

# WEEK 2 | ROMANS 1:8-17

## ROMANS | THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S POWER

### OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES.

The following passages may be helpful to you as you consider this text.

- 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 – this passage contrasts how Christians and others view the gospel.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 – this is a clear example of the power and efficacy of the gospel.
- Habakkuk 2:4 – Paul quotes the prophet's words to show that righteousness is by faith, not works.

### THEMES.

The overarching theme of Romans is the gospel—salvation through Jesus Christ. That is important to remember and keep in front of your group, because the letter is a theological masterpiece. But as with any work of art, each brush stroke's true beauty is best seen when the piece as a whole is realized. To that end, we will deal with many sub-themes, but remember that each one weaves together to give the “fullest, plainest and grandest statement of the gospel in the New Testament.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Gospel-transformed people lovingly care for one another. (Rom. 1:8-12; John 13:34-35; Eph 4:1-3; 1 John 4:7-21)
2. The gospel is for all the nations, and gospel-transformed people are obligated to proclaim it them. (Rom. 1:14-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13:44-52; Col. 3:11)
3. Righteousness is not attained by human action; it is graciously given to men by God. (Rom. 1:16-17; Gen. 15:1-6; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 5:17-19; Eph. 2:4-9; Phil 3:8-11; Titus 3:4-7)
  - a. Another way we could say this is that salvation is by faith alone.

### QUESTIONS.

Feel free use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week's Scriptures.

1. Paul continues his introduction to this letter by praying and thanking God for the Roman church's faith. Who are one or two people whose example or model of faith cause you to give thanks to God?
2. Notice that verse 8 begins with the word “*First*,” indicating that what directly follows is a priority. Is prayer a priority in your life? What are some prayer patterns or tips you follow that may be helpful for others in the group?

One commentator observes that “ten of [Paul's] thirteen epistles open with some form of “I thank my God” (Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Thess 1:3; 2 Tim 1:3; Phlm 4) or “Praise be to God” (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3).”<sup>2</sup>

3. Why is genuine Christian friendship important? How have Christian friends comforted, encouraged, or strengthened you in your moment of need?

Hint: According to the passage, one reason is that Christians mutually encourage one another, strengthening each other's faith.

4. Paul transitions to the theme of his letter in verse 16, saying, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel...*” In that statement, Paul simultaneously “reject[ed] the shame heaped upon him by those who despised the gospel”<sup>3</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's good news for the world*. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 65.

declared his loyalty to the God of the gospel.

Do you ever struggle with feeling ashamed of the gospel, whether due to outside pressure or internal desires? If so, what is the cause of your shame? Do you need comfort or encouragement from this group to strengthen your faith?

Note: According to 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, the gospel seems like foolishness to the world. Christians ought not be surprised by that, and rather than feeling ashamed, we proudly boast in the cross.

5. How do actions and words personally, in the home, on the job, or at play show your loyalty to the God of the gospel?

Hint: It could be as simple as holding different ethical standards at work.

6. Paul reminds his readers that the gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Whose salvation are you praying for? Where is your hope for their salvation ultimately rooted?
7. Consider encouraging the members of your group to get together with another member before the next meeting and exchange *grace stories*.

## PRAY TO CLOSE.

Consider these prompts as you pray with your group:

- Thank God for the ways he’s demonstrated his love toward you: salvation, financial provision, friends, etc.
- Thank God for the Christian friends in your life.
- If any in your group need spiritual encouragement or comfort, pray for them by name.
- Pray for salvation of family, friends, and co-workers.

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<sup>3</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2012), 67.