



**For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,**  
to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God  
is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

**ROMANS 1:16-17 (ESV)**



# ROMANS 1-8

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

FALL 2022



"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 ESV

*"The writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit...It is God's voice, not man's; the words are God's words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this earth."*

C.H. SPURGEON

*"The almighty Creator, the Lord of hosts, the great God before whom the nations are as a drop in a bucket, comes to you and begins to talk to you through the words and truths of Holy Scripture.*

*Perhaps you have been acquainted with the Bible and Christian truth for many years, and it has meant little to you; but one day you wake up to the fact that God is actually speaking to you — you!"*

J.I. PACKER

# WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

## **God has chosen to speak to us through His Word.**

In the pages of Scripture, we hear the voice of the living God. The Bible tells us who God is, why he made us, who we are, and how we might come to know, love, and serve our Creator. There is nothing more valuable in this world than to receive communication from the One who made us. The Psalmist understood how precious the Scriptures are when we penned these words: "The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." (Ps. 119:72, ESV)

Perhaps you understand this and agree that the Bible is infinitely valuable, yet you feel intimidated and ill-equipped to read it for yourself. The Bible is, after all, complex ancient literature, written centuries ago in a distant culture and context. As you encounter passages that range from apocalyptic visions, to bizarre Levitical commands, to abstract Hebrew poetry, you often find yourself uncertain of how these verses could possibly hold any significance for your life. For many of us, there is a temptation to immediately run to a pastor, a commentary, our study Bible notes, or a Google search to find answers to these difficult questions.

While there is certainly value in those various Bible study resources, there is nothing quite so valuable as learning how to discover these truths for yourself. While it may be intimidating, challenging, and time consuming, with prayerful dependence on God's Spirit, a growing understanding of how the literature of the Bible operates, and the proper tools of interpretation, anyone can study the Bible for themselves. My hope for you in this Bible study is that you will come to grow in your understanding and experience of mining the riches of God's Word for yourself.

Our goal this year in Bible study is not only for you to learn about one particular book or passage in the Bible, but to simultaneously grow in your general abilities to study, interpret, and apply the Scriptures for yourself.

*My prayer is that we will become more and more like those diligent Bereans of whom Paul speaks in Acts 17, who "...received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."*

# HOW DO WE STUDY THE BIBLE?

In our personal study, many of us will feel an immediate instinct to contextualize a given passage to our own lives. We want to immediately answer the question, “What does this have to do with me?” While that is a good question to ask, in order to answer that question well, we must first investigate what the text meant for its original author, in its original context, to its original audience. If we fail to do this, we run the risk of reading our own ideas, biases, and opinions into the passage, without reference to the author’s intent.

Faithful Bible study involves the difficult but rewarding work of building a bridge from “them, then” to “us, now.” There are a variety of Bible study methods that can be employed to faithfully accomplish this goal. We should bear in mind that there is no one Bible study approach that guarantees the “right” answers. You can do all the right things and use all the right tools, but apart from God’s Spirit opening your eyes, softening your heart, and illuminating the pages of Scripture for you, you will end up just like the Pharisees who were skilled experts in their study of the Bible but remained blind to the truth.

Our method for studying this semester will be a three-step approach, considering structure, surroundings, and significance. Each of these categories will provide you with questions for the passage you are studying that will serve as a kind of road map, guiding you towards a better understanding of the text. The harder you work at prayerfully seeking out the answers to these questions, the more easily you will be able to build that bridge from “them, then” to “us, now.”



## **STRUCTURE**

Consider how the words, ideas, and teachings of this book are developed and organized. The better you can understand the structure, the more clearly you will see the emphasis of the message.



## **SURROUNDINGS**

Consider the different levels of context. How does one passage fit with those that come before and after? How does it fit within the context of the entire book? How does it fit in the context of the whole Bible story?



## **SIGNIFICANCE**

Consider how we can apply these verses to our lives in light of the gospel. What transformative truths does this passage tell me about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus?

Studying the Bible well is often difficult! It takes time, practice, and most importantly, prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit. This handbook is meant to aid you in identifying the structure, surroundings, and significance of these passages with tools and strategies you should use in studying any biblical discourse. The more you learn, develop, and put these tools into practice, the more you’ll enjoy and benefit from the richness and depth of God’s Word.

## TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING STRUCTURE

As we study, interpret, and apply these passages, it's important to keep in mind what type of literature is being read so that we can use the right approach. There are three primary genres of literature found in the Bible: narrative, poetry, and discourse. The book of Romans is a discourse.

Here are some tools and strategies you can use that will be helpful as you try your best to see how these passages are structured:

- **Identify primary and subordinate clauses** - Try your best to discern which clauses are supported and developed from those clauses which are employed to support and develop a primary clause.
- **Repetition of words** - Are there words, phrases, or ideas that are repeated?
- **Comparison/Contrast** - Are there ideas, people, or things that are identified as similar or different?
- **Conjunctions** - Look for terms that would join units together (and, but, for, because...)
- **Pronouns** - Identify which individual is represented by each pronoun
- **Questions and Answers** - Is there a question posed by the speaker that is answered elsewhere?
- **Figures of speech** - Are there expressions used in a non-literal sense which are meant to convey an image?

Seeing the structure of a passage will be more difficult in some passages than others. It's not a perfect science and there often won't be one right answer to how a passage breaks down. So be patient, take your time, don't be discouraged, and know that the more you put these tools into practice, the more clearly you'll see the message of the text and enjoy the riches of God's Word.

## TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING SURROUNDINGS

One of the most common ways that information is misunderstood is when it is taken out of context. Imagine walking in on a friend who is in mid-conversation with someone else on the phone. We can hear them speaking but we can't truly make sense of their words until we identify who's on the other end of the conversation, why this phone call is taking place at all, what they talked about before we walked in, and how the conversation will end.

The same is true with any biblical text. Any individual verse belongs to a larger unit of a chapter or a book. Every book in the Bible can only be understood in reference to the meta-story of the whole Bible. Most often, misinterpretation in our personal Bible study will occur because we missed some level of context that informed us as the modern reader of the author's intended meaning for his original audience.

As we study Romans, every week we're going to consider three important levels of context: the borders, the book, and the Bible.

- **Borders** - Consider the immediate context of the verses that come immediately before and after the verses you're studying. How do the verses that border your passage inform your understanding of the author's argument and aim? You'll find that this will be closely related to the first step in identifying the structure. The sections before and after your passage are like pieces to a puzzle that will help you see how your passage fits.
- **Book** - This wider level of context will be a regular reminder of Paul's theme and aim in writing the book of Romans. Ask the question, how does this particular section of Romans support and contribute to Paul's larger aim?
- **Bible** - The Bible is made up of many books and many stories, but we must know that they all serve to tell one big story. This one meta-story is a story that is ultimately about Jesus. This level of context will be an opportunity to widen your gaze to the promises, predictions, and fulfillment of these realities that stretch from Genesis to Revelation.

There's an infinite number of connections and reflections to be made about each of these levels of context, and the more you dig into these questions, the more you'll be overwhelmed by the richness of God's Word. As we study these passages week by week, make it your goal to have at least one significant reflection or observation that takes each level of context into consideration.

## TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANCE

It's a common Bible study application "reflex" to immediately look for rules to follow. While there certainly are ethical demands found all throughout the Bible, the consistent pattern in Scripture is that imperatives (things we must do) are always grounded in indicatives (things that are true or already done). That pattern is found throughout Paul's letters. The grace of God in Jesus is what motivates and empowers our obedience. The love of Jesus is ultimately the only thing that can transform us. So before we ask, "What must I do?", it's important that we first ask the question: "Who is Jesus, and what has he done?"

Here are some questions to ask in your study that will help you connect the indicatives of the gospel to the imperatives for how we can live transformed lives:

- Is there an example given by Jesus that he enables me to follow?
- Are there sins identified in this passage that Jesus has forgiven, that I must confess?
- Does this passage tell me about something that Jesus has accomplished or provided for me in the past?
- Does this passage tell me about the benefits that I presently experience in belonging to Jesus?
- Does this passage tell me about an unrealized gospel reality that I can anticipate in the future?
- What gospel realities in this passage should cause me to worship?



We must resist the temptation to make the Bible into a book about us. It is first and foremost a book about God, who he is, and what he has done for us in and through his Son, Jesus.

