

GRACEPOINT DEVOTIONS
OCT - DEC 2022

ROMANS

PART TWO



Hymn of the Month

OCTOBER

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above,
I have a strong and perfect plea,
A great High Priest
Whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart.
I know that while in heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me,
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace.
One with Himself I cannot die;
My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God,
With Christ, my Savior and my God!

*Words by Charitie Lees Bancroft, 1863;
Music by Vikki Cook*

NOVEMBER

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
You are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged,
Thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one,
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.

*Count your blessings,
Name them one by one;
Count your blessings,
See what God hath done;
Count your blessings,
Name them one by one;
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.*

Are you ever burdened
With a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy
You are called to bear?
Count your many blessings,
Every doubt will fly,
And you will keep singing
As the days go by.

When you look at others
With their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you
His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings,
Money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven
Nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict
Whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged,
God is over all;
Count your many blessings,
Angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you
To your journey's end.

Johnson Oatman, 1897

DECEMBER

Savior Thy Dying Love (Something for Thee)

Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

At the blest mercy seat,
Pleading for me,
My feeble faith looks up,
Jesus, to Thee;
Help me the cross to bear,
Thy wondrous love declare,
Some song to raise, or pray'r,
Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wand'rer sought and won,
Something for Thee.

All that I am and have,
Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, through life,
Dear Lord, for Thee!
And when Thy face I see,
My ransom'd soul shall be,
Through all eternity,
Something for Thee.

Sylvanus D. Phelps, 1862

FEELING WORDS



MAD

bothered
ruffled
irritated
displeased
annoyed
steamed
irked
perturbed
frustrated
angry
fed up
disgusted
indignant
ticked off
bristling
fuming
explosive
enraged
irate
incensed
burned up
livid
outraged
furious



SAD

down
blue
somber
low
glum
lonely
disappointed
worn out
melancholy
downhearted
unhappy
dissatisfied
gloomy
mournful
grieved
depressed
lousy
crushed
defeated
dejected
empty
wretched
despairing
devastated



GLAD

at ease
secure
comfortable
optimistic
satisfied
refreshed
stimulated
pleased
warm
snug
happy
encouraged
tickled
proud
cheerful
thrilled
delighted
joyful
elated
exhilarated
overjoyed
ecstatic
relaxed
content



AFRAID

uneasy
apprehensive
careful
cautious
hesitant
tense
anxious
nervous
edgy
distressed
scared
frightened
repulsed
agitated
shocked
alarmed
overwhelmed
frantic
panicked
stricken
horrified
petrified
terrified
numb



CONFUSED

curious
uncertain
ambivalent
doubtful
unsettled
hesitant
perplexed
puzzled
muddled
distracted
flustered
jumbled
unfocused
fragmented
dismayed
insecure
dazed
bewildered
lost
stunned
chaotic
torn
baffled
dumbfounded



ASHAMED

guilty
uncomfortable
awkward
self-conscious
disconcerted
chagrined
abashed
humiliated
embarrassed
flustered
sorry
apologetic
sheepish
regretful
remorseful
belittled
violated
mortified
defiled
degraded
clumsy
jumbled



LONELY

out of place
left out
unheeded
lonesome
disconnected
remote
invisible
unwelcome
cut-off
excluded
insignificant
ignored
neglected
separated
removed
detached
isolated
unwanted
rejected
deserted
outcast
abandoned
desolate
forsaken



BAD

burdened
heavy-hearted
stressed
weighed down
upset
disturbed
worried
apathetic
avoidant
self-pitying
dumb
lame
bitter
resentful
down
lousy
awkward
envious
diminished
restless
bored
bitter

a guide to

SELF-REFLECTION



From *C201, Holiness of God: Habits to Form*

Self-reflection is one of the habits we need to form as a way to locate ourselves accurately against the backdrop of God's holiness.

But a Christian is a man who has **seen himself and seen what he has done**. He has seen his transgression, his iniquity, his sin. He realizes **the meaning of his actions**. He realizes he has **sinned against God**; and he has seen that his actual nature is itself sinful. I would call that "the sinner awakening," facing himself and realizing the initial truths about himself. ¹

- Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Out of the Depths* (emphasis added)

As soon as we are alone, ...inner chaos opens up in us. This chaos can be so disturbing and so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again. Entering a private room and shutting the door, therefore, does not mean that we immediately shut out all our inner doubts, anxieties, fears, bad memories, unresolved conflicts, angry feelings and impulsive desires. On the contrary, when we have removed our outer distractions, we often find that our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force. We often use the outer distractions to shield ourselves from the interior noises...

This makes the discipline of solitude all the more important. ²

- Henri Nouwen, *Making All Things New*

Self-reflection should be a written record of a period of disciplined thinking about some incident, or even a passing moment, that seems significant.

SOME TIPS TO HELP OBSERVE AND REFLECT UPON THE SELF

STEP #1 – LIST THE FACTS

Go through facts utilizing the 5W's - Who, What, When, Where, Why

This is where you want to review what happened with as much accuracy as possible. You can list out basic facts of the situation in chronological order. Focusing on facts halts rationalizing and self-justifying emotions. For example, rather than saying, "I felt like he was attacking me with his words so I responded in this way," just state the objective facts: "I yelled at my roommate."

STEP #2 – EXPLORE

Based on some facts, you can begin to explore some questions to help you think, such as:

- Why did I say that? Why did I do that?
- What was I feeling when I did that?
- What was going through my mind?
- What were some events leading up to this incident?

STEP #3 – ASK, WHAT DOES THIS REVEAL ABOUT ME?

After reviewing the facts and exploring why you reacted or felt as you did, now you can ask yourself the question, "What does this reveal about me?" Here are some questions that might be helpful:

¹ Lloyd-Jones, David Martin. *Out of the Depths: Restoring Fellowship with God*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books. 1995. p.49.

² Nouwen, Henri. *Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*. New York, New York: HarperSanFrancisco. 1981. pp. 70-71.

- What does this show about what drives me?
- What does this show about what's going on inside of me?
- What does this show about my view towards...(others, God, myself)?
- What does this reveal about what is important to me?

Don't use a lot of jargon and try not to be overly dramatic in language (e.g., "I feel like I don't deserve the cross of Jesus!"). Try to use plain speech as much as possible.

STEP #4 – WORD OF GOD

- What about the gospel addresses me at this point?
- What is true and real according to God's word?
- How does the word of God bring reproof and correction (2 Timothy 3:16) to you regarding this situation?

Often, people either go into a downward spiral of self-flagellation, or they might be satisfied with merely identifying what they did wrong and end there. If you don't go through this step, you can leave God entirely out of your struggle. Sometimes in people's reflections and repentance, they commit to never doing something again in a very self-driven way, without going through the full process of seeing themselves and their own sinfulness in light of who God is. They end up missing out on God's grace and his forgiveness pronounced through his words.

Truth may hurt, but it is always best to face the truth. God's word will be relevant and powerful when there is proper admission of and discovery of truth. By default, we have layers of self-deception, denial, rationalization, justification, etc. Writing self-reflections can slice through all of that and help you get to the truth of who you are. And of course what we want is the truth about ourselves! It's something many people do not have; nor do they treasure it.

Above all, be honest. God wants to dialogue with us.

ISAIAH 1:18 (ESV)

**"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool."**

Ultimately God wants to dialogue in truth so that we can be healed and so we can be as white as snow.

There is freedom when you know you have properly acknowledged, repented of and fully processed the junk inside. There is self-knowledge and, with it, a growing appreciation of the holy love and grace of God.

