

GROWTH GROUP BOOKLET

# OUR *Story*

ROMANS 9-16



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## INTRODUCTION TO 'OUR STORY'

The first half of Romans is best understood through the story Jesus told of the 'Prodigal Son', a Father with two sons, one a rebel (Gentiles), the other obeyed because of rules (Jews), but neither loved their Father (God).

Chapters 1-8 are all about what God the Father has done to bring us all home to Himself, no matter how far we've been. It's 'God's story'. His pursuit of His lost children (all of us).

But what happens next?

After all, Jesus ends the parable of the 'Prodigal Son' without telling us how the sons came together living under the same roof. It's got all the ingredients for a massive blow-ups, feuds, jealousy, tensions!

In a way, Romans 9-16 is the unfinished story of the lost sons and their father played out.

It's the story of people who've been on very different journeys who have now come together as one family through their faith in Jesus.

It's the story of people who've previously had to fight for their rights, shout to be heard, trying to be somebody by looking after 'me', because nobody else will.

It's the story of people who are adopted by God into one family – brothers and sisters called to love each other.

It's the story of the church.  
It's 'our story'.

But how is that ever going to work?

How are we going to live out the gospel?



## THE LETTER OF ROMANS CONTINUED...

As we continue on our journey through the letter of Romans, it's worth taking a moment to reorientate ourselves with the purpose of the letter.

So let's begin 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.

Not that we haven't had a window into this already through Romans 1-8. But we're particularly confronted in Romans 9-16 with these real problems facing these real Christians.

Let's also remember the moment in history our brothers and sisters in Christ faced. The church in Rome emerged in the earliest days of the church when Jewish believers travelled to Jerusalem from Rome and heard Peter preaching the Gospel at Pentecost. Where told they, among many others, believed and we would assume returned home to Rome (Acts 2:10). Remember too, Paul has never visited Rome (Romans 1:8-15; 15:14-33) but knows of them as the Christians in Roman have become well known (Romans 1:8; 16:19). Also 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 Christians in Rome faced some real problems.

What was once, more than likely, a church community with a Jewish majority and Gentile minority was completely changed overnight 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. Like the enforcement of a new Covid lockdown, all Jews, Christian and non-Christian (Acts 18:2), were locked out of Rome and their homes. Such a fast and extreme change like this would be traumatic and transform any church overnight. And for this church in Rome this change looked like becoming a Gentile congregation overnight.

But when 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 a Jewish church but is now very much a Gentile church. Romans chapters 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 1-16 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 is 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. And what can we expect from Romans 9-16? We can expect that as we continue on our journey into Romans 9-16, God continues on in his transformational agenda in our lives.



## 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.





## GROWTH GROUP | ROMANS 9:6-29

### WHO IS IN THE FAMILY? PART ONE

In our Christian context, predestination is the understanding that God has ordained all that will happen, especially with regard to the salvation of some and not others. How does this make you feel? What questions does it raise?

#### Read Romans 9:6-29

To understand what's going on behind God predestining, we need to see it in the context of God's relationship with humanity. Reflecting on the history of God's relationship with humanity is exactly what Paul does in verses 9-18:

a. *Abraham & Israel* – Back in Genesis 12:1-3 God made a promise to Abraham that He would make Abraham the father of a great nation, God's people. So in Romans 9:6-9, why does Paul say "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel"?

b. *Jacob & Esau* – Reflecting on verses 10-13, give a short summary of what Jacob and Esau were like and God's explanation of what happened?

c. *Pharaoh & God* – Reflecting on verses 14-18, give a short summary of what was going on for Pharaoh in Exodus?

Notice in verses 14-18 the word 'mercy' is used 5 times, what do these stories and God's mercy have to do with how He's chosen to relate with humanity?

Why are these questions in verse 19 good to ask? And are you satisfied with the answer? Why/why not?

Is 'God's choice' comforting to you, as explained from vs 22-29? Why/why not?

How should we understand the way God has chosen to relate to those who aren't saved?

