Seminole
BAPTIST CHURCH

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

Forty Daily Devotions
from Romans
(Based on the NKJV)

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Introduction

The great preacher and pastor, Adrian Rogers, once said, "If I were shipwrecked on an island and could choose only one book of the Bible to take with me, I would bring Romans." This wonderful New Testament book has long been thought to contain some of the greatest theological teachings ever given to Christians. Some even believe that Paul received these teachings directly from the Lord during his three-year stay in Arabia that is mentioned in Galatians 1:11-24. Paul penned the letter to the Romans from Corinth. Since Paul was primarily writing to a Gentile group in Rome, his main concern was to educate them on some of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. His letter has become the believer's best explanation of the Kingdom Principles by which we are to live today.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Galatians 1:11-24	01/01/26
2	2 Timothy 3:10-17	01/02/26
3	Acts 22:22-30	01/03/26
4	Romans 1:1-12	01/04/26
5	Romans 1:13-25	01/05/26
6	Romans 1:26-2:6	01/06/26
7	Romans 2:7-16	01/07/26
8	Romans 2:17-29	01/08/26
9	Romans 3:1-12	01/09/26
10	Romans 3:13-23	01/10/26
11	Romans 3:24-4:3	01/11/26
12	Romans 4:4-15	01/12/26
13	Romans 4:16-25	01/13/26
14	Romans 5:1-11	01/14/26
15	Romans 5:12-21	01/15/26
16	Romans 6:1-14	01/16/26
17	Romans 6:15-23	01/17/26
18	Romans 7:1-13	01/18/26
19	Romans 7:14-25	01/19/26
20	Romans 8:1-12	01/20/26

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Romans 8:13-23	01/21/26
22	Romans 8:24-34	01/22/26
23	Romans 8:35-9:7	01/23/26
24	Romans 9:8-18	01/24/26
25	Romans 9:19-29	01/25/26
26	Romans 9:30-10:4	01/26/26
27	Romans 10:5-15	01/27/26
28	Romans 10:16-11:6	01/28/26
29	Romans 11:7-18	01/29/26
30	Romans 11:19-31	01/30/26
31	Romans 11:32-12:5	01/31/26
32	Romans 12:6-16	02/01/26
33	Romans 12:17-13:8	02/02/26
34	Romans 13:9-14:4	02/03/26
35	Romans 14:5-17	02/04/26
36	Romans 14:18-15:6	02/05/26
37	Romans 15:7-19	02/06/26
38	Romans 15:20-33	02/07/26
39	Romans 16:1-15	02/08/26
40	Romans 16:16-27	02/09/26

Day 1: Galatians 1:11-24

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man… but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12)

Paul in Arabia

Paul clearly stated that "the gospel" he preached was not "according to man" (v. 11). He explained that statement by adding, "I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 12). To further emphasize that point, Paul then said, "I did not immediately (after his conversion) confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia" (v. 16-17). I am personally convinced that Paul's time in Arabia was for his own, personal *edification* that equipped him for a life of personal *evangelism*. It is not clear that Paul actually spent three years in Arabia. It is possible that he actually spent three years being trained by the Lord in Arabia and Damascus (see v. 17). The important thing to note is that Paul, since he was not readily accepted by the early church, spent some time alone with God, and part of that time was in Arabia. So, just as it was with men like Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist, Paul spent some personal time alone with God before he began his ministry.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for enlightenment from God's word and **share** God's great truths with others you meet along life's way. In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul said, "I *received* from the Lord that which I also *delivered* to you" (1 Corinthians 11:23). **Allow** God's word to flow in and *out* of your life!

Day 2: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness…" (2 Timothy 3:16)

Romans – The Book of Doctrine

The letters of Paul are not in the Bible in chronological order. Although opinions vary, most believe the letters to the Thessalonians were written first (51-52 AD), and the letters to Timothy and Titus were written last (66-68 AD). Somewhere in the middle, sometime around 56-59 AD, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans from Corinth while on his third missionary journey. But, if Romans was the fifth or sixth letter written by Paul, why is it the first of his letters as they are presented in the Bible. Many believe Paul's epistles are listed by the longest (Romans) to the shortest (Philemon). However, I think there may have been more thought than that put into the biblical order of Paul's letters. Some think 2 Timothy 3:16 provides an outline that is followed in the ordering of these letters. As such, Romans would be "profitable for doctrine" while 1 & 2 Corinthians would definitely have been written "for reproof." In that same vein, Galatians would have been written for "correction" with the remaining letters providing believers with "instruction in righteousness." There is no argument that the letter to the Romans is the most doctrinal book in all the New Testament, so it makes sense that it would be the foundation upon which the other writings should stand.

Prayer Emphasis: Prepare your heart to hear some divine words that are "given" to us "by inspiration of God" as you read the Book of Romans. **Enrich** your life with the beautiful, Christian doctrines that are provided therein and then **invest** your life in the work of sharing them with others!

Day 3: Acts 22:22-30

"And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, 'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?'" (Acts 22:25)

Paul's Roman Citizenship

It is obvious that Paul had a burning desire to go to Rome. In Acts 19:21, speaking about his upcoming trip to Jerusalem, Paul said, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." His desire to visit Rome might have been based on his personal knowledge of many of the people there. Although he had never visited Rome after his salvation experience, reading the Book of Romans makes it quite apparent that Paul knew a lot about the people in the church there. In the closing chapter of this letter, Paul sent a personal greeting to 26 different people in Rome! He may have learned much of what he knew about these Roman believers through his close relationship with Priscilla and Aquila, whom Paul met and associated with as a tentmaker after his arrival in Corinth. This dedicated couple fled from Rome after Emperor Claudius "commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome" (Acts 18:2). But, most likely, Paul's desire to go to Rome was based on his own Roman citizenship and his desire to share the gospel there. You can clearly see from today's Scripture reading that Paul considered himself "a Roman" (v. 25) and that he stated he was "born a citizen" of that great city (v. 28).

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God to give you a burden to share the gospel with others, especially those of your own family and community. **Prepare** a brief, personal testimony of your own salvation experience to share with others as opportunities arise. **Believe** that God will schedule some opportunities for you!

Day 4: Romans 1:1-12

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle…" (Romans 1:1)

"Called."

Paul followed the customary formula for letter writing in his day by first identifying the author and then the recipients. After that, the writer usually included a personal greeting or salutation. With the exception of Hebrews and 1 John, every letter in the New Testament followed this format. Paul first identified himself as a "bondservant" of Christ and then as "an apostle" ("sent one") of the gospel (v. 1). Paul often referred to himself by both titles throughout his writings in the New Testament. It is easy to trace the spiritual growth in Paul's life. He became *a saint* when he met Christ on the road to Damascus. He immediately became *a servant* when, in Acts 9:6, he asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then we surely know that he eventually became *a soldier* in the Lord's Army. In Romans, he quickly moved from the discussion of his own calling to the calling of the Christians who were residing in Rome and the surrounding areas. They were "called to be saints" (v. 7). It is important to note that the calling of the Christians at Rome was no different than the calling of the great preacher, Paul. Paul did not see their calling as being any less significant or important than his own – and neither did the Holy Spirit! Notice that our calling is not *from* something but *to* something!

