



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

ROMANS 1-8

Week 1

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# *Before You Begin Your Journey...*

It's been said that all of the reforms and transformations that have taken place in the church over the past 2,000 years have in some way been connected with the book of Romans. The book of Romans provided the starting point for Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation.

This book, originally a letter written by the apostle Paul, explains who God is, what we can expect from him and how we can relate to him. The original audience to which this book was written was a small group of Christians in the imperial city of Rome, capital of the mighty Roman Empire.

Paul had never been to Rome at the time he wrote the book. He wrote to men and women who had become Christ-followers with little formal instruction, so the book is a guide to basic Christianity—answering some of the most basic questions about God. These questions still perplex and puzzle men and women today: *What is the purpose of life? How can I find God? Does God care about me? Do I matter to God? If God cares, what does he want me to do with my life? How can I please God?*

In Romans we have some of the most basic and fundamental teaching about Christianity, but this doesn't mean the book is simple. Romans is masterfully written to appeal to the person who does not even pretend to follow Jesus and to someone who might not even believe in God. At the same time Romans is written to a new Christian. It is so profound that mature and veteran Christians are amazed at the new insights they have when they re-study Romans.

In Romans Paul reasons, argues, gives examples and encourages his readers to be stronger in their faith. Although the apostle wrote this letter to a specific group of people in the first century, this letter has stood the test of

time. It is very much a letter to each one of us.

Paul was a Jew who had been brought up to know, obey and reverence the law of the Old Testament. Originally, his name was Saul. As a Jew, Saul believed that his people had a unique relationship with God that no other humans could have. He believed that the Jews had an exclusive franchise with God—and that no one else could know God in the special way they did. This is not so different from many groups today—some who call themselves Christian and some who do not.

But Saul believed that he and his fellow Hebrews had this exclusive relationship with God because of their law—and their devotion to that law. Saul had been an enemy of the early Christians. He tortured and killed those who did not agree with him—something this sad old earth has seen happen over and over again—murder and mayhem in the name of God.

Saul was called by God one day as he journeyed to Damascus, a city that still exists in present day Syria. He was en route to persecute Christians. As a result of God's intervention in his life, this man of zeal accepted Jesus Christ, and became one of the central figures in Christianity—then and now, 2,000 years later. In the process Paul learned the greatest lesson any Christian can learn: *Salvation does not depend on what humans do, but on what Christ has done.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Albrecht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "G" and a long, sweeping underline that extends across the name.

Greg Albrecht  
President, Plain Truth Ministries

# *How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...*

**1**—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. We plan to cover the entire Bible in 43 volumes, and while that sounds like a long time, don't be in a hurry. Take your time! Even though each volume is divided into bite-size daily lessons, you may want to take two days on each "daily" lesson.

**2**—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule. You will find that the *CWR Bible Survey* will be an invaluable resource for facing your daily challenges.

**3**—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a study Bible. Plain Truth Ministries has reviewed many of the study Bibles that are available, and in cooperation with Thomas Nelson and Zondervan, we are pleased to be able to offer two superb study Bibles that will be an excellent resource and help to you. Please see the back pages of this book for more details.

**4**—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

**5**—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.
- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.
- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

**6**—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

**7**—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. The *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

• **Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey***—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

# ROMANS 1-8

What It Means  
to Be a Christian

# *Introduction to Romans 1-8*

**Authorship:** The apostle Paul.

**Date:** It is generally believed that Paul was in Corinth near the end of his third missionary journey (Ac 20:1-5) when he wrote this letter. This dates Romans around A.D. 58.

**Setting and purpose:** Paul was planning to visit Christians in Rome and wrote to prepare them for his arrival. Paul was aware that many of them did not know him because he had not been involved in establishing that Christian community. Perhaps he was eager to reassure Christians in Rome that, in spite of any rumors they may have heard about him, his message was in line with that of the other apostles. He also wanted to get their support for a missionary trip to Spain (Ro 15:24).