Let me ask a simple question at this point: "Have you faced yourself?" Forget everybody else. Hold up a mirror before yourself, look back across your life, look at the things you have thought and done and said, look at the kind of life you are living...The first call to man by God is to be honest, to stop arguing and to face himself. Let him examine himself...There is no hope for a man who does not do that, and the truth about the modern world is that people are running away from just this...[doing] anything to fill up their lives and keep them from thinking. **I say that you have to fight for your life and you have to fight for your soul.** The world will do everything to prevent you facing yourself. My dear friend, let me appeal to you. Look at yourself. Forget everybody and everything else. It is the first step in the knowledge of God and in the experience of His glorious salvation.³

- Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Out of the Depths* (emphasis added)

³ Lloyd-Jones, David Martin. *Out of the Depths: Restoring Fellowship with God*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books. 1995. pp.24-25.

“ Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in his glory.
Think of what he can do, and how he delights to hear the prayers of his redeemed people.
Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!
”

- Andrew Murray -



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication



October Hymn

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above,
 I have a strong and perfect plea,
 A great High Priest whose name is Love,
 Who ever lives and pleads for me.
 My name is graven on His hands,
 My name is written on His heart.
 I know that while in heaven He stands
 No tongue can bid me thence depart,
 No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
 And tells me of the guilt within,
 Upward I look and see Him there
 Who made an end of all my sin.
 Because the sinless Savior died,
 My sinful soul is counted free;
 For God the just is satisfied
 To look on Him and pardon me,
 To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,
 My perfect spotless righteousness,
 The great unchangeable I AM,
 The King of glory and of grace.
 One with Himself I cannot die;
 My soul is purchased by His blood;
 My life is hid with Christ on high,
 With Christ, my Savior and my God,
 With Christ, my Savior and my God!



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.

Commentary

ROMANS 9 COMMENTARY

vv.1-3 “Paul suffers from great anguish because his Jewish kinsmen are unsaved (see also 10:1). Indeed, if it were possible, Paul might almost choose to be accursed (to suffer God’s punishment in hell) so that his fellow Jews would be saved (cf. Moses in Ex. 32:30–32). But he knows this would achieve nothing, for none but Christ could be any person’s substitute to bear God’s wrath.”¹

vv.4-5 “Paul lists the privileges of his kinsfolk. He does so, at one level, to heighten the immediate rhetorical force, the plea for sympathy: these are the people to whom so much has been given. At another level, the list functions as a point of high irony: most of these privileges are what he has argued in the preceding chapters now belong to those (from whatever race) who are ‘in the Messiah.’ [...] The force of the list is thus to say: the privileges that now belong to all those in Christ – ‘not least,’ Paul might add, ‘those of you in Rome’ (see 1:7 15) are actually the privileges God promised to Israel according to the flesh. You Christians have come, as he says explicitly in 11:17 and 15:27, to share in the spiritual blessing of Israel.”

“The point, then, is that God, having called ethnic Israel to be the light of the world, has now shone that light lavishly on the wider world, while Israel seems to have chosen to remain in darkness. Israel, called to be God’s messenger to the world (3:1-2), has seen the message successfully delivered while itself failing to give heed to it. The irony and tragedy of this situation is the reason both for Paul’s anguish and for this poignant way of expressing it.”²

vv.6-29 “This passage is the first part of the continuous narrative that runs through to 10:21. It is the story of Israel told in such a way as to bring out some often-overlooked features: the story, both in promise and fulfillment, was always a story of grace, but was simultaneously one of tragic failure, of Israel being narrowed down further and further to a final ‘remnant.’ The point of this aspect of the narrative, in Paul’s telling of it, is that this, too, was not outside the purpose of God, but was what had been promised all along.”³

¹ English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2172.

² N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 629.

³ N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN:

v.6 “How can the people of Israel not be Israel? The first *Israel* refers to the nation – an ethnic category. The second *Israel* refers to individuals who genuinely believe in God and come to him through faith in Christ – a spiritual category. Some who were Israel by the first definition were not by the second. Others, though not Israel in an ethnic sense, had become Israel in a spiritual sense (v.8; Gal 3:29).”⁴

vv.8-9 “That Paul should first turn to Abraham to substantiate this point is not surprising. Abraham was, after all, the ancestor of the Jewish people as a whole (see Gen. 12:1 – 3; Rom. 4:1). Yet Jews belong to Abraham in different ways, Paul affirms. All who can claim him as their physical ancestor are his ‘children,’ but only those who have him as their spiritual father as well are his ‘offspring.’”⁵

vv.12-14 “Was it right for God to choose Jacob, the younger, to be over Esau? In Malachi 1:2,3, the statement ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated’ refers to the nations of Israel and Edom rather than to the individual brothers. God chose Jacob to continue the family line of the faithful because he knew his heart was for God. But he did not exclude Esau from knowing and loving him. Keep in mind the kind of God we worship: he is sovereign; he is not arbitrary; in all things he works for our good; he is trustworthy; he will save all who believe in him. When we understand these qualities of God, we know that his choices are good even if we don’t understand all his reasons.”⁶

vv.14-18 “The question of 9:14, as we saw, is parallel to that of 3:5: is God unjust to inflict wrath? There Paul answered abruptly that this could not be so, since God is the world’s judge, and as such is bound to punish evil. Here as there, Paul is not talking about people who are, so to speak, morally neutral; he is talking about sinful human beings. The contexts of the quotations from Exod 33:19 and 9:16, in vv.15 and 17, make this clear. In the first case, God is speaking to Moses about those who sinned by making the golden calf. In the second, God is speaking through Moses to Pharaoh, explaining why, despite his arrogance in opposing God’s plan to set Israel free, God has not struck him dead on the spot, but has allowed him to go on, hardening his heart so that the long-term effect

Abingdon Press, 2002) 634.

⁴ *Quest Study Bible, study notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 1561.

⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary* Pradis CD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

⁶ *Life Application Study Bible, study notes* (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2044.

would be the spreading of the news of God's power and reputation.

"In both cases, then, the question is not: granted that human beings are a blank slate, what is God writing on that slate? Instead, it is this: Granted that Israel has followed Adam into sin (5:20 and 7:7-25 are the second relevant passages), what will God do with it? The answer Paul gives, continuing his story of Israel from Abraham to the present day, is that God has allowed Israel, like Pharaoh, to stand – that is, he has withheld instant judgment, in order that mercy may spread into the world. This is where the third earlier passage comes into play: God's kindness is meant to lead to repentance (2:4-6), though those who do not avail themselves of the chance will become hardened."⁷

v.18 "Paul concludes the Pharaoh episode with this observation: 'Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden' (v. 18). He does not so much as bother to indicate that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, an evidence of unbelief and rebellion, because he is emphasizing the freedom of God's action in all cases. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart can profitably be related to the principle laid down in Romans 1, that God's method of dealing with those who reject the revelation of himself in nature and history (and in Pharaoh's case also in miracles) is to abandon them to still greater excess of sin and its consequences."⁸

vv.19-21 "The very question Paul now poses is exactly the one that we are tempted to raise at this point also: how can God blame people for rejecting him if he himself, by choosing some and 'passing over' others, in some sense causes that very rejection? Paul's response reveals that he himself has no logically satisfactory answer to this question. He has earlier in the letter made it plain that people are fully responsible for their rejection of the truth of God (1:20-2:11), and he will make the point again with respect to Israel (9:30-10:21). But Paul does not mention this as way of avoiding the issue that he now raises. He thereby implies that God's sovereignty in rejection and man's responsibility for that rejection are to be maintained as two complementary truths, truths that must not be used to detract from one another. Here Paul simply contests anyone's right to stand in judgment over the ways of God.

