



the gospel

# ROMANS

**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**  
**CHAPTERS 13-16**  
**(MAR.—MAY 2018)**



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## Governed by the LORD

### Romans 13:1-7

#### **3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word**

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on March 25.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

#### **Monday, March 19**

1. **Read** Romans 13:1-7. Then look back at 12:21. **Pray** or **journal** in response to the following questions. What significance does this verse have for the first section of Romans 13? What is wrong with the idea of “choosing the lesser of two evils” for the Christian?
2. **Read** Acts 4:1-32. Where do you see the main characters overcoming evil with good? What is the result? Did the main characters rebel against authority? Why or why not?

#### **Tuesday, March 20**

1. Thinking again about Romans 12:21, **read** Acts 16:16-40. **Journal** or **pray** through responses to the following questions. Where do you see the main characters overcoming evil with good? What is the result? Did the main characters rebel against authority? Why or why not?
2. How do verses 4-5 imply a limit on our obedience to human government? (see also Acts 4:29)

#### **Wednesday, March 21**

1. **Journal** or **pray** in response to the following questions. “What are the four instructions Paul gives in this section? Are any of them difficult for you? Why or why not?”
2. What five reasons does Paul give to support his instructions about relating to government (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6)? How might someone argue against these reasons?

*"Forbidding the Christian from taking vengeance and allowing God to exercise this right in the last judgment [cf. 12:19-21] might lead one to think that God was letting evildoers have their way in this world. Not so, says Paul in 13:1-7: for God, through governing authorities, is even now inflicting wrath on evildoers (vv. 3-4)."*

*Douglas Moo*

## Thursday, March 22

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following question. “How do you make sense of what it means to serve God over man and at the same time submit to authority even if authority doesn’t honor God?”
2. What does Judges 21:25 add to your understanding about why government and submission to it are important?

## Friday, March 23

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following questions. “Apart from the practical considerations like avoiding punishment, why else might God want us to obey authorities? How might it be important for our faith? (consider vv. 1-2)”
2. **Read** some or all of the following passages. What do they contribute to your understanding of the Christian’s relationship to human government?
  - Mark 12:17
  - Titus 3:1
  - 1 Peter 2:13-17
  - Acts 5:29
  - Hebrews 11:31

## Saturday, March 24

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following questions. “What are some common ways that people do not obey the government? Is there anything for which you need to repent based upon Paul’s instruction in this passage?”
2. There is a common notion that America is “a Christian nation,” and that our very founding was out of devotion to the Lord. How might Romans 13:1-7 apply to that viewpoint?

## Governed by Love

### Romans 13:8-14

#### **3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word**

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on April 1.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

#### **Monday, March 26**

1. **Read** Romans 13:8-14. **Journal** or **pray** about all the things Paul teaches about love in this passage.
2. According to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), what makes someone our neighbor?

#### **Tuesday, March 27**

1. **Explain** how adultery, murder, stealing, and coveting each violate the principle of love. Thinking about how Jesus resets the standard for some of these things, **journal** or **pray** to confess any ways that you have fallen short of His standards for loving others.
2. Look up the following Old Testament passages containing the word “neighbor” and write in your own words what they command:
  - Leviticus 19:13-18
  - Deuteronomy 5:20-21
  - Proverbs 3:28

#### **Wednesday, March 28**

1. **Journal** or **pray** in response to the question, “How is Paul’s view of love different from contemporary ideas of love?”
2. Why did Paul quote the law here, especially since he has previously taught that believers have died to the law?

#### **Thursday, March 29**

1. **Identify** all the “dos” and “do nots” in this passage. **Journal** or **pray** over these things, giving thanks for the good deeds God has allowed you to do to His glory, and asking for His help with the things that cause you trouble.
2. What does it mean to “understand the present time” or “know the time”? What does this look like, practically, for you? (How can you successfully apply Paul’s exhortation here?)

### **Friday, March 30**

1. What “slumber” or “sleep” is Paul exhorting his readers to waken from in 13:11? (see also Matthew 24:36-39, 25:1-13) **Journal** or **pray** about how you can obey Paul’s teaching here.
2. What do you think Paul means by the “night” in 13:12? What about the “day”? Does verse 11 offer any clues to what events/periods these images might represent?

### **Saturday, March 31**

1. What do you think is the “armor of light” Paul mentions in 13:12? Why does a Christian need it? (see 2 Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 6:13-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8) **Journal** or **pray** about where and how you can take advantage of this God-given armor.
2. What does it mean to “put on” or “clothe yourself with” the Lord Jesus Christ? How does this expression relate to the other item Paul tells us to “put on” in this passage?