Most of the other letters of Paul were written to churches he personally had established. Those letters often deal with local problems, issues and controversies. The Book of Romans has few localized issues. Paul does address some local concerns in chapters 13 through 15, and in chapter 16 he greets some of the Roman Christians, whom he had met in places other than Rome. The book of Romans is a systematic exposition of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many scholars view Romans as the most important theological book in the New Testament.

**Distinctive Features:** This is Paul's most comprehensive outline of the Christian faith. There is something in Romans for every person. *For those who do not know Christ*, Paul provides a clear exposition of God's righteous plan for their salvation. *For those new in the faith*, Romans teaches them about their identity in Christ and their victory in life through the power of the Holy Spirit. *For more experienced Christ-followers*, there is ample discussion of a wide spectrum of Christian truths such as sin, salvation, righteousness, holiness and the nature and work of Jesus.

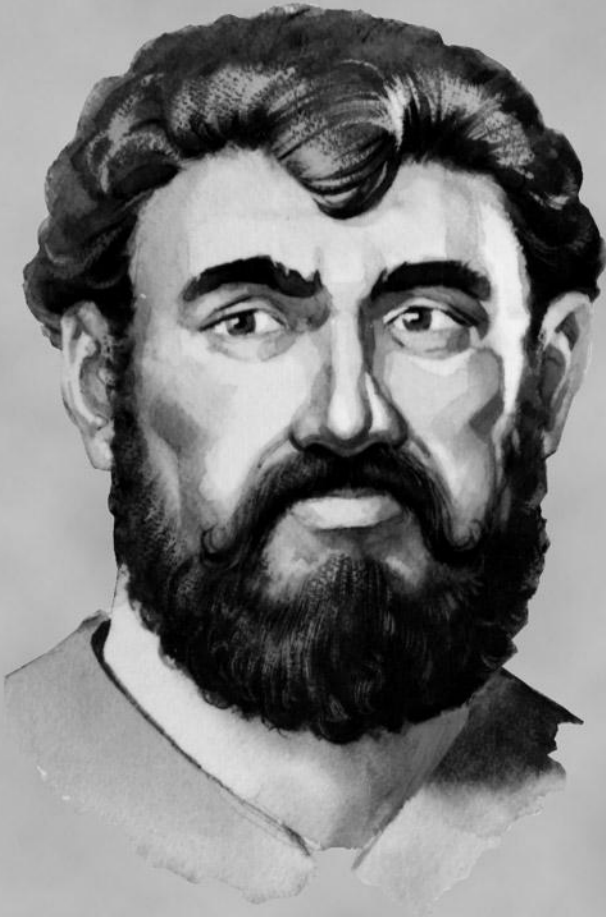


## **Reading outline:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Theme</b>
1	Romans 1:1-7	A Calling In Life
2	Romans 1:8-17	Thanking God for Other Christians
3	Romans 1:18-32	A World Without God
4	Romans 2:1-11	Dangers of Self-Righteousness
5	Romans 2:12-16	God Will Be the Judge of That
6	Romans 2:17-29	Lip Service Religion
7	Romans 3:1-8	Family Perks
8	Romans 3:9-20	What We All Have in Common
9	Romans 3:21-31	Breaking Down the Barriers
10	Romans 4:1-8	Justification by Faith
11	Romans 4:9-12	Shattering Thoughts
12	Romans 4:13-17	Amazing Grace
13	Romans 4:18-25	God Makes the Impossible Possible
14	Romans 5:1-5	How To Have Peace With God
15	Romans 5:6-11	Extraordinary Love
16	Romans 5:12-17	Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ
17	Romans 5:18-21	Action and Reaction
18	Romans 6:1-11	All The Difference In The World
19	Romans 6:12-14	Using, Not Abusing
20	Romans 6:15-18	Slave Driver
21	Romans 6:18-23	No Man Can Serve Two Masters
22	Romans 7:1-6	A Fresh Start
23	Romans 7:7-13	Struggling With Sin
24	Romans 7:14-25	The Common Human Condition
25	Romans 8:1-4	A Fresh Start
26	Romans 8:5-11	Living by the Spirit
27	Romans 8:12-17	God's Children, Not Slaves to Fear
28	Romans 8:18-25	Glorious Hope!
29	Romans 8:26-30	An Invisible Means of Support
30	Romans 8:31-39	We Shall Overcome