⁷ N.T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 638.

⁸ Everett F. Harrison, "God's Freedom to Act in His Own Sovereign Right (9:14-29)," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976).

He is the potter, who has full right over the vessels that he creates"⁹

vv.22-23 "Within the theological position Paul has sketched out in 2:1-1 [...] it makes good sense to see God as not inflicting wrath, even though it has been richly deserved, but rather creating a breathing space in which there is time to appeal to Israel, and for mercy to spread to more people (see 2 Chr 36:15-16, in the context of Rom 9:11-21 as a whole)."¹⁰

"For the sake of longer-term fulfillment of his wider purposes (we must never forget that this argument continues to 10:12-13 and beyond), God has patiently put up with the Pharaohs of this world, who now alas include much of his own people Israel, as the prophets themselves said over and over again. They are 'vessels of wrath,' not in the sense of being God's agents to bring wrath on others [...] but in the sense that they are the appropriate recipients of wrath."

"Had God simply condemned Israel at once, following its decisive rejection of Jesus as Messiah, there would have been no space either for Jews to repent [...] or for Gentiles to be brought in. Instead, God's patience has served the larger good. God will in the end still display the appropriate wrath and power, but, more important, there will be also displayed 'the riches of his glory,' the glory, in this case, which God will give to, or share with, the 'vessels of glory.'"¹¹

vv.22-23 "God created a world in which both his wrath and his mercy would be displayed. Indeed, his mercy shines against the backdrop of his just wrath, showing thereby that the salvation of any person is due to the marvelous grace and love of God. If this is difficult to understand, it is because people mistakenly think God owes them salvation!"¹²

vv.25-26 "Paul quotes Hos. 2:23 and 1:10 to illustrate the stunning grace of God—that those who are not my people . . . will be called 'sons of the living God.' In calling the Gentiles to salvation, God calls a sinful people to himself, just as in saving Israel he showed mercy to the undeserving.

⁹ Douglass J. Moo, "Romans," *New Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004) 1144

¹⁰ N.T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 641.

¹¹ N.T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 642.

¹² *English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2173.

No one can presume on God's grace. In calling anyone to salvation, he shows undeserved mercy to those who were not his people."¹³

vv.24-29 "We now hear again the theme that dominated 9:6-13: God's call is the sole basis for inclusion in the true people of God. 'What counts is grace, not race,' as N. T. Wright puts it.

"Paul now takes a step further by taking this principle to its logical conclusion. Since God's grace is what matters, then he is free to call Gentiles into his kingdom as well as Jews. [...]

"Under the old covenant, as Paul puts it in Ephesians 2, the Gentiles were 'excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world' (Eph. 2:12). While God graciously extended his covenant grace to some Gentiles (e.g., Rahab, Ruth; see also the book of Jonah), his people were largely identified with, or drawn from, Israel. Under the new covenant, however, all that has changed. God shows no distinction, giving his grace to both Jew and Gentile alike. This, Paul insists, was predicted in the Old Testament itself [...]

"The remnant conception emerged in the prophets as a message of both judgment and hope—judgment, because the continuing sinfulness of Israel brought God's judgment on the people as a whole, resulting in the salvation of only some of the people; hope, because despite Israel's sinfulness, God maintained his commitment to his covenant and pledged to save at least some of the people."¹⁴

vv.30-33 "Fundamentally, the Jewish idea was that a man, by strict obedience to the law, could pile up a credit balance. The result would be that God was in his debt and owed him salvation. But it was obviously a losing battle, because man's imperfection could never satisfy God's perfection; nothing that man could do could even begin to repay what God has done for him.

"That is precisely what Paul found. As he said, the Jew spent his life searching for a law, obedience to which would put him right with God, and he never found it because there was no such law to be found. The Gentile had never

engaged upon this search; but when he suddenly was confronted with the incredible love of God in Jesus Christ, he simply cast himself upon that love in total trust. It was as if the Gentile saw the Cross and said, 'If God loves me like that I can trust him with my life and with my soul.'

"The Jew sought to put God in his debt; the Gentile was content to be in God's debt. The Jew believed he could win salvation by doing things for God; the Gentile was lost in amazement at what God had done for him. The Jew sought to find the way to God by works; the Gentile came by the way of trust."¹⁵

v.32 "Why did Israel fail to achieve right standing with God through the law? They did not pursue obedience to the law in humble trust, but tried to make it a means of establishing their own righteousness. Such a use of the law led them to stumble over the stone (which was Christ confronting them), for those attempting to establish their own righteousness see no need to believe in Christ."¹⁶

v.33 "The 'stumbling stone' was Jesus. The Jews did not believe in him, because he didn't meet their expectations for the Messiah. Some people still stumble over Christ because salvation by faith doesn't make sense to them."¹⁷

vv. 32-33 "[Paul] draws the picture of a walker so intent on pursuing a certain goal that she stumbles and falls over a rock lying right in her path. So Israel, myopically concentrating on the law and its demands, missed Christ, 'the stone' that God placed in her path. This imagery comes from Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16, which Paul quotes in Romans 9:33."¹⁸

¹³ English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2174.

¹⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary Pradis CD* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

¹⁵ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans, Daily Study Bible Series CD* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1975).

¹⁶ English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2174.

¹⁷ Life Application Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996) p.2045

¹⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary Pradis CD* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

Tuesday, October 25, 2022



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Bible Text

Romans 9:6-21 (ESV)

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹ For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 9:6-21

“Because all men are sinful and deserve God’s condemnation, no person is wronged or treated unjustly if God chooses to condemn him. That is justice. His mercy toward any person is purely by His grace [...] It is not a man’s choice or pursuit but God who initiates mercy for the sinner. Salvation is never initiated by human choice or merited by zealous human effort. It always begins in God’s sovereign, gracious, and eternal will.” ¹

- Meditate on the fact of God’s total sovereignty and freedom to have mercy upon whomever he wills. Have I fully acknowledged in my heart that God has the absolute right to do as he will in history, and in my life?
- In what sense must God’s sovereign freedom to rightfully condemn all humanity be the backdrop against which I appreciate my own personal salvation?

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Romans 9-16*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991) 42-43

Wednesday, October 26, 2022



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Bible Text

Romans 9:22-33 (ESV)

²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— ²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”

²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them,
‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”

²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,
we would have been like Sodom
and become like Gomorrah.”

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to
shame.”



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 9:22-33

“The implication for Jews was that they did not pursue... the righteousness which is by faith, but instead relied on their birthright as Jews or on their supposed good works in obedience to God’s laws.” ¹

- What warning does this passage give against Christians who presume upon God based on their own good works, service, or spiritual heritage?
- Think of the paradox of this passage, that those “who did not pursue righteousness” have obtained it. As a Gentile believer who “did not pursue righteousness,” how does this passage amplify my gratitude for God’s sovereign choice to provide Jesus as the savior of the world “to all who believe?”
- Reflect on the words: “whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Romans 9-16*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991) 67

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A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Prayer



As well could you expect a plant to grow without air and water
as to expect your heart to grow without prayer and faith.

- Charles Spurgeon -



Prayer of Gratitude

Dotted lines for writing the prayer.



Prayer of Supplication



October Hymn

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above,
I have a strong and perfect plea,
A great High Priest whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart.
I know that while in heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me,
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace.
One with Himself I cannot die;
My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God,
With Christ, my Savior and my God!

