

Sunday School Member Quarterly

Winter 2024 – 2025

Romans 9 – 16

Live Out The Gospel

Sunday School Lessons for Adults and Youth

Written by John O. Yates



Morningside

B A P T I S T C H U R C H

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Sunday School – 9:00 each Sunday Morning

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Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are taken
from the King James Version of the Bible.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sunday School Lessons

December 2024 through February 2025

Romans 9 – 16 *Live Out The Gospel*

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Daily Bible Reading Guide

Read the following scripture passages each day and complete the learning activities in this book each week. This will prepare you for Sunday School class, and God will bless you as you read, study, and memorize His Word.

Week of November 25 – 30

Mon: Romans 9:1-24; **Tues:** Genesis 16; 17:15-21;

Wed: Genesis 18:9-14; 21:1-21; **Thurs:** Memorize Romans 10:9-10; **Fri:** Ephesians 1; **Sat:** Romans 9:1-24

Week of December 2 – 7

Mon: Romans 9:25 – 10:8; **Tues:** Isaiah 1; **Wed:** Isaiah 8;

Thurs: Memorize Romans 10:13; **Fri:** Matthew 23;

Sat: Romans 9:25 – 10:8

Week of December 9 – 14

Mon: Romans 10:9-21; **Tues:** Psalm 19; **Wed:** John 3;

Thurs: Memorize Romans 10:14; **Fri:** Luke 14;

Sat: Romans 10:9-21

Week of December 16 – 21

Mon: John 1; **Tues:** Luke 1; **Wed:** Luke 2;

Thurs: Memorize Romans 10:15; **Fri:** Matthew 1;

Sat: John 1

Week of December 23 – 28

Mon: Romans 11:1-16; **Tues:** 1 Kings 19; **Wed:** Psalm 69;

Thurs: Memorize Romans 10:17; **Fri:** Isaiah 29;

Sat: Romans 11:1-16

Week of December 30 – January 4

Mon: Romans 11:17-36; **Tues:** Isaiah 59; **Wed:** Joshua 24;

Thurs: Memorize Romans 11:25; **Fri:** Luke 21;

Sat: Romans 11:17-36

Week of January 6 – 11

Mon: Romans 12:1-8; **Tues:** 1 John 2; **Wed:** Ephesians 4;
Thurs: Memorize Romans 12:1-2; **Fri:** 1 Corinthians 12;
Sat: Romans 12:1-8

Week of January 13 – 18

Mon: Romans 12:9-21; **Tues:** Matthew 5;
Wed: Philippians 2; **Thurs:** Memorize Romans 12:10;
Fri: Proverbs 15; **Sat:** Romans 12:9-21

Week of January 20 – 25

Mon: Romans 13; **Tues:** 1 Peter 2; **Wed:** 1 Thessalonians 5;
Thurs: Memorize Romans 13:1; **Fri:** Exodus 20;
Sat: Romans 13

Week of January 27 – February 1

Mon: Romans 14; **Tues:** 1 Corinthians 3;
Wed: 1 Corinthians 8; **Thurs:** 2 Corinthians 5;
Fri: Matthew 7; **Sat:** Romans 14

Week of February 3 – 8

Mon: Romans 15:1-13; **Tues:** Isaiah 11; **Wed:** Galatians 6;
Thurs: Memorize Romans 15:1; **Fri:** 1 Corinthians 13;
Sat: Romans 15:1-13

Week of February 10 – 15

Mon: Romans 15:14-33; **Tues:** 1 Corinthians 2;
Wed: Ephesians 3; **Thurs:** 2 Timothy 1; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 2;
Sat: Romans 15:14-33

Week of February 17 – 22

Mon: Romans 16; **Tues:** Acts 18; **Wed:** 2 Corinthians 6;
Thurs: 2 Timothy 3; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 4; **Sat:** Romans 16

Coming Next Quarter
(March – May 2025)

1 Kings

Introduction to Romans 9 – 16

Author: The Apostle Paul

Date: A.D. 57

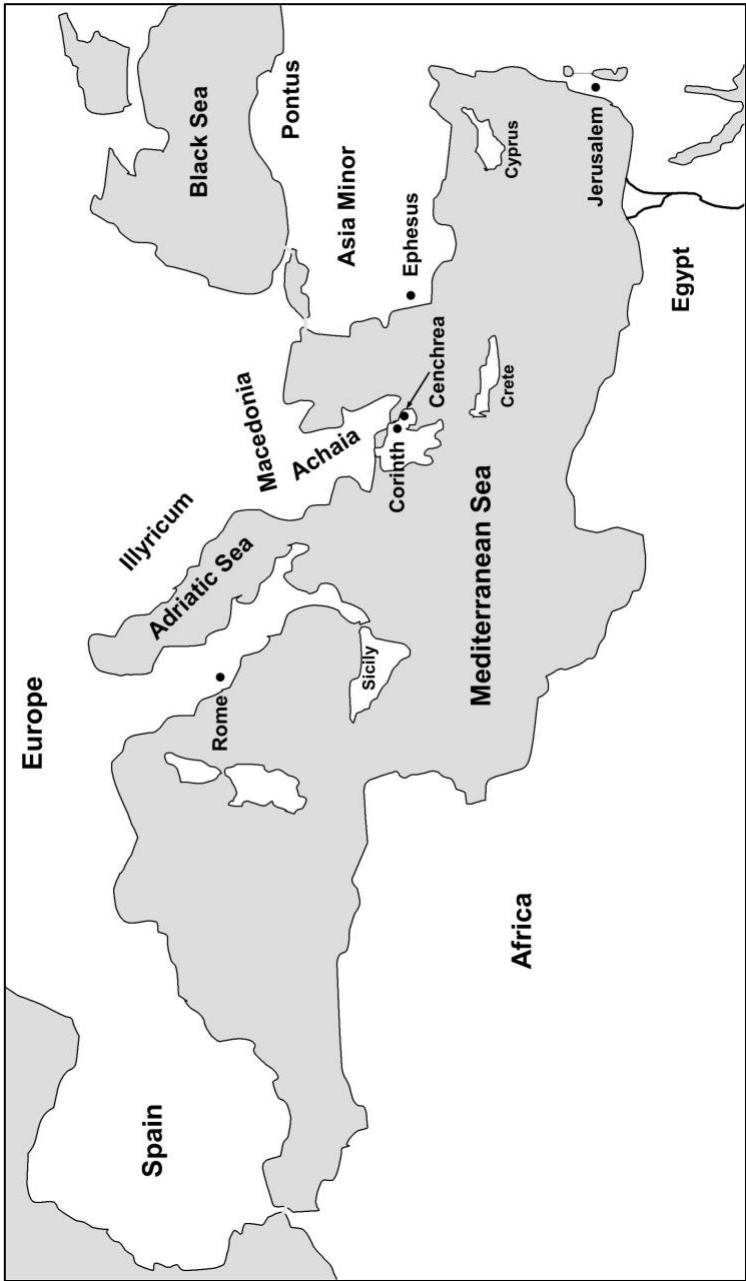
Author and Date: The book of Romans is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the believers in **Rome** (see the **Map of the New Testament World** on page 7). Paul wrote the letter from **Corinth** during his Third Missionary Journey. Commentators date the writing of Romans from as early as A.D. 55 to as late as A.D. 58.