*“Paul, a servant of  
Christ Jesus, called to  
be an apostle and set  
apart for the gospel of  
God.”*

Romans 1:1



# A Calling in Life

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DAY 1

Romans 1:1-7

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) said: "The special person called to do missionary work is every person who is a member of the church of Christ. The call does not come to a chosen few, it is to every one of us." Do you agree, and, if so, how are you engaged in *missionary* work?

1. How does Paul identify himself? What is his task or call in life?
2. Describe the *good news* as outlined in these verses by Paul.
3. What does Paul say about Jesus?
4. What words of assurance and reassurance does Paul offer to Christians in Rome?

1. When you introduce yourself to someone who doesn't know you, how do you identify yourself? Why that particular identification and not some other?
2. What is some good news that made a big difference in your life? How did you hear that good news?
3. Who has recently brought you spiritual good news? What was the message?

**Gentiles** (v. 5) is translated from a Greek word that actually means "nations." In the Old Testament worldview, there were two kinds of nations: Israel and everyone else. Israel was called by God to be a light to the nations. In the New Testament, the word *gentiles* refers to all non-Jewish nations (Lk 21:24; Ac 9:15; 1Co 1:23).

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## Thanking God for Other Christians

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Romans 1:8-17

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

If you were in a situation like Paul, writing to a group of Christians whose faith you admired, what would you write? What would you say about that group of Christ-followers?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** Identify the strengths of Christ-followers in Rome. What conclusions could Roman Christians arrive at about Paul from these verses?

**2.** What are Paul's reasons for wanting to visit the Roman Christians?

**3.** Summarize the gospel as outlined in verses 16-17.

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** From these verses, what is most impressive to you about Paul? Do you know any other Christians who have similar characteristics?

**2.** What tasks engage your whole heart (v. 9)? Are they fulfilling or frustrating?

**3.** In verse 14 Paul indicates he has learned from all kinds of people—"Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish." How have you learned from the wise and the simple, the cultured and the uncultured, the lettered and unlettered? Identify some of those individuals.

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

**Greek** (v. 14) as used by Paul does not refer to someone of a specific ethnic group nor to someone of a specific birth place. Rather a Greek was a Hellenized person—someone educated in the culture and philosophical outlook of the great Greek teachers and philosophers.

# *The Christian Declaration of Freedom*

In the eighth chapter of Romans we are given a number of freedoms which people can enjoy because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Each one is divinely designed to give us power for daily living.