“ What wings are to a bird and sails to a ship, so is prayer to the soul.
- Corrie Ten Boom - ”



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication



October Hymn

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above,
 I have a strong and perfect plea,
 A great High Priest whose name is Love,
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 The King of glory and of grace.
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 My soul is purchased by His blood;
 My life is hid with Christ on high,
 With Christ, my Savior and my God,
 With Christ, my Savior and my God!



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Commentary

ROMANS 10 COMMENTARY

Overview: “The most important thing Paul does in this section is to explain where he, his readers, and the people he is discussing are within God’s story with Israel and the world. Learning to think like this—to understand a grand narrative that is larger than ourselves, that may be challenging or even threatening to us—is a major task for those who undertake to live with Scripture. [...] It is the story of how people who had no airs and graces of their own, no thought of being sought by Israel’s God, the creator; nevertheless found themselves grasped by the divine call and love as an act of sheer grace.”¹

vv. 1-4 “There can therefore be no doubt that Paul regards the zeal of his fellow Israelites as a good thing. The problem, however, is that — like the pre-Christian Paul (Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:6) — their zeal was not directed by knowledge. As Paul makes clear in Romans 10:3-4, what the Jews did not understand was that God now is offering a right relationship with himself through faith in Jesus Christ, the culmination of salvation history. [...]

“But in seeking to establish their own righteousness, they were also guilty of relying on their own works.”

v. 4 “Paul may well here be thinking of the race course imagery he has used in 9:30 – 32 (‘pursuing’ and ‘obtaining’). Let’s picture Israel as the runner, the law as the race, and Christ as the finish line. What Israel has failed to understand, Paul is saying, is that the finish line has been reached. The Messiah and the salvation he brings have come. Thus, the ‘race’ has attained its end and goal — or, to use the best English equivalents, its ‘culmination’ or ‘climax.’

“As a result of Christ’s coming and bringing the law to its culmination, righteousness is now available for everyone who believes. Christ opens a new phase in salvation history, in which God extends his offer of a right relationship with himself to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Faith, apart from ethnic origin or works, is the sole basis for experiencing this gift he offers to the world.”

“Christ is the ‘end of the law’ in two ways. He fulfills the purpose and goal of the law (Matt 5:17) in that he perfectly exemplified God’s desires on earth. But he is also the

1 N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 670.

termination of the law because in comparison to Christ, the law is powerless to save.”²

vv. 5-8 “The apostle cites Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5 to describe legal righteousness: “The man who does these things will live by them.” Paul is not suggesting here that Moses taught that one could be saved by doing the law. ‘Living’ in the Old Testament context refers to the enjoyment of covenant privilege and not necessarily to eternal life. Rather, Paul’s point is that any righteousness based on the law is, by definition, something one can get only by ‘doing.’ For ‘doing’ is what the law is all about [...].

“In contrast to this legal righteousness, then, is the ‘righteousness that is by faith.’ [...] The general point he wants to make about the righteousness by faith is clear enough: Through Christ’s being brought down to earth (i.e., his incarnation, Rom. 10:6) and his being brought up from the dead (10:7), God has made righteousness readily available (10:8). One does not have to ascend into heaven or plumb the depths of the sea to discover it. All one needs to do to attain righteousness is to respond in faith to the gospel as it is preached.”³

vv. 12-13 “The fact of there being no distinction between Jew and Greek highlighted the fact that all alike were in sin, and all alike were redeemed and justified by the faithful death of the Messiah and through faith in God’s covenant action in him, not some other way. [...]

“‘The same Lord is Lord of all.’ That was what Caesar claimed, and it was what Paul claimed for Jesus. At the same time, Paul is picking up, and transforming, a regular Jewish theme: one God, therefore on people of Israel. Where, before, ‘no distinction’ was explained by ‘for all have sinned’ (3:23), now it can be explained by ‘for there is one Lord of all.’”⁴

vv.20-21 “The prophecy of Isa. 65:1 has been fulfilled in that the Gentiles who did not seek after God have now experienced God’s saving promises. Israel, on the other hand, has fulfilled the words of Isa. 65:2. They have rebelled against and disobeyed the gospel message. Still, God extends his hands to them, inviting them to be saved.”⁵

2 *Life Application Study Bible*, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2046.

3 Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary* Pradis CD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

4 N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 665.

5 *English Standard Version Study Bible On-line*, study notes for verse 3 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008).



Bible Text

Romans 10:1-4 (ESV)

¹ Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 10:1-3

- If the Jews commendably had a “zeal for God” with insufficient knowledge, how much more is it appropriate for me to have zeal for God with the full knowledge of God’s grace and salvation plan?
- Reflect on the words used to describe the Israelites—“seeking to establish their own” and “did not submit.” What is the relationship between will-power driven efforts to establish my own righteousness and a refusal to submit to God’s way of grace? How can I guard myself against this?



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines provided for writing a journal entry.



Bible Text

Romans 10:5-13 (ESV)

⁵ For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. ⁶ But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 10:5-13

- According to this passage, what does it take for a person to be saved?

Romans 10:11

- Reflect on the total trustworthiness of God. What institution or what person can make such a promise or claim? Is there a deep sense of security in my life arising from the fact that I have received the righteousness from God (i.e. Jesus) that has been provided for me?

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Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
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- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, starting below the list of prompts and extending down the page.

 Bible Text

Romans 10:14-21 (ESV)

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.”

¹⁹ But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,

“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”

²⁰ Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who did not seek me;
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”

²¹ But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

 Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 9:14-15

- Reflect on the words, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.” List the people (known and unknown) God used to bring the gospel to me? Who are the people God is asking me to go to?

Romans 10:17

- Based on this verse, what can I do to strengthen my faith? What are the obstacles that keep this from happening more in my life?

Romans 10:16-21

- What is the heart of God concerning those who reject Him?

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Thursday, November 3, 2022

“

God shapes the world by prayer. Prayers are deathless.
They outlive the lives of those who uttered them.

- E.M. Bounds -

”



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, providing a guide for writing a prayer of gratitude.

 Prayer of Supplication

 November Hymn

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
You are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged,
Thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one,
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.

Chorus

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.*

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy
You are called to bear?
Count your many blessings,
Every doubt will fly,
And you will keep singing
As the days go by.

When you look at others
With their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you
His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings,
Money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven
Nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings,
Angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you
To your journey's end.



Prayer of Supplication



November Hymn

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
 You are tempest-tossed,
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So amid the conflict whether great or small,
 Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
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 Angels will attend,
 Help and comfort give you
 To your journey's end.