Prayer Emphasis: **Relive** and **review** your own salvation experience today and thank God for that life-changing experience! **Ask** God the same question that Paul asked: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then **busy** yourself in fulfilling God's calling on your life to be a saint, a servant, and a soldier!

Day 5: Romans 1:13-25

"I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also." (Romans 1:14-15)

A Personal Obligation

Paul believed he was a "debtor" (v. 14), and that he was personally obligated to share the gospel with all people. The word translated "barbarians" in the NKJV is translated "non-Greeks" in other translations. The Greeks would have shouted out a strong "Amen!" to Paul's choice of words here because they believed all the other people in the world were unlearned, uncultured, and ignorant. Notice that Paul was not just *willing* to preach the gospel to Gentiles, but he was "*ready*" (NKJV) or "*eager*" (NIV) to do so (v. 15). The importance Paul placed on the gospel is evidenced by the fact that he used that word repeatedly in the opening chapter of this letter. (Take a moment to review the first 16 verses and mark the word "gospel" each time you see it.) Paul believed the gospel was the power of God unto salvation and it revealed the pathway to the righteousness that God had provided for all that would come to Him in faith. What we read in Romans 1:16-17 is pretty much the theme of the entire book, that being, the preaching of "the gospel of Christ" was of utmost importance because "in it the righteousness of God is revealed." However, just as it is today, many in Paul's day chose to deny God and reject the relationship He so graciously offered to them.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to give you a burden for those who do not yet know Christ. **Pray** for the salvation of your friends and family members. **Speak** to them about Christ at every opportunity. **Commit** your time and efforts to not leaving any unpaid spiritual debts behind when this life is over.

Day 6: Romans 1:26-2:6

"And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?" (Romans 2:3)

"The Judgment of God"

In the last verse of yesterday's reading, we read where people "exchanged the truth of God" for lies (1:25). Today's Scripture includes a second exchange that some people made. Both men and women were seeking sexual pleasures in ways that God described as "against nature" and "shameful" (1:26-27). Many Christians stop reading and start judging after reading those verses. However, as we continue to read, we see there were many other bad decisions being made by those who refused to recognize God for who He is. The list begins in 1:29 and includes such things as "unrighteousness" and "sexual immorality" and eventually includes gossips and even those who were "disobedient to parents" (v. 30). I am *not* trying to soften the words of Romans 1:26-27 here. However, I *am* trying to say that other sins, some of *our* sins, are also on this list of things that rob people of joy and blessings and incur the wrath of God. Notice that the Holy Spirit wisely begins to speak about those who are quick to pass judgment on others. Verse five clearly states that each one of us will someday be judged by God.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to reveal any sin in your life so that you can repent and honor God in your daily walk. **Read** again the words, "doing the same" in 2:3 and see that God sees all sin as evil. **Remember** all sin is dishonoring to God and ultimately leads to judgment.

Day 7: Romans 2:7-16

"…in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ…" (Romans 2:16)

"The Secrets of Men"

Today's verses do not contradict the clear teaching that salvation is a gift of God and not the result of human merit or the performing of good works. Paul never wavered from teaching that salvation is a result of placing one's faith in what Jesus did on the cross and not in the good works that we do in our lives. However, Paul clearly teaches that good works are part of the fruit that should be evident in the lives of those who have experienced the new birth. This new birth is available to all who will place their faith in Christ. Verse 11 repeats a constant theme of the Bible: God shows no favoritism. Both Jew and Gentile alike can know God and live in His divine power and presence. Many people may try to live in a way that will cause them to *appear* to have this new birth, but God knows their heart! He alone knows "the secrets of men" (v. 16) and the true motivations for our actions. He alone knows whether or not our good works are a result of our relationship with Him or our desire to appear righteous to others. It will only lead to frustration if we try to walk with God without beginning that walk at the cross. Only a true, personal relationship with Jesus Christ can lead to genuine, heart-felt living for the honor and glory of God.

Prayer Emphasis: Check your motivation! Be sure your life is being lived for God's glory and not simply to be seen of men. **Remember** that God not only knows *what* we do, but He also knows *why* we do it. **Seek** to honor God in all that you say and do!

Day 8: Romans 2:17-29

"You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?"(Romans 2:23)

"You"

I am sure the Jews who heard this section of Paul's letter found themselves giving forth a few hearty "Amens!" Paul spoke directly to the Jews and listed several things they believed to be true about their nation. They believed they trusted in God's law and had a right relationship with Him. They thought they knew His will because they had been instructed in the law. They believed themselves to be guides to the blind and a light to those who were in darkness. They saw themselves as able instructors and teachers of the laws of God. And, because of this, they saw themselves as being approved of God simply because of who they were. However, God's Spirit desired that they take a hard look at their own lives before they tried to tell others how to live. In the NKJV, verses 21, 22, and 23 all begin with "you." God was admonishing these Jewish believers to take a hard look at their own lives and see if they were teaching one thing and living another. Circumcision was a physical, outward sign of the personal, inward covenant that God made with Israel. However, the Jews had come to believe that ceremonies and physical acts, like circumcision, were guarantees of their spiritual relationship with God. Paul wanted these readers, Jew and Gentile alike, to see the true identifying marks of a believer are not something that could be made on their physical body.

Prayer Emphasis: Examine your own heart and life to see if "you" are expecting and demanding more from others than you are willing to do for God yourself. **Honor** God by exhibiting what He has done, and is doing, within you and not by outward appearances only.

Day 9: Romans 3:1-12

"What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2)

A Great Advantage!

This chapter begins with an especially important question. Paul asked his readers what advantage there was in being born a Jew. He answered his own question in verse two when he concluded that there was "much" advantage to the Jews, and "in every way." However, in verse nine, Paul made it clear that the advantage the Jews enjoyed was not found in their being "better" than others. The advantage the Jews held over others was found in the fact that "to them were committed the oracles of God" (v. 2). Some translations clarify this statement a bit when they read, "entrusted" rather than "committed" and "the very words of God" rather than "oracles." (Paul would speak of other advantages later in chapter nine, but he elaborated on this one here in this section of his letter.) He wanted them to understand that this great *advantage* brought with it great *responsibility*! God's law can bring us to only one conclusion: That no one nation or race of people has an exclusive right to a relationship with God! Notice the phrase, "As it is written" in verse 10. It is followed by a collection of quotations from the Old Testament. Take a moment to circle the words "none" or "not one" in verses 10 through 12. Then circle the word "all" and "together" in verse 12. These words link us with every other sinner in the world. We are "together" with them in the sense that we are powerless to save ourselves.