Jesus is the hero of the Bible, the Savior of the world, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Our study, interpretation, and application of the Bible must lead us to increasingly love, trust, serve, and obey him.

## DOING THE STUDY

In preparation for each week of Bible study, spend some time reading and rereading the passage, writing down observations, insights, and questions. After your own initial observations, do your best to answer the assigned questions for each section. You will answer the same questions each month regarding structure, surroundings, and significance. Within each section there are specific questions designed to help guide your study and give you a closer look at the passage.

### STUDY KEY



Initial insights/observations you have after reading the passage a few times



Questions designed to help you take a closer look at structure, surroundings, and significance

ROMANS 1-3  
LESSONS



# ROMANS 1:1-17



## **NOTES, INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, ETC.**

Read the passage and write down any observations, insights, or questions.



## **STRUCTURE**

What themes or topics is Paul addressing in this passage?

Is there any one theme that seems to be most important in the passage?

How does Paul organize this section? Try to come up with a simple outline that reflects how this passage might break down into different parts.

What is Paul's main point? Try to summarize the emphasis of this passage in 1-2 sentences.

# ROMANS 1:1-17



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

*Compare and contrast Paul's greeting here in Romans to some of his other letters. Any observations?*

*Many believe that Paul establishes his theme for the entire book of Romans in this first section. Which of these verses might Paul be using to communicate the theme of his letter?*



## SURROUNDINGS

### BORDERS

In what ways do the verses immediately before and after this section impact your understanding of what Paul is saying?

### BOOK

Consider the theme of the book of Romans. How does this passage help to support and develop Paul's main theme?

### BIBLE

When we consider this passage in light of the larger story of the Bible, how does this passage relate to God's big plan to save sinners?



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SURROUNDINGS

*In what ways might Paul's words regarding unrighteousness in verses 18-32 help us to understand why verses 16 and 17 are such good news?*

*In Romans 15:22-33, Paul gives us a clue as to why he is writing to the church in Rome. How do these verses inform our understanding of the letter?*

*This passage tells us that the Gospel is for both Jew and Gentile. How does a broader understanding of Jews and Gentiles in the rest of Scripture inform our understanding of this passage?*



## SIGNIFICANCE

How does the good news of the gospel impact how you respond to this passage?

What part of the gospel can you see in this passage? Please describe.

# ROMANS 1:1-17



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SIGNIFICANCE

*What truths in this passage might impact the way that we think about evangelism?*

*How can we connect verse 17 to who Jesus is and what he has done?*

## GOING DEEPER

*What is the significance of Jesus being “a descendent of David”? (V.3)*

*What does Paul mean by “The obedience of faith”? (V. 5)*

*Why might we be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel? Have you ever felt this way? How does a passage like this help us to be bold in our faith?*

# ROMANS 1:18-32



## NOTES, INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, ETC.

Read the passage and write down any observations, insights, or questions.



## STRUCTURE

What themes or topics is Paul addressing in this passage?

Is there any one theme that seems to be most important in the passage?

How does Paul organize this section? Try to come up with a simple outline that reflects how this passage might break down into different parts.

What is Paul's main point? Try to summarize the emphasis of this passage in 1-2 sentences.

# ROMANS 1:18-32



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

*What is the significance of the “therefore” in verse 24?*

*What is the pattern or progression of sin and idolatry that Paul describes in this passage?*



## SURROUNDINGS

### BORDERS

In what ways do the verses immediately before and after this section impact your understanding of what Paul is saying?

### BOOK

Consider the theme of the book of Romans. How does this passage help to support and develop Paul's main theme?

### BIBLE

When we consider this passage in light of the larger story of the Bible, how does this passage relate to God's big plan to save sinners?

# ROMANS 1:18-32



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SURROUNDINGS

*Look for a contrast between this passage and v. 17. Describe.*

*How does the "therefore" in 2:1 impact how you understand this section?*

*Paul describes a pattern of how God responds to sin and idolatry. Identify other places in Scripture where this pattern is visible.*



## SIGNIFICANCE

How does the good news of the gospel impact how you respond to this passage?

What part of the gospel can you see in this passage? Please describe.

