

Studies in Romans



Workbook One

Chapters 1-5

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How to use this workbook

This series of studies is presented as a workbook. When we get into the **Word of God, great things happen**. Our desire in writing this series of studies is to help you to begin to study the Bible for yourself. The workbook is designed to introduce you gradually over the next few weeks to the basics of personal Bible study as you begin to get to grips with the book of Romans. The principles you will learn as you work through this will stand you in good stead for a life time of walking with God.

Like anything in life, the more you put into these studies, the more you will get out. Each week, you will study a portion of the book of Romans. We suggest that you will probably find it most beneficial to split this over a few days of the week and get into the habit of spending a few minutes each day on the material.

Each study is set out so that you can do as much or as little as you want – although we hope you will find as the weeks go on that you want to do more! We have tried to include material that will help you to understand the passages better, rather than simply tell you what we think the passage means. Week by week you will build up a repertoire of Bible study methods as you try them out in the workbook.

There are four basic components to these Bible studies –

1. **Observation** – when we read a passage, we need to observe what it is saying, what the context is and what stands out to us.
2. **Interpretation** –once we have observed, we need to try to discover what the passage is actually saying – what it means. We need to be able to understand accurately what the Bible is really saying, not what we think it is saying (or even worse, what we would like it to say!).
3. **Devotional link** – as we engage with the Word of the God who made us, it will lead us to praise and worship Him. We will talk to Him about what we reading.
4. **Your response** – after all the above three steps, we need to respond – what is God saying to me through this? Is there anything I need to do, say or change in response? Studying the Bible with an open heart and mind will change us.....for the better! These studies are designed to help you first to understand the Bible then to worship God and apply the truth to your life.

You will see that the material is arranged with a main text and side bars containing additional information. These are optional, but we think that the information or teaching they contain will really enrich your own study and understanding. Each week there is a devotional link section to help you to engage with God and worship Him. Then there is a section for you to pray over and write out your response to what you have been studying and how these truths could apply to your life. Finally, each week there are discussion questions to help your group discuss the passage for that week.

Our prayer is that you will enjoy and be helped by these studies.

Written By Paul

The Apostle Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome is considered by many to be the definitive statement of the Gospel as it really is. Paul soars to the heights as he grapples with the great truths of God's dealings with and purposes for men and women. It is wonderful letter and the studying of it will enrich our lives.

As with all of Paul's letters, he does not just write to people to tell them what to do. Rather, he tells them about who God is, who we are by nature, what God has done for us and who we are now as a result. Only then does Paul go on to tell us how we should live in the light of this.

Stuart Olyott states in his commentary that renewed study and understanding of the book of Romans has often preceded revival. We can only pray that it might be so for us now.

To study the book of Romans is to come face to face with some of the deepest teachings in Scripture. We can expect to be challenged intellectually, spiritually and practically, for Paul's teaching is never abstract and is always brought back to the fundamental purpose of life – loving relationships with God and with our fellow human beings.

Even Paul, though, the great Jewish scholar, at the close of 11 chapters of exploring the truths of the Gospel is moved to exclaim –

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and His paths beyond tracing out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counsellor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever! Amen.” Romans 11:33-36

Historical Setting

It is likely that Paul's letter to the Romans was written as he was returning from his 3rd missionary journey. He was on his way to Jerusalem with a gift from the Macedonian and Achaian churches for their brothers and sisters in the church in Jerusalem where there was famine.

Paul probably wrote in the 3 month period referred to in Acts 20:3 when he was in Corinth. His intention was to go on to Jerusalem and then visit Rome on his way to Spain where he planned to be the first to preach the Gospel (Rom 15:22-30). Given that shortly after this, Paul received warning from the prophet Agabus about what was likely to happen to him in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-12) but carried on anyway, it may be that Paul was beginning to have some notion from the Spirit that he might never reach Spain. Perhaps this explains why it is that he takes such great pains in his letter to give a thorough outline of the Gospel as he would want it to be passed on by others.

Main Themes

Many of Paul's letters are written to specific situations to deal with specific issues. However, Paul had never visited the church in Rome (although it is obvious from his greetings at the end of the letter that he knew some of the people there). His letter to the Romans is therefore the purist exposition and explanation of what the Gospel is. Broadly speaking, the letter divides into two, the first section ending with chapter 11. In the first 11 chapters, Paul is concerned with doctrine; in the last 5 chapters he is concerned with application of that doctrine. It is important to note that we cannot have one without the other.