Prayer Emphasis: Take advantage of the great advantage of having God's word in your life! **Commit** to the daily reading of God's Word. **Ask** God to reveal Himself to you as you read every paragraph and turn every page. **Live** out your faith in ways that will reveal Him to others you meet along the way.

Day 10: Romans 3:13-23

"...For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:22b-23)

"No Difference"

Yesterday we read that, in at least one way, there was a great advantage to being a Jew. Today we read that, when it comes to our soul's spiritual condition, "there is no difference" (v. 22) between Jew or Gentile. We may be tempted to think that condemning sin will bring conviction, but we should be continually reminded that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction. The root of all sin is found in verse 18. When there is "no fear" (reverential respect) for God, then there is no inward reason to live out a life that brings praise to Him. We are reminded that the righteousness of God is given to us because of our faith being placed in Jesus Christ and not because of any good deeds done on our part. In God's eyes, we have all "sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (v. 23). There is a strong temptation to compare ourselves to others, but it is against the life of God's own Son that our lives will be compared and measured. When we read about Jesus, and all His love, kindness, generosity, humility, and holiness, we should remind ourselves that He was an illustration of all that God had meant for us to be. When we compare ourselves to Him, we can clearly see that we have fallen short of God's intentions for our lives.

Prayer Emphasis: Avoid the temptation to compare yourself to others. **Remind** yourself that God's divine standard is the perfect life lived by His only begotten Son, Jesus. **Humble** yourself before Him and **thank** Him for your salvation!

Day 11: Romans 3:24-4:3

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28)

"Justified"

Paul used the word "justified" often in his letter to the Romans. It is a word that clearly indicated that one had been declared to be righteous or innocent. However, this word does not imply that the purity of one's own life has proven them to be innocent. It does, though, declare that the sacrifice of God's own Son has paid our sin debt and allowed God to pronounce us innocent! Allow this thought to sink in: Justified does not simply mean we have been found "not guilty." It goes much farther than that. It states we are righteous before God and He sees no sin in us whatsoever! An old preacher once explained the term "justified" by explaining that it meant that God saw him, "Just if I'd" never sinned! Through the blood of Christ, God cancels our sin debt and then credits us with the righteousness of His perfect Son! Verse 25 clearly teaches that Christ became our atoning sacrifice. The word "atone" means to "satisfy." Salvation has always been a gift from God. We are wrong to think that those in the Old Testament were saved by anything other than grace. Where would Paul find such an idea? Notice Romans 4:3. Paul got it from the "Scripture." Look at Genesis 15:6 and see it for yourself! As you read these words, be reminded that Abram had no law to keep and no rituals to perform before having righteousness "accounted" to him.

Prayer Emphasis: **Make** much of your salvation today! **Praise** God for sending His own Son as a substitute for our sins and a provider for our salvation and righteousness. **Remember** that the blood of Christ has allowed us to be made righteous, holy, and innocent in the sight of God. **Ask** God to allow you to see yourself as He sees you through the filter of the blood of Jesus.

Day 12: Romans 4:4-15

"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." (Romans 4:7-8)

A Lesson from the Life of David

Our focus verses quote Psalm 32:1-2 where David's praise and appreciation for God's amazing ability to forgive and pardon his sin was expressed. I am sure you remember the story. The evidence against David was strong and compelling. He sinned against God and man by committing several terrible, premeditated acts that were motivated by his own greed and lust. As you know, he paid a dear price for his personal indulgence and suffered greatly for his sins. However, when he turned to God in genuine repentance and threw himself upon God's mercy, he received forgiveness and believed his sins were "covered." This verse is the only place where this Greek word translated "covered" is used in the New Testament. It is a word that means to be completely covered over or hidden. David considered himself "blessed" because God covered his sin and would never "impute" it against him (v. 8). Paul makes it clear that the blessing of forgiveness and pardon was not for the Jews only, but for all who "believes on Him who justifies the ungodly" (v. 5).

Prayer Emphasis: **Take** some time to reflect on how blessed you are to be saved by the grace of God! **Praise** Him for His willingness to forgive and forget our sins. **Confess** any sin that has hindered you from being what God has called you to be and experience what David felt when his sin was "covered."

Day 13: Romans 4:16-25

*"He (*Abraham*) did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God." (Romans 4:20)*

Abraham

Through faith, all people can become the spiritual descendants of Abraham! We trace our spiritual "family tree" not through our physical ancestors but through our spiritual ancestry. By faith we are born into God's family and made direct heirs of all His promises. When you read the promises that God made to Abraham in Genesis 17, you can clearly see that God had both Jews and Gentiles in mind when he promised salvation by faith. Romans 4:17 clearly identifies Abraham as the father of believing Jews and Gentiles alike. Just as surely as the promised son, Isaac, was born well after Abraham and Sarah had the physical power to produce offspring, so are we born into the kingdom through the supernatural power of God. Isaac was born "contrary to hope" (v. 18), nevertheless, he was born! Long after the "hope" of Abraham and Sarah had grown weak, the hope of God's promises remained strong. Faith kept Abraham from wavering and allowed him to accept God's promises as they were stated to him. It is our faith alone that will keep us strong in our spiritual lives. We must constantly claim God's promises as we read His word and allow it to do its work in our hearts. When we do this, we will, like Abraham, give "glory to God" (v. 20).

Prayer Emphasis: **Remember** to continually see your personal salvation as a miraculous gift from a loving and gracious God. Never forget that our salvation was purchased at the price of God giving His only begotten Son. **Believe** that you, and all Christians, can have complete confidence in God's promises.

Day 14: Romans 5:1-11

"… having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

"Peace With God"

Through faith we have been justified (as in "Just if I'd" never sinned) and that allows us to have "peace with God." This peace is much more than just comfort or peace of mind. It literally means that we are at peace with God because we have entered into an entirely new relationship with Him. We were once "enemies" with him (see v. 10) and now we are His children. Verse two tells us that our faith has granted us "access" into the presence of God, and there is no longer any separation between us and our Creator. But notice the four words that close verse one: "our Lord Jesus Christ!" You can rest assured that He is the central figure in God's great redemption plan that has moved us from being a part of the "all have sinned" of Romans 3:23 and included us in the "we" of Romans 5:1! Because of God's great love for us, we can "glory in tribulations" (v. 3). We glory in our tribulations because we know they are part of God's perfecting process for the believer. Look again at verses three through five and see how suffering takes us on a direct path to hope! It has been said that, if one could place a hand on the front and back covers of their Bible and push them together, compressing all of God's Word into one statement, that statement would be the last four words of Romans 5:8: "Christ died for us!"