How should God's supreme acts of love towards us shape who we are and how we live (Rom 5:8):

a. How does it shape the way we think and feel about ourselves?

b. How does it shape the way we choose to speak and act towards others?

## 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 | ROMANS 10

### WHO IS IN THE FAMILY? PART TWO

Share some of the contributing factors for you believing that Jesus is Lord.

- a. How was God involved?
- b. How were you involved?

#### **Read Romans 10**

Paul explains in verse 1-9 the differences between the Jews and Gentiles and their pursuit of being near to God – being saved. What are the wrong and right ways of drawing near to God?

Are verses 10-11 an oversimplification of what it means to have faith and be saved yet?

Looking at verses 8-18 by itself, who is responsible for your saving faith? You or God?

However verses 19-21 don't allow us to think it's only us who are involved in having a saving faith. How does this passage explain the tension between God's choice and our free will?

What are the dangers of just holding onto only one side:

- a. What are the dangers if we only hold onto God's choice?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. What are the dangers if we only hold onto our choice?

Why is holding onto both sides being 100% responsible a helpful way of understanding this? How is this more than a belief system, but a relationship?

How should we understand the way people choose to relate to God who aren't christians yet? How should we feel, think, speak and act towards them?

## 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?

# WEEK 3 | SHOCKED BY GRACE

## PERSONAL GROWTH ROMANS 11:33-36

33 Oh, the depth of the riches of  
the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable his judgments,  
and his paths beyond tracing out!

34 "Who has known the mind of  
the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?"

35 "Who has ever given to God,  
that God should repay them?"

36 For from him and through him  
and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

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# GROWTH GROUP | ROMANS 11

## SHOCKED BY GRACE



Some Christians today believe the nation of Israel will be saved through the Old Covenant – Old Testament law and promises, without Jesus – and the restoration of the nation will be key to Jesus' return (eg. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaSOXsuZRts>). Have you come across people like this?

Let's start by acknowledging, in the words of Tim Keller, *"we need to recognise that this chapter is one of the most difficult in Scripture to understand."*

So, rather than trying to work verse by verse, for this chapter we're going to work on what we know it does say, and what it doesn't say.

### **Read Romans 11**

What are we told about Israel regarding their relationship with God?

What are we told about the Gentiles regarding their relationship with God?

What are we told about God, his kindness and sternness?

What is the one overarching lesson for both Jews and Gentiles from this passage?

From this passage, which seems to be consistent to the rest of Scripture, how should we understand Jewish people today in relation to being children of God?

In regards to Israel and their eagerness to please God (v7), is it possible for a person to try so hard to please God that they come to resist the idea of grace? What might that look like today?

Paul talks about having a faith that others envy (11:14). Why could this be a good thing and what might it look like today?

Even though this chapter might be the hardest chapter in Scripture to understand, how does it spur you on to live out your faith?

## **COMING UP:**

**Sunday, 23 May** – is our Lunch in the Park after church.  
A great opportunity to hang out with our Church fam!

## 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?

WEEK FOUR

# REACH AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE

**Reach Australia Conference Mid May... here at Southside!** They're an organisation that trains and equips church Leaders to lead healthy, growing churches. They've been a major help to us here at Southside in reaching our community for Jesus.

The reality is, though, there are many churches across Queensland, that aren't growing, or reaching the lost. In fact, for many Ministry Leaders, it's easy to become tired and overwhelmed, even discouraged. God has put us in a unique position to encourage other ministry Leaders from across Queensland. That's why Southside has signed up to host the Queensland Hub of the Reach Australia Conference on May 17-19. There are opportunities for us to build up other churches and encourage Ministry Leaders from across the state here in our building! This is where you can get involved – to encourage others - by serving them with a smile. There are a number of Serving Teams you can join Welcoming, Child Minding, set-up/pack-up, cleaning, food/coffee (see Volunteering Form below).

Follow the QR code to see the Conference Program and steps for registering.



