ. God did not create sin or the suffering which sin brings into the world, but God is sovereign over his world and provides a way to be reconciled to him, faith in his Messiah, Jesus.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# JUDGEMENT

## DEFINITION

The righteousness of God in justification is both the divine attribute of righteousness, God's holy and perfect character, and the gift that God gives to sinners through his Son, the righteousness received by sinners through faith, which justifies them before a holy God.

## SUMMARY

The concept of righteousness is closely associated with both judgment and salvation in the Bible. In both, God shows the uprightness of his character: in judgment, by displaying his holy and just character in punishing the wicked; in salvation, by graciously rescuing his people to whom he has promised salvation. In salvation, God's righteousness plays a dual role, both as what is shown to the world as an attribute of the God who saves his people and as the gift of salvation to his people, who receive his righteousness as their own through Christ's death and resurrection on their behalf. The justification of ungodly sinners, then, is the justification or vindication of God, for it vindicates his holiness and righteousness, while at the same time it discloses his mercy and love.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# JUSTIFICATION

## DEFINITION

The doctrine of justification concerns God's gracious judicial verdict in advance of the day of judgment, pronouncing guilty sinners, who turn in self-despairing trust to Jesus Christ, forgiven, acquitted of all charges and declared morally upright in God's sight.

## SUMMARY

Before God's law humans stand condemned and there is no way they can put themselves right with God. In the gospel God reveals his way of putting sinners right with himself. Jesus, the Son of God, became the sinner's representative and substitute. As God's obedient servant, he lived a righteous life and died the atoning death of the cross. Justification is one of the key components of God's saving work. It concerns the "great exchange" where both the sins of his people were put to Christ's account and he paid the price, and also the righteousness of Christ's obedience to the Father in life and death was put to their account. It is by faith alone in Christ alone that sinners are justified. There is no substance to the many objections made to this doctrine but the benefits that result from this gospel truth are enormous and the implications significant.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# FAITH

## DEFINITION

Saving faith is faith that not only knows and comprehends the facts about the gospel of Jesus Christ but also trusts in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

## SUMMARY

While faith can be used in various ways, saving faith is faith that not only knows and comprehends the facts about the gospel of Jesus Christ but also trusts in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Historical faith understands the claims of Scripture, and temporary faith seems for a time to trust in them, but saving faith is a firm conviction and trust in the person and work of Christ. While demons understand and comprehend the facts about God and Jesus Christ, this faith causes them to tremble. For the Christian, faith leads to joy and confidence in the goodness and grace of God, which bestows salvation through Jesus Christ apart from works, even apart from the fruit that flows from faith.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# GRACE

## DEFINITION

Saving grace is the free and unmerited operation of God's person and presence that initiates the spiritual life of God's people.

## SUMMARY

God's saving grace is the unmerited favour of God that reconciles sinners through Jesus Christ. This is not the same as mercy; grace is God's goodness toward sinners, while mercy is God's goodness toward sufferers. This grace is sovereign; God gives new spiritual life to whomever he will. This grace is unconditional; God's saving grace cannot be earned. God's saving grace is the foundation for God's gracious gifts and empowerment of the Christian life, nourishing and sustaining us. Finally, this grace is fundamentally the presence of God in covenant with his people.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# SANCTIFICATION

## DEFINITION

While the language of sanctification in theological terminology has focused on the progressive aspect of growing holiness in the Christian life, the Bible uses the term sanctification to point towards the status as consecrated and holy that we have in Christ through our union with him.

## SUMMARY

In theological language, the term sanctification has largely referred to something that we do, normally our growth in holiness. However, the Bible uses the term sanctification in a more definitive way, indicating the holy status that we have already through our union with Christ. This consecrated status forms the foundation from which we grow in holiness and godliness in our lives and relationships; we strive to be what we are. However, because in theological discussion these categories have merged, theologians often call the status of holiness that we have in Christ “definitive” or “positional” sanctification, while our pursuits of Christian virtue and personal godliness are called “progressive” sanctification. The danger is that Christians often forget the definitive nature of sanctification and only focus on the progressive aspect of daily life.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# ADOPTION

## DEFINITION

“Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, 34)

## SUMMARY

The word “adoption” (Greek, *hiothesia*) appears only five times in Scripture, but rooted in the purpose of God and prefigured in the Old Testament, the theme gets woven into the fabric of New Testament theology—in particular the writings of the Apostle Paul. With notable connections both to justification and to sanctification, the meaning of adoption exceeds the boundaries of both. A term both of privilege and identity, adoption introduces superlative components of what Jesus provides in salvation and expresses who it is that enjoys those blessings.



SCAN TO READ MORE....

# ESCHATOLOGY / CHRISTIAN LIFE

## DEFINITION

Eschatology is concerned with the Christian life between the resurrection and return of Christ. The Christian life is the life of repentance, faith, and good works lived through the power of the Spirit and with the help of the means of grace as the Christian is conformed to the image of Christ to the glory of God.