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** yourself, "Am I really at peace with God?" **Trust** Him and allow Him to turn your sufferings and trials into hope, peace, and joy. **Believe** that God never fails or disappoints those who place their trust in Him! **Thank** God for His love for us and for the peace that comes from knowing Him.

Day 15: Romans 5:12-21

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

Adam vs. Christ

Verse 12 begins with "Therefore," which simply means "because of this." This transitional word indicates that the comparison Paul is about to make between Adam and Jesus is going to help us see what God has saved us from and what He has saved us to! Through Adam came sin, condemnation, and death (v. 12). Through Jesus came justification and life that was offered to "all men" (v. 18). This does not mean "all men" (everyone) will be saved, but it does mean "all men" (everyone) *could* be saved if they would only come to Christ! Through the "disobedience" of Adam, sin was passed down from generation to generation (see again v. 12). But through the "obedience" of Christ, all men can be made righteous (v. 19). It is important to note that the righteousness mentioned here describes our standing in Christ and not necessarily our character and standing in this world. Although we are "righteous" before God because of what we have inherited from Christ, we are still living in a body that we have inherited from Adam. And thus, the conflict between law and grace begins (v. 20).

Prayer Emphasis: **Review** your life and **ask** yourself: "Who do I most resemble, Adam or Christ?" **Accept** the fact that you, because of the cross, now stand righteous before God! **Commit** to be a follower of Jesus and not Adam. **Realize** that, for the believer, the answer to every "how" question is, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 21)!

Day 16: Romans 6:1-14

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." (Romans 6:12)

Sanctification 101

There are some important Biblical terms with which every believer should become familiar if they are to fully understand what Christ accomplished at the cross, and sanctification is one of those terms. In the earlier chapters of Romans, Paul carefully explained the principles of "redemption" and "justification." Here in chapter six, he enters into a very long explanation of "sanctification" that will continue through chapter eight. The progression here is consistent with every story of the Bible and the gospel story as a whole. Man must first understand and accept redemption and justification before he can ever understand (much less experience) sanctification. Unfortunately, many try to start their walk with God here and soon give up in complete and total frustration! But for those who have been "redeemed" (bought back) from the slave block of sin – and for those who have been "justified" by the blood of Jesus – being "sanctified" (literally – "set apart for service") is the most obvious option. Chapter six deals with our being "sanctified" (set apart) from sin and death. Paul explains that we "died to sin" (v. 2), were "buried," and then "raised" (resurrected) to live a new life in Christ (v. 4)! Imagine that! The Gospel of Jesus is to be lived out through those for whom He died. Sanctification is the process that causes us to be less like Adam and more like Jesus!

Prayer Emphasis: **Memorize** Romans 6:12! **Write** it on a card and put it in your pocket or purse. Keep it with you and **refer** to it every time you are tempted to allow the flesh to control your life! **Remember** that believers are not doomed to be servants to sin and the flesh!

Day 17: Romans 6:15-23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"The Wages of Sin"

Some believers were concerned that Paul's teaching on grace would lead to a belief that believers could live any way they wanted with no consequences for disobedience and sin. After all, if God, by grace, has completely forgiven us and made us righteous before Him ("redemption" and "justification") then what would keep people from thinking they did not need to live a new and holy life ("sanctification")? Paul's response was to explain that redemption, justification, and sanctification will direct those who have experienced them to a path of committed service to Christ. This commitment is a result of a "heart" decision to be obedient to the things we are taught from the word of God (v. 17). Few believers ever become committed servants of Christ without first becoming committed students of the Bible! After all, aren't we taught that Christ and the Word are one and the same? How can we ignore God's word without also ignoring God's Son? Verse 20 speaks of *what we were*: "Slaves of sin." Verse 22 speaks of *what we are*: "Free from sin" and "slaves of God!" Verse 23 explains the wage plan for all servants. Those who serve sin and the flesh, will receive "death" (eternal separation from God) while those who follow the path of redemption, justification, and sanctification will receive "eternal life" through Jesus Christ!

Prayer Emphasis: As crazy as this statement may sound, we need to not settle for just being saved, but we should press forward, growing in our spiritual lives, toward sanctification and service! **Read** from the Bible every day and **pray** for strength and opportunity to live it out on a daily basis!

Day 18: Romans 7:1-13

"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law…" (Romans 7:4)

Sanctification 201

In "Sanctification 101" (Romans 6) we learned that we are saved from sin's *control*. In "Sanctification 201" we will learn that we are also saved from sin's *condemnation*. Most believers are familiar with Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." However, the "therefore" reminds us that the statement is referring to something that has been said previously. That something is the wonderful truth found here in Romans 7! When Paul used the illustration of a woman who was bound (obligated) to her husband as long as he was alive, he was trying to help us understand that death dissolves legal obligations. People do not prosecute dead people. They do not sue them, nor do they put them in prison. They certainly do not execute them for their past transgressions. Verse four contains an especially important truth. It states that we, as believers, "have become dead to the law through the body of Christ." The word translated "dead" in that verse could literally be translated "were slain." As such, Paul concludes that, when Christ died on the cross for us, our obligation (sin debt) to the law died there with Him.

Prayer Emphasis: **Refuse** to accept the guilt, shame, and condemnation that Satan will try to bring against you. **Know** that you have been made free from your sin debt and any control that sin may hold over your life. **Say** "Thank you!" to Jesus throughout your day because of the realization that you, as a believer, have been set free from sin's control and condemnation.

Day 19: Romans 7:14-25

"...for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find." (Romans 7:18)

The Constant Conflict

Like Paul, we are often extremely critical of ourselves. There are good things that we know we should do for God, but we don't seem to get them done. There are wrong things that we know we should not do, but, sadly, we find ourselves doing them. And we, like Paul, can offer no acceptable explanation for our failures. We, like him, have to say, "I do not understand!" Here is a simple explanation for the constant conflict that every Christian must face. Salvation does not mean that God has "fixed" our *old* nature. Every Christian still has the ability to sin. However, salvation does mean we have been given a *new* nature. That new nature has no appetite for sin. As such, we have an old nature that still can walk in the flesh, and we have a new nature that has no desire to do so. At the same time, we have a new nature that can walk in the Spirit while we have an old nature that has no desire to do that. What is the result? We find ourselves in a constant struggle to do that which we know to be spiritual and good. And what complicates things even further is that, even when we are doing good things, our old nature is right there with us trying to taint our efforts with such things as pride and selfish ambition (v. 21). In verse 24, Paul wrote "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The answer for him is still the answer for us today: "Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 25)!