# WEEK 5 | YOUR NEW (RADICAL) STORY + THE NEW (RADICAL) YOU

PERSONAL GROWTH ROMANS 12:1-8

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

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## GROWTH GROUP | ROMANS 12:1-8

### YOUR NEW (RADICAL) STORY + THE NEW (RADICAL) YOU

What impacted you the most from the 'Reach Australia' Conference? In particular, what did you think about Greg Lee's talks from Colossians on the supremacy of Jesus?

Which do you think is the most significant cause of transformation in a person's life and why: social privileges (eg. wealth), physical endowments (eg. intellect), love?

- a. Read Romans 12:1-2
- b. Do we learn anything about the cause of transformation in our life? What do we learn?

God's loving mercy is the power that enables us to be 'living sacrifice' (1:16-17) which means an act of personal devoted/loving response to God and that is the only 'true and proper' (lit. logical) impact of God's love. How then does verse 2 help us see what a loving relationship with God *does* and *doesn't* look like?

Paul says in verses 1-2 that the loving mercies of God activate and drive our hearts to rediscover, retrieve and relearn God's genuinely good intentions for us. What could God want our hearts to learn from verses 3-8?

Paul doesn't say mere information/knowledge or willpower transforms us but loving relationship with God is what transforms us. How might a belief that a 'loving relationship is the most significant cause of change (particularly with God)' be countercultural for us?

Paul understands that our hearts have been shaped (conformed) over our life to think and feel in a particular way. From the options below, which pattern of thinking and feeling about yourself describes you best:

- a. Do you think too highly of yourself? And what shaped your heart to think and feel like that?
  
- b. Do you think too lowly of yourself? And what shaped your heart to think and feel like that?

Based on your answer to question 6, how do you think God's love challenges and change this way of thinking and feeling about yourself with 'sober judgement', that is to think and feel about yourself as God does?

If verses 3-8 are God's call to us to be who we really are 'in Christ' (v 5). What do you think it looks like for you to become who you really are in Christ? Do any of Paul's suggestions in verses 6-8 gives resonate with you?

# 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 | ROMANS 12:9-21

### YOUR NEW (RADICAL) RELATIONSHIP

If there was one thing in life that you wish you weren't responsible for what would it be?

#### **Read Romans 12:9-21**

How are verses 1-2 connected to verses 9-21? And why is this important to remember?

How do you think verses 3-8 different from 9-21?

What do you think Paul means in verses 18-19?

Which of the many examples that Paul gives us in these verses resonate with you as being most difficult for you at the moment?

- a. Why do you think you're finding this particularly hard at the moment? Is it because you're placing too much responsibility on yourself (eg. "I'm responsible for the outcome and response of others")?
- b. Or is it because you're not taking enough personal responsibility (eg. "If only the other person would change everything would be okay")

If you were to bring God's love for you in focus right now. Remember His mercies. His love that says He values you and has made you capable of love. Remember He is only asking you to take responsibility for how you relate to others. And what happens in the end is His responsibility and in his hands. Remember you're his beloved. How does facing God's love help you in the difficulties you're facing in relationships at the moment?

Are you up for addressing the immature part you're playing in your relationships? Why/why not?

Invite God into your struggle to love others and ask him to fill your heart with His love for you.

## COMING UP:

In Romans we see there is much more going on for believers than simply believing the right things. It's how the gospel shapes our actions. As a church family, serving and loving each other is not about what we do, it's who we are! One practical way you can do this is to join your Growth Group next week, with other Growth Groups, to give our home/building a makeover. It's a way of loving those who clean each week. It's a way of serving shoulder to shoulder with others. It also says, 'this is our place and want it to feel clean and comfortable'. Please join us for a fun night.

# 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?

## WEEK SEVEN

# GROWTH GROUP SERVING NIGHT

In Romans we see there is much more going on for believers than simply believing the right things. It's how the gospel shapes our actions. As a church family, serving and loving each other is not about what we do, it's who we are! One practical way you can do this is to join your Growth Group next week, with other Growth Groups, to give our home/building a makeover.

It's a way of loving those who clean each week. It's a way of serving shoulder to shoulder with others. It also says, 'this is our place and want it to feel clean and comfortable'. Please join us for a fun night.

