

July 28, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passages: Romans 13: 1-7, 8-10; 14:1-12;
16:17-20

(Additional suggestion: Romans 15)

Submission to Governing Authorities: Romans 13:1-7

1. How should Christians balance their allegiance to God and their obedience to earthly authorities?
2. In what ways can we demonstrate respect and submission to government officials even when we disagree with them?

Love fulfills the Law: Romans 13:8-10

3. How does loving our neighbor fulfill the law of God?
4. What practical steps can we take to show genuine love to those around us, especially those who are difficult to love?
5. How can we as a church embody the commandment to love one another?

The Weak and the Strong: Romans 14: 1-12

6. How should we handle differences of opinion on disputable matters within the church?
7. How does the concept of not passing judgment on others apply to our church community?

Final Warnings: Romans 16:17-20

8. How should we handle divisions and false teachings within the church?

Doxology: Romans 16: 21-27

9. How does Paul's final doxology (praise to God) encapsulate the themes of the letter to the Romans?

July 21, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 12:9-21

(Additional suggestion: read Romans 12:9-21 in different translations and note the differences)

1. How much do you rely on making *lists* in your life, like a to-do list, a checklist, or a goal list? Can you recall a time when having a list greatly helped you?
2. In Romans 12:9-21, Paul gives a list of actions to take, and they come in rapid succession. All of these are commanded in response to God's mercy toward us (12:1). As you look at these teachings, what stands out the most to you?
3. Romans 12:9 says "let love be genuine." How do *you* distinguish between genuine love and counterfeit love?
4. How do the instructions in this passage relate to *love*?
5. Make note of the instructions that relate to our relationships with others. Which ones are most difficult to live out? Which ones are most needed today?
6. In our world, revenge and retaliation are common responses to attack, whether personal, communal, or national. How does this passage instruct us in dealing with enemies? Can you recall an example of someone refusing to seek revenge?
7. Evil is mentioned throughout our passage, including in the final sentence: "...overcome evil with good" (12:21).

Why are humans tempted to fight evil with evil? How is it possible for victims of evil to be “overcome” by evil?

8. How can faithful people help each other live out the teachings of this passage?
9. What one piece of instruction in this passage do you most need to do your life right now?

July 14, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 12: 1-8

1. What does it mean to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice? How can we apply this in our daily lives?
2. In what ways do we conform to the patterns of this world?
3. What steps can we take to renew our minds and be transformed?
4. Paul warns against thinking too highly of ourselves. What are some ways we can maintain humility while recognizing our gifts?
5. Paul talks about the body of Christ and it's many parts. How does understanding our individual roles within the body of Christ impact our approach to community and service?
6. Paul lists different gifts (preaching, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy). How can we identify and develop the gifts God has given us?
7. Can you share an example of how you have used your gifts to inspire the body of Christ and serve others?
8. This week, choose one specific way to present yourself as a living sacrifice to God. What will you do, and how can you stay accountable to this commitment?

July 7, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 8:18-39

1. Today's passage is a powerful reminder of the hope of the gospel. What does it mean to *hope*? In what do people place their hope today?
2. How would you explain Christian hope?
3. Romans 8:18-21 speaks both of suffering and hope. What kinds of suffering make the biggest challenges to faith and hope? Have you known people whose faith grew either weaker or stronger during times of suffering?
4. Romans 8:26-27 speaks of the role of the Spirit and prayer. Does anything in this passage surprise you? How does this portion of scripture encourage you?
5. Read Romans 8:28. Some have believed this passage to mean "everything happens for a reason," or that "God causes everything to happen." Is this what the text actually communicates? Do you agree or not? Are there alternative ways to understand Romans 8:28?
6. Those who follow Christ are a part of a *family* (verse 29). What do you find helpful about this? What do you find challenging?
7. Today's passage ends with a memorable set of rhetorical questions all pointing to a wonderful affirmation about Jesus (verses 31-39). As you read this portion of scripture, what words or phrases stand out to you?
8. Have you ever felt separated from the love of God in Christ? How have you been reminded of God's presence?
9. How does Romans 8:18-39 encourage you today?