*"Christ's return is the next event in God's plan; Paul knew it could take place at any time and sought to prepare Christians—both in his generation and in ours—for that 'blessed hope.'"*

*—Douglas Moo*

## Be Evang-elastic

### Romans 14:1-12

#### **3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word**

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on April 8.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

#### **Monday, April 2**

1. **Read** Romans 14:1-12. In this section, Paul addresses how believers are to maintain unity and love between one another while making decisions in matters that are not directed by God's word in the Bible. **Journal** or **pray** about what some of these "gray areas" are in our contemporary setting and the risks that they carry. Consider even working through the various arguments associated with one particular issue and asking God for wisdom about how to best glorify Him in that issue.
2. The specific matters of dispute that Paul mentions in this passage are **meat sacrificed to idols** and **holy days**. Consider looking at the following passages to gain further biblical insight into the issues at stake.
  - Meat: 1 Corinthians 8; 10:14-33; Acts 15:1-20
  - Days: Galatians 4:1-11; Colossians 2:16-19 (the whole chapter is great for context); Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:11-17

#### **Tuesday, April 3**

1. **Read** again through Romans 14:1-12. What are the various principles that Paul lays out? What is the basic thought about how we are to receive one another? How would you rate yourself in this area? **Journal** or **pray** in response to these questions.
2. In this passage, what does it mean to be "weak in faith"? Why would Paul call the person who eats only vegetables the weak one?

*"The weakness in faith to which this chapter refers is not weakness in basic Christian faith but weakness in assurance that one's faith permits one to do certain things . . ."*

— C.E.B. Cranfield

*"The liberty of the Christian assembly should be able to embrace divergent views and practices without a feeling that they must be resolved or that a common mind must be achieved on every point of disagreement."*

— J.D.G. Dunn

### Wednesday, April 4

1. In this passage, Paul describes the typical wrong attitudes of the meat-eater and the non-meat-eater toward one another. **Paraphrase** these attitudes in the form of a dialogue between the two:

- a. Meat-eater to non-meat-eater
- b. Non-meat-eater to meat-eater

**Pray** for discernment to see these attitudes within yourself, wisdom to adjust your attitude, and grace to respond to others who behave with such attitudes toward you.

2. Why should the “strong” and “weak” Christians stop judging and condemning one another? Can you think of additional reasons from what you have observed or experienced in your own life?

### Thursday, April 5

1. The NASB translates 14:7 “For not one of us lives for himself, and not one of us dies for himself.” If we don’t live or die for ourselves, for whom do we live? What does this mean? Evaluate the validity of this thought in your life.

**Journal** or **pray** a response.

2. What was the overall purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection (14:9)? What do you think Paul means when he says that Jesus is “Lord both of the dead and of the living”?

### Friday, April 6

1. A holy life is one that pleases God. How does this apply if there is no particular right or wrong way? **Pray** or **journal** through your response, asking God for wisdom and reliance upon His grace.

2. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10; Isaiah 45:23). Does this include those who do not believe in Christ? What does this verse mean to us, especially in the context of Paul’s focus in this passage?

### Saturday, April 7

1. **Look again** at 14:12. **Journal** or **pray** through the following questions. “Have you ever seriously thought about giving a final account of your life? What do you think you will need to give an account for? How are you faring? List one way to improve.” (If you are concerned about condemnation, spend some time with the next question.)

2. Why won’t we ever be condemned for our sins (Romans 8:1)? What will we be judged for or give account for? Some helpful cross-references are 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 and 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

*“The remembrance that all Christians will have to stand before the judgment-seat of God is a powerful dissuasive from all sitting in judgment on one’s fellows.”*

— C.E.B Cranfield

Freedom in Faith  
Romans 14:13-14:23

**3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word**

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on April 15.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

**Monday, April 9**

1. **Read Romans 14:13-23.** The passage begins with the idea of judging others. Why do we normally judge others? What underlying attitudes does judging spring from? **Journal** or **pray** in response.
2. In Romans 14:1-12, Paul speaks of “strong” and “weak” believers. “Strong” doesn’t mean “I’m such a *strong* Christian that I can be involved in sin and it doesn’t even bother me.” How would you define “strong” and “weak” as Paul means them here? Strong in what way? Weak in what way? How would you describe Daniel when he refused to eat non-kosher food (Daniel 1:8-21)?