Paul had not visited Rome when he wrote the letter, but he greatly desired to do so (Rom. 1:10-13). The book of Romans is the greatest and most detailed explanation of God's wonderful plan of redemption in the entire Bible. While most of Paul's letters were written to deal with problems and answer questions, Romans is a treatise on Christian doctrine. The book explains the source and depth of man's problem with sin, the problem of Jewish unbelief and the availability of salvation to the Gentiles, the only way of justification (faith in the Lord Jesus Christ), the struggles we face as believers living in sinful flesh, our true standing in Christ, and some practical instructions for Christian living.

The Overall Theme of Romans is new life in Christ. In the first eight chapters we learned about man's problem with sin, God's solution for that problem, and some of the amazing changes that come as a result of the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.

This Quarter's Study: In chapters 9 through 16 we will learn that new life in Christ is available to both Jews and Gentiles, and discover some guidelines for Christian living; in other words, how to *Live Out The Gospel* of Jesus Christ.

Map of the New Testament World



The Sovereign Savior

Have you ever seen a potter work with clay? The potter can skillfully and carefully transform a shapeless lump of clay into a beautiful dish, bowl, or vase.

If you have any fine china or a curio cabinet, go and get the prettiest piece of pottery you own. As you look at it, think about these two important truths:

1. That beautiful pottery began as an ugly lump of clay.
2. The potter had the power to make that clay into anything he wanted.

Rather than a simple flowerpot or an ugly brick, the potter chose to make a beautiful piece of pottery. The clay had no choice in the matter. The potter exercised sovereign control over the clay. A dictionary definition of sovereign is, “*One that exercises supreme, permanent authority.*”¹ In this lesson you will learn that the Lord Jesus Christ is our sovereign Savior.

Rom. 9:1-2 What did Paul feel in his heart?

Rom. 9:3 Paul’s “*kinsmen according to the flesh*” were his fellow Jews. How deep was his concern that they accept Jesus Christ?

Rom. 9:4-5 List below some of the blessings the Jews enjoyed simply because they were Jews:

¹ *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.*
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Rom. 9:6 Even though God had made wonderful promises to the Jews, many did not follow Him, “For they are not all _____, which are of _____.”

Rom. 9:7 Does being a descendant of Abraham automatically make you right with God?

Abraham had **two** children, Ishmael and Isaac; but God’s promises concerning Abraham’s descendants **only** applied to Isaac and his children. Ishmael and his descendants were “*children of the flesh*” (v. 8), so they were excluded from God’s covenant promises.

The point of these verses is that **your parents can’t make you right with God**. The Jews were not right with God because they were descendants of Abraham. In the same way, no one is a Christian simply because his or her parents were Christians.

Rom. 9:10-11 Isaac’s wife Rebekah conceived twin boys (Jacob and Esau). Before they were born, had either of them done anything good or evil?

Rom. 9:12 What did God decide before the twins were born?

The last half of verse 11 explains why God did this: “That the _____ of God according to election might stand, not of _____, but of Him that _____.” God sovereignly chose Jacob and his descendants to be the recipients of all the promises He made to Abraham. This was God’s choice, not based upon Jacob’s goodness, merit, or works.

Rom. 9:13 “As it is written, Jacob have I _____, but Esau have I _____.” God decided this before Jacob and Esau were even born!

Rom. 9:14 Is God unfair or unrighteous to make such a choice?

Rom. 9:15 What did He tell Moses?

Rom. 9:16 “So then it is not of him that _____, nor of him that _____, but of _____ that showeth _____.”

Rom. 9:17 Why did God raise up Pharaoh?

Rom. 9:18 “Therefore hath He _____ on whom He will have _____, and whom He will He _____.”

Rom. 9:19 God knew some people would consider Him unfair.

Rom. 9:20 Do we have the right to talk back to God?

“Shall the thing _____ say to _____ that formed it, _____ hast thou made me thus?”

Rom. 9:21 Describe the power a potter has over the clay:

Rom. 9:22-23 Just as the potter can make vessels of honor and dishonor from the same lump of clay, these verses tell us there are people who are “*vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*” (v. 22) and others who are “*vessels of mercy ... prepared unto glory*” (v. 23).

Rom. 9:24 Who are those “*vessels of mercy*”?

Concluding Thoughts: Does God have the right to treat people differently? Look up the following verses to see how the Bible describes humans.

Psalms 103:14 – God knows that we are _____

Gen. 18:27 – Abraham realized he was _____

Job 33:6 – Job realized he was made from the _____

Isaiah 64:8 – We are the _____ and God is the _____

If you are a believer, you were not saved because you are a good person or because your parents were Christians and raised you in church. Your salvation was entirely the work of your sovereign Savior who chose you before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8). Think of this glorious, humbling thought: your Savior is sovereign (possessing supreme, permanent authority), and He chose to save **YOU!** Through His sovereign act He gave you new life. What a blessing!

If you are not yet a believer but you **want** to be, that's because God is drawing you to salvation (John 6:44). Don't ignore that drawing. Please read the verses printed on the back of this book, confess and turn from your sins, and place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To live out the Gospel, we must understand that God is sovereign. Thank God that in His sovereign authority He chose to save you.

Project: Memorize **Romans 10:9-10**. Who do you know that needs to know Jesus Christ as his or her Savior? Ask God to give you an opportunity this week to tell that person how to be saved.

Don't Reject the Savior

Look up the definition of the word **zeal** and write it here: _____

Think about the various religions in the world today. Which of them exhibits the most zeal? Jehovah's Witnesses? Muslims? Mormons? Does their zeal for their religion make them right with God? Does fanaticism produce new life? Are passion and enthusiasm all that really matter, or is it possible for one's zeal to be misplaced? In other words, can you be **zealous** but **wrong**? You will discover answers to those questions in this week's lesson.

Rom. 9:25 Who did God say He would call to be His people?

Remember that last week's lesson concluded by telling us God graciously extended His mercy and salvation to Gentiles. Verses 25-30 contain five quotations from Old Testament prophets, all of which prove God planned to save Gentiles by faith in Christ.

Rom. 9:26 What will those who weren't God's people be called?

Rom. 9:27 The people of Israel were numerous, but how many did Isaiah say will be saved?

Rom. 9:28 God promised to complete His redemptive work.

Rom. 9:29 What would have happened to the Jews if God had not been gracious to preserve a faithful remnant?

Rom. 9:30 What did the Gentiles attain?

How did this happen?

Rom. 9:31 Israel tried to keep the rules and regulations of the Law to achieve righteousness. Did it work?

Rom. 9:32 Why did Israel's efforts fail?

Rom. 9:33 Jesus was a "*stumbling stone*" and offense to the Jews, but the Bible assures us "whosoever believeth on Him shall not be _____."

Next we get a glimpse into the heart of the Apostle Paul.

Rom. 10:1 What was Paul's deepest desire for the Israelites?

Rom. 10:2 "For I bear them record that they have a _____ of God, but not according to _____."

