

WEEK 8 | ROMANS 4:1-25

ROMANS | THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S POWER

OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES.

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

- Genesis 15:1-21 – Quoted by Paul in Rom. 4:3, this passage details God's covenant with Abram.
- Galatians 2:15-3:14 – A concise explanation of justification by faith alone as seen in Abraham's life.
- Hebrews 11:8-19 – Abraham's example in the "Hall of Fame of Faith."

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."¹

1. All men and women are born with a sin nature, actively oppose God, and need salvation. (Rom. 3:21-23; Ps. 51:5; John 3:1-15; Rom. 5:12-14; Eph. 2:1-3)
2. Righteousness is not attained by human action or works of the law; justification is God's free gift of grace received by faith in Jesus. (Rom. 4:1-25; Gen. 15:1-6; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 5:17-19; Eph. 2:4-9; Phil 3:8-11; Titus 3:4-7)

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. What is a sight, experience, or moment that gave you the feeling of awe? If you tried to formulate words for why you had that feeling, what would you say?

Example: I recently spent time in Southern California. I experienced awe as I stood on the coast in Malibu looking at the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains. In that moment, I felt mentally and physically small because my mind couldn't totally compute the beauty that I was seeing. I didn't want to look away, because I knew nothing I could ever do would be able to recreate that image or moment.

2. Read Romans 4:1-8. Paul seems to talk about justification with a similar sense of awe. Why would you (and Abraham) experience awe with God and salvation? Do you tend to think of salvation as "wage" or as a "gift"?²
3. How does Romans 2:28-29 help you understand Romans 4:9-12? Do works produce salvation, or does obedience follow salvation?

Note: Circumcision "was both a 'sign' and a 'seal.' As a *sign* it pointed beyond itself to that which it represented," like "'an outward sign of inward things.' As a *seal* it authenticated the righteousness by faith that Abraham had while he was still uncircumcised. "The circumcision ceremony was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him."³

¹ 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.

² Michael Kruger, *Study Romans*, The Gospel Coalition., Retrieved from <https://cdn.rts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sermon-Notes-Romans-L11.pdf>.

³ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 125.

4. The word “promise” appears 5x in Romans 4:13-25, referring to God’s promise of eternal blessing in Christ and heavenly inheritance for Abraham and his descendants.
- According to Paul in Romans 4:13-25, who is the Promise-Maker and Promise-Keeper? Upon what does the fulfillment of the promise rest? Why can you—like Abraham—“hope against hope” and face earthly difficulty with confidence?
 - How has God shown himself to be a Promise-Keeper in your life? How has that strengthened your faith?
5. What are some things you are hoping and praying God transforms in your life?

PRAY TO CLOSE.

Consider breaking up and praying in gender-specific groups this week:

- How has God been kind to you? Praise him.
- Are you struggling with being a moralist? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you realize the implications of your adoption as a child of God.
- What do you need? Ask God to show you his lavish grace.