**Tuesday, April 10**

1. Instead of judging one another, what are we told in Romans 14:13 to do? In order for us to follow this instruction, what do we need to be able to do? How do we know what causes a fellow believer to stumble? **Journal** or **pray** as you ponder these questions, asking God for discernment into your own behaviors.
2. What command is someone transgressing when he makes an issue of food to the point that he hurts his brother? How could someone be destroyed with food (14:15)? What did Jesus say would be the consequences of causing one of the “little ones” to stumble?

**Wednesday, April 11**

1. Look again at **Romans 14:17**. What does Paul say is the essence of the kingdom? Why does he say these things are essential? Why might some people get confused and think that how others eat and drink is an essential matter? **Pray** or **journal** over this verse and these questions.
2. Why is it important to differentiate between surface issues and the essentials? How do we know which issues are which?

*“Never sacrifice truth for peace—unity only occurs in truth.”*  
— Tommy Nelson

## Thursday, April 12

1. Look again at **Romans 14:22**, and then **journal** or **pray** in response to the following questions. What freedom does God give us here? What governs this freedom? What risks does this freedom allow, both as expressed in 14:13-23 and beyond?
2. What is conviction? Are convictions good or bad? How can we “come up” with a conviction? What is the problem with a conviction-less person? What is the importance of having your “own” conviction? What is the importance of having it “before God”?

## Friday, April 13

1. In the final verse of this chapter (14:23), Paul lays down a standard similar to those Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:20, 27-48). Respond to the standard Paul gives in 14:23. Why does Paul say, “What is not from faith is sin”? **Journal** or **pray** in response.
2. Explain the phrase “approved by men” in 14:17. How is your explanation altered or enhanced by Romans 12:17, 15:2, 2:29, and 1 Peter 2:12?

## Saturday, April 14

1. If my brother or sister in Christ is distressed by something I do, what should I do about it? How should I behave in such a situation? On the other hand, if I am distressed by something my brother or sister does, what should I do? **Journal** or **pray**, asking God for the wisdom, courage, and love to know a wise response. If God brings to mind a specific situation, obey Him in addressing it.
2. Paul puts a lot of stock in our ability to arrive at a legitimate conviction. How can we be sure if our conviction is right or wrong?

*“While freedom is a right, it is not a guide for conduct.*

*Love serves that purpose.*

*Rights are to be laid aside in the interest of love.”*

*— William Mounce*

*“Those are most pleasing to God that are best pleased with him.”*

*— Matthew Henry*

*“Paul’s words meant, then, that it is wrong to do anything we think is wrong,  
although it is not always right to do what we think is right.”*

*— S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*

# Unity through Mutual Acceptance

## Romans 15:1-13

### 3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on April 22.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

#### Monday, April 16

1. **Read Romans 15:1-13** and then **journal** or **pray** a response to the passage. You might consider the passage from both the perspective of a “strong” believer and a “weak” believer (keeping in mind the discussion about strong and weak in Romans 14).
2. **Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.** What do you understand from this passage? What does it add to your understanding of Paul’s discussion in Romans 14-15?

#### Tuesday, April 17

1. **Look again at 15:1-2.** Did Christ have the right to please Himself? Did He do so? Do we have the right to please ourselves? **Reflect** on the generosity and self-denial of Jesus and how it impacts us. **Journal** or **pray** a response.
2. What should we do to build up the people around us? Why is this important?

#### Wednesday, April 18

1. **Journal** or **pray** about unity in the body of Christ (15:5-6). How does God give us a spirit of unity?
2. **Look again at 15:4.** What is Paul talking about, the things written in earlier times? What can we expect to find in the Old Testament scriptures?

*“God’s great men are not sitting on top of lesser men,  
But bearing lesser men on their backs.”*

— RCH Lenski

## Thursday, April 19

1. Paul is nearing the end of his letter to the Romans, so he begins to stress the matters of greatest importance. Based on 15:1-13, what do you think Paul would like to see happen because of his letter? **Pray** or **journal** about the impact Paul's letter will leave on our church and in our individual lives.
2. After Paul lays out the principle of **Romans 15:7**, he then elaborates that principle among two different groups of people in verses 8-13. Who are they, and what does he say about each (15:8 & 15:9-12)? Why is this discussion important in the broad context of Paul's entire letter?

## Friday, April 20

1. Where have you allowed unimportant things to keep you from the work of God or from healthy relationships with other believers? **Pray** or **journal** about those things, confessing where needed and asking for wisdom to move forward in a productive way.
2. Use a concordance, study Bible, or similar resource to track down the various sources of the quotations in 15:9-12. What rhetorical effect does this range of sources cause for Paul's argument? How does it impact his argument about the validity of his ministry to the Gentiles?