# ROMANS 1:18-32



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SIGNIFICANCE

*How does such a grim diagnosis of idolatry and description of the nature of sin impact your understanding of the gospel?*

## GOING DEEPER

*Define “wrath.” Why can the concept of wrath be unsettling?*

*What are some of the consequences of ignoring or thinking lightly of the doctrine of God’s wrath?*

*What is the connection between idolatry and immorality in this passage?*

*What does Paul mean when he says “God gave them up”?*

*How does Paul’s understanding of sin differ from how sinful humanity might view sin?*



# ROMANS 2:1-16



## NOTES, INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, ETC.

Read the passage and write down any observations, insights, or questions.



## STRUCTURE

What themes or topics is Paul addressing in this passage?

Is there any one theme that seems to be most important in the passage?

How does Paul organize this section? Try to come up with a simple outline that reflects how this passage might break down into different parts.

What is Paul's main point? Try to summarize the emphasis of this passage in 1-2 sentences.

# ROMANS 2:1-16



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

*What kind of person is Paul addressing in 2:1? Why does Paul have this concern?*

*This section addresses the theme of God's judgment. Can you identify the different aspects or implications of God's judgment in this passage? How might that help you see how Paul structures this section?*



## SURROUNDINGS

### BORDERS

In what ways do the verses immediately before and after this section impact your understanding of what Paul is saying?

### BOOK

Consider the theme of the book of Romans. How does this passage help to support and develop Paul's main theme?

### BIBLE

When we consider this passage in light of the larger story of the Bible, how does this passage relate to God's big plan to save sinners?

# ROMANS 2:1-16



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SURROUNDINGS

*How does the "therefore" in 2:1 connect this passage to 1:18-32?*

*Where else in the Bible do we see God's righteous judgment carried out?  
In what ways might that impact the way we understand this passage?*



## SIGNIFICANCE

How does the good news of the gospel impact how you respond to this passage?

What part of the gospel can you see in this passage? Please describe.

# ROMANS 2:1-16



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SIGNIFICANCE

*How might a Christian and a non-Christian read this passage differently? How does our relationship to Jesus impact how we think about God's judgment?*

*What part of the gospel deals with God's righteous judgment?*

## GOING DEEPER

*What are ways that we might be tempted to pass judgment in the way that Paul describes here?*

*What does Paul mean when he says, "[God] will render to each one according to his works?" (V.6) Does this contradict the doctrine of justification by faith alone? Why or why not?*

*What difference does it make whether or not a person has the Law? (Vs. 12-16)*

*What does this passage teach us about the conscience?*

*How might this passage humble us?*

# ROMANS 2:17-3:8



## NOTES, INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, ETC.

Read the passage and write down any observations, insights, or questions.



## STRUCTURE

What themes or topics is Paul addressing in this passage?

Is there any one theme that seems to be most important in the passage?

How does Paul organize this section? Try to come up with a simple outline that reflects how this passage might break down into different parts.

What is Paul's main point? Try to summarize the emphasis of this passage in 1-2 sentences.

# ROMANS 2:17-3:8



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

*Reflect on the themes Paul has developed up to this point in his letter. Describe.*

*Paul is making an argument about the Jews and the Law. How does he develop this argument?*



## SURROUNDINGS

### BORDERS

In what ways do the verses immediately before and after this section impact your understanding of what Paul is saying?

### BOOK

Consider the theme of the book of Romans. How does this passage help to support and develop Paul's main theme?

### BIBLE

When we consider this passage in light of the larger story of the Bible, how does this passage relate to God's big plan to save sinners?

# ROMANS 2:17-3:8



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SURROUNDINGS

*What does the previous section tell us about the Law that helps us understand what Paul now says about the Jews?*

*What do we know about the Jews and their relationship to the Law throughout the rest of the Bible's story? What does it mean that they were entrusted with the oracles of God (3:2)?*



## SIGNIFICANCE

How does the good news of the gospel impact how you respond to this passage?

What part of the gospel can you see in this passage? Please describe.

# ROMANS 2:17-3:8



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SIGNIFICANCE

*What was Jesus relationship to the Law? How was it different than how Paul describes the Jews?*

## GOING DEEPER

*In verses 1-8 Paul is anticipating and addressing a potential error in how his audience might think about God. What is that error and how does he correct it?*

*What is the Jew's advantage? In what way are they the same as the Gentiles?*

*Paul is addressing the religious hypocrisy of the Jews. What are some practical expressions of how that same kind of hypocrisy might express itself in the Christian church today?*

*How can God be just in his judgment upon the Jews but simultaneously faithful to the promises He has made to the Jews?*



# ROMANS 3:9-20



## NOTES, INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, ETC.

Read the passage and write down any observations, insights, or questions.