The well known author and theologian J.I.Packer said that *“The whole of New Testament doctrine is grace and the whole of New Testament practice is gratitude.”* We need both doctrine and practice side by side.

In the first 11 chapters, Paul is concerned to set out a detailed argument for the fact that salvation is by grace and not by anything we can do to deserve it. Of course, the concepts of salvation and grace are meaningless unless there is something from which we need to be saved. Paul's arguments are devastatingly effective in chapters 1-3 as he shows that we are all in the same boat; we have fallen so far short of God's standards that there is nothing we can do to help ourselves. We deserve judgment and condemnation.

Basic Thrust of Paul's arguments:

- we need to be righteous before God and we are not; no-one has any excuse before God (Rom 1:18 – 3:20)
- God has not only taken upon Himself the punishment our sin deserves but has given us His righteousness (Rom 3:21-31)
- we are put right with God (justified) by exercising faith in Him and depending upon what He has done, not by earning it by our own efforts
- there are wonderful consequences of justification (chapter 5)
- Paul answers objections to salvation by grace through faith in chapters 6 and 7
- now we live by the Spirit (chapter 8)
- God's purposes for the people of Israel (chapters 9-11)

From chapter 12 onwards we have the practical out-workings of the doctrines in the first 11 chapters. Paul applies his teaching to our relationships with God

Romans 1:1-17

Meet the Author and His Readers

The first thing we need to take into consideration as we begin to study Romans is the historical context of the epistle. Paul had a purpose for writing this letter and a specific audience to which he was writing. We cannot make the text mean something to us that contradicts the original message from Paul. Something has happened in Rome which has prompted Paul to write this letter and clearly communicate the gospel of Christ and what implications this Gospel has for our daily life.

Paul

Paul was raised in Tarsus, a prosperous city in Asia Minor (Turkey) known for its schools of philosophy and liberal arts. Because of the standing of his family he was also a citizen of Rome (Acts 21:39). He was raised as a Jew and trained as a strict Pharisee under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3, Galations 1:14). He was a tentmaker by trade.

He is best known for: His persecution of Christians and his amazing conversion (Acts 9:1-19); The letters of instruction and encouragement he wrote to the early church; His burning desire that the gospel be presented to the nations; Representing Christ to the world powers of his day

The Roman Church

Many of the founders of the Roman church were Jewish Christians (Ac 2:10). But sometime in the 40s A.D., the emperor Claudius, like the earlier emperor Tiberius, expelled the Jewish community from Rome (see Acts 18:2). The Roman church was thus composed entirely of Gentiles until Claudius's death, when his edict was automatically repealed, and Jewish Christians returned to Rome (Ro 16:3). Jewish and Gentile Christians had different cultural ways of expressing their faith in Jesus; Paul thus must address a church experiencing tension between two valid cultural expressions of the Christian faith.

In Romans 1:1-1:17 Paul introduces himself and gives us some major clues as to what he will be saying in the rest of the letter. Verses 16 & 17 especially express the theme for this epistle very clearly.

Your Study

If this is the first time you have studied the Bible, it can be a little intimidating. But remember, the Holy Spirit caused this to be written and, if you are a follower of Jesus, then the Holy Spirit lives in you to "guide you into all truth." (John 16:13)

Start each study with a simple prayer that God will help you to understand what this passage means. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it and show you what response He desires from you.

a) Observation

Read the passage 2-3 times. You may find it helpful to read the passage once aloud – very often it is reading Scripture aloud that verses start to make sense that did not before.

Jot down some of the immediate reactions or questions you have:

"Gospel"

Greek *evangelion* from which we get our word 'evangelise' or 'evangelism'. Unfortunately, these words have become loaded with so much negative meaning when they simply mean to share the good news of Jesus with another person. It doesn't sound so hard when it's put like that. We need to ask, *why* is the Gospel good news? Making this clear is Paul's goal.

Optional

What character qualities does Paul show in 1:1-17?

What kind of person does he seem to be?