## Saturday, April 21

1. Has there been a time where you and a fellow believer did not agree on a "disputable matter," and you both handled it well? If not, what went wrong? If so, what were the keys to unity and mutual pleasantness? **Journal** or **pray** through your responses.
2. Bob was raised in a home where drinking alcohol was strictly forbidden. Now, after studying Romans, he feels the freedom to drink alcohol, as long as he doesn't get drunk. He feels so liberated by his discovery that he orders beer or wine whenever he eats with other believers and tries to persuade them to join him in doing so. What do you think of Bob's behavior?

*"In my opinion, the greatest sin in the church of Jesus Christ in this generation is ignorance of the Word of God. Many times I have heard a church officer say, 'Well, I don't know much about the Bible, but...' and then he gives his opinion, which often actually contradicts the Word of God! Why does he know much about the Bible? These things were written aforetime for our learning. God wants you to know His word."*

— J. Vernon McGee

## A Mission-Shaped Life

### Romans 15:14-33

#### **3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word**

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on April 29.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

#### **Monday, April 23**

1. **Read Romans 15:14-33** and then **journal** or **pray** a response to the following questions: “How would you characterize Paul’s attitude toward God and people from this passage? What might you apply to your own life from his example?”
2. In this passage, the Trinity—God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—is mentioned as working together in the work of the gospel. Identify what is true of each person of the Trinity:

God the Father—vv. 15, 16, 30, 32

God the Son (Jesus Christ)—vv. 16, 18, 19, 29

God the Holy Spirit—vv. 16, 19

#### **Tuesday, April 24**

1. **Look again at Romans 15:17-22.** **Journal** or **pray** about the following questions: “What desires motivated Paul? Why do you think he tells the Roman Christians about those desires? How do your ambitions compare with Paul’s in terms of clarity? In terms of eternal value?”
2. What does Romans 15:14-22 tell us about the church to whom Paul is writing? Is this the image you had of them all along as you read Paul’s letter? Why or why not?

*“Almost as though the whole sweep of the argument from 1:16 to 15:13 had been one long parenthesis, Paul returns to the theme and mood of 1:8-15.”*

— J.D.G. Dunn

### Wednesday, April 25

1. **Romans 15:19** reveals that Paul performed miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit. Despite that strength in the Spirit, he still suffered hardship. **Journal** or **pray** over what this means for each of us and for us as one body in Christ.
2. Looking at 15:26-27, why did Paul think it was appropriate for the Gentiles to make an offering to the Jews? Is this a principle that we should literally honor today? Is there a broader principle that we should honor?

### Thursday, April 26

1. There is a strong movement today to reach all the “unreached people” (see 21) of the world with the gospel. **Pray** or **journal** about the following related questions: “Has this vision taken root in your heart? Why or why not? What in your life has impressed on you the importance of world missions?”
2. Does Paul want to visit Rome? Why? What other intention does he have? What request did he make of the Romans? Why is this example important for us today?

### Friday, April 27

1. What significance do you see in Paul asking the Roman Christians to pray for his trip (15:30-33)? Is it easy or hard for you to ask others to pray for you? Why? **Pray** or **journal** about any issues where you need God’s help to trust Him more in prayer.
2. In 15:30-33, Paul asks for prayer for two specific requests. After reading what actually happened to Paul in Jerusalem (**Acts 21:17-36; 23:12-15**), summarize what Paul’s primary concerns might have been as he looked forward to this trip.

### Saturday, April 28

1. Notice how Paul uses “will of God” in **Romans 15:32**. Do you think it is something Paul knew would happen or was he trying to make it happen? Does it surprise you or bother you that Paul’s plans were not carried out as he expected? **Pray** or **journal** about what it’s like seeking the will of God.
2. In **Romans 15:23-29**, Paul outlines his travel plans. What reasons does he give for each stop on his itinerary?
  - Jerusalem
  - Rome
  - Spain

Why do you think Paul included his travel plans in this letter?

*“A Christian’s intercession is a means of sharing in the ministry of others.”*

— John A. Witmer

## Greetings in Grace

### Romans 16

#### **3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word**

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on May 6.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

#### **Monday, April 30**

1. **Read Romans 16. Paul closes his letter with greetings to specific people. Journal or pray** a response to the following questions: “Do you see any common theme among the greetings? If Paul was to mention you in this chapter, what would he say to praise you? What would you want to be known for? What steps can you take to get there?”
2. What does the fact that Paul ends his letter with specific greetings tell you about Romans and the purpose for which it was written?