## STRUCTURE

What themes or topics is Paul addressing in this passage?

Is there any one theme that seems to be most important in the passage?

How does Paul organize this section? Try to come up with a simple outline that reflects how this passage might break down into different parts.

What is Paul's main point? Try to summarize the emphasis of this passage in 1-2 sentences.

# ROMANS 3:9-20



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

*Reflect on the themes that Paul has been developing in previous passages. Write any observations here.*

*Consider Paul's rhetorical question and the answer he provides. Explain.*



## SURROUNDINGS

### BORDERS

In what ways do the verses immediately before and after this section impact your understanding of what Paul is saying?

### BOOK

Consider the theme of the book of Romans. How does this passage help to support and develop Paul's main theme?

### BIBLE

When we consider this passage in light of the larger story of the Bible, how does this passage relate to God's big plan to save sinners?

# ROMANS 3:9-20



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SURROUNDINGS

*Paul makes an important transition in 3:21. What kind of a contrast is he making from what he's summarizing in 3:9-20 to what he's introducing in 3:21 and onward?*

*Look up the passages that Paul quotes. How do these cross references impact your understanding of the passage?*



## SIGNIFICANCE

How does the good news of the gospel impact how you respond to this passage?

What part of the gospel can you see in this passage? Please describe.

# ROMANS 3:9-20



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SIGNIFICANCE

*What is the bad news that Paul summarizes in this passage and how does it impact the way we think about the good news of the gospel?*

*How is Jesus unique from the rest of mankind? How can we see that contrasted here in this passage?*

## GOING DEEPER

*What does Paul mean when he says that every mouth will be silenced before God? Why is this such an important thing to understand in order to be saved?*

*In what ways might this passage be offensive to Christians and non-Christians?*

*What are some ways that we might implicitly or explicitly try to make ourselves righteous by works of the Law? How does a better understanding of the gospel correct that way of thinking or living?*

*Why is it important that we understand the bad news of 1:18-3:20 before we can truly appreciate the good news of the gospel?*

# ROMANS 3:21-31



## NOTES, INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, ETC.

Read the passage and write down any observations, insights, or questions.



## STRUCTURE

What themes or topics is Paul addressing in this passage?

Is there any one theme that seems to be most important in the passage?

How does Paul organize this section? Try to come up with a simple outline that reflects how this passage might break down into different parts.

What is Paul's main point? Try to summarize the emphasis of this passage in 1-2 sentences.



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE

*Consider the way Paul explains how and why God has manifested his righteousness. Describe.*

*How does Paul use rhetorical questions and answers to make his point in this passage?*



## SURROUNDINGS

### BORDERS

In what ways do the verses immediately before and after this section impact your understanding of what Paul is saying?

### BOOK

Consider the theme of the book of Romans. How does this passage help to support and develop Paul's main theme?

### BIBLE

When we consider this passage in light of the larger story of the Bible, how does this passage relate to God's big plan to save sinners?

# ROMANS 3:21-31



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SURROUNDINGS

*What kind of contrasts do we see in this passage with what passages have come before?*

*What does it mean in verse 21 when Paul says, "the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it..."?*



## SIGNIFICANCE

How does the good news of the gospel impact how you respond to this passage?

What part of the gospel can you see in this passage? Please describe.

# ROMANS 3:21-31



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SIGNIFICANCE

*How do we get this righteousness of which Paul speaks?*

*Define "propitiation." How does Paul use the term here and why is this concept such an important part of his gospel message?*

## GOING DEEPER

*Read Leviticus 16. How does this passage impact the way we think about Jesus sacrificial death on the cross?*

*How is it that God can remain just, yet pass over sins? (Vs. 25 & 26)*

*Why might the concept of propitiation be offensive? Why is it necessary?*

*In what ways does this passage highlight the significance of what God has accomplished over what mankind can achieve for themselves?*



**SMALL GROUP CONTACT INFO**

Leader: .....

Participants: .....

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& FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

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