## SUMMARY

The Christian life is based upon the work of God in the new birth, justification, the gift of the Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, and our union to Christ. The goal of the Christian life is to be conformed into the image of Christ and, as a result, to share in God's rule on the earth to the glory of God. Using various means of grace, such as Scripture, prayer, the Church, and the sacraments, God conforms the Christian into the image of Christ by the Spirit. The healthy Christian life is shown in faith and obedience, good works, sacrificial living and giving, and participation in the worldwide mission of the Church.

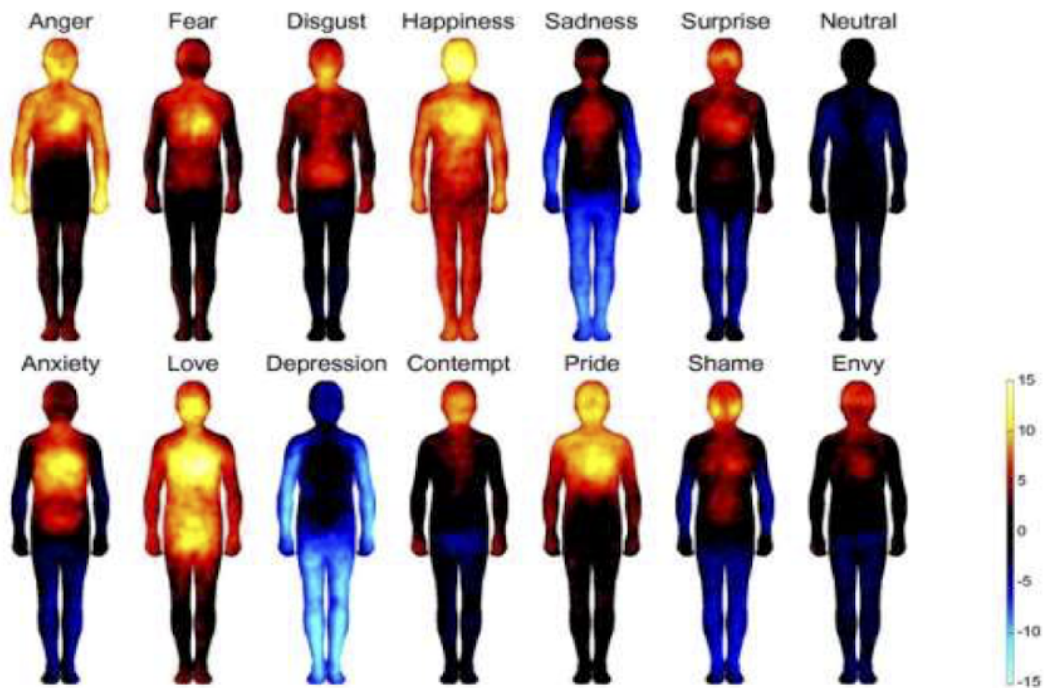


SCAN TO READ MORE....

# A GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS

	JOY / HAPPINESS	LOVED / LOVING	SADNESS	ANGER	FEAR	SHAME / DISGUST
<b>Relatively High Emotional Intensity</b>	Elated Overjoyed Thrilled Exuberant Ecstatic Empowered Optimistic Delighted Amazed	Loved Loving Accepted Blessed Attracted Enchanted Fascinated Passionate Adoration Devoted	Despairing Devastated Depressed In Agony Anguish Hurt Dejected Hopeless Distressed	Enraged / Outraged Furious Violent Hating  Mad  Angry Exasperated Aggressive	Terrified Petrified Panic Shocked Frightened Frantic Threatened Paranoid	Worthless Mortified Disgraced Guilty Dishonoured Remorseful Unworthy Rejected Disgusted
<b>Medium Emotional Intensity</b>	Cheerful Thankful Pleased Relieved Satisfied Loved Loving Energetic Excited	Trusting Encouraged Moved Tender Caring Connected Appreciated Empathy Compassion Supported	Alone Miserable Sorrowful Heartbroken Lost Grieving Sick Misunderstood Loss	Frustrated Annoyed Hostile Jealous Defiant Exploited Intolerant Provoked	Fearful Insecure Intimidated Anxious Helpless Suspicious Confused Disturbed Unsafe	Sorry Embarrassed Apologetic Sneaky Regretful Stupid Ashamed
<b>Relatively Low Emotional Intensity</b>	Appreciated Glad Content Peaceful Pleasant Tender Positive Creative Hopeful Amused	Admiration Respect Sentimental Kind  Caring Friendly Affectionate Warm	Disappointed Unhappy Upset Dissatisfied Discouraged Tired	Irritated Touchy Uptight On edge Agitated Critical Sarcastic Selfish	Uneasy Apprehensive Cautious Nervous Worried Shy / Timid Unsure Bewildered Concerned	Uncomfortable Ridiculous Regretful Defensive Sheepish

**Bodily topography of basic (Upper) and nonbasic (Lower) emotions associated with words.**



Lauri Nummenmaa et al. PNAS 2014;111:646-651