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that we are not just saved *from* sin, but *to* a life of service to Jesus Christ. **Focus** on what Christ wants you to be and **feed** your new nature with what it takes to strengthen it!

Day 20: Romans 8:1-12

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:7-8)

Sanctification 301

The Holy Spirit dominates this chapter of the Bible – and rightfully so! If Sanctification 101 and 201 taught us that we could be free from *sin's* control and condemnation, then this graduate level of study on sanctification (Romans 8) will teach us how we can live under the *Spirit's* control. It is important for us to review and understand that sanctification is about our service and not our salvation. Paul's struggles in Romans six and seven were not about being saved. In fact, if Paul had not been saved, he would not have had that inner conflict going on in his life! But, since he was saved, God's Spirit now lived in him and was leading him to live in a way that would bring honor and glory to Christ. As the latter part of Romans 8:4 states, Paul was to no longer live "according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Every Christian must understand that we cannot please God without being obedient to the Holy Spirit. When we allow God's Spirit to lead us, we are going to learn to walk in ways that please God. When we obey our old nature (the flesh) we are going to lead lives that are not pleasing to God. In verse 12, Paul reminds us that we are not "debtors" to the flesh. In other words, God says that we do not owe our old nature anything but that we owe Him everything!

Prayer Emphasis: Pray much about your daily walk. **Seek** to be a witness for God's glory in all that you think, say, and do. **Realize** that productive, joyful believers walk in harmony with the Spirit and not the flesh.

Day 21: Romans 8:13-23

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'" (Romans 8:15)

"The Spirit of Adoption"

The Greek word translated "adoption" in Romans 8:15 and 23 is a word found only five times in the New Testament, and three of those times are in Romans. Paul is the only New Testament writer to use this term. Perhaps the best way to understand the way this word is used in the first two places in Romans is to understand how it is used in the third, and final, place it is found in the book. In Romans 9:4, Paul speaks of Israel and uses this word to describe the special place that was given to that nation as the chosen people of God. This helps us understand more about our own relationship with Christ. We have been "adopted" or "granted sonship" by our heavenly Father because He has chosen us in Christ. This means we have been granted membership into the divine family. With that membership comes all the privileges of rightful heirs. However, just as our adoption brings privileges, it also brings responsibilities. As such, we must learn to share in the Lord's sufferings as well as in His glory. In fact, if we are not willing to share in His sufferings, we will not share in His glory. In verse 18, Paul compared his present suffering to his future reward in heaven and found there to be no comparison between the two.

Prayer Emphasis: Examine your spiritual life to see if you are placing more priority on your privileges than your responsibilities. **Commit** to an area of service in the church and faithfully fill that position. As God's children, Christians are to accept family responsibilities as eagerly as they accept family privileges.

Day 22: Romans 8:24-34

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us…" (Romans 8:26)

Hope and Help

In the NKJV, the word "hope" is found in the first two verses of today's reading five times! Hope is an outgrowth of our salvation and an important part of our Christian experience. Much of our hope is found in the help that God provides for us through His Holy Spirit (v. 26). In verse 23, we saw that believers sometimes "groan." Now, in verse 26, we read where the Holy Spirit "groans" for us. Verse 27 indicates that the Holy Spirit searches our hearts and intercedes for us even when we cannot find the words to express our needs and desires in prayer. We find help and hope in the promise that, "all things work together for good to those who love God" (v. 28). We are told that God has predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of His Son. Here we learn that predestination is about *service* and not salvation! God has provided every *help* that we need to succeed in the Christian life and all the *hope* that we need to be sustained along the way. Based on this truth, Paul asks in verse 31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" If God would give His own Son for us, then why would He later withhold from us anything that we need to live for Him? Verse 34 reveals three essential truths to our Christian success: 1) Christ died for us; 2) He is alive and seated at the position of power (the right hand of God); and 3) He is interceding for us!

Prayer Emphasis: Memorize Romans 8:28 and **meditate** on it daily! **Ask** the Holy Spirit to help you express your deepest needs to God. **Allow** God's Spirit and Word to give you hope as you live for Him. **Believe** that God's plan is for every believer to be like Jesus, and He provides us with all we need to do it.

Day 23: Romans 8:35-9:7

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

No Separation!

Paul asks five questions in Romans 8:32-35 and then provides the answer for each question. There is no need for the believer to ever worry about what God is going to do. God wants all Christians to understand that suffering does not separate us from Christ. In fact, He wants us to understand that suffering is a tool that God sometimes uses to draw us even closer to Him. In Romans 8:26, Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 to show that God's people have always suffered for their faith. However, our suffering is in no way an indication that God is not with us – helping us in every way! Paul reminds us that there is absolutely nothing that can take us outside the reach of our loving God! Think about the things that we have read in Romans 8. Verse one reminded us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Verse 12 reminded us that we have no obligation to obey the flesh and its desires. And now verse 39 reminds us that there is no separation from Christ – regardless of our circumstances! Beginning in Chapter nine, Paul is going to teach some biblical lessons from Israel's spiritual experience and remind his Jewish readers of just some of the many ways that Israel has been blessed by God.

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to worry when challenging times come into your life. **Know** that God is always with you. **Believe** God's promise that nothing can separate us from Him or His love!

Day 24: Romans 9:8-18

"That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed." (Romans 9:8)

"The Children of the Promise"

Paul was quite clear that, to be included in those who were considered "The Children of the Promise," one had to be born again and not just born an Israelite. To help his readers understand that salvation was not based on good works, Paul was led to use the illustration of the children of Rebecca. Before her children were "born" or had done anything "good or evil," God had already chosen them to be His without regard to "works" (v. 11). By this, we clearly see that our relationship with God is not based on performance. When you read these verses carefully, you see that this "election" is not about salvation, but service. It was about Jacob being chosen over Esau as far as the continuation of the lineage was concerned. The word "hated" (v. 13) does not imply that God did not love Esau. It is clear that Esau's natural father loved him dearly, and we can be assured that God loved him, too! The word translated "hate" in this verse is the same word found in Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not *hate* his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." The Lord was not implying that we should literally hate those that are precious to us to prove that we love Him. However, He was implying that we must prioritize our relationships – always putting Him first.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for His call to salvation and to service! **Remember** that our call to salvation and service is based on God's grace and mercy and not our good works or merit! **Praise** God that you have been included in His divine plan for the ages!

Day 25: Romans 9:19-29

"Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?" (Romans 9:21)

A Good Question

Verse 19 begins another series of questions that Paul must have anticipated his readers might ask. The central question regarding God's callings is found in verse 21, "Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?" A potter might use the same batch of clay to make one vessel that was to be used in some decorative way (like a beautiful vase) and another that was to be used in some more practical way (like a water pot). So it is with God's callings for service and His divine purposes for different people. We are not to complain about God's sovereign choices! God had every right to choose Jacob over Esau – and we have no right to question His choice. Paul then quotes from Hosea and Isaiah to support his statement. He wanted his readers to understand that God is a loving God who forgives and restores those who are not His people so that He, based on *mercy* and not *merit*, can make them what He wants them to be – His own! The key point here is that God loves Jews and Gentiles alike and He calls whom He chooses and appoints them to whatever place of service He desires.