## *Freedom From Guilt*

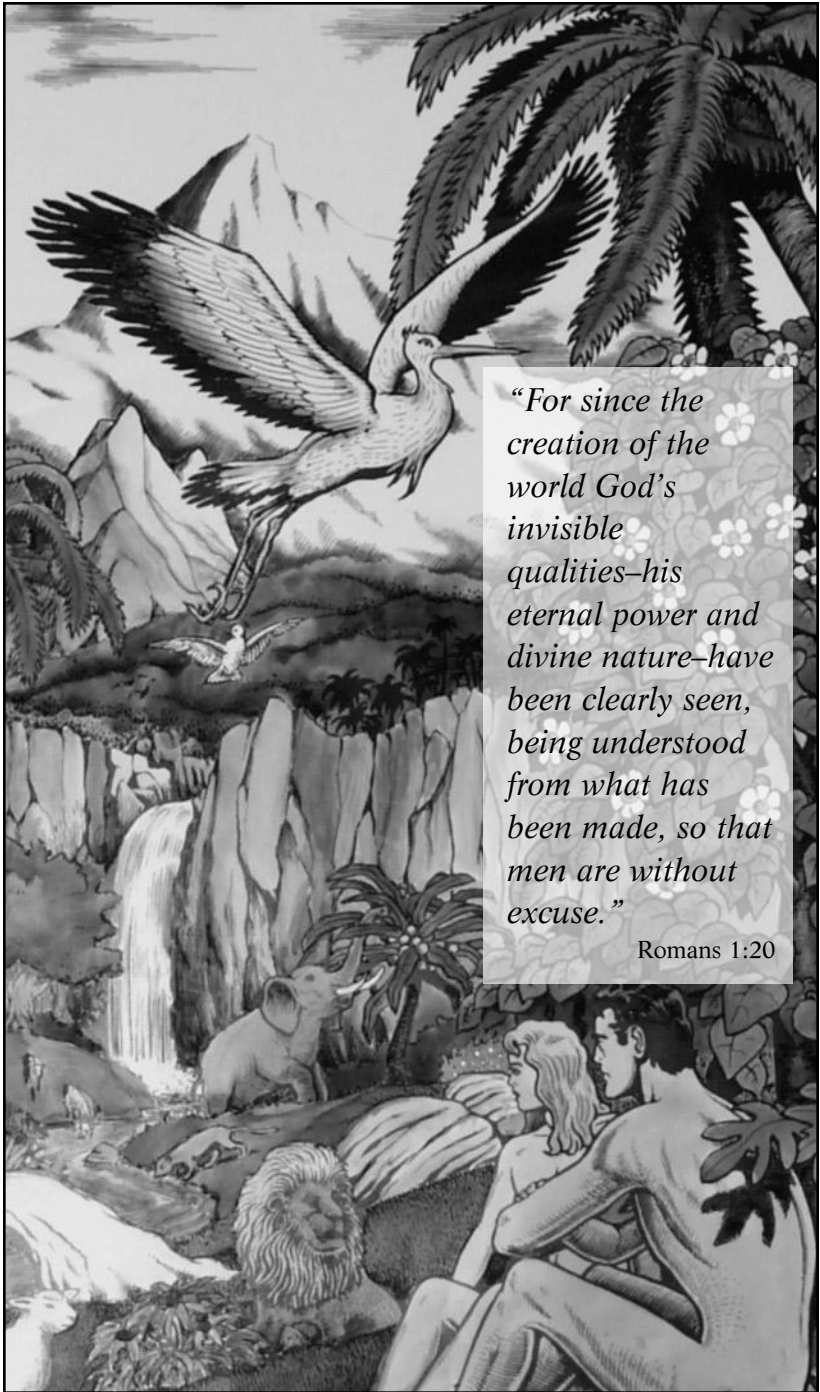
“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (8:1-2). It is God and God alone, who gives us ultimate freedom from guilt. If you believe in Jesus Christ, that he is big enough, strong enough and sufficient to remove both the penalty and the guilt of your sin, the guilt of your past is removed and strength and hope for the future is assured.

## *Freedom From Anxiety*

“The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace” (8:6). It is when we have a relationship with Christ that we also have inner peace regardless of the outer storms which may be raging. The apostle Paul reminds us it is possible to experience peace in spite of life’s demands and traumas. Those who trust in Christ enjoy peace—a word that is usually defined as the absence of conflict and trouble. But God’s peace is confident assurance in any circumstance.

## *Freedom From Condemnation*

“If God is for us, who can be against us? ... Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (8:31-39). We are free from God’s condemnation no matter what we have done or said. Whatever you have done, and no matter what you are now doing, you can come to Christ. And because you come to him and trust in him to save you, you will be accepted.



*“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

Romans 1:20

# A World Without God

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Romans 1:18-32

“God plans and engineers a personal visit to his own world and the reaction of the world is to get rid of him,” said J. B. Phillips.

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1. Based on these verses, write a description of God.
  2. What are some natural ways people come to know about God (vs. 19-20)? What is the problem with humanity?
  3. How does God respond to people who choose to wander off on evil paths?
  4. How many vices are listed in this passage?
- 

1. According to this section, *the judgment God inflicts on people is to let them have their own way* (v. 24). Can you identify an experience, either from your own life or something you have observed in someone else, where either you or someone else experienced “the wrath of God” (verse 18) as simply the consequences of actions humanly chosen?