June 30, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 8: 1-17

1. What does Paul mean when he says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).
2. How does this truth impact our daily lives and our relationship with God?
3. How does Paul contrast the “law of the Spirit of life” with the “law of sin and death” in verses 2-4?
4. In what ways does living according to the Spirit set us free from the power of sin?
5. According to Romans 8: 5-8, what is the difference between setting our minds on the flesh versus setting our minds on the Spirit?
6. What are some practical ways that we can do to set our minds on the things of the Spirit in our daily lives?
7. What does Paul mean when he says that the Spirit of God dwells in believers (Romans 8:9-11).
8. How does the presence of the Holy Spirit influence our actions and decisions?
9. In verses 14-17, Paul talks about believers being adopted as children of God. What are the implications of this adoption for our identity and inheritance as Christians?

June 23, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 6: 1-2, 12-18

1. Paul asks, "Shall we go on sinning so that Grace may increase?" How does this question challenge common misunderstandings about grace and sin?
2. How does Paul's emphatic response, "By no means" reflect the seriousness of the issue?
3. Some Christians think the church talks too much about sin, while others think the church doesn't talk enough about sin. What do you think?
4. Regardless, Paul's overarching focus is Grace and Peace. How can we be bearers of Grace and Peace when it seems that good is now called evil and evil is called good?
5. Paul says that Christ has set us free from the power of sin? Do you see evidence of that in your own life? In the life of other believers?
6. What part do we play in choosing to live in sin or to refrain from sin? Who determines what sin is?
7. Paul says, "Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires" (Romans 6:12). What are some practical steps that we each can take to avoid giving in to sinful desires?
8. What are some steps we can take to lead lives of holiness that lead to eternal life? (Romans 6:22).
9. How does scripture reading, prayer, fellowship, small group conversation, worship and communion strengthen you to live a life of grace and peace? A life of holiness and godliness?

June 16, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 5:1-5

1. What does it mean to be “made right with God by faith” according to Romans 5:1?
2. How does this new life affect our relationship with God?
3. How would you describe the peace we have with God through Jesus Christ?
4. In what ways do you experience or struggle with this peace in your daily life?
5. What does Paul mean by saying we have “gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand?” (Romans 5:2).
6. How does understanding God’s grace impact our spiritual growth and daily living?
7. How does hope influence our perspective on current challenges and future expectations?
8. According to Romans 5:3-4, what role does suffering play in the life of a believer?

Going Deeper:

9. How has your understanding of faith, peace, grace, and hope evolved as you’ve grown in your relationship with Jesus?
10. In what areas of your life do you feel God is calling you to trust Him more fully based on this passage in Romans 5:1-5?

June 9, 2024 - Romans

Scripture Passage: Romans 4:13-25

1. Name a promise that someone made to you. Did they keep their promise? How did that make you feel?
2. Do you recall some promises that God made to people in the Old Testament? Name the person and the promise that was made.
3. God made a promise to Abraham way back in the Old Testament that he would become the father of many nations. Why do we call him Father Abraham?
4. Abraham, a great patriarch of the faith, is our Father spiritually speaking because of faith. God honored God's promises to Abraham because of his faith in the faithfulness of God.
5. How can our Christian faith be more rooted and grounded in God's faithfulness? In fact, how does God's faithfulness to us contribute toward a strong and robust faith?
6. Romans 4:18 says, "Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping - believing that he would become the father of many nations." How can Abraham's example of hope and faith inspire us when circumstances in our lives are difficult and unpleasant?
7. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise (vs.26). Abraham didn't have the written scriptures to lean on. How was he able to be so strong and not waver in his faith?
8. What are some spiritual practices that you can draw upon to strengthen your hope and faith?

June 2, 2024 - Romans 1

Scripture Passage: Romans 1:1-17

1. When was the last time you could not wait to share something good with another person? Describe that situation.
2. What comes to mind when you hear the word “gospel.” How do you understand this word?
3. Read verses 1-6. How would you summarize Paul’s opening six verses? What do you notice?
4. Paul writes to those in Rome who were “called to be saints.” The word *saints* was the simple designation in the New Testament for a regular Christian. Do you see yourself as someone called to be a saint? Why or why not?
5. One of Paul’s goals for the letter to the Romans is that his audience would be strengthened and encouraged (vss 11-12). How has your faith been strengthened in your life? What do you need for further strengthening?
6. Early Christian communities were made up of both Jews and Gentiles (non Jews), and clearly there were divisions at times. How does Romans 1:1-17 foreshadow how Paul will handle these divisions in the rest of the letter?
7. How does Paul define the gospel in verse 16?

Going Deeper

8. How have you been encouraged in your recent journey of faith? How have you encouraged others?