



## Romans 1:1-17

### “Paul: A Man on a Mission”

Reading and Study Guide for the week  
of Jan. 7-13, 2024

**Memory verse:** *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* (Romans 10:9)

**This week, read and study Romans 1:1-17. Some questions to answer and think about this week with your family or Community Group:**

#### Introduction: Romans 1:1-7

1. If you were writing the initial letter to a pen pal, how would you introduce yourself?
2. How did Paul introduce and identify himself to the Romans? ([1:1](#))
3. What did Paul and others receive as a calling for their lives? ([1:5](#))
4. What kind of greeting did Paul send to his audience? ([1:7](#))
5. In what way do you feel God has placed a special calling on your life?
6. What words do you use to describe yourself to others as a follower of Jesus Christ?
7. To what friend could you explain God’s love and your response to His plan of salvation? How?

#### Life Application Bible Notes

**1:1** Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome. Neither he nor the other church leaders, James and Peter, had yet been to Rome. Most likely, the Roman church had been established by believers who had been at Jerusalem for Pentecost ([Acts 2:10](#)) and by travelers who had heard the Good News in other places and had brought it back to Rome (for example, Priscilla and Aquila, [Acts 18:2](#); [Romans 16:3-5](#)). Paul wrote the letter to the Romans during his ministry in Corinth (at the end of his third missionary journey just before returning to Jerusalem—[Acts 20:3](#); [Romans 15:25](#)) to encourage the believers and to express his desire to visit them someday (within three years he would). The Roman church had no New Testament because the Gospels were not yet being circulated in their final written form. Thus, this letter may well have been the first piece of Christian literature the Roman believers had seen. Written to both Jewish and Gentile Christians, the letter to the Romans is a systematic presentation of the Christian faith.

**1:1** Paul humbly calls himself a slave of Christ Jesus and an apostle ("one who is sent"). For a Roman citizen—which Paul was—to choose to be a slave was unthinkable. But Paul chose to be completely dependent on and obedient to his beloved Master. What is your attitude toward Christ, your Master? Our willingness to serve and obey Jesus Christ enables us to be useful and usable servants to do work for him—work that really matters. Obedience begins as we

renounce other masters, identify ourselves with Jesus, discover his will and live according to it, and consciously turn away from conflicting interests, even if these interests have been important to us in the past.

**1:3, 4** Paul states that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the resurrected Lord. Paul calls Jesus a descendant of King David to emphasize that Jesus truly had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures predicting that the Messiah would come from David's line. With this statement of faith, Paul declares his agreement with the teaching of all Scripture and of the apostles.

**1:3-5** Here Paul summarizes the Good News about Jesus Christ, who (1) came as a human by natural descent, (2) was part of the Jewish royal line through David, (3) died and was raised from the dead, and (4) opened the door for God's grace and kindness to be poured out on us. The book of Romans is an expansion of these themes.

**1:5** Christians have both a privilege and a great responsibility. Paul and the apostles received the privilege of being called, but they also received the authority and the responsibility to share with others what God has done. God also graciously forgives our sins when we believe in him as Lord. In doing this, we are committing ourselves to begin a new life. Paul's new life also involved a God-given responsibility: to witness about God's Good News to the world as a missionary. God may or may not call you to be a foreign missionary, but he does call you (and all believers) to be Christ's ambassador and to witness to the changed life that Jesus Christ has begun in you.

**1:6** Jews and Christians alike stood against the idolatrous Roman religions, and Roman officials often confused the two groups. This was especially easy to do since the Christian church in Rome could have been originally composed of Jewish converts who had attended Pentecost in Jerusalem (see [Acts 2:1ff](#)). By the time Paul wrote this letter to the Romans, however, many Gentiles had joined the church. The Jews and the Gentiles needed to know the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

**1:6, 7** Paul says that those who become Christians are invited by Jesus Christ to (1) belong to God's family, and (2) be his very own people. What a wonderful expression of what it means to be a Christian! In being reborn into God's family we have the greatest experience of love and the greatest inheritance. Because of all that God has done for us, we strive to be his holy people.

**1:7** Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire that had spread over most of Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. In New Testament times, Rome was experiencing a golden age. The city was wealthy, literary, and artistic. It was a cultural center, but it was also morally decadent. The Romans worshiped many pagan gods, and even some of the emperors were worshiped. In stark contrast to the Romans, the followers of Christ believed in only one God and lived by his high moral standards.

Christianity was also at odds with the Romans' dependence on military strength. Many Romans were naively pragmatic, believing that any means to accomplish the intended task was good. And for them, nothing worked better than physical might. The Romans trusted in their strong military power to protect them against all enemies. Christians in every age need to be reminded that God is the only permanent source of our security and salvation, and at the same time he is "our Father"!