Commentary

ROMANS 11 COMMENTARY

v.1-2 “God chose the Jews (‘his people, whom he foreknew’) to be the people through whom the rest of the world could find salvation. But this did not mean the entire Jewish nation would be saved; only those who were faithful to God (the remnant) were considered true Jews (11:5). We are saved through faith in Christ, not because we are part of a nation, region, or family.”¹

v.5 “*Remnant*. Those who remain faithful and escape God’s judgment though most of those around them are unfaithful. Although small and insignificant, the remnant serves as a symbol of hope pointing toward the vast, innumerable multitude that one day will stand saved before God (Rev 7:9).”

v.8 “God doesn’t want people to have a *spirit of stupor*, but he allows them to reap the consequences of their own choices. The more they follow God’s way, the more God will show his way to them. But those who continually resist the things of God will become confused—spiritually deaf and blind.”²

v.22 “‘Continue in his kindness’ refers to steadfast perseverance in faith. Steadfastness is a proof of the reality of faith and a by-product of salvation, not a means to it.”³

v.26 “[I]n this way all Israel will be saved. Various interpreters have claimed that Paul is speaking of: (1) the salvation of the church of Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, throughout history; or (2) the saving of a remnant of Jews throughout history; or (3) the salvation of the end-time generation of the Jewish people in the future. The first view is unlikely since throughout chs. 9-11 Israel and Gentiles are distinct ethnic entities. Furthermore, in 11:25 Israel refers to ethnic Israel, and it is difficult to see how the referent could suddenly change in v.26. Finally, v.28 indicates that ethnic Israel is still distinguished from Gentiles, for ‘they’ in v.28 clearly refers to ethnic Israel. The third view, that Paul refers to the salvation of Israel at the end of history, seems most likely because: (1) it fits with the promises of God’s future work in vv. 12 and 15; (2) it is

difficult to see how the salvation of a remnant of Jews all through history would qualify as a mystery; (3) the future salvation of ethnic Israel at the end of history accords with the climactic character of this passage; and (4) it demonstrates finally and fully how God is faithful to fulfill his saving promises to his people (9:6). ‘All Israel’ does not necessarily refer to every single Jewish person but to a very large number, at least the majority of Jews. *The Deliverer* coming from Zion probably refers to Christ (cf. 1 Thess 1:10), suggesting that the Jews will be saved near or at the second coming.”⁴

vv.28-32 “In this passage Paul shows how the Jews and the Gentiles benefit each other. Whenever God shows mercy to one group, the other shares the blessing. In God’s original plan, the Jews would be the source of God’s blessing to the Gentiles (see Gen 12:3). When the Jews neglected this mission, God blessed the Gentiles anyway through the Jewish Messiah. He still maintained his love for the Jews because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (‘on account of the patriarchs’). But some day the faithful Jews will share in God’s mercy. God’s plans will not be thwarted: he will ‘have mercy on them all.’ For a beautiful picture of Jews and Gentiles experiencing rich blessings, see Isaiah 60.”⁵

¹ Life Application Study Bible, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2047.

² Quest Study Bible, study notes (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 1564.

³ Life Application Study Bible, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2048.

⁴ English Standard Version Study Bible On-line version, study notes for verse 3 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008).

⁵ Life Application Study Bible, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2049.



Bible Text

Romans 11:1-10 (ESV)

¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? ³ “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” ⁴ But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

⁷ What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, ⁸ as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that would not see
and ears that would not hear,
down to this very day.”

⁹ And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;
¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,
and bend their backs forever.”



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 11:1-10

“Seven thousand: a competent number to bear their testimony against the idolatry of Israel, and yet, compared with the many thousands of Israel, a very small number. [...] Christ’s flock is but a little flock; and yet, when they come all together at last, they will be a great and innumerable multitude. [...] The best evidence of integrity is a freedom from the present prevailing corruptions of the times and places that we live in, to swim against the stream when it is strong.” ¹

- Why is the feeling of “I am the only one left” not appropriate for God’s people? Are there times when I feel this way?
- How does this passage highlight the fact that becoming saved is truly by the grace of God?

¹ Matthew Henry, *Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible – Romans 11*

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Tuesday, November 8, 2022

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Bible Text

Romans 11:11-24 (ESV)

¹¹ So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.

¹² Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

¹³ Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴ in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²² Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 11:11-24

"It is good for those that have found mercy with God to be often thinking what they were in time past, and how they obtained that mercy. This would help to soften our censures of those that still continue in unbelief, and quicken our prayers for them."¹

- Given that the background of this letter to the Romans is the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers, what lesson is here about how to pursue Christian unity and fellowship?
- What is ironic about the fact that some Gentile believers looked down on the Israelites?
- Are there any ways in which I look down on those who are outside of the community of believers? Reflect on the words: "So do not become proud, but fear." How can I apply this to myself?

¹ Matthew Henry, Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible - Romans 11

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Journal

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- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Bible Text

Romans 11:25-36 (ESV)

²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;
²⁷ “and this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴ “For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?”
³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him
that he might be repaid?”

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 11:28-36

- In this passage, describing the mystery of God’s continuing faithfulness to Israel, are the words: “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Reflect on what this reveals about the nature of God, my own salvation, and God’s call upon my life.
- What are God’s gifts and his call that pertain to me?
- Thank God for the fact that the truly important things depend on God’s irrevocable faithfulness, and not on my own constancy or efforts.



Prayer

“

There is no way that Christians, in a private capacity, can do so much to promote the work of God and advance the kingdom of Christ as by prayer.

- Jonathan Edwards -

”



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication

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November Hymn

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
You are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged,
Thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one,
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.

Chorus

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
And it will surprise you
What the Lord hath done.*

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy
You are called to bear?
Count your many blessings,
Every doubt will fly,
And you will keep singing
As the days go by.

When you look at others
With their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you
His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings,
Money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven
Nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings,
Angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you
To your journey's end.



Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.

- *Martin Luther* -



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Prayer of Supplication



November Hymn

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
You are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged,
Thinking all is lost,
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Name them one by one,
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Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings,
Angels will attend,
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To your journey's end.



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
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- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.

Commentary

ROMANS 12 COMMENTARY

vv.1-2 “Romans 12:1–2 is one of the best-known passages in the Bible—and deservedly so, for we find here a succinct description of the essence of the believer’s response to God’s grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It functions as the heading for all the specifics Paul will unpack in the subsequent chapters. Our response is rooted in God’s grace. The NIV’s ‘God’s mercy’ conceals the fact that the Greek word for ‘mercy’ is in the plural (‘mercies’). Paul is reminding us of the many displays of God’s mercy he has touched on in chapters 1–11. ‘In view of’ probably modifies ‘urge’; Paul exhorts us in light of the manifold mercy of God. Our obedience is the product of what God has done in our lives, not something we can manufacture on our own.”¹

“Paul, unusually, repeats the word ‘well-pleasing’ (NIV, *pleasing*) in the very next verse, making it clear that for him at least what a Christian does, in Christ and by the Spirit, gives actual pleasure to God. This is counterintuitive for many Christians, schooled to insist that nothing we do can commend ourselves to God. But Paul insists in several passages that Christian worship and obedience, holiness and unity do indeed please God, and if we have articulated his other doctrines (e.g., justification) in such a way as to exclude this notion, we have clearly misrepresented him.”²

“This offering of ourselves to God constitutes, Paul concludes, our ‘spiritual act of worship.’ ‘Spiritual’ translates a word (*logikos*) over which there is much debate, as the varied renderings in English translations suggest: ‘spiritual’ (NIV; NRSV; NASB); ‘reasonable’ (KJV); ‘true’ (TEV); ‘offered by mind and heart’ (REB); ‘intelligent’ (Phillips). But when the background is considered [...], we think ‘informed’ or ‘understanding’ is the best single equivalent in English. We give ourselves to God as his sacrifices when we understand his grace and its place in our lives. We offer ourselves not ignorantly, like animals brought to slaughter, but intelligently and willingly. This is the worship that pleases God.”³

v.2 “When we change the way we think, we change the way we live. [...]

“[...] It is a *process*. The fact that Paul calls on believers to engage in this renewing of the mind shows that it does not automatically happen to us when we believe. God’s Spirit comes to reside in us, and he provides a whole new orientation to our thinking. But our thinking itself is not instantaneously changed. The ruts of the old life are not always easy to get out of. Some of our ways of thinking are deeply ingrained, and they will not disappear overnight.”