Study 1

Devotional link

Paul expresses fairly strong emotions about the Gospel – he essentially said he was “burstingly proud of it”! How do you feel about the Gospel as you start out on this course of studies? Take some time to tell God honestly what you feel about Him, and about the Gospel. For examples of this honesty before God, look at some of the Psalms and the emotions expressed there.

b) Interpretation

One of the simplest ways to begin to interpret a passage of Scripture is to split a passage up into its natural paragraphs and then give each paragraph a heading that describes in your own words the content of that paragraph. For example, you might say that Romans 1:8-10 is a paragraph and give it the heading “Paul’s prayers of thanksgiving for the faith of the Romans and its witness to the world.” It just helps you get a handle on what the passage is saying. Take a few minutes now to break Romans 1:1-17 into paragraphs:

Verses

Heading

c) Your response:

Review this week’s study. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures that He wants you to understand, learn or practice. Then respond to the following:

1. What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture for you in this study?
2. Reword that statement or Scripture in a prayer of response to God.
3. What does God want you to do in response to this study?

Optional

To what extent do you have the same mission Paul does? (1:5)

What have you been set apart to be and do?

In what ways would you like to be more like Paul?

Useful Questions

1. Can your group think of any Old Testament Scriptures that promised the Gospel?
2. What do you learn of Paul’s prayer life in this passage?
3. Discuss as a group how you would define the Gospel and what it means to you.

Romans 1:18-2:16

We have a big Problem – with God!

From 1:18 onwards Paul starts to build his case logically for the fact that we are all equally sinful, no-one is righteous and we are all therefore equally in need of something being done by God to save us from the judgment we deserve.

Paul's argument in 1:18-23 is similar to one in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a popular Jewish work widely circulated at the time. His arguments and examples, especially the sexual perversion which was very evident in the Greek society of the day, would have met with the ready agreement of his Jewish readers. However, this was to some extent a setup. In 1:24-32 Paul goes on to catalogue other sins less often denounced by the Jews. Then in 2:1-11 He begins to challenge the self righteous and selectively judgmental attitude of the Jewish mindset and its accompanying self-deception.

Your Study

Last week you began to learn some introductory ways of studying the Bible. Each week we will add a little to these basic aspects of **prayer**, **observation** and **interpretation**. You will find it helpful in getting to grips with each passage to start off with the same basic approach before building in some methods to help you go deeper.

Again, start this study with a simple prayer that God will help you to understand what this passage means. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it and show you what response He desires from you.

a) Observation

Read the passage 2 or 3 times, once out loud and then note any difficulties, questions, observations or thoughts you have.

IVP Background Commentary:

Stoic philosophers argued that the nature of God was evident in creation; Cicero at that time could even assert that no race of humanity was so uncivilized as to deny the existence of the gods, and along with others he argued that the human mind points to what God is like. Jewish people scattered throughout the Greco-Roman world used this argument to persuade pagans to turn to the true God.

Devotional Link

Prayerfully review the list of vices in 1:1-32.

- Which of the vices do you sense you are most vulnerable to?
- Which are you most inclined to judge in others? Have you judged someone recently?

Humbly express your need for God's help with these things. Take time to thank him for his forgiveness and grace in Jesus.

Study 2

b) Interpretation

Take a few minutes now to break Romans 1:18-2:16 into paragraphs and then give each paragraph a heading that describes in your own words the content of that paragraph.

Verses

Heading

IVP

Background

Commentary:

Greek men were commonly bisexual; not only was homosexual behaviour approved (some writers, like speakers in Plato's Symposium, preferred it to heterosexual behaviour), but elements of the culture socialized boys in this direction.

Although many upper-class Romans were affected by Greek ideals, many other Romans, especially Roman philosophers, regarded homosexual practice as disgusting. Greco-Roman moralists sometimes opposed gender reversal as "against nature," which would resemble the Jewish argument from God's original purposes in creation (Ge 2:18).

2:12 Paul is stricter than most of Judaism here. Most Jews believed Gentiles could be saved by simply keeping the 7 laws that Jewish tradition taught had been given to Noah. Paul argues that anyone who has sinned with or without the Law of Moses (613 laws) will be strictly judged.

c) Your response:

Review this week's study. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures that He wants you to understand, learn or practice. Then respond to the following:

1. What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture for you in this study?
2. Reword that statement or Scripture in a prayer of response to God.
3. What does God want you to do in response to this study?

Useful Questions

1. Does God's attitude to sin contradict his nature as a loving God?
2. As a group can you come up with a working definition of sin from Rom 1:18-2:16?
3. How would you explain sin to a friend who is not a believer?