The Jews were zealous to keep the Law, but they missed their Messiah, Jesus Christ. They blindly followed the rituals of the Old Testament Law, but missed the heart of the Law (Matt. 23:13-28).

Rom. 10:3 What were they ignorant of?

What were they trying to establish?

What did they fail to submit to?

The Jews did not understand God's righteous character, so they tried to be righteous by doing good things. Isaiah 64:6 says, "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*" Man's best efforts can never measure up to God's perfect standard (Rom. 3:23), so the Jews missed out on the righteousness they could have received by faith (Rom. 4:3).

Rom. 10:4 How is Jesus described?

For whom is this true?

Rom. 10:5 If someone tries to be righteous by keeping the Law, how long is he bound by its requirements?

Verses 6-8 come from Deuteronomy 30:12-14, when Moses told the Israelites God's Law was not hidden or far away from them: it was in their mouths and hearts. Jesus was not hidden, either.

Concluding Thoughts: We began this lesson thinking about zeal for religion. Zeal alone doesn't make anyone right with God. Our zeal can easily become focused on the wrong things. For example, some of the most zealous religionists in the world today are Muslim suicide bombers. They mistakenly believe killing others pleases their god and that they will be rewarded in the afterlife for doing so. They believe this so strongly that they kill themselves in order to kill others. Sadly, their zeal and religious fervor are misplaced. If they don't know Jesus Christ as their Savior, then they blast themselves from the momentary fire of a bomb explosion straight into the eternal fire of Hell. Zeal does not save them. They will have all eternity to regret their misplaced zeal.

The Jews were zealous for the Law, but they missed their Messiah. They tried to work their way to heaven, but failed because they rejected the Savior who is the only way to have new life and get to heaven. The title of this lesson is "Don't Reject the Savior." **Anyone who tries to work his or her way to heaven is rejecting the Savior and His completed work of redemption** and misses out on new life in Christ and eternity in heaven. Zeal, sincerity, and enthusiasm cannot make you right with God. The Gospel teaches that we must come to God through faith in His only Son, Jesus.

We have mentioned Muslims and Jews, but some Baptists also try to work their way to heaven by zeal and good works. When they do, they deny Christ's work and reject the Savior. Don't reject the Savior by trying to work your way to heaven. Please read the verses printed on the back of this book and turn to Jesus for salvation.

Project: Memorize **Romans 10:13**. Tell someone about Jesus.

Accept the Savior

Will you exchange gifts with family and friends this Christmas?

Think of all that goes into giving those gifts. First you plan what to give your friend or loved one and then you have to find it. Next you purchase it with money you worked to earn. Finally, you prepare the gift by wrapping it in a beautiful package.

Imagine going to all that trouble and then inviting your friend or loved one to come receive their gift. How would you feel if they **never** responded to your invitation? Imagine calling to ask why they had not come, only to be told, “Thanks anyway, but I’m just not interested.” How would their rejection make you feel?

The Lord Jesus Christ planned, paid for, and prepared a wonderful gift for us, but sadly, many people are not interested in receiving it. Some do, however, and they are blessed forever by that gift.

Rom. 10:9 “That if thou shalt _____ with thy _____ the Lord Jesus, and shalt _____ in thine _____ that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be _____.”

Rom. 10:10 “For with the _____ man believeth unto _____; and with the _____ confession is made unto _____.”

Read Romans 10:2-3. The ancient Jews were zealous to keep the Old Testament Law, but they failed to **believe** in Jesus. Religious **works** can never save anyone; genuine salvation requires **belief**. “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” (Rom. 4:3). Salvation is available to anyone who believes and trusts in Jesus Christ.

Rom. 10:11 Those who believe in Jesus will not be _____.

Rom. 10:12 Is there any difference in the way Jews and Greeks (Gentiles, those who are not Jews) are saved?

“The same Lord over all is rich unto” whom?

Rom. 10:13 “For whosoever [Jew or Gentile] shall _____ upon the name of the Lord shall be _____.”

There is only one way for anybody to be saved: through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16). The great truth of these verses is that **salvation is available to anyone who will trust in Jesus Christ**. With this salvation comes new life. Let’s consider now our responsibility to tell others about the availability of salvation.

Rom. 10:14 What is necessary before people can **call** on Jesus?

What do they need before they can **believe**?

What is necessary for them to **hear**?

Rom. 10:15 What must happen before someone can **preach**?

How does this verse describe those who spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Rom. 10:16 Does everyone who hears the Gospel believe it?

Rom. 10:17 Where does faith come from?

What must people hear?

Rom. 10:18 Have those who reject the Gospel ever heard it?

Rom. 10:19-20 God’s gracious act of saving some of the Gentiles provoked the Jews to jealousy. The Gentiles did not seek after God, but He graciously made Himself known to some of them anyway.

Rom. 10:21 How persistent was God in reaching out to the rebellious Jews?

How did He describe them?

The main truth of the verses you have just read is that **those who know Jesus Christ have a responsibility to tell others.**

Concluding Thoughts: The two main truths of this lesson are:

1. Salvation is available to **anyone** who will place their trust in Jesus Christ.
2. Those who have trusted Jesus should tell others how they, too, can be saved.

Think back to the illustration about the Christmas gift at the opening of this lesson. The Lord Jesus Christ planned, paid for, and prepared a wonderful gift for mankind: salvation, redemption, right relationship with God, and new life in Jesus Christ. That gift is available to anyone (Jew or non-Jew) who will accept it.

Have you accepted God's gift of salvation? If not, please read the verses printed on the back of this book, confess your sins, and place your trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

If you have already received that gift, will you accept the duty God has given you to tell others? That's part of living out the Gospel. Imagine planning, paying for, and preparing a gift, but never telling the intended recipient about it. That would be sad, but how much sadder it is to possess God's wonderful gift of salvation, without telling others that it is available to them, too.

Do you know someone who needs to accept the Savior? Will you tell that person about the greatest gift you have ever received?

Project: Memorize **Romans 10:14**. Try to tell someone about the gift of salvation available through faith in Jesus Christ. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** (pages 4-5) each day this week.

The Arrival of the Savior

What an embarrassing situation! It has happened to all of us. Out in a public place someone calls your name and you turn to see a person you either do not recognize or whose name you cannot recall. They know you, but you don't know them. What do you do,— carry on an awkward conversation hoping they will soon be on their way? To make matters worse, what if a friend or family member is with you? The polite thing would be to introduce this person, but you don't know their name! Talk about uncomfortable!

When you are with your family or close friends, if one of them calls your name will you experience the awkwardness described above? Of course not, because you know and recognize those close to you.

If a beloved family member knocks on your front door you will gladly open the door and receive them into your home. If a stranger is knocking, however, you may not even open the door.

In this Christmas lesson from John 1 you will read about the arrival of Jesus Christ, the Savior. Many people rejected Him, but some received Him. In the following verses you will learn more about those who rejected the Savior and those who received Him.

The Savior Has Always Existed

- John 1:1** In this verse, Jesus Christ is referred to as “*the Word*” (see v. 14). How long has He existed?
- John 1:2** Where was the Savior in the very beginning (before anything was created)?
- John 1:3** How do we know Jesus has always existed?
- John 1:4** “In Him was _____.” What does it do?