# WEEK 8 | FOOD FIGHTS

## PERSONAL GROWTH ROMANS 14:1-23

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. 5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.' " 12 So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. 13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. 19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. 22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

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## GROWTH GROUP | ROMANS 14-15:12

### FOOD FIGHTS

What do you think matters more in relationships, a person's intentions behind their behaviour or the impact of their behaviour? Why?

In 14:1-12 Paul addresses a particular rupture in the relationships over an issue of food.

- a. Although we're not told the groups identity on either side of this conflict but what are we told about them?
  
- b. Is the conflict of food and drink simply the issue here or is this a presenting symptom of a deeper issue? What seems to be the deeper cause of this rupture in their relationship?
  
- c. Do we learn anything from verses 1-12 about what might repair the relationship?

Reflecting on Question 1, how do you think Paul answers this question from verses 13-21? What reasons does Paul give for this?

How do 15:1-13 help us deal with those moments when loving others is hard and when others intentionally or unintentionally treat us in unloving ways? How do you think they are helpful?

Let's reflect on our impact and intentions.

Reflecting on our impact...

- a. What is one current rupture in relationships you are facing?
  
- b. What impact have your thoughts, feelings, words and behaviour had on the other person?
  
- c. Is this impact, in Paul's words, 'destroying' or 'building-up' God's work in them?

Reflect on our intentions...

- a. What impact is this current rupture in relationships having on your heart? What thoughts, feelings, words, actions does it provoke in you?
  
- b. What does this impact reveal has gotten into your heart? What have you let shape your heart?
  
- c. What difference would it make if instead you let God shape your hearts? How does the way God thinks and feels about you and speaks and acts toward you change your heart?



## 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?

# WEEK 9 | A PART OF SOMETHING GREATER

PERSONAL GROWTH ROMANS 15:14-20

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15 Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—19 by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. 20 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.

Horizontal lines for writing or reflection.



## GROWTH GROUP | ROMANS 15:14-16:27

### A PART OF SOMETHING GREATER

When you think about your experience of serving in church – doing ministry – what's one positive and negative memory that you have?

Throughout chapters 12-16 there is no doubt a big focus on how we live together as God's family. One important aspect of church-family life is how we work together as a 'family-team.' After all, becoming more like Jesus doesn't just mean we learn to love one another like him, but we share in his ministry and the way he goes about it.

#### **Read Romans 15:13-33**

What does verse 15:13-33 tell us about the *goal* of Paul's ministry?

#### **Read Romans 16:1-27**

What do we learn about *how* Paul goes about his ministry in 16:1-27?

How does Paul's *goal* and the *way* he goes about ministry challenge or confirm your understanding of the goal and way ministry is done?

Does Paul's description of ministry here match your experience of ministry at Southside? And in what way have or haven't you experienced this?

Through chapters 9-16 of Romans, God encouraged us towards a few things, to value our God-given usefulness, take personal responsibility, and to be mindful of our hearts – Whether or not our thoughts, feelings, words and actions of our hearts are being shaped by God.

Reflect on these questions together:

- a. Are you practicing your God-given usefulness by serving in a ministry team?
  
- b. As far as it depends on you, are you taking personal responsibility for joining a ministry team?

c. Does the way you think, feel, speak and act towards serving in a ministry team reflect a heart that is being shaped by God or something else?

d. Ministry opportunities. We often think there's only one model of serving: once a week, in a Team. But there are many exciting opportunities to live out ministry. Please consider the following positions. For more information please Talk to Ryan Holmes (Ministry & Maturity Pastor).

### **MINISTRY INTERN:**

Part time (a day a week), voluntary, serving and learning.

### **RETIREES INTERN:**

Part time (a day a week), voluntary, serving and learning.

### **MTN (MINISTRY TRAINING NETWORK):**

Full time, Trainee employment, serving and learning.