2. Look over the list of vices found in this section. Which one(s) do you struggle with the most? What spiritual tools do you use to resist and overcome them?

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**The wrath of God** is an alarming and terrifying phrase to some people. Behind the phrase is the spiritual reality that God created a moral order in this world and when people go against it, they do so at their own peril. It is not a “wrath” specifically sent by God but one that humans experience as a consequence of their own actions. However, there is also a future “day of wrath” when God will judge what everyone has done (2:5-10).

DAY 3

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## Dangers of Self-Righteousness

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Romans 2:1-11

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

In the first chapter, Paul has shown that nonbelievers need Christ. Now he turns his attention to believers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. He addresses the evil of self-righteousness, that is, acting and behaving as though we are better than others. What are some ways that Christians do this today?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** The church in Rome was made up of Jewish Christians and non-Jewish Christians. To whom does it seem most of Paul's remarks are directed in this section? Why?

**2.** What vices are mentioned in these verses? In what ways are the people who are guilty of these vices in the same boat as those cited in 1:18-32?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

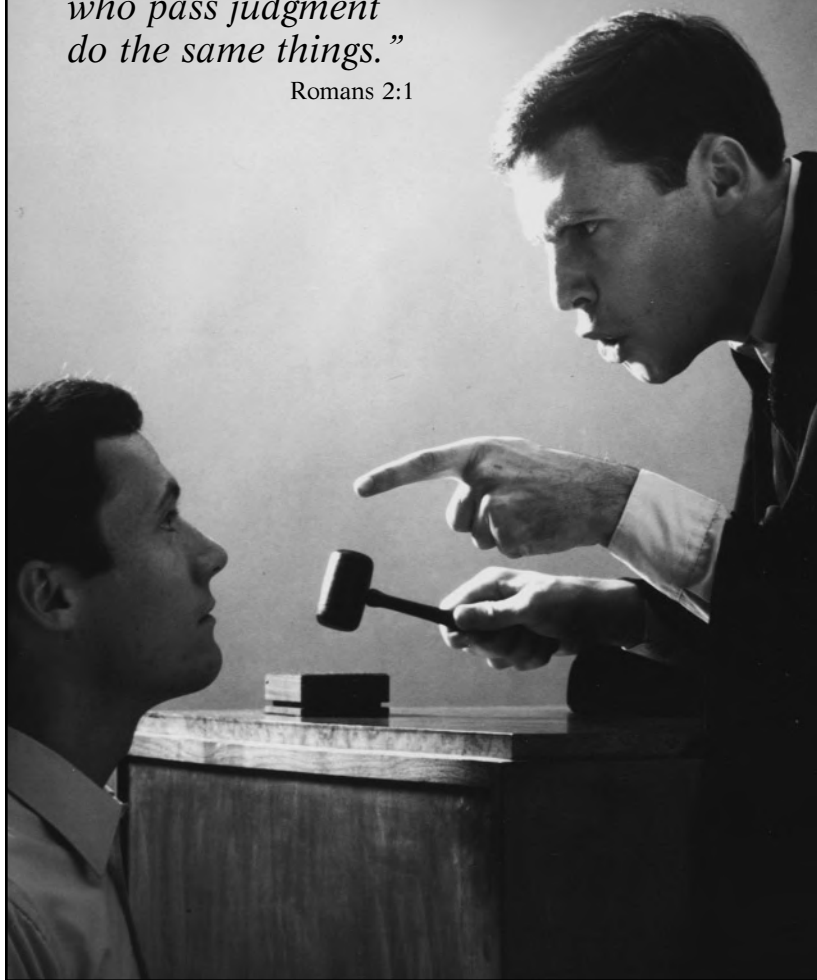
**1.** Take a closer look at verse 4 and ask yourself this question: "In what ways do I take God's goodness and kindness for granted?"