## Paul's Longing to Visit Rome: Romans 1:8-17

1. What trips to see friends or family members would you like take in the future?
2. What kind of concern did Paul have for his audience? (1:9-10)
3. What happened to Paul's plans to visit the church in Rome? (1:10-13)
4. Who would benefit from Paul's visit? (1:12)
5. What are some of the positive reports you would want other people to hear about your faith in God?
6. How does remembering someone in prayer help him or her?
7. What can you do this week to help a person for whom you are concerned?

## Life Application Bible Notes - Romans 1:8-17

**1:8** Paul uses the phrase "I thank my God through Jesus Christ" to emphasize the point that Christ is the one and only mediator between us and God. Through Christ, God sends his love and forgiveness to us; through Christ, we send our thanks to God (see 1 Timothy 2:5).

**1:8** The Roman Christians, at the Western world's political power center, were highly visible. Fortunately, their reputation was excellent; their strong faith was making itself known around the world. When people talk about your congregation or your denomination, what do they say? Are their comments accurate? Would you rather they noticed other features? What is the best way to get the public to recognize your faith?

**1:9, 10** When you pray continually about a concern, don't be surprised at how God answers. Paul prayed to visit Rome so he could teach the Christians there. When he finally arrived in Rome, it was as a prisoner (see Acts 28:16). Paul prayed for a safe trip, and he did arrive safely—after getting arrested, slapped in the face, shipwrecked, and bitten by a poisonous snake. When we sincerely pray, God will answer—although in his timing and sometimes in ways we do not expect.

**1:11-13** A reading of the first few verses of Romans relates Paul's ardent desire to visit Rome and the sovereign hand of God that had prevented him from getting there for quite some time. The combination of these two factors—Paul's impassioned desire to go to Rome and God's sovereign "no"—resulted in his sitting down to write this letter to the Romans. This letter is a powerful exposition of the Christian faith and has helped countless millions of believers across the centuries since Paul first penned it to the group of believers in Rome. Perhaps there are some "no's" in our lives that God is planning to use greatly if we would just faithfully do what lies directly ahead of us instead of worrying about why we didn't get our way.

**1:13** By the end of his third missionary journey, Paul had traveled through Syria, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. The churches in these areas were made up mostly of Gentile believers.

**1:14** What was Paul's obligation? After his experience with Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), his whole life was consumed with spreading the Good News of salvation. His obligation was to people of the entire world. He met his obligation by proclaiming Christ's salvation to people—across all cultural, social, racial, and economic lines, both Jews and Gentiles. We also are obligated to Christ because he took the punishment we deserve for our sins. Although we cannot repay Christ for all he has done, we can demonstrate our gratitude by showing his love to others.

**1:15** Paul was eager to preach the gospel. Is our Christian service done in a spirit of eagerness? Or do we serve out of habit, a feeling of obligation, or perhaps even with a feeling of reluctant duty (much like a child who has to take a bath)? When we fully understand what Christ has done for us and what he offers to others, we will be motivated to share the Good News. Ask God to rekindle that fresh eager attitude that wants to obey him and to tell others about Christ.

**1:16** Paul was not ashamed because his message was the Good News about Christ. It was a message of salvation, it had life-changing power, and it was for everyone. When you are tempted to be ashamed, remember what the Good News is all about. If you focus on God and on what God is doing in the world rather than on your own inadequacy, you won't be ashamed or embarrassed.

**1:16** Why did the message go to the Jews first? They had been God's special people for more than 2,000 years, ever since God chose Abraham and promised great blessings to his descendants ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)). God did not choose the Jews because they deserved to be chosen ([Deuteronomy 7:7, 8; 9:4-6](#)) but because he wanted to show his love and mercy to them, for it would be through them that his Messiah would come into the world. God chose them, not to play favorites, but so that they would tell the world about his plan of salvation. For centuries the Jews had been learning about God by obeying his laws, keeping his festivals, and living according to his moral principles. Often they would forget God's promises and laws; often they would have to be disciplined; but still they had a precious heritage of belief in the one true God. Of all the people on earth, the Jews should have been the most ready to welcome the Messiah and to understand his mission and message—and some of them did (see [Luke 2:25, 36-38](#)). Of course, the disciples and the great apostle Paul were faithful Jews who recognized in Jesus God's most precious gift to the human race.

**1:17** The Good News shows us both how righteous God is in his plan for us to be saved and also how we may be made fit for eternal life. By trusting Christ, our relationship with God is made right. "From start to finish," God declares us to be right with him because of faith and faith alone. Paul then quotes from [Habakkuk 2:4](#) to show that as we trust God, we are saved; we have life both now and forever.

**Romans Study Guide questions and notes are from**

