

Study Series: Romans

Questions about the overall message of Romans

1. Paul has a great deal to say about “sin” in Romans. Throughout the Bible, the word “sin” can refer to a number of different ideas. (See the Learning Bible article on sin in the Background Materials.) Some of those ideas are present in the Letter to the Romans, but Paul also seems to put forward a different theological understanding of sin. For Paul, “sin” differs somewhat from “sins” and “sinning.” Look again carefully at 3.9-20; 5.12-21; and 6.1-20. What is Paul’s view of sin? How does a theology of “sin” as a kind of power relate to Paul’s notion of salvation (see e.g., 3.21-27; 5.18-21; 8.1-17)?
2. How do you understand Romans 7? Is Paul talking about himself, or is he using the first person narrative to depict the struggles of all Christians? Does it reflect Paul’s current state or is it a flashback to an earlier period in his life? What are some ways in which your interpretation of chapter 7 affects how you read the rest of the letter?
3. Reread chapter 8, keeping in mind its position with respect to the overall message of the letter. Make a list of traits and transformations that characterize all those “who are in Christ Jesus” (verse 1, *NRSV*).

Study Series: Romans

Questions about Romans 1.1—4.25

1. How does Paul describe himself at the beginning of his letter to the Romans? What is his task or special work?
2. How does Paul describe the “good news” (1.16, 17)? Have you heard this good news before? If so, where? What difference does it make that this “good news” exists?
3. Reread 1.18 – 2.16. How do people “crush the truth” (CEV)? How does Paul describe God’s judgment (2.2-11)? What does Paul say about the human conscience? What troubles you, if anything, about what Paul says? What gives you hope?
4. According to Paul, what does it mean to be a “real Jew” (2.25-29, CEV). Are Jews better off than Gentiles? Why or why not (3.9-18)?
5. What is the real purpose of the Law (3.19, 20)? If following the Law is not the way to be saved or accepted by God, what is (3.21-30)? Does this mean that the Law is useless or should be thrown out? Why or why not (3.31)?
6. What argument is Paul using in chapter 4 to prove what he has already said about the Law, about being a Jew or Gentile, and about being acceptable to God?

Study Series: Romans

Questions about Romans 5.1—8.39

1. According to Paul, what is the relationship between suffering and having hope (5.3-5)? How do God's people have hope?
2. How are Adam and Christ alike and different from each other (5.12-21)?
3. How is being baptized like dying (6.2-11)?
4. How does Paul answer his own question in 8.35? (See 8.36-39.) What do you think of his answer?

Study Series: Romans

Questions about Romans 9.1—16.27

1. In chapters 9-11, what points is Paul making about Israel (the Jewish people), Gentiles, and being saved?
2. How do people come to have faith in the Lord (10.14-17)? What does this mean for followers of Christ today?
3. Paul offers lots of advice to the Christians at Rome (13.8 – 15.6). How can this advice be helpful for people today? What piece of advice in this section was particularly meaningful to you? Why?
4. What request does Paul make of the followers in Rome (15.30-32)?
5. What have you learned from reading Romans? What questions, if any, has it raised for you?