“The key question then becomes: What are we feeding into our minds? Most Christians have little choice but to spend forty or fifty hours of every week in ‘the world,’ making a living. It is hoped that most Christians also seek to spend time with unbelievers as a means of ministry and evangelism. But if we spend all our discretionary time watching network television, reading secular books, and listening to secular music, it will be a wonder if our minds are not fundamentally secular. Our job is to cooperate with God’s Spirit by seeking to feed into our minds information that will reprogram our thinking in line with the values of the kingdom.”⁴

v.6 “Prophesying in Scripture is not always predicting the future. Often it means preaching God’s messages (1 Corinthians 14:1-3).”⁵

v.9 “He must hate *evil* and *love* good. Regarding one thing we must be clear – what many people hate is not *evil*, but the *consequences of evil*. No man is really a good man when he is good simply because he fears the consequences of being bad.”⁶

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary Pradis CD* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

² N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 704.

³ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary Pradis CD* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, NIV Application Commentary Pradis CD* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

⁵ *Life Application Study Bible, study notes* (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2050.

⁶ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans, Daily Study Bible Series* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1975) 164.



Bible Text

Romans 12:1-3 (ESV)

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 12:1-3

“Our refusal to conform to this world’s values... must go even deeper than the level of behavior and customs—it must be firmly planted in our minds—‘be transformed by the renewing of your mind.’ It is possible to avoid most worldly customs and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Spirit renews, reeducates, and redirects our minds are we truly transformed.” ¹

- What is “by the mercies of God” the basis for presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice?
- What can I learn from the fact that the command to “not be conformed to this world” primarily involves the “renewal of [the] mind” and thinking of myself with “sober judgment?”
- What would it mean for me to daily offer up my body as a “living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God”?

¹ *Life Application Study Bible, NIV Edition.* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. & Zondervan, 1984). p.2050.

Tuesday, November 15, 2022



Prayer



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Bible Text

Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 12:9-21

- Read this passage several times and meditate on the life that I am called to live. Imagine a church community seriously carrying out these commands. Pray for our church to become this kind of community and for my part in making that a reality. Is there a truth that God is particularly convicting me of based on this passage?
- How is it possible to “not be slothful in zeal” but “fervent in spirit, serv[ing] the Lord?” What is the relationship between spiritual fervor and the command, “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer?”
- What would it mean to become “overcome by evil”? What practical approach is suggested by the exhortation to “not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good?” Is there some area of life in which I can put this into practice?

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Thursday, November 17, 2022

Thursday, November 17, 2022



Prayer

“

We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties.

- Oswald Chambers -

”



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication



November Hymn

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
 You are tempest-tossed,
 When you are discouraged,
 Thinking all is lost,
 Count your many blessings,
 Name them one by one,
 And it will surprise you
 What the Lord hath done.

Chorus

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
 Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
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 What the Lord hath done.*

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
 Does the cross seem heavy
 You are called to bear?
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 Every doubt will fly,
 And you will keep singing
 As the days go by.

When you look at others
 With their lands and gold,
 Think that Christ has promised you
 His wealth untold;
 Count your many blessings,
 Money cannot buy
 Your reward in heaven
 Nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict whether great or small,
 Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
 Count your many blessings,
 Angels will attend,
 Help and comfort give you
 To your journey's end.

“ In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God’s thoughts after him: to desire the things he desires, to love the things he loves, to will the things he wills. Progressively, we are taught to see things from his point of view. ”

- Richard Foster -



Prayer of Gratitude

Lined area for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication



November Hymn

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 You are tempest-tossed,
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Journal

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- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
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- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Commentary

ROMANS 13 COMMENTARY

vv.1-7 “Paul appears to be demanding that every person always obey whatever any governmental authority tells that person to do, for God has appointed every authority that exists; to obey God, we must obey his appointed representatives. Yet believers in every generation have quailed before the prospect of obeying orders from what appear to be evil, even demonic, rulers — Hitler, of course, is the classic modern example.

“Moreover, Scripture itself seems to present *disobedience* of secular rulers as, at least in some cases, a virtue. The classic instance is Peter and John, whom Luke apparently commends for responding to the Sanhedrin’s command not to preach about Jesus with these words: ‘Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard’ (Acts 4:19–20; cf. 5:29).”

“In demanding ‘submission’ to the state, Paul is not necessarily demanding obedience to every mandate of the state. Key to this restriction is the recognition that the word ‘submit’ (*hypotasso*) in Paul is not a simple equivalent to ‘obey’ (*hypakouo*). To be sure, they overlap, and in some contexts, perhaps, they cannot be distinguished (cf. 1 Peter 3:1, 6). Moreover, submission is usually expressed through obedience.

“Nevertheless, submission is broader and more basic than obedience. To submit is to recognize one’s subordinate place in a hierarchy established by God. It is to acknowledge that certain institutions or people have been placed over us and have the right to our respect and deference. In addition to rulers (see also Titus 3:1), Paul also calls on believers to submit to their spiritual leaders (1 Cor 16:16) and even to one another (Eph 5:21; i.e., in the ways Paul outlines in 5:22–6:9). Christian slaves are to submit to their masters (Titus 2:9), Christian prophets to other prophets (1 Cor 14:32), and Christian wives to their husbands (1 Cor 14:35; Eph 5:24; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5). In each case, one person is to recognize the rightful leadership role that another human being has in his or her life.

“But implicit always in the idea of submission is the need to recognize that God is at the pinnacle of any hierarchy.

While not always explicit, Paul assumes that one’s ultimate submission must be to God and that no human being can ever stand as the ultimate authority for a believer.”¹

vv.8 “*continuing debt*. To love is the one debt that is never paid off. No matter how much one has loved, he is under obligation to keep on loving.”²

vv.12 “The *night* refers to the present evil time. The *day* refers to the time of Christ’s return.”³

vv.11-14 “Paul ends the section where he began in 12:1-2, setting the Christian’s moral obligations in the context of knowing what the time is: It is almost daybreak. This is a familiar image in early Christian writing, again quite possibly going back to Jesus himself; and Paul has developed it elsewhere (1 Thess 5:1-11; see also Matt 24:42-44; 26:45; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:3-56; 21:36; Eph 5:8-16; the idea of staying awake to be about one’s Christian tasks is also evident in Eph 6:18). This idea flows consistently from the early Christian belief that with the resurrection of Jesus God’s promised new age had dawned, but that full day was yet to come (see above all 1 Cor 15:20-28). Christians therefore live in the interval between the early signs of dawn and the sunrise itself, and their behavior must be appropriate for the day, not the night.”⁴

vv.14 “Paul’s exhortations can be summed up in the call to **put on . . . Christ**. The metaphor of putting on clothing implies not just imitating Christ’s character but also living in close personal fellowship with him. Even though believers have new life, they still must constantly renounce the **flesh** and refuse to **gratify its desires**.”⁵

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, Life Application Bible Commentary CD* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2000).

² *The NIV Study Bible, study notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985) 1726.

³ *Life Application Study Bible, study notes* (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2052.

⁴ N.T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. X (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002) 727-728.

⁵ *English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2180.



Bible Text

Romans 13:1-7 (ESV)

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

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Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 13:1-5

- What is the state of my relationship with those who have authority in my life?
- What can I do to be free of fear of those in authority?