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to question God's choices and surrender to His authority and plan for your life. **Serve** Him in whatever role He chooses for you. **Remember** that this sovereign choice is about *service* and not *salvation*. It is God's desire that *all* people be saved!

Day 26: Romans 9:30-10:4

*"...they (*the Jews*) did not seek it (*righteousness*) by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone." (Romans 9:32)*

Israel's Real Problem

Verse 30 begins with a question. Paul asks, "What shall we say then?" It is interesting to note that this is the fifth time (see 4:1; 6:1; 8:31; 9:14) that he introduced a new topic of discussion with this question. He then spoke about the Gentiles obtaining righteousness by faith while the Jews were still seeking to find righteousness through the keeping of the law. Israel's real problem was that, if one were to obtain righteousness by keeping the law, they would have to keep it completely and perfectly. Their real problem was they had not sought righteousness "by faith," but "by the works of the law" (v. 32). This became "a stumbling stone and rock of offense" (v. 33) to the Jews because they rejected the gospel while the Gentiles responded to it by faith. Paul explained the reason for Israel's stumbling. It was because they were zealous for God, but their zeal was not according to knowledge. I think Paul could clearly understand their situation because he had been such a zealot himself before he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. The Jews sought to establish their own righteousness by keeping the law and therein rejected the righteousness that can be found only in Christ Jesus. It is obvious that Paul loved his fellow Jews and desired very much for them to accept the gospel and be saved.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for the salvation of someone that you know. Let them know how much you care about them and **seek** an opportunity to share the gospel with them. **Strive** to be a good and faithful witness in all things and at all times.

Day 27: Romans 10:5-15

"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him." (Romans 10:12)

"No Distinction"

Righteousness that was obtained by keeping the Law would be a result of human achievement and not by God's grace. If one had to keep the Law perfectly to obtain righteousness, then no one could ever say with any certainty that they were saved. Paul's quoting of Deuteronomy 30:14 (v. 8) is an indicator that Moses never taught that a man was saved by keeping the law. The purpose of the law was to *reveal* man's need for salvation, not to *provide* salvation. The words found in Romans 10:6-8 are based on what is found in Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Blessings were promised to those who were obedient to God while chastisement was promised to those who were disobedient. The same is true with the gospel. One either obeys God's call to repentance and is blessed with salvation or disobeys God by rejecting the gospel. The latter decision would lead to damnation that could be blamed on nothing but the individual's own choice. Salvation involves an inward belief "with the heart" and an outward confession "with the mouth" (v. 10). There was to be no distinction made between Jew and Gentile. If the Jews were going to be saved, then they were going to have to reject their self-made pursuit of righteousness and accept God's one way of salvation. All they had to do was call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank** God for allowing you to clearly see His plan of salvation. **Recognize** that it is only by God's divine grace that you have come to know Jesus and all His wonderful blessings. **Remember** there is only one way to salvation for Jew and Gentile alike and that is Jesus Christ!

Day 28: Romans 10:16-11:6

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?' So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:16-17)

No Excuses

We know that some Jews believed the gospel and accepted Jesus as Savior. When Romans 10:16 states, "But they (the Jews) have not all obeyed the gospel," it is saying that Israel, as a nation, rejected Jesus and denied that He was who He claimed to be. But why was that the case? What excuse could they possibly offer the Lord when they finally had to stand before Him? Could they say they had not heard? No! In 10:18 Paul quoted Psalm 19:4 to refute that reasoning. Could they claim that they did not understand? No again! In 10:19-20 Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1 to disallow that excuse. Then in 10:21 Paul quoted Isaiah 65:2 to prove that God had reached out to Israel only to find them to be a disobedient people who would not come to Him on His terms. In 11:1 Paul asked, "Has God cast away His people?" The answer was, "Certainly not!" It was not God that rejected Israel, but it was Israel that rejected God. However, there would prove to be a remnant that would be faithful to believe that the only way to God was on His terms – that being, by grace and grace alone!

Prayer Emphasis: **Review** your various excuses for not being fully committed to God and then try to explain them to Him in light of the cross. **Move** from the realm of "thinking about it" and "praying about it" and get busy doing the things God wants you to do! **Realize** that there is no good excuse for the lost to reject salvation or for the saved to neglect service.

Day 29: Romans 11:7-18

"What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Romans 11:7)

"Certainly Not!"

Paul believed in giving credit where credit was due. He spoke of the earnestness with which Israel had gone about seeking a performance-based righteousness before God. For many, their sad spiritual condition could not be attributed to a lack of trying! In verse eight, Paul quotes from Isaiah 29:10 and says that Israel was in a spiritual "stupor." He then added this comment to that quotation: "To this very day!" The first 30 chapters of Isaiah were written somewhere around 701 BC, and Paul wrote this letter to the Romans somewhere around 57 AD. So, for at least a period of almost 800 years, Israel had been banging their heads against the hard wall of the law while trying to earn their own way to God! That, my friends, is a very long time! But it is not time enough to extend beyond the reach of God's grace! Look at the question in the first part of verse 11, "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" Now look at the Holy Spirit's immediate answer, "Certainly not!" Israel's "fall" mentioned in the later part of that verse is in reference to their rejection of the gospel. To reject Christ and the pardon that was purchased by His death, burial, and resurrection is the one, and only, unpardonable sin.

Prayer Emphasis: Review your life and **recognize** that time is passing swiftly. **Consider** all the things you have been thinking, talking, and praying about doing for God on that magical "someday." **Remember** that God never gives up on His people, so it is never too late to surrender to His will!

Day 30: Romans 11:19-31

"You will say then, 'Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.' Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear." (Romans 11:19-20)

"Grafted In"

How supernatural is our salvation? In the last part of yesterday's verses, and the first part of today's, Paul uses the illustration of the olive tree to help us understand just how thankful we should be that we are saved and have been made a part of God's glorious kingdom. The olive tree is used to represent God and His holy word. The natural "branches" (v. 17) represent Israel, the people to whom God's word was first given and with whom God first entered into covenant relationship. The "wild olive tree" (v. 17) represents the Gentiles. An especially important phrase is found in verse 24, that being, "contrary to nature." The natural way of looking at a wild branch was to see it as something that needed to be removed so that the good branches would not have to compete with it for nourishment. When the natural branches (Israel) refused to fulfill their covenant relationship with God, the wild branches (the Gentiles) were grafted in and made a part of the tree. However, there was to be no boasting on the part of the Gentiles. Even though Israel refused to keep its covenant promises, God never failed from His end. In verse 29, His promises are said to be "irrevocable," and, because of His faithfulness, Israel will ultimately "be saved" (v. 26).