John 1:5 Jesus brought light into a dark world. Did the world understand who He was?

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, has **always** existed.

God Announced the Savior's Coming

John 1:6 Who was this man sent from God?

John 1:7 What was his role?

John 1:8 John the Baptist wasn't the promised Savior (the Light), but he was sent to announce that Jesus (the Light of the world) was coming.

The Savior Came but Was Rejected By His Own

John 1:9 What did the "*true Light*" (Jesus) do?

Christ brought light to the world, but most people rejected Him.

John 1:10 "He (Jesus) was _____ the world, and the world was _____ by Him." Did the world know who Jesus was?

John 1:11 "*His own*" refers to the Jewish people. God chose the Jews and has a special affection for them. Did they receive the Savior?

Those Who Receive the Savior Become Children of God

John 1:12 What did Jesus do for those who received Him?

Who receives this blessing?

John 1:13 The children of God are "born, not of _____, nor of the will of the _____, nor of the will of _____, but of _____." Salvation is entirely the result of God's saving grace, not your good works.

The Savior Reveals God

John 1:14 The Word (Jesus Christ) came in human flesh and lived among us. What could people see in Him?

John 1:15-17 John the Baptist told people Jesus was the Savior.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God. What did Christ declare (reveal) to us?

The Savior is the Lamb of God Who Takes Away Sin

John 1:29 How did John the Baptist identify Jesus?

What did he say Jesus came to do?

Concluding Thoughts: Let's review the things we have learned about the arrival of the Savior. Jesus is the one and only Savior available to mankind and He has always existed. God announced His coming through John the Baptist. The Savior came to His own people, but they rejected Him. Those who receive Him, however, become the children of God!

Since Jesus Christ was God in human flesh (Col. 2:9), He revealed God to those who saw Him. Most importantly, the Savior is the Lamb of God who takes away sin. Jesus came to be the sacrificial lamb, dying to pay the penalty for our sin and give us new life.

At Christmas most people give gifts to their family and friends. Jesus Christ, the **Savior**, is the **greatest gift** ever given!

Live out the Gospel by telling someone the Good News that the Savior has come. If they receive Christ they can be a child of God.

Project: Memorize **Romans 10:15**. Look for opportunities to tell others about the arrival of the Savior.

God's Plan for the Jews, Part 1

Laura had a special surprise for her son, Buddy. On her lunch break she ran by the ice cream shop, bought Buddy's favorite sundae, and took it to his daycare. She knew he would be thrilled.

The daycare director met Laura at the door. "I was just about to call you," she said. "Buddy started a fight and hit another boy so hard it made his nose bleed." There was no doubt about it, Buddy beat up the most unpopular, rejected boy in the daycare. Laura scolded her son, telling him, "I was bringing you a special treat, but now I find that you've been fighting."

"I don't want your old ice cream; I want to go home!" Buddy yelled. Laura took the sundae, Buddy's very favorite treat, and gave it to the boy Buddy hit. "You're right," Laura said, "you don't want it and you don't **deserve** it, either. This little boy, who you treated so badly, gets to enjoy **your** ice cream sundae."

What does this story have to do with this week's lesson? Read the following verses to find out.

Rom. 11:1 "I say then, Hath God _____ away His _____?"

Why would Paul ask such a question? Remember that the earlier chapters of Romans proved that **everyone is a sinner** and **no one can be justified by doing religious activities** (such as living by the Jewish Law). **Justification comes only by faith in Christ**; but most Jews rejected Jesus Christ while many Gentiles (non-Jews) accepted Him. One might think these facts showed that God had completely rejected His people (the Jews). Paul insisted this was not so, and used his own salvation (since he was a Jew) as proof.

Rom. 11:2 Has God cast away His people (the Jews)?

Rom. 11:3 Paul reminded them of Elijah (1 Kings 19:10-18).
What did Elijah tell God?

Rom. 11:4 How did God answer Elijah's concern?

Rom. 11:5 "At this present time also there is a _____
according to the election of _____."

Just as there was a faithful remnant in Israel in Elijah's day, there was a remnant of Jews in the First Century who believed in Jesus Christ; and there still is today. God has **not** cast away the Jews; in fact, He still plans to save many Jewish people.

Rom. 11:6 Does salvation come by grace or works?

Rom. 11:7 Israel tried to be right with God through their rituals and sacrifices. Did they obtain that?

Who actually obtained it?

Rom. 11:8 This verse quotes **Isaiah 29:10**. What did God give Israel?

Why did He do this?

Temporary spiritual blindness has come upon the Jews (Rom. 11:25). The remaining verses explain why.

Rom. 11:9-10 These verses quote **Psalms 69:22-23**. What had become a snare to the Jews?

What became darkened?

Rom. 11:11 What did Israel's spiritual fall bring to the Gentiles?

Paul hoped the salvation of the Gentiles would make the Jews jealous so they, too, would turn to Christ.

Verse 12 says Gentiles benefit from the Jews' rejection of Jesus!

Rom. 11:13 What was Paul's role?

Rom. 11:14 The word **emulation** means jealousy. As in verse 11, Paul hoped the salvation of the Gentiles would make the Jews jealous. What was his ultimate goal?

Rom. 11:15 If the Jews' rejection of Jesus means the salvation of the world, what will their turning to Christ be?

Rom. 11:16 The few Jews (such as Paul and the apostles) who were saved in the First Century were like first fruits, which guaranteed a greater harvest to come. God plans to save **many** more Jewish people.

Concluding Thoughts: Think back to the story at the beginning of this lesson. Buddy displeased his mother and rejected her gracious gift. As a result, his gift was given to the other boy, whom he disliked and abused. Buddy missed the gift that could have been his, and it was given to another. But even though he rejected his mother's gift, Buddy was still Laura's beloved child.

Similarly, the Jews are God's chosen people. He has a covenant relationship with them and still plans to save many of them. The Jewish people are temporarily blinded, however, to the truth that Jesus is their long-awaited Messiah. Their rejection of Jesus has led to many Gentiles receiving new life in Christ.

Living out the Gospel includes understanding that God has a plan for the Jews. Gentile believers should love, respect, and pray for the Jews. Thank God that He saved you. Do you know someone who is Jewish? Pray that he or she will recognize Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah and receive the wonderful gift of salvation.

Project: Memorize **Romans 10:17**. Ask God to save many Jews.

God's Plan for the Jews, Part 2

Last week's scripture closed with a reference to plants: "*if the root be holy, so are the branches*" (Rom. 11:16). This week's lesson continues the analogy from horticulture.

Olives were a very important crop in ancient times. Trees might live for hundreds of years, but sometimes a branch stopped bearing fruit. In such cases the old branch was broken off and a branch from a younger olive tree was grafted into the old trunk so the tree could continue producing fruit. The branch couldn't live by itself, it needed the root. Keep that picture of an olive tree in your mind as you learn more about God's plan for the Jews.

Rom. 11:17 The branches represent the Jews. The wild olive tree represents the Gentiles. What happened to the Gentiles?

What did they partake of?

Rom. 11:18 What did Paul warn the Gentiles not to do?

Rom. 11:19-20 Why were the Jews "*broken off*?"