## 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?



APPENDIX

## FORGIVENESS

TIM DYER



How many times have I heard something along the lines of “*The scriptures instruct us to forgive one another, you should forgive her and just get over it*” or “*I know I will never be truly free and healed until I forgive him, but I just can’t do it. He destroyed my life and my best friend took his own life because of him, he has never acknowledged the wrong, even in prison. I can’t forgive him and I am stuck.*”

Compared to other elements pastoral teaching like the call to exercise compassion, kindness, justice-seeking and truth-telling, the biblical material relating to forgiveness is actually quite complex for several reasons.

## WHY IS CHURCH CONFLICT SO HARD?

TIM DYER



If you are interested in why churches experience significant amounts of conflict. grab a cuppa and check out this video. A little on the long side at 25 minutes but explores the reasons churches are conflict prone and conflict averse at the same time.

## WHAT CHANGES PEOPLE?

DEREK HANNA



One of the challenges we face in ministry is being problem solvers. That may sound counter-intuitive, because who doesn’t want to solve problems? Especially when those problems belong to people we love. Furthermore, can’t we be of particular help if we’ve been there, made the mistake and learnt from it? It seems pastorally neglectful not to give people *the* solution to their problems.

## WHAT IS THE HEART?

JONATHAN ANDREWS



*What is the heart?* In the present day we of course use the two different senses of the word (biological and psychological) frequently. We manage to use the different meanings with ease and we let the context of the word help create the meaning of it.

## THE POWER OF CONNECTION (LOVE)

JONATHAN ANDREWS



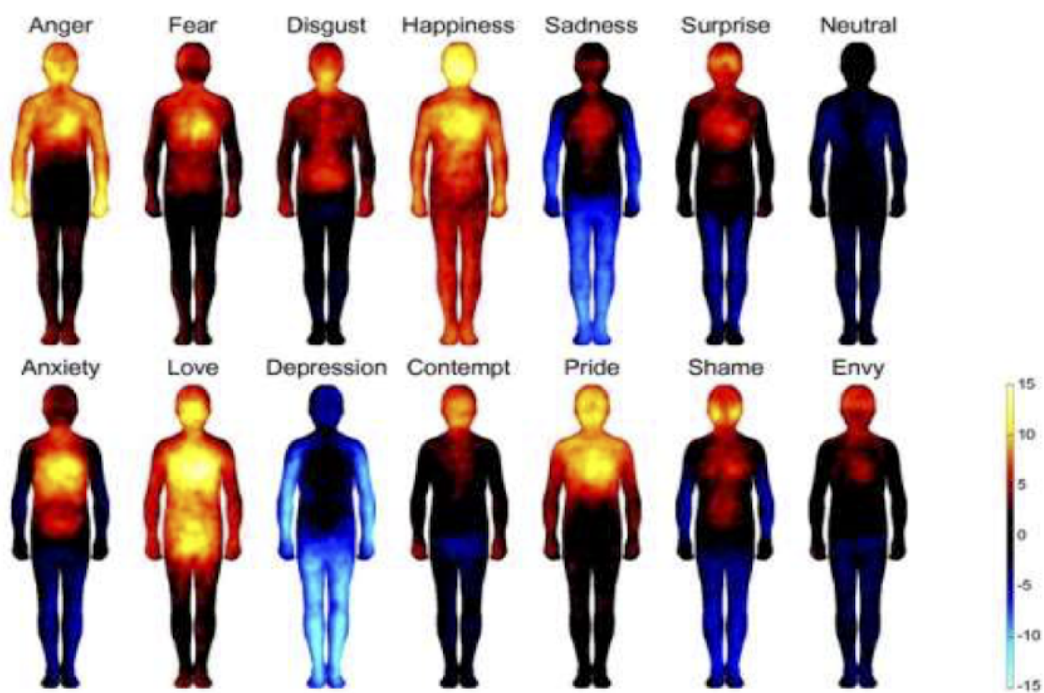
Love has a long and positive reach. Much time and energy has gone into documenting the impact of negative events in people's lives. The consequences of neglect and abuse has received considerable attention, and rightly so – the impact of adversity is large and lasting. Less attention has been given to how love might impact on human beings, and the enduring nature of that impact.



# 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

# NOTES

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