Romans 2:17-3:20

Wrong Solution! Religion (Judaism)

We are incurably spiritual beings. We have a deeply implanted moral sense and an appetite for intimacy, beauty and adventure that leaves us longing for more (Rom 2:15). There is also an unmistakable sour taste; a *dark shadow* is cast over human life. We see it everywhere. We sense it in ourselves. There is a "lostness" about us:

Henri Nouwen, in **The Return of the Prodigal Son**, states: "Addiction" might be the best word to explain the lostness that so deeply permeates contemporary society. Our addictions make us cling to what the world proclaims as the keys to self-fulfilment: accumulation of wealth and power; attainment of status and admiration; lavish consumption of food and drink, and sexual gratification without distinguishing between lust and love. These addictions create expectations that cannot but fail our deepest needs."¹ We have seen expressions of this chronicled in Romans chapter one.

Another response to "lostness" is religion. This appears to be a far more legitimate way to address our 'dis-ease' and feel good about ourselves before God, but religion can never deliver what we need.

Your Study

Start with a simple prayer that God will help you to understand what this passage means. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it and show you what response He desires from you.

a) Observation

Read the passage 2-3 times. Read the passage 2 or 3 times, once out loud and then note any difficulties, questions, observations or thoughts you have.

Law of Moses:
Torah (תּוֹרָה) is a Hebrew word meaning "teaching," "instruction," or "law". It refers primarily to the Five Books of Moses which contain both a complete and ordered system of laws, particularly the 613 *mitzvot* (613 distinct "commandments", individually called a *mitzvah*), as well as a historical description of the beginnings of what came to be known as **Judaism**.

In the New Testament context, 'law' can mean anything from the Law of Moses to any form of law to which man subjects himself (including man-made rules or forms of legalism). The original law is God's standard: a representation of His own holiness. It is not a means of being justified before God, but rather a spotlight, exposing sin for what it really is and showing us we need help (Rom 3:20, 1 Cor 15:56).

Devotional link

Pray Romans 3:9-20. This passage is the culmination of Paul's argument, describing you and me and the fact that we are sinful. One way of drawing closer to God through Scripture is to personalise it. Go through these verses and change them from third person ("they", "their", etc) to first-person ("me", "I", etc). Pray verse 12 by saying, "Lord, I have turned away from you so often and in doing so, have become worthless. I do not do good – even when I try. Please forgive me, Lord..." etc.

¹ Henri Nouwen, *The Return Of The Prodigal* p42

Study 3

b) Interpretation

Take a few minutes to break Romans 2:17-3:20 into paragraphs and then give each paragraph a heading that describes in your own words the content of that paragraph.

Verses

Heading

Circumcision: A ritual cutting away of the foreskin, which signified that a man was a Jew. Many Jews came to think that the mere rite guaranteed their membership among God's people. Moses and the prophets warned Israel that the ritual was meaningless unless it accompanied "circumcision of the heart" (Deut 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4)

c) Your response:

Review this week's study. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures that He wants you to understand, learn or practice. Then respond to the following:

1. What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture for you in this study?
2. Reword that statement or Scripture in a prayer of response to God.
3. What does God want you to do in response to this study?

"Sinner" was an awful insult in Jewish circles: for Paul to call everyone sinners (Rom 1-2) would be shocking.

Useful Questions

1. In religious/church circles today what are some of things people rely on to gain acceptance with God?
2. What do non-religious people today rely on to feel good about themselves?
3. What are some of the telltale signs that people are trusting in something other than God and his grace to make life work?

Romans 3:21-4:25

God's Solution - Righteousness by Faith Alone

God has provided the answer to the problem of the fact that we have no righteousness of our own so that we can stand before God on our own merit. A righteousness based on faith alone has been revealed [Cross Reference -Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17]. It is faith in the promised one, the Messiah, prophesied in the Law of Moses and the Prophets (i.e. contained in what we call the Old Testament) – Jesus Christ. It is salvation for all who believe, no matter what racial or religious background. Paul introduces us to the sequence of God's working in our salvation. Firstly, Christ died as a sacrifice of atonement (v25) on the cross (propitiation) to take the punishment we deserve. Now we are released from the punishment we deserve, we are redeemed (v24) from the slavery of our sin. Through this redemption, we have been justified (v24) or declared guiltless by God. But it is not only that sin and guilt is cancelled, God then credits us with His righteousness – He imputes His righteousness to us.

So, it is not just as though we had never sinned, it is as though we had lived perfect lives also. This is what God gives us as we exercise faith and trust in Him.