The Gentiles were grafted in by _____.

Rom. 11:21 Paul warned the Gentiles not to be proud. Why shouldn't they boast?

Rom. 11:22 God's actions demonstrated both His **goodness** (upon the undeserving Gentiles) and His **severity** (upon the unbelieving Jews).

Rom. 11:23-24 What would God do for the Jews if they turned to Jesus Christ?

Rom. 11:25 “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be _____ of this _____, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that _____ in _____ is happened to _____, until the _____ of the _____ be come in.”

Let’s review: The Jews rejected Jesus. Their rejection led to the Gentiles being saved and “*grafted in*” to their place. From the time of Christ up to this very moment, most Jews have been spiritually blind to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah. Their “*blindness in part*” will last until God has saved all the Gentiles He plans to save. What, then, are God’s future plans for the Jews? Read on:

Rom. 11:26 “And so all _____ shall be _____: as it is written (in **Isaiah 59:20**), ‘There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.’”

WOW! What a wonderful promise! **The Jews have not fallen out of God’s ultimate plan of redemption.** The phrase “*All Israel shall be saved*” does **not** mean **every** Jew who has ever lived will be saved (because those who have not trusted Christ are under condemnation for their sin; John 3:18; Rom. 3:9; 11:32; Gal. 3:22). This promise points toward the widespread salvation of Jews during the Tribulation, in preparation for Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. That’s when “*all Israel shall be saved.*”

Rom. 11:27 This was God’s covenant with Israel.

Rom. 11:28 Concerning the Gospel, what are the unsaved Jews?

Concerning election, what are they?

Rom. 11:29 “For the gifts and calling of God are without _____.” This means that **God does not go back on His promises.**

Verses 30-31: In the past the Gentiles (“*ye*” in v. 30) did not believe in God; but through the Jews’ unbelief they received God’s mercy.
Morningside Baptist Church – Valdosta, GA

The Jews (“*these*” in v. 31) had not yet believed, so the Gentiles were to extend God’s mercy to them.

Rom. 11:32 “God hath concluded them all in _____, that He might have _____ upon all.”

Rom. 11:33-36 The depth and riches of God’s wisdom and knowledge overwhelmed Paul. He realized that **everything** comes **from** God, **through** God, and was created **for** God.

Concluding Thoughts: The Jews rejected Jesus Christ, so God has grafted Gentile believers into His family. He is showing mercy to the Gentiles, saving all who come to Him by faith (Eph. 2:8-9). The Jews, meanwhile, have been in a state of spiritual blindness for 2,000 years. When the fullness of the Gentiles has come (when God has saved all the Gentiles who will believe; Rom. 11:25) then that spiritual blindness will be removed and many Jews will trust Jesus Christ for salvation. The branches that were cut off will once again be grafted into God’s family, where they can live out the Gospel.

To state it another way, during **Old Testament times** God’s focus was on the Jews. **Now** (since the coming of Christ) His focus is on the Gentiles (that’s why Jesus called our present age “*the times of the Gentiles*” in Luke 21:24). During the future **Tribulation** God’s focus will be on redeeming the Jews, and many will respond.

If you are saved, thank God for your new life in Christ. If you are not yet saved, please read the verses printed on the back of this book and place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation right now. If you know any Jewish people, ask God to draw them to salvation and give you a chance to tell them about Jesus Christ.

Project: Memorize **Romans 11:25**. Thank God daily for grafting you into His family.

Sacrifice and Service

The Jewish sacrificial system was very complex and elaborate.

The worshiper had to bring (or purchase) a lamb; but not any lamb would do, it had to be spotless (free from deformity, injury, or illness). The worshiper showed the lamb to the priest, who inspected it to make sure it was acceptable. Next the lamb was presented to the Lord, near the altar and facing the Holy of Holies. The worshiper then placed his hand on the lamb's head and confessed his sins.

The lamb was then killed and one of the priests caught some of its blood in a cup. The blood was sprinkled or thrown on the altar, while other priests cut the lamb into pieces. The pieces were then placed in precise positions on the altar. The lamb was completely consumed (either by the fire on the altar or as a meal for the priests). The worshiper left without his lamb, but he had done the things God expected of him.

How does this description of an animal sacrifice relate to us? Read Romans 12:1-8 to find out.

Rom. 12:1 “I _____ you therefore, _____,
by the mercies of God, that ye present your
_____ a living _____, holy,
acceptable unto God, which is your
_____ service.”

Let's think about the significance of the words you wrote.

Beseech means to call someone to your side to urge them to do something.

Brethren – Was this written to saved or lost people? _____
This means you don't **get** saved by presenting yourself as a living sacrifice, but this is something those who **are** saved should do.

Bodies – Do you think it matters what you put in your body and how you use your body?

Sacrifice – A sacrifice must be spotless. Does that describe you? _____ The sacrifice is also completely dedicated and totally consumed in serving the Lord. Does that describe you? _____

Reasonable – Is God expecting too much of you?

Rom. 12:2 What should we **NOT** be conformed to?

How can we be transformed?

Putting it together: Verses 1 and 2 tell Christians we should be **holy, yielded** to God, and **different** from the world. Those things are God’s will for His children.

Rom. 12:3 What did Paul warn us not to do?

Rom. 12:4 “For as we have many _____ in one _____, and all members have not the same _____” (function).

Your body is made up of many parts (arms, legs, torso, head, lungs, heart, toes). The different parts of your body carry out very different functions, which means they are not interchangeable.

Rom. 12:5 The word **we** refers to believers. What do the many individual believers make up?

How are we related and connected to one another?

If you lose one part of your body the rest of your body will suffer. You may have to adapt and change the way you do things to make up for the missing part. In the same way, when believers don’t faithfully serve the Lord their local church suffers.

Rom. 12:6 Does everyone have the same gifts?

Every believer receives one or more spiritual gift at the time he or she is saved. These gifts provide both ability and desire to serve the Lord. Believers are part of the body of Christ and should use their spiritual gifts to serve the Lord together in the church. The point of verses 6-8 is that **we should use our gifts faithfully and diligently**. That's living out the Gospel. What gifts are named in those verses?

Verse 6: _____

Verse 7: _____, _____

Verse 8: _____, _____, _____,

Concluding Thoughts: The title of this lesson is “Sacrifice and Service.” If you have received new life in Christ, here are two very pointed questions you must answer:

1. Is your life a living **sacrifice**, holy, yielded to God, and transformed?
2. Are you **servicing** the Lord, faithfully exercising your spiritual gift in your church?

If you are not giving your body to the Lord as a living sacrifice, then you are disobedient to Him, conformed to this wicked world, and a bad testimony of the saving and transforming power of Jesus Christ. Confess your sin and yield yourself to the Lord right now.

If you are not using your spiritual gift to serve the Lord in your church, then you are disobedient to God and hindering His work in His church. Your lack of service is causing other members of the body to suffer. Confess that sin and ask God (and your Sunday School teacher) how you can get to work in the church.

Project: Memorize **Romans 12:1-2**. Follow through on the commitments you have just made to the Lord.