**2.** Paul may be specifically addressing Jewish Christians, reminding them that even though they considered themselves the "chosen" people (1Ki 3:8; 1Ch 16:13; Ps 105:6), in God's eyes there is no longer any most favored nation (Rom 10:12). Are some Christians today guilty of acting like the ancient Jews did—believing they hold a special position of favor and privilege in God's eyes? We would all do well to remember "God does not show favoritism" (verse 12).



*“You, therefore,  
have no excuse, you  
who pass judgment  
on someone else, for  
at whatever point  
you judge the other,  
you are condemning  
yourself, because you  
who pass judgment  
do the same things.”*

Romans 2:1



## God Will Be the Judge of That

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Romans 2:12-16

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you ever had to stand before a judge? Were you sentenced to pay a penalty or were you acquitted?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** Verse 13 says that only those who *obey the law* will be declared righteous. Based on that criteria, how many righteous people can you name? Remember that violating even one small point of the law counts as breaking the *entire* law (Jas 2:10).

**2.** Paul suggests that a knowledge of God's law is built into the human conscience (vs. 14-15), and that a violation of that law condemns a person just as much as violation of the law of Moses. Has your conscience ever helped to guide you in matters of ethics and morality?

**3.** The meaning of the word *gospel* is "good news." Yet in verse 16, Paul includes God's day of judgment as part of his gospel. The gospel is good news because even though we are all judged, in that we experience and endure the consequences of our actions, God offers to forgive and reconcile us by his grace, in and through Jesus Christ.

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** Many speak of God's wrath as if he is a vengeful and spiteful monster. But Jesus takes exception with the idea that our loving heavenly Father "harvests where he has not sown" and "gathers where he has not scattered seed" (Matthew 25:24-26).

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Romans 1:18 speaks of the **wrath of God** being revealed and further explains that wrath is his consent to our decisions—see the phrase "God gave them over" in Romans 1:24, 26 and 28.*

*“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”*

Romans 2:12



Artwork by Ren Wicks

## DAY 6

# Lip Service Religion

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Romans 2:17-29

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

The issue in this section is a distinction between outward actions, which can be humanly produced, and the internal circumcision of our hearts.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. What is the apostle concerned about in this passage?
2. Identify the sins mentioned in this section.
3. Name the virtues included in this passage.
4. What does the apostle mean by “circumcision of the heart” (v. 29)? Note also Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25-26.

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Here’s the danger: We can play a religious game, acting out a role by attending a building called a church where we wear the *right* clothing, say the *right* prayers, perform the *right* ceremonies and mouth the *right* words. But God sees behind the facade. “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies,” God told the people of Israel. He didn’t want lip service religion. Rather, if Christ lives in us, by God’s grace, justice will “roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (Am 5:21-24).

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

The **law** referred to in this section is the law of Moses, which included 613 separate commandments. Of those, 365 (one for every day of the year) were stated negatively and 248 were stated positively.

Romans 3:1-8

*In time of test, family is best*, goes an old proverb. Think about your family. What were the benefits you received by belonging to your family? Who did you like most and why? Who did you like least and why?

**1.** What were some of the spiritual advantages of being Jewish?

**2.** Verse 3 is a quote from Psalm 51. Take a moment to read the entire psalm.

**3.** Why would some Jews accuse God of injustice?

**1.** Do you feel any sense of privilege? If so, how does privilege translate into responsibility?

**2.** Pay close attention to verse 3, which reminds us that God is faithful even when we are unfaithful. Has there been a time when you experienced this truth?

**3.** How can our unrighteousness set apart God's righteousness more clearly (v. 5)?

**4.** Likewise, how can human falsehood enhance God's truthfulness and glory (v. 7)?

**Circumcision** (v. 1) is the act of cutting off the foreskin of the male genital. For the Hebrews, it was an act of initiation into the covenant people of God. But for Christianity, only the spiritual meaning is required—that our hearts and bodies are set apart for God (Eph 2:11, 15; Col 3:11).

### OPENING

up to the Word

### DIGGING

into the Word

### LIVING

out the Word

### WINDOW

on the Word