Romans 13:7

- Who are the people with whom I interact? What do I owe each of them?
 - Who are the people with whom I may not interact, but towards whom I owe a duty of some sort?
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Tuesday, November 22, 2022

Tuesday, November 22, 2022



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Bible Text

Romans 13:8-10 (ESV)

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 13:8-10

- How would a person’s relationships change if he went from thinking about what people in his life owe him, to what he owes to the people around him? How can I specifically begin to give people in my life what I owe them?
- Reflect on the truth that love is the fulfillment of the law. Why is this so amazing? How does this change the way I view people in my life?
- Reflect on the truth that all of the commandments are summed up in the command to love my neighbor, and the truth that, when I sin, I am doing “harm to [my] neighbor.” How does this motivate me to become a person of greater love and greater obedience to God’s commandments?



Prayer



Journal

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A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Bible Text

Romans 13:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 13:11-13

- Reflect on v. 11. Why is it important to “know the time?” Are there things causing me to “sleep”?
- What are the “works of darkness” that I need to “cast off?”

Romans 13:14

- What practical step is being urged in the words: “make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires?” How can I specifically carry out this advice regarding my thought life?
- What does it mean to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and how can I specifically carry out this exhortation in my life?

Thursday, November 24, 2022

Thursday, November 24, 2022



Prayer

“ Without immersion in God’s words, our prayers may not be merely limited and shallow but also untethered from reality. ”

- Tim Keller -



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication

A series of 25 horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, providing space for handwritten prayer text.

“ It is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength.
It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfillment, the kingdom waits for its coming,
and the glory of God waits for its full revelation. ”

- Andrew Murray -



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Prayer of Supplication



November Hymn

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows
 You are tempest-tossed,
 When you are discouraged,
 Thinking all is lost,
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 Whether great or small,
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 To your journey's end.



Journal

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- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines provided for journaling.

Commentary

ROMANS 14 COMMENTARY

v.2 “The weak eat only **vegetables**, probably so that they avoid the risk of eating unclean foods (cf. Dan 1:8, 10, 12, 16).”¹

v.3 “The strong are liable to ridicule and mock the weak with their delicate conscience. Conversely, the weak are prone to **pass judgment** on those who feel the liberty to eat anything. The weak must not stand in judgment, for God has accepted the strong believer.”

vv.10-12 “The strong should not despise the weak, and the weak should not judge the strong, for everyone will stand before God, who will judge all on the last day. The future day of **judgment** is prophesied in Isa 45:23. Every person will give **an account** of his life to God at the judgment. Though justification is by faith alone, what Christians do will affect God’s evaluation of their service to him and the rewards they will receive (cf. 1 Cor 3:10–17; 2 Cor 5:10).”²

v.14 “At the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), the Jewish church in Jerusalem asked the Gentile church in Antioch not to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Paul was at the Jerusalem council, and he accepted this request not because he felt that eating such meat was wrong in itself, but because this practice would deeply offend many Jewish believers. Paul did not think the issue was worth dividing the church over; his desire was to promote unity.”

vv.20-21 “Sin is not just a private matter. Everything we do affects others, and we have to think of them constantly. God created us to be interdependent, not independent. We who are strong in our faith must, without pride or condescension, treat others with love, patience and self-restraint.”³

“In conclusion, we need to say again: The need to limit the expression of our liberty out of love for God and fellow believers is the key principle in this chapter. Our culture insists on rights, and it is easy for Christians to bring that attitude into the church. But the spiritual health of the body

is far more important than our rights. The freedom God has purchased for us through his Son is a precious gift, but it is a freedom to live as God wants, not as we want. Luther put it well in his famous comment on Christian liberty: ‘A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.’”⁴



Bible Text

Romans 14:1-12 (ESV)

¹ As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵ One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

¹ English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2180.

² English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2181.

³ Life Application Study Bible, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2054.

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, Romans, Life Application Bible Commentary CD (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2000).



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 14:1-12

"If we are to understand the point of this section as a whole, we must recognize that the phrase 'whose faith is weak' has a special nuance in this context. 'Faith' refers not directly to one's belief generally but to one's convictions about what that faith allows him or her to do. The weak in faith are not necessarily lesser Christians than the strong. They are simply those who do not think their faith allows them to do certain things that the strong feel free to do. What Paul wants the strong to do is not simply extend grudging tolerance to the weak, but to welcome them (the verb *proslambano*, used here, means to receive or accept into one's society, home, circle of acquaintance). They should not allow differences over 'disputable matters' to interfere with full fellowship in the body of Christ."¹

- The Christians in Rome passed judgment upon one another, "quarrel[ing] over opinions" such as the eating of meat. Name some opinions of our day that have caused Christians to be unaccepting and judgmental of one another.
- Why must Christian freedom be understood in the context of "we are the Lord's?" What kinds of abuses can this lead to if not properly understood?

Romans 14:5,12

- Reflect on the words: "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (v.5); and "each of us will give an account of himself to God" (v.12). Think about the degree to which God calls me to take ownership over my own convictions and decisions, and assess the degree to which I do things out of being "fully convinced in [my] own mind."

¹ Douglas J. Moo. "Romans," *The NIV Application Commentary*. (Zondervan, 2000) 448.

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Tuesday, November 29, 2022



Prayer



Bible Text

Romans 14:13-18 (ESV)

¹³ Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵ For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 14:13-18

“The strong are not wrong to think they have freedom to eat whatever they want. Rather, they are wrong for using that freedom without regard to the effect it may have on their weaker brothers and sisters – people for whom Christ died. The strong need a reordering of priorities, in which kingdom values take precedence over selfish interest and pleasure.” ¹

- What lesson is here about a life of voluntary self-limitation as a basic duty of Christian love?
- What are some permissible things which, given the call to be mindful of other believers, I need to personally limit or eliminate?

¹ Douglas J. Moo, “Romans,” *The NIV Application Commentary*. (Zondervan, 2000) 460.



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Bible Text

Romans 14:19-23 (ESV)

¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

²⁰ Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. ²¹ It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. ²² The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 14:19-21

- Reflect on v.19 as a general rule of life. in what specific way can I increase my effort to “pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” with people in my life?



Prayer

“ Prayer is no petty duty, put into a corner; no piecemeal performance made out of the fragments of time which have been snatched from business and other engagements of life; but it means that the best of our time, the heart of our time and strength must be given. ”

- E.M. Bounds -



Prayer of Gratitude

Series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Prayer of Supplication



December Hymn

Savior Thy Dying Love (Something for Thee)

Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

At the blest mercy seat,
Pleading for me,
My feeble faith looks up,
Jesus, to Thee;
Help me the cross to bear,
Thy wondrous love declare,
Some song to raise, or pray'r,
Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wand'rer sought and won,
Something for Thee.

All that I am and have,
Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, through life,
Dear Lord, for Thee!
And when Thy face I see,
My ransom'd soul shall be,
Through all eternity,
Something for Thee.

“

Work, work, from morning until late at night.
In fact, I have so much to do that I shall have to spend the first three hours in prayer.

”

- Martin Luther -



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication



December Hymn

Savior Thy Dying Love (Something for Thee)

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Through all eternity,
Something for Thee.