Prayer Emphasis: Consider how much God loves you! **Thank** him for the fact that you have been made a part of His family. **Pray** for Israel, and all lost people today, and **pray** specifically for the salvation of someone you know personally. **Realize** that being born again means we are God's children and heirs to all His promises. **Live** up to your family name today!

Day 31: Romans 11:32 - 12:5

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2)

"Transformed"

The thought of God's love for all people caused Paul to begin to praise the Lord for His mercy and goodness. He declared God's wisdom and knowledge to be "unsearchable" (11:33). By that, Paul meant there was no bottom to the ocean of God's greatness! The last verse of chapter 11 is a key to understanding what we are going to learn in chapter 12. All things are "of" Him and "through" Him, so every life should be committed "to" Him! Chapter 12 begins by telling us that we should be willing to present ourselves to God as living sacrifices. Just like the ceremonial offerings of old, the presenting of our lives to God is a form of "service" (12:1). As God's children, our lives should not conform to the pattern of this world. In other words, it is time to discontinue being "conformed" to this world's pattern and to be "transformed by the renewing of (our) mind" (12:2). We are not to think of ourselves as being God's second choice after Israel's rejection of the gospel. We are to see ourselves as God's children and just as much a part of His great plan as Israel. To help us better understand how God's love has allowed us to become His own children, God begins to use the image of a "body" (v. 4) to help us to see that He has a role and purpose for all believers – Jew and Gentile alike!

Prayer Emphasis: **Read** God's word faithfully and, as you read, **ask** Him to change the way you think and to give you a new mind that is more compatible to your new life! **Realize** that we can only change the way we *live* by allowing God to change the way we *think*.

Day 32: Romans 12:6-16

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them…in proportion to our faith…" (Romans 12:6)

Spiritual Gifts

Applying what he just said about all believers being a part of God's body, Paul explained just how we can go about offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices. Every Christian is to use their God-given abilities (spiritual gifts) in spiritual service to Christ and His church. We are to serve the Lord by serving one another. This service should be motivated by love, which will cause us to think more about the needs of others and less about ourselves. Verse 11 clearly teaches us that when we are serving one another, we are serving the Lord! When we serve the Lord, our lives are filled with rejoicing, patience, and consistency (v. 12). We will also exhibit generosity and hospitality towards others (v. 13). And, we will be empowered to live out our Lord's command (Matthew 5:44) to love and even be a blessing to our enemies (v. 14). But that is not all. By serving one another we learn how to relate to people in all situations and better understand how to meet their needs (v. 15). And, perhaps best of all, we become of "the same mind" (v. 16) and live in harmony. Imagine what church would be like if every believer did their part to make it a success!

Prayer Emphasis: **Value** the ministries of others. **Express** appreciation to someone who serves in a different ministry than yours today. **Pray** for all our church volunteers and workers on a regular basis. **Remember** that God is glorified when His people serve one another because they love one another.

Day 33: Romans 12:17-13:8

"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." (Romans 12:18)

"Live Peaceably With All Men"

The verses we read yesterday dealt with the way believers are to lovingly serve one another, while the verses we read today deal with the way believers are to relate to unbelievers. We are commanded to "repay *no one* for evil" (12:17), and "no one" includes believers and unbelievers alike. In that same verse we are told to "have regard for good things in the sight of *all* men." Some translations read "provide things honest" (KJV) or "do what is right" (NIV), implying that our dealings with all people, whether they are believers or not, should be fair, open, and honest. If there is any way we can possibly do so, we are to live at peace with all people. Again, this means the saved as well as the unsaved. But it goes even farther than that. As the Scripture states, we are to feed our enemies when they are hungry and give them drink when they are thirsty. In other words, we are to leave such things as judgment and revenge to God. When we do this, we will learn the great truth that is found in Romans 12:21, and we will accomplish wonderful things for God. As Christians, we are to be good citizens and respect the laws of the land (13:1-7). The only debt we should owe to anyone is to love them in the way that God has commanded (13:18). God certainly seems to indicate that this is all very possible.

Prayer Emphasis: **Live out** the Golden Rule on a daily basis. **Treat** others as you would want to be treated. **Remember** that believers are to exhibit love to all people and not just to their fellow believers.

Day 34: Romans 13:9-14:4

"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed." (Romans 13:10-11)

The Importance of Showing Love

Paul continued his discourse on the role that believers are to play within society by stating that there is a lot of Bible truth expressed when Christians treat their neighbors with love. There is a whole lot of John 3:16 to be found in being kind to those who are experiencing difficult situations in life. You cannot help but notice that Paul quoted three of the "Shall Not" commandments in this illustration before moving on to what love "does" and "is" (13:10). Verses 11 through 14 help us understand that the soon (and certain) coming of the end of this age should serve to motivate us to actually do those good things that we have been thinking about doing. The brevity of life is understood in the usage of the words "night" and "day" (13:12). The kind of love that motivates us to do good to others is the kind of love that will help us overcome the desire to live and act in ways that are *not* pleasing to God and to live in ways that *are* pleasing to Him. Accordingly, the first verses in chapter 14 serve to remind us that we are not to judge others in matters of diet and other observances of the ceremonial laws. Such "disputes over doubtful things" (14:1) are not reason enough to become judgmental or to break fellowship with other believers.

Prayer Emphasis: **Do** something good for someone today. **Express** God's love to someone by rendering an act of kindness that is motivated by nothing but the love of God. **Remember** that we *preach* by what we *practice* and not just by what we say. **Live out** a wonderful sermon of God's love and grace as you walk through life today!

Day 35: Romans 14:5-17

"One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind." (Romans 14:5)

Differing Opinions

Yesterday we were warned not to be judgmental toward those who hold differing opinions regarding ceremonial or dietary laws. Today we are told not to judge those who hold differing opinions on the Sabbath or Holy Days. A key to understanding these verses is found in the last part of 14:5 where we read, "Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind." Which position a person took on what day to worship did not seem to matter to Paul. If they believed they should worship on the Sabbath and on the Holy Days, then let them do it. Paul, like the apostles and the early church in Acts, worshipped God daily. So, it seems that Paul was of the opinion that you couldn't pick a wrong day to worship and serve God! All days are to be dedicated to God and should be filled with service to Him. When we begin to judge others, we should allow the Holy Spirit to remind us that, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (v. 10), and that God said, "Every knee shall bow to Me" (v. 11). God is the one to whom every person will ultimately answer. Be assured that, "each of us shall give account *of himself* to God" (v. 12). This fact alone should be enough to convince us that we should cease from passing judgment on others. On the other hand, if some unnecessary action on our part is particularly offensive to others, we should be willing to forego any action that might cause other Christians (especially new believers) to stumble (v.13).