NOTE: A simple and free spiritual gifts test is available at the following website: <http://gifts.churchgrowth.org>

Christ-like Behavior

Tom and Rich stopped to talk in the hall before Sunday School class began. “Hey Rich, I went to see a really good movie last night. You should see it.” “Great,” said Rich, “tell me about it.” Tom described the movie: “It’s really exciting, lots of action! Oh, yeah, it’s rated ‘R,’ but it really doesn’t have a lot of bad language or sex scenes.”

Their conversation was interrupted when Bert, a member of their class, walked by. Tom greeted him: “Good morning, Brother Bert! It’s great to see you this morning.” After Bert walked into the classroom, Tom leaned up close to Rich’s ear and whispered, “I can’t stand that guy. We work at the same office, but he tries to make the rest of us look bad. He seldom takes breaks and he turns out a lot of work. Not only that, he got the promotion I wanted.”

This lesson is about “Christ-like Behavior.” Is Tom behaving in a way that would please the Lord Jesus? Read Romans 12:9-21 to find a number of guidelines for Christ-like behavior.

Rom. 12:9 “Let _____ be without _____.”
The word **dissimulation** means hypocrisy. Our love for fellow believers should be **sincere**. What should we **abhor** (hate, detest)?

What should we **cleave** (cling) to?

Rom. 12:10 How should we treat one another?

What do you think “*in honor preferring one another*” means?

Rom. 12:11 “Not _____ in business; _____ in spirit; _____ the Lord.” **Slothful** means lazy and **fervent** means full of zeal. How does your service to the Lord measure up?

Rom. 12:12 How should a Christ-like person respond to difficulties?

Describe his or her prayer life:

Rom. 12:13 What should a Christ-like person do for other believers?

Rom. 12:14 How should we treat those who persecute us?

Rom. 12:15 “_____ with them that do _____,
and _____ with them that _____.”

This is a great pattern for ministry, especially for Sunday School Care Group Leaders. Show people you care about their troubles, and rejoice with them when things are going well.

Rom. 12:16 “Be of the _____ one toward another.”
How should we treat those of lower position?

Believers should be humble, give others preferential treatment, condescend to the lowly, and not become puffed up with pride.

Rom. 12:17 How should we respond to those who harm us?

What does this verse say about honesty?

Rom. 12:18 How should we interact with others?

Rom. 12:19 “Dearly beloved, _____ not yourselves.”

We shouldn't seek revenge for the wrongs and hurts done to us. The phrase “*give place unto wrath*” means we should hold our temper and allow God's wrath to do its work. The last part of this verse quotes **Deuteronomy 32:35**: “_____ is mine; I will _____, saith the _____” (see also Ps. 94:1 and Heb. 10:30). The Lord is responsible for taking vengeance upon those who hurt His people.

Rom. 12:20 How should we treat an enemy who is needy?

This verse is a quotation of **Proverbs 25:21-22**. It refers to an ancient custom in which a person who was truly repentant would carry a pan of hot coals on his head, representing his burning shame and guilt. Doing good to one's enemy may cause him to feel guilt for his wickedness and lead him to repent (Rom. 2:4).

Rom. 12:21 What should we guard against?

How can we overcome evil?

Concluding Thoughts: Do you remember Tom, the church member who was resentful and jealous of the success of his coworker Bert? Here's the rest of the story. Tom later tried to sabotage one of Bert's business deals in hopes of making him look bad. Bert found out Tom was responsible, but he didn't retaliate. Instead, he prayed for Tom and even sent more customers his way.

Was Tom behaving in a Christ-like way?

Was Bert?

The guidelines you've studied today tell us Christ-like behavior includes sincere love, a self-sacrificing spirit, a good work ethic, rejoicing with those who are blessed, and not trying to get even with those who hurt you. Tom didn't display those characteristics, but Bert acted like one whose life has been changed by Christ.

How does your conduct compare to the characteristics of Christ-like behavior you have discovered in this lesson? Are there areas that need improvement? Confess your shortcomings and ask for God's help to live in a Christ-like manner.

Project: Ask God each day to enable you to live out the Gospel by living a Christ-like life. Memorize **Romans 12:10**.

Obligations to Others

Alvin York, the most decorated American soldier in World War I, tried to avoid the draft because of his religious convictions. He was a Christian and he thought his allegiance to Jesus Christ freed him from any responsibility to serve his country. Through prayer and study, however, he concluded that a Christian citizen has certain obligations to his or her government.

Many people complain about the government. Do we have to have a government? If so, what is it supposed to do?

This week's lesson deals with the subject of the believer's obligations to others. Specifically, you will discover the Bible's answers to the following questions:

1. What is my responsibility to the government?
2. What is my responsibility to other individuals?

The Believer's Obligations to the Government

Rom. 13:1 The term **higher powers** (literally, those possessing great authority) refers to human governments. How should we relate to the government?

Why?

Where do human governments get their power?

Rom. 13:2 If you disobey the government, what are you actually resisting?

The word **damnation** here refers to the legal verdict and sentence you will receive for breaking the law, not eternal torment in hell. What if the government is ungodly and repressive?

Christians should obey the government as long as doing so does not cause them to violate the clear commands of the Word of God.

Rom. 13:3 Who should be afraid of the government, those who do evil or those who do good?

How should the government treat us if we do good?

Rom. 13:4 “For he is the _____ of _____ to thee for _____. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the _____ of God, a _____ to execute _____ upon him that doeth _____.”

Do you realize what you just read? The Bible says the government is God’s **minister** (servant) to do good to those who obey the law and to punish evildoers. This is **God’s purpose for government**.

Rom. 13:5 What are the two reasons Christians should be subject to the government?

1. _____
2. _____

Rom. 13:6 What should we pay?

The word **tribute** refers to taxes.

Rom. 13:7 “Render therefore to all their _____.” What four things are we obligated to give the government?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The Believer’s Obligations to Other Individuals

Rom. 13:8 What’s the only thing we should owe others?

This doesn't mean we can never have a car loan or a home mortgage, but as believers we must pay what we owe when it is due.

Rom. 13:9 Paul quoted five of the Ten Commandments. What is one saying that sums up all the commandments?

Rom. 13:10 What is the fulfillment of the Law?

Rom. 13:11-12 Time is running out! In light of this, how should we live?

Rom. 13:13 "Let us walk _____, as in the _____; not in _____ and _____, not in chambering and wantonness (sexual immorality and lust), not in _____ and _____."

Rom. 13:14 Who should we put on?

What must we not make provision for?

Concluding Thoughts: In your own words, describe your obligations toward the government:

In your own words, describe your obligations toward others:

Living out the Gospel involves fulfilling the obligations God has placed upon us. Time is running out; you must get busy right now doing the things you wrote in the spaces above.



Project: Memorize **Romans 13:1**. Fulfill your obligations.

Avoid Offenses

Lisa believes Christians should abstain from caffeine, but Monique doesn't see anything wrong with drinking coffee or soft drinks containing caffeine. Brett thinks it's just fine to cut his grass on Sunday, but Steve thinks that is wrong. Esther doesn't believe women should wear pants, but Pam does. Jacob feels that being a vegetarian makes him more spiritually minded, but Larry enjoys grilling and eating all sorts of meats.