Commentary

ROMANS 15 COMMENTARY

v.2 “If we merely set out to please our neighbors, we will be people-pleasers. Paul was opposed to that (see Gal 1:10). But we are to set aside willfulness and self-pleasing action for the sake of building others up for good. Our Christian convictions must not be a disguise for coldhearted treatment of our brothers and sisters.”

v.12 “The Root of Jesse refers to Christ as the heir from the family line of Jesse, David’s father (1 Sam 16:1).”¹

v.19 “Paul has fulfilled his mandate to preach the gospel among the Gentiles from **Jerusalem to Illyricum** (roughly comprising what is now Albania and also what was formerly Yugoslavia). How can Paul say that his work has been complete when many still have not heard the gospel in this area? It can be seen from the following verses that churches have been planted in key centers, and from there Paul’s coworkers will bring the gospel to outlying areas (e.g., Ephras in Colossae, Col 1:7).”²

vv.20-22 “Paul wanted to visit the church at Rome, but he delayed his visit because he had heard many good reports about the believers there and he knew they were doing well on their own. It was more important for him to preach in areas that had not yet heard the Good News.”³

vv.23-24 “No visit of Paul to Spain is recorded in the NT, but it is possible that he went there after his release from prison in Rome (after Acts 28:30–31). There is some historical evidence after the NT suggesting that Paul did preach in Spain, but it falls short of clear proof.”⁴

¹ Life Application Study Bible, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2054.

² English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2183.

³ Life Application Study Bible, study notes (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2055.

⁴ English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2183.

Bible Text

Romans 15:1-13 (ESV)

¹ We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name.”

¹⁰ And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

¹¹ And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him.”

¹² And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 15:1-3

"The way Christ acted, the Christ who although he was strong yet for our sake became weak, is the way that the strong must also act toward those whose own faith is weak. The self-limitation of Christ for the sake of others thus shows the way the strong are to exercise the freedom they have in the faith: Its exercise is to be limited for the good of others, in this case, the weak."¹

- Reflect on the fact that Christ "did not please himself." To what extent is "pleasing myself" the criterion by which I choose between options, and the motivating goal of my life?
- What can I do to "please [my] neighbor for his good, to build him up?"

Romans 15:4-11

- In what way does a deep desire to "with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 6) push out the attitude of wanting to assert the rightness of my opinions, or engage in disputes over nonessential matters?

¹ Achtemeier, Paul J., *Romans* (John Knox Press, 1985) at p.223-4



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



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A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Prayer

“

Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God.

- Oswald Chambers -

”



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Prayer of Supplication



December Hymn

Savior Thy Dying Love (Something for Thee)

Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

At the blest mercy seat,
Pleading for me,
My feeble faith looks up,
Jesus, to Thee;
Help me the cross to bear,
Thy wondrous love declare,
Some song to raise, or pray'r,
Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wand'rer sought and won,
Something for Thee.

All that I am and have,
Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, through life,
Dear Lord, for Thee!
And when Thy face I see,
My ransom'd soul shall be,
Through all eternity,
Something for Thee.

“ Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people.
Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!

- Andrew Murray -

”



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer of Supplication



December Hymn

Savior Thy Dying Love (Something for Thee)

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Thou gavest me,
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee;
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Thy gifts so free,
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Dear Lord, for Thee!
And when Thy face I see,
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Commentary

ROMANS 16 COMMENTARY

vv.1-16 “It’s interesting that Romans, a profound book of doctrine, ends with so many personal greetings. This illustrates the fact that true doctrine leads to loving fellowship among people. It also shows that no matter how admired and significant Paul was as an apostle, he saw himself as one of the believers – a fellow worker and friend of those in Christ.”¹

“[W]hat is not typical about this section is the number of greetings. He asks the Romans to greet twenty-six individuals, two families, and three house churches. This number is all the more surprising when we remember that Paul had never visited Rome.”

vv.1-2 “Letters of commendation were important in the ancient world. People who traveled in an age with few public facilities (such as hotels or restaurants) depended on the assistance of people they had sometimes never met for their needs. Phoebe is apparently going to be traveling to Rome, and so Paul commends to the church this ‘sister’ (*adelphē*, rare in the New Testament as a description of believer [1 Cor 7:15; 9:5; Philem 2; Jas 2:15]).

“But Phoebe is more than a sister; she is also a ‘servant [*diakonos*] of the church in Cenchrea.’ *Diakonos* can be applied to any Christian, called to ‘serve’ God and his people. This may be its sense here. But the addition ‘of the church in Cenchrea’ makes it more likely that Phoebe holds an official position in the church there. Phoebe is probably a ‘deacon,’ serving the church by ministering to the financial and material needs of the believers (see esp. 1 Tim 3:8–12; cf. also Phil 1:1).”²

v.3 “Priscilla and Aquila were a married couple who had become Paul’s close friends. They, along with all the other Jews, had been expelled from Rome by the emperor (Acts 18:2,3) and had moved to Corinth. There they met Paul and invited him to live with them. They were Christians before they met Paul, and probably told him much about the Roman church. Like Paul, Priscilla and Aquila were missionaries. They helped believers in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-28), in Rome when they were allowed to return, and

again at Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19).”³

v.7 “The fact that Andronicus and Junias were ‘outstanding among the apostles’ could mean they had distinguished themselves as apostles. They may have been a husband and wife team. Paul’s references to them as relatives (see also 16:21) could mean that they were from the same tribe as Paul.”⁴

v.13 “It is not certain that this is the same **Rufus** as is mentioned in Mark 15:21, but it is possible that he is the son of Simon of Cyrene. Apparently Rufus’ mother ministered significantly to Paul.”⁵

v.22 “**Tertius** functioned as Paul’s scribe or secretary for the letter. It was common for those writing letters in the first century to dictate to a secretary, but the content of the letter is clearly Paul’s.”⁶

1 *Quest Study Bible, study notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 1570.

2 Douglas J. Moo, *Romans, Life Application Bible Commentary CD* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2000).

3 *Life Application Study Bible, study notes* (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2056.

4 *Life Application Study Bible, study notes* (co-published by Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991) 2057.

5 *English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2184.

6 *English Standard Version Study Bible, study notes* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008) 2185.



Bible Text

Romans 16:1-16 (ESV)

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, ² that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. ⁵ Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. ⁶ Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. ⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. ⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. ¹⁰ Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. ¹¹ Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. ¹² Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. ¹⁵ Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. ¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 16:1-16

- List the characteristics of those people Apostle Paul greets here. What picture of Christian discipleship and relationship do these qualities paint, especially given Apostle Paul had never been to the church at Rome?
- Note the many names of women that appear in this list (e.g., Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus' mother, Julia, Nereus' sister.) What does the fact that Apostle Paul referred to so many women with deep personal appreciation, respect, and high commendation show about gender roles in the early church?
- As Apostle Paul comes to the end of his dense and packed epistle, he lists people he loves—a couple who “risked their necks for my life,” three he calls “beloved,” many who “worked hard,” those who were “fellow prisoners,” and a woman who “has been a mother to me.” Reflect on the richness of Apostle Paul's life. Who are the people I can recollect with a similar fondness, love, and shared history? Try writing your own Romans 16.

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

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Tuesday, December 13, 2022



Prayer



Bible Text

Romans 16:17-27 (ESV)

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. ¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

²² I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³ Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

²⁵ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Dotted lines for writing.



Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

Romans 16:17-20

- How does Apostle Paul exhort the church to deal with those who cause divisions in the church?
- What can I learn from Apostle Paul's directive about the nature of divisiveness within the church, and why is it such a serious issue?



Prayer



Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

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- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.

Thursday, December 15, 2022



Prayer

“ He must set his heart to conquer by prayer, and that will mean that he must first conquer his own flesh, for it is the flesh that hinders prayer always. ”

- A. W. Tozer -



Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page below the section header.



Prayer of Supplication



December Hymn

Savior Thy Dying Love (Something for Thee)

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In love my soul would bow,
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Some off'ring bring Thee now,
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