In Romans 4, Paul explains the Old Testament basis of being justified by faith, apart from works. This is not some idea that God thought up because plan A failed. Paul shows that justification (being declared innocent before God) was always by faith. Abraham is held up to us as the example of someone who simply believed God (exercised faith in Him) and God credited it to him as righteousness – i.e. God saved Him. Abraham's life remains an example to us all of living by faith and believing God's promises.

Your study

a) Observation

So, pray again and ask the Lord to open the eyes of your understanding and speak to you through His Word. Read the passage 2 or 3 times, once out loud and then note any difficulties, questions, observations or thoughts you have.

What does that mean?

Atonement /Propitiation (v25) = Grk *Hilasterion*

The appeasing of God's wrath against our sin, by the voluntary death of Jesus' in our place. In His death He took the punishment due to us for our sin. Mental hook: 'At-one-ness'

Justification (v24-28) = Grk *Dikaioo*

In a legal sense, declaring the accused to be guiltless. Mental hook: 'Just-as-if-I-never-sinned'

Righteousness (v22, 25) = Grk *Dikaiosune*

Through Jesus' death, right-ness before God can be ours. Mental hook: 'Right-relationship-with-God'

Devotional link

1. Take some time to think about the four aspects of the work of Christ in Salvation.
 - a. Reflect upon the fact that you have escaped the judgment and anger of God because Christ was the atoning sacrifice (propitiation) for your sin.
 - b. Then go onto look at the other three works of Christ: how we have been saved from death – redeemed, how you have been justified - declared guiltless, and finally, how you now stand righteous before God. Ask God to give you a deeper understanding of what it means to be declared guiltless and righteous in His sight. Take some time to praise God and thank Him for each of these works.
2. It is a great idea to use a Psalm to help you to praise God. Psalm 62 talks of salvation from the Lord. Read over it and use it to pray and worship the Lord.

Study 4

b) Interpretation

Go over the passage and divide it into paragraphs, giving each one a title that summarises the content of the paragraph.

What Exactly is Faith?

Greek. Pistis.

Faith is the firm persuasion, trust or conviction in God and His promise. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). It is defined in Hebrews 11:1, as being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see. In other words, faith is in the present. It is the here and now reality of hope in Christ's return and heaven. It is the certainty, here and now, of God's existence. According to Hebrews 11, faith should lead to obedience in the present, evidenced by the great examples of faith listed. We have to be careful not to confuse faith and hope. Hope deals with the future, whereas faith is the present reality of that hope. Hope is from the mind, whereas faith is from the heart (Romans 10:10, 1 Thess 5:8). The word faithfulness is from the root word of faith, and it is the fruit of a godly life born out of maturity in Christ. Faith has to be confessed (Rom 10:8-10), outworked (Rom 4:18-21, Gal 5:6), and tested (Rom 5:1-5, Jas 1:2-4).

Now write out a title that accurately summarises the passage for this week.

Now go back over your study and see which verse really stood out to you from the passage this week. Write it out:

1. Best verse –
2. Now try to put into your own words (paraphrase) what it is that this verse is saying.
3. What is it about this verse that makes it either stand out to you or key for your understanding of this passage?

Romans 5:1-5:19

Righteousness a Gift Received by Faith

Progress Report.

We have seen the universal nature of sin and our universal need of salvation because of our accountability to God. Last week (3:21-31) we looked at Paul's outline of God's remedy for the problem. We deserved condemnation, but God Himself took our punishment. We were guilty, but God Himself declares us free from guilt. We had no righteousness, but God gave us His own Son's righteousness as a gift. None of these things come to us because we deserve them – in fact the opposite – they come to us despite the fact we deserve the opposite. We cannot do anything to earn or deserve our salvation. This is what it means that we are saved by grace. We stand before God forgiven and cleansed. This salvation is for all, Jew and Gentile and is on the basis of grace, not works and comes to us through faith.

We also saw in Romans 4, the Old Testament basis of being justified by faith, apart from works. This is not some idea that God thought up because plan A failed. Paul showed that justification (being declared innocent before God) was always by faith. Abraham is held up to us as the example of someone who simply believed God (exercised faith in Him) and God credited it to him as righteousness – i.e. God saved Him. Abraham's life remains an example to us all of living by faith and believing God's promises.

Now as we begin Chapter 5 we begin to encounter the benefits of being justified with God. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith....." This is an exciting section containing life-transforming truths. Enjoy studying and discussing it.