The people described above hold vastly different opinions. Which ones are right and which ones are wrong? Which do you agree with? Do these opinions really matter at all?

Since its very beginning, the Christian church has included people with differing opinions about such issues. The First Century church was made up of Jews who were accustomed to Old Testament dietary rules, as well as Gentiles who were not. How can believers with differing opinions about debatable issues get along together in the church? This lesson will show us how.

Rom. 14:1 Who should we receive?

Believers should welcome and fellowship with those who are less mature, but shouldn't become drawn into meaningless arguments or debates about unimportant issues ("*doubtful disputations*").

Rom. 14:2 What difference of opinion is described here?

Rom. 14:3 How should the differing believers treat each other?

PLEASE NOTE: These instructions address matters of **opinion** concerning things about which the Bible doesn't give specific commands. In contrast, the Bible clearly says Christians should attend church. Mature believers should warn those who forsake church of their error and try to lead them to obey God. Where the Bible speaks clearly, our **opinions** do not matter.

Rom. 14:5 What difference of opinion is named here?

Rom. 14:6 True believers can have sincere differences about how they worship and serve God. The key here is that we are talking about **those who know the Lord**, not those who are trying to **achieve** salvation by their diet or by observing so-called “holy” days.

Rom. 14:7 “For none of us liveth to _____, and no man dieth to _____.”

Rom. 14:8 “For whether we live, we live unto the _____; and whether we die, we die unto the _____: whether we live therefore, or die, we _____ the _____’s.”

One reason we should not offend others over debatable issues is that **we don’t belong to ourselves**, but we belong to God.

Rom. 14:9 Jesus Christ is Lord of whom?

Rom. 14:10 There is no need for us to judge other believers in debatable issues, “for we shall _____ stand before the _____ seat of _____.”

The **Judgment Seat of Christ** is the future time when the works of all believers will be judged, for the purpose of gaining or losing rewards (see also 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). Salvation is not an issue at the Judgment Seat, because **only** believers will be present.

Rom. 14:11-12 What will we do at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

Another reason we shouldn’t offend others over debatable things is that one day **we will each answer to God** for our motives and deeds.

Rom. 14:13 What should we not put in our brother’s path?

Rom. 14:15 Are you walking in love if you eat something that offends other believers?

If Jesus Christ died for our fellow believers, we should be willing to sacrifice some of our preferences to keep from offending them. A third reason we should avoid offenses is that **Jesus died for our brothers and sisters in Christ.**

Rom. 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not _____ and _____; but _____, and _____, and _____ in the Holy Ghost.”

Rom. 14:19 What two things should we strive to do?

Rom. 14:20 We shouldn’t destroy the work of God for the sake of our personal preferences and opinions.

Rom. 14:21 How far should we be willing to go to avoid offending our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Concluding Thoughts: To live out the Gospel, we must avoid offending or judging other believers in debatable things. If the Bible speaks clearly about an issue, then we must be dogmatic; but if not, we should strive for peace and to edify one another.

How can you decide if a debatable activity is right or wrong for you? The late evangelist Bill Sturm recommended honestly answering the following five questions about the activity:

- What does the Bible say about it?
- Is it harmful to my body?
- Will it offend my brother?
- Would Jesus do it?
- Can I give God the glory for it?

Ask the Lord to help you live in a way that honors Him, promotes peace, and edifies other believers.

Project: Are you doing anything that is offensive to other believers? Confess that as sin and stop it immediately.

Edify, Unify, and Glorify

The dictionary says the word **edify** means to build, establish, or “*to instruct and improve especially in moral and religious knowledge.*”

The word **unify** means “*to make into a unit or a coherent whole.*”

The definition of **glorify** is, “*to make glorious by bestowing honor, praise, or admiration.*”²

The closing chapters of the book of Romans give us many practical instructions. You have already learned that you should sacrifice yourself to God, serve others in the church, fulfill your obligations to the government and to others, and avoid offending fellow believers. This week’s lesson teaches that we should **edify** other believers, **unify** the church, and **glorify** God.

Edify Other Believers

Rom. 15:1 What should strong (mature) believers do?

What should they **not** do?

Rom. 15:2 Who should we try to please?

What should our goal be in doing this?

Rom. 15:3 How is Jesus an example for us?

These verses sound simple, but they say more than we might catch at first glance. Did you notice the last part of verse 1? **We are not to be concerned with pleasing ourselves.** The philosophies of our world include “look out for number one” and “you only go around once in life, so grab all the gusto you can.” The Lord tells us **we**

² All definitions from the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, located at <http://www.m-w.com>

shouldn't focus on our pleasure and comfort, but we should look out for the good of others and seek to edify others (build them up). Do you remember Romans 12:10? Turn there now and fill in the blanks: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly _____; in honour _____ one another" (see also Phil. 2:2-3). Believers are to put others first and strive to build them up in the things of the Lord. Jesus is our example in this.

Unify the Church

Rom. 15:4 Why were the Old Testament scriptures written?

Rom. 15:5 Churches are made up of individuals with differing personalities and preferences. How should we relate to one another?

Rom. 15:6 "That ye may with _____ and _____ glorify God"

Rom. 15:7 How should we treat one another?

Why should we do this?

The Lord Jesus Christ wants there to be unity and harmony within His churches. Sadly, this is often not the case in modern churches. Now let's go back and look at verse 6 once again.

Glorify the Lord

Rom. 15:6 What should we do with one mind and one mouth?

Rom. 15:7 What should we glorify Jesus Christ for?

Rom. 15:8 Jesus came to confirm and fulfill the promises God had previously made to the Jews.

Rom. 15:9 What did Jesus' coming enable the Gentiles to do?

Rom. 15:10 “And again He saith, _____, ye _____, with His people.”

Rom. 15:11 “And again, _____ the Lord, all ye _____; and _____ Him, all ye people.”

Rom. 15:12 Who do you think the “*root of Jesse*” is?

What will He do for the Gentiles?

Rom. 15:13 “Now the God of hope fill you with all _____ and _____ in believing, that ye may abound in _____, through the _____ of the Holy Ghost.”

Concluding Thoughts: The Bible says our behavior and words should **edify** other believers, **unify** the church, and **glorify** God. Verse 13 names some of the results of living in a way that edifies, unifies, and glorifies: we will experience **joy**, **peace**, abundant **hope**, and God’s **power** through the Holy Spirit.

We all want joy, peace, hope, and power, but our problem is that we usually focus on what **we** want instead of focusing on what the Lord tells us to do. When we obey Him (by edifying, unifying, and glorifying) He will give us more joy, peace, hope, and power than we could imagine. Those are blessings of new life in Christ.

Self-examination: Does your behavior **edify** other believers? Are you helping the weaker brothers and sisters, or are you trying to please yourself? Does your behavior help create and maintain **unity** within the church? Do you receive others, as Christ received you? Does your behavior bring **glory** to the Lord Jesus? Do you praise Him publicly for your salvation?

Confess your failures, and commit to living out the Gospel.

Project: Memorize **Romans 15:1**. Look for tangible ways this week to **edify** others, **unify** the church, and **glorify** the Lord.