#### **Tuesday, May 1**

1. Paul uses the word “saint” in **Romans 16:2. Journal or pray** in response to the following questions: “Do you think of yourself as a saint? Why or why not? Why is this important to you and to our one body in Christ?”
2. Who are Priscilla and Aquila? What do you learn about them in this chapter? What further information do you learn from Acts 18:2, 18, 26; 1 Corinthians 16:19; and 2 Timothy 4:9? Can you notice anything unique about them that might be of particular interest to many of us in the church?

*“This sixteenth chapter is neglected by many to their own loss. It is by far the most extensive, intimate and particular of all the words of loving greeting in Paul's marvelous letters. No one can afford to miss this wonderful outpouring of the heart of our apostle toward the saints whom he so loved—which means all the real Church of God!”*

— William R. Newell

## Wednesday, May 2

1. **Romans 16:17-18** tells us that people who seek to cause dissension in the church do so for self-centered reasons. They deceive by smooth talk and flattery. How should we go about knowing and opposing these divisive people? **Pray** or **journal** and ask for the Lord's help in handling these people well (and not being one of them).
2. While the New Testament offers much in the way of historical information during Jesus's time on earth and in relation to the early church, there is also a great deal of anonymity for most of the early believers. In Romans 16, we get a rare glimpse of several individuals within the early church. Yet for most, this is the only time they are mentioned. One exception is Rufus (16:13). Read Mark 15:21, and spend some time considering the implications of these two Rufuses being the same person.

## Thursday, May 3

1. In a thought similar to Paul's in **Romans 16:19**, the author of Hebrews admonishes us to know good and evil when we see it (Heb. 5:14). How can we know this? What we do to help ourselves in this knowledge of good and evil? **Journal** or **pray**, asking God for this type of discernment and for Him to bring 16:19 into reality in your life.
2. Yesterday, we did some additional study about Rufus. Today, see what else you can learn about Erastus (16:23, Acts 19:22, 2 Timothy 4:20), recognizing that we can't be absolutely certain that all these references apply to the same individual. If you are really enjoying this activity, check out Gaius, too (16:23, Acts 19:29, Acts 20:4, and 1 Cor. 1:14). You might also consider looking up these names in a Bible dictionary.

## Friday, May 4

1. According to **Romans 16:25**, what is it that Paul wants the Romans to be established in? Why does Paul refer to this as a "mystery kept secret" (see Ephesians 3:1-7 for additional insight)? **Journal** or **pray** about the extraordinary privilege we've been granted, that Paul describes in Romans 16:25-26.
2. One of the wonders of the Christian faith, especially in comparison to other world faiths, is the way it respects and honors women. Romans 16 is a great indication of the importance of women in the early church. What do you observe? Evaluate the place of women within your own Christian tradition in light of what you see in Romans 16. Identify any corrections that you think would be appropriate in your current context.

## Saturday, May 5

1. Write down the benediction in **Romans 16:20**. **Pray** or **journal** in response.
2. How does **Romans 16:20** relate to Genesis 3:15? In what sense is Satan crushed and in what sense is this event yet to come? (2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:7-8)

*"Although Aristobulus was a common name (MM, BGD), there is certainly a strong plausibility in the suggestion that the Aristobulus here mentioned was the grandson of Herod the Great and brother of Agrippa I."*

— J.D.G. Dunn

## Romans Review

### Romans 1-16

For this final week, simply take time each day to pray and journal over each day's reflection question before the review lesson on May 13.

#### **Monday, May 7**

Start a list of the things that you learned from your study of Romans. Add to it as you spend more time reflecting during the week. Thank God for what He has revealed through His word.

#### **Tuesday, May 8**

What passage will stick with you for the rest of your life? Begin memorizing the first verse of that passage, and set a goal of memorizing the whole passage.

#### **Wednesday, May 9**

Write in one complete sentence what you understand to be the theme—the main point—of Paul's letter to the Romans. Why do you think this is the best theme for the book?

#### **Thursday, May 10**

Trace the progression of thought in Romans. You might create an outline or illustrate the flow of ideas somehow.

#### **Friday, May 11**

Look again at 16:25-27, Paul's conclusion of his epistle. Consider **one** of his five summary statements and reflect on what you remember of his teaching about it throughout the letter:

1. Being established by the good news and proclamation of Jesus
2. The revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past
3. The revealing and making known of this mystery through prophetic writings
4. That all nations might believe and obey
5. God's wisdom

#### **Saturday, May 12**

Looking back at the list from yesterday, choose another of the five summary statements, and reflect on what you remember of Paul's teaching about that topic in Romans.



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