Prayer Emphasis: Draw an imaginary circle on the floor and stand or kneel in it. **Ask** God to deal with the person in the circle and leave the judging of others to Him alone. **Pay** attention to your own actions and **trust** God to pay attention to the actions of others.

Day 36: Romans 14:18 - 15:6

"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another." (Romans 14:19)

Pursue Peace

As believers, it should be our consuming desire to do what leads to peaceful relationships with our fellow Christians and to live in ways that result in other believers being strengthened. The fellowship of God's people should not be disrupted because of differing opinions on such matters as what foods should be eaten or avoided. There is much freedom for the believer in these matters, but much responsibility accompanies that freedom. It is better for stronger believers to forfeit some of their freedom if doing so will prevent younger, or weaker, believers from stumbling. If you have questions in your own heart about something, then it is best to avoid the questionable thing or activity altogether. Strong Christians know how to put the needs of others before their own. Each of us should be constantly considering the needs of others (whether saved or not) and taking care to live in ways that will be a positive witness of our faith in Christ. Memorize the first part of Romans 15:3: "For even Christ did not please Himself." When we begin to live unselfishly, we begin to "be like-minded toward one another" (15:5) and to "glorify…God" (15:6).

Prayer Emphasis: Resist the temptation to make life only about you. **Defeat** that seed of selfishness that draws you toward thinking about you and what you want or need. **Focus** on the needs of others and **trust** your needs to God. **Remember**, we are never being more like Christ than when we are putting others first.

Day 37: Romans 15:7-19

"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." (Romans 15:7)

"Receive One Another"

When we "receive one another" (v. 7), we are to do so in the same way that Christ has "received" or accepted us. When we obey this command, we bring glory to God. It is sometimes difficult to refer to Christ as a "servant" (v. 8), but that is a word by which Jesus often described Himself. Like Christ, Paul made himself a servant to everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike. He used several quotations from the Old Testament to prove that God's redemption plan always included all people from all races and nationalities. When we learn to love all people – and to allow God to love them through us – then, "The God of hope (will) fill (us) with all joy and peace in believing," and we will soon "abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (v. 13). Paul considered it an honor to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and to teach them truths from God's word that would empower them to be the kind of "living sacrifices" or "offerings" that he encouraged them to become in chapter 12. When people live in accordance with the word of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, then the life they offer to God becomes acceptable to Him and He can accomplish remarkable things through them. Paul never forgot that it was, "by the power of the Spirit of God" (v. 19) that his life and ministry had led to the saving of many souls.

Prayer Emphasis: Consider the way that Christ has loved you and then **treat others** accordingly. Be strong enough to make yourself a servant to others. **Remember**, it is Christ-like to serve others!

Day 38: Romans 15:20-33

"And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation…" (Romans 15:20)

A Noble "Aim"

Paul stated: "I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named" (v. 20), or, in other words, in places where the gospel had not yet been preached. Even though Paul often quoted from Isaiah, Moses, and Jeremiah, it seems as if Paul had adopted the last part of Isaiah 52:15 as his life verse and personal "Mission Statement." There Isaiah said, "For what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider." This paramount and consuming desire to carry the gospel to unreached people often hindered Paul from spending as much time as he desired with the established churches and his fellow believers. When you read verse 23, you have to admire the statement that he, "no longer (had) a place in these parts" where he had not carried and faithfully preached the gospel. This does not imply that everyone alive at Paul's time had heard him preach, but it does imply that he had fulfilled his personal mission statement of carrying the gospel to every Gentile nation within his reach. And now, what was Paul going to do with his "spare time?" He was now going to Jerusalem to deliver an offering that the Christians in Macedonia and Achai had collected for the church there. Needless to say, Paul was a remarkably busy man. No wonder he often asked people to pray for him!

Prayer Emphasis: Review your own personal, spiritual goals and ambitions to see how much priority you have placed on soul-winning and personal evangelism. **Set** a goal to witness to someone for Christ in the near future and **prepare** yourself for that task. **Remember** that all Christians should possess a fervent desire to share the gospel with others.

Day 39: Romans 16:1-15

"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church at Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also…" (Romans 16:1-2)

Personal Greetings

As you read the closing verses in Romans, notice how well Paul seemed to know the many people that are mentioned in this closing chapter. When I read these verses, I can only conclude that Paul, like Jesus, knew his sheep by name and had a personal concern for each of them. Some believe that Phoebe was probably the person who delivered Paul's letter to the Christians at Rome. Aquila and Priscilla were "fellow workers" (v. 3) in more ways than one. They were in the tent-making business with Paul, and they had apparently joined him in the business of preaching the gospel around the world. In Phoebe and Priscilla, we see examples of women being incredibly involved in the work of the early church. Read down through verse 15 and note again the personal information Paul shares about each one of these people. He knew them, was familiar with their personal ministries, and it seems that he knew their families as well. As you read these expressions of love and appreciation, you can imagine that Paul would have loved to have been able to spend more time with these people. But one supposes that Paul thought there would be time for friends and fellowship in heaven when this life was over.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for your fellow believers and church members today, especially the many godly women who serve so faithfully among us. **Contact** someone and **express** your love and appreciation to them. **Invest** in others by taking the time to get to know them.

Day 40: Romans 16:16-27

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Romans 16:24)

In Conclusion

You can sense the urgency in Paul's words as he urges the Christians at Rome to watch out for those who desired to cause division in the church by teaching things that were contrary to what they had learned from him and other godly teachers. His warning was both simple and succinct, "Avoid them" (v. 17). It was Paul's opinion that people who caused division in the church did so for selfish reasons. "Smooth words" and "flattering speech" (v. 18) were some of the tools that divisive people used to entice others to their way of thinking. We would be unwise to think that this does not go on in God's churches today. People have not changed. Personal ambitions lead to personal agendas, and personal agendas lead to politics in the church. Paul simply encouraged these believers to be "wise in what is good" (v. 19), and to do the right things toward one another. When Christians unselfishly serve the Lord, and one another, Satan is ultimately defeated and crushed! How is this possible? Read again the words of verses 25 through 27 and be reminded that we serve a God "who is able" (v. 25). Therefore, we, like Paul, can say, that unto Him "be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (v. 27).

Prayer Emphasis: When it comes to church unity, **commit** to always being a part of the solution and to never being a part of the problem. **Make** maintaining church unity a personal goal in your life. **Refuse** to be a tool by which anyone's personal agenda is advanced in the church. Thank you for reading with us. Please contact us at **gary@seminolebc.com** if we can ever be of service to you.