Minister to Others

Think about your Sunday School class. Does your class intentionally reach out to unchurched people, or does it seem to exist only to meet the needs of its members? Do you and other class members love and share the Gospel with those who don't know Jesus, or do you only minister to one another? Does the class have definite plans for future ministry, or do the members simply meet each Sunday with no thought of the future?

The Apostle Paul was very focused on doing the will of God. In modern terminology, we might say he was task-oriented and intentional in his ministry. He also had definite plans for the future. In this lesson you will learn about the **purpose** of Paul's ministry and some of his **plans** for the future of his ministry.

Rom. 15:14 What did Paul believe about the Roman Christians?

Rom. 15:15 Why did he write more boldly to the Romans than to other believers?

Rom. 15:16 What did Paul say he was?

What was his task?

What did he want the result of his ministry to be?

Rom. 15:17-18 Paul said he could glory (boast) in the things God did, not his fleshly works.

Rom. 15:19 How did God work through Paul's preaching?

Where had Paul preached the Gospel?

The area from **Jerusalem** to **Illyricum** represented the eastern half of the Roman Empire (see the map on page 7).

Rom. 15:20 Where did Paul want to preach the Gospel?

Why?

Rom. 15:21 Paul's ministry fulfilled Isaiah 52:15 (which he quoted in this verse), because he took the Gospel to Gentiles who had never heard of the Lord Jesus.

Rom. 15:22 Why had he not yet gone to Rome?

The purpose of Paul's ministry was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Christ's power to those who had never heard. Next you will learn about Paul's future ministry plans.

Rom. 15:23 What was Paul's great desire?

Rom. 15:24 Where was he planning to go?

Paul wanted to visit the church at **Rome** and to receive help and encouragement from them before going on to **Spain**.

Rom. 15:25 Where was he going before making that trip?

Rom. 15:26-27 The churches of **Macedonia** and **Achaia** (see the map on page 7) had taken up an offering to help the poor believers in Jerusalem. Paul was going to carry that offering.

Rom. 15:28 What would he do after completing that task?

Rom. 15:30 What did Paul ask the Roman believers to do?

Rom. 15:31 What two specific requests did he name?

Rom. 15:32-33 What was Paul looking forward to?

Paul's plans for his future ministry included delivering the offering to the needy Christians in Jerusalem, and then traveling (by way of Rome) to Spain to preach the Gospel.

Concluding Thoughts: Paul understood and could clearly state the purpose of his ministry: he was called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles who had never heard about the Lord.

What about your Sunday School class: does it have a clearly defined purpose? Can the members (yourself included) describe that purpose? If the members can't state the purpose of the class, they probably don't understand it or participate in it.

The purpose of your Sunday School class is to involve members and prospects in regular Bible study so those who are not yet saved come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and believers grow in Christ-like thinking and behavior.

Does your Sunday School class have any definite plans for its future ministry? Have you and other members made definite plans to participate in activities designed to share Christ through His power to those who don't know Him? If the class doesn't have specific plans, it probably won't accomplish much. After all, if you aim at nothing you're sure to hit it.

Those who have experienced new life in Christ should be involved in His work. What do you think would have to happen for your class to understand and accept its purpose and make definite plans to try to achieve that purpose? Will you pray for those things?

Project: Living out the Gospel involves ministering to others. Pray for your Sunday School class and its leaders. Talk to your class leaders about the class' purpose and plans. Offer to help the class define its purpose and make some plans, and then get involved living out the Gospel by helping to carry out those plans. Remember, your class can do no more than its members (like you) are willing to give their time and energy to.

Encouragement and Warning

Think for a moment about signs and words of encouragement you have received. A good report card will encourage a student, while a favorable job performance review will encourage an employee. Businesses receive encouragement from customer reviews, as well as from the faithfulness of their regular customers. You might have received a greeting card in the mail sometime that included encouraging words. We all appreciate encouraging words.

Have you seen any warning signs lately? On the highway you often see yellow warning signs, and sometimes you see trucks displaying hazardous material warnings. Your prescription medications probably have warning labels, as well. Warning signs are everywhere; they are designed to protect us from danger.

This final lesson from the book of Romans includes Paul's closing words of encouragement and warning to the believers in Rome.

Rom. 16:1 Who did Paul commend?

Rom. 16:2 What did he ask them to do for her?

Phoebe was a trusted servant in the church of **Cenchrea** (a city near **Corinth**; see the map on page 7). She was going to **Rome**, probably carrying Paul's letter with her.

Rom. 16:3 Who did he greet?

Rom. 16:4 What did he say about them?

Verses 3-16 contain words of greeting and encouragement to the believers Paul knew in Rome. Paul had not yet been to Rome, so these were people he led to the Lord or ministered to during his travels who later moved to Rome and were part of the church there.

Rom. 16:5 What did Paul say about Epaenetus?

Rom. 16:6 What did he say about Mary?

Rom. 16:7-10 Note the love Paul had for these people.

Rom. 16:11-15 These believers were faithful laborers for the Lord.

Rom. 16:16 The word **salute** means “greet.” How were they to greet one another?

This custom sounds strange to us, but in some cultures men still greet one another with a ceremonial kiss on the cheek. After saluting the believers in Rome, Paul gave some words of warning.

Rom. 16:17 “Now I beseech you, brethren, _____ them which cause _____ and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and _____ them.”

Rom. 16:18 Who do those people actually serve?

How do they deceive people?

Rom. 16:19 What was well known about the Roman Christians?

Paul wanted them to be wise (knowledgeable) about things that are good, but simple (ignorant) concerning evil.

Rom. 16:20 What did he say God would soon do?

Verses 21-23 contain greetings from those with Paul (in Corinth) to the believers in Rome.

Rom. 16:22 Tertius was the scribe who wrote the things Paul dictated to him (because of Paul’s poor eyesight).

Verses 24-27 are the benediction of the letter.

Rom. 16:24 What did he want his readers to have?

Rom. 16:25 What does the Lord have power to do?

The Gospel was planned before the worlds were created (Rev. 13:8), but it was kept secret until the coming of Jesus Christ.

Rom. 16:26 To whom is the Gospel now made known?

Rom. 16:27 “To God only _____, be glory through _____ for ever. Amen.”

Concluding Thoughts: Paul lived out the Gospel by encouraging the believers in Rome. Why was this necessary? Even though we have new life in Christ, we sometimes become discouraged. A few words of encouragement can restore our focus so we get back to work for the Lord. Paul’s encouragement to the Roman Christians was timely; in a few short years he finally made it to Rome, but as a prisoner instead of a welcomed guest. The Christians in Rome later endured terrible persecution. They needed encouragement.

Who do you know that needs some encouragement right now? Will you take the time and energy necessary to write that person an encouraging note or to say some encouraging words to them?

Paul also warned the Roman believers about some who would cause divisions, oppose the doctrines of Christ, and deceive many people. He warned his fellow believers to beware of such troublemakers. Unfortunately, these warnings are still needed today.

Do you know anyone who needs to be warned? Are troublemakers deceiving that person? Will you warn him or her?

Project: Do all you can this week to encourage believers and to beware of troublemakers. Warn those in danger of being deceived. Pick up a new *Sunday School Member Quarterly* and begin the **Daily Bible Readings** on Monday.