Your study

a) Observation

Pray and ask the Lord to speak to you and give you understanding of this passage of His Word. Read over the passage 2 or 3 times, once out loud. Try reading the passage in *another version* of the Bible if you have one available.

Jot down any observations, questions or reflections you have on the passage.

Something to ignore...

It is important to remember that in the original Greek, Romans was written as one long letter: there were no verses or section headings. Try to get into the habit of reading past the paragraph or chapter breaks to see what you might be missing.

The Spirit:

In many Jewish traditions, the Spirit was available only to those most worthy; here he is bestowed as a gift. On the Spirit being "poured out" see Joe 2:28.

Study 5

Devotional link

1. What does the concept of peace with God mean to you? How do you feel about it? What difference should it make to your life if you really do have peace with God? Often how we feel is not in line with the truth – you *have* peace with God even if you do not *feel* it. Our feelings need to come in line with the facts in that case. Take some time to thank God for the fact that you have peace with Him as a follower of Jesus. What might be stopping you from feeling that to be true?
2. “We have access into the grace in which we now stand” – you stand by grace. Ask the Lord to reveal to you any ways in which you might be trusting in your performance in order to bring you peace with God. You might want to start each day by reminding yourself that there is nothing you can do to make God love you more and nothing you can do to make Him love you less.....and thanking and praising Him for it!

b) Interpretation

Go over the passage as before and break it into paragraphs with short summary titles for each paragraph.

What is Peace with God?

Grk *Eirene*

The New Testament

understanding of peace is simply borrowed from the Old Testament word *Shalom*, famous today as a common Jewish greeting. It means harmony, wholeness and health. Ultimately it refers to the harmonious relationship between man and God accomplished through Jesus Christ and his canceling of the debt of sin. This restored relationship of peace (salvation) between man and God should lead to a sense of rest and wholeness in the believer, feeding into harmonious relations with other believers (2 Thess 3:16).

Now write out a title that accurately summarises the passage for this week.

Now go back over your study and see which verse really stood out to you from the passage this week. Write it out:

1. Best verse –
2. Now try to put into your own words (paraphrase) what it is that this verse is saying.
3. What is it about this verse that makes it either stand out to you or key for your understanding of this passage?

Study Method Ideas

Observations

- Ask the “**Detective**” **Questions** - Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- Take note of the **emotional tone** of the chapter. What do you think Paul was feeling as he wrote these words? Underline words and phrases that seem to express strong emotion and identify the emotions involved.
- Read the passage from **different perspectives**. Read it from Paul’s perspective. Read it from a Roman’s/Jew’s/Greek’s perspective. You could even read it as a complete stranger who found the letter on the street. What do you notice?
- Take note of the **words** being used. Repeated words point to themes – find key verbs, nouns, adjectives (and their synonyms); Linking words reveal the logic of the chapter – if, but, because, therefore, then, so, also, etc.

Interpretation

- Come up with questions. For each question find at least one **cross-reference**. Find cross-references by recalling similar passages you have read before. Check your Bible’s cross-reference column and footnotes. Look up key words in the concordance at the back of your Bible or at www.Biblegateway.com, or use a bible software program like E-Sword. You may also find some good cross-references by skim reading the rest of Romans.
- **Summarize** the main thrust of the passage in one short paragraph. It may help to first write a single sentence capturing the content of each paragraph in the chapter.
- Develop an **Outline** for the passage. Break it into sections with a title for each section. Write sub points under each section title. Give the chapter an overall title. Try to keep the titles and sub points as succinct as possible. Outlining helps you identify the main ideas and see how they are connected.
- Find key passages that give important **background** information. It might be good to compare this letter with a letter that addresses similar themes, e.g. *Galatians*. What differences do you notice? How might the circumstances have been different? Check *Acts* for any background information.

Your Response

- Write out phrases, sentences or verses that seem particularly meaningful. Below write down any feelings, memories, relationships, issues or situations that come to mind.
- Ask these **questions**: Is there a command to obey? A promise to claim? An error to avoid? An example to follow? A principle to apply?
- **Pray** your way through the passage. Read a sentence or two then stop and pray about whatever comes to mind. Invite the Holy Spirit to direct your heart and mind as you pray
- Having identified the truth that seems to be speaking to you, run through the following questions to help you locate a specific sphere of application:
 - How should this truth affect my attitudes, behaviour, relationships, motives, values, priorities, character?
 - How does it apply at home, at uni, in my social life, in my faith community, with my family, with my non-Christian friends?

