



The gift of God

ROMANS 1 – 7

by Timothy Keller

Editor: Carl Laferton


thegoodbook
COMPANY

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introduction: good book guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, moms and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That's why we've designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let's take a look at what is included:

- ☞ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here's the question that will do that. It's designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. **The Leader's Guide** contains **guidance on questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- 🔍 **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that's not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- ➡ **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you'll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. 🗒 **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God's word—in line with his concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader's Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God's word.

why study Romans 1 – 7?

Everyone wants to be all right—to be in right standing, or “righteous.”

We want to be right in the eyes of the law of our land—so we stay out of trouble. We want to be righteous in the eyes of those we respect and those we live among—so we act, speak and dress in ways which are expected and acceptable. We want to be righteous in the eyes of our loved ones—so we seek, and then seek to keep, a partner, or partners. We want to be righteous in the eyes of those we work with—so we work hard, and work long.

But there is another, far better righteousness—the righteousness that Paul’s letter to the church in Rome is all about. It is a righteousness which we all need, which all those other righteousnesses are pointers to, which changes and liberates every aspect of our lives.

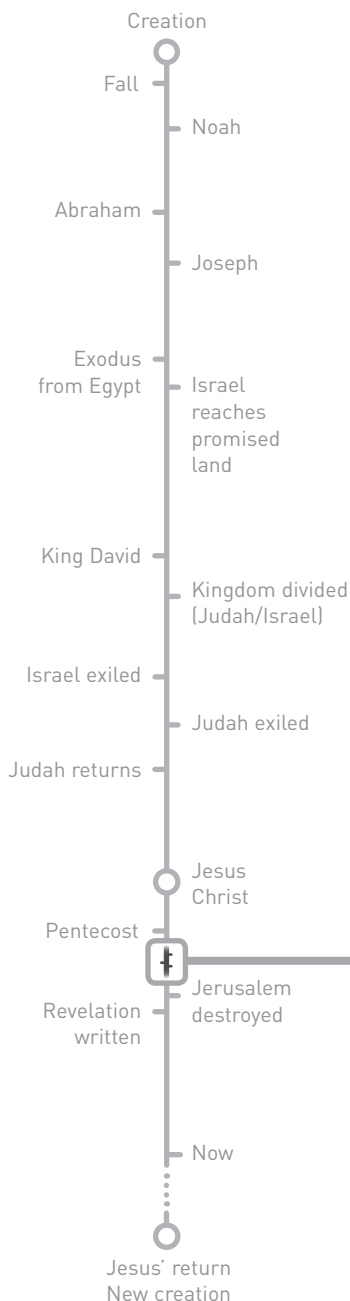
It is to be right with God—to enjoy knowing him now, and to be able to look forward to enjoying knowing him forever. And this is a righteousness which, the apostle Paul told these Christians living in the capital of the known world, no one can earn or maintain themselves. No amount of effort or achievement can secure it.

Paul wanted them and us to realize something of eternal importance and life-changing liberation: that God *gives* people a right relationship with him. “The *gift of God*,” he told them, “is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6 v 23).

In these seven studies, you’ll see Paul teaching us about this gift of being right with God. You’ll discover why, however religious we may be, we are not naturally righteous; how it is that, in Christ, God makes the unrighteous righteous; and what being righteous means for our future and our present.

And, as you unwrap this gift of God—as Paul challenges, teaches and thrills you—you’ll find that your lives, identities and perspectives are transformed.

Carl Laferton
Editor



BIBLE TIMELINE

Where does the book of Romans fit into the whole story of God's word?

ROMANS c57AD

- 53AD Paul begins his third missionary journey, through modern-day Syria, Turkey and Greece
- 55AD Paul writes 1 & 2 Corinthians
- 57AD Paul writes his letter to the church in Rome, possibly from Corinth
- 59-61AD Paul reaches Rome to stand trial, is put under house arrest, and (probably) later released
- 67AD Paul dies (possibly executed in Rome)

1

Romans 1 v 1-17

INTRODUCING RIGHTEOUSNESS



talkabout

1. How would you sum up the message of Christianity in one sentence?



investigate

➤ Read Romans 1 v 1-13

2. How did Paul view himself and his life (v 1, 5)?

DICTIONARY

Apostle (v 1): a man who had seen the risen Jesus and was chosen by him to teach his word.

Gospel (v 1): announcement (often of good news).

Holiness (v 4): set-apart-ness.

Grace (v 5): unmerited favor.

Saints (v 7): holy people.

3. What do the first six verses tell us about “the gospel”?

4. What does true faith result in (v 5)? Why is this, do you think?

5. Who is Paul writing to (v 7)? How does he describe them?

- How is he praying for them (v 8-10)?

- Why does he want to visit them (v 11-13)?

apply

6. How can we mutually encourage each other as Christians today?



getting personal

God has declared that Jesus is his Son, raised with power to rule in power; and under his rule, we enjoy grace from and peace with him. When we spend time with other believers, we are spending time with those who say “This is true” and “This is wonderful” to that declaration.

How does this both encourage and challenge your attitude to your church services?

How are you relying on other Christians’ gifts, and serving them with yours? Do you need to do more of one or the other (or both)?





investigate

➤ Read Romans 1 v 14-17

7. How does Paul feel about the gospel (v 15)? How does he not feel (v 16)?

DICTIONARY

Obligated/Bound (v 14): in debt.

Greeks (v 14): the people who had produced the wisest philosophers.

Ashamed (v 16): the Greek word also means "offended."

Righteousness (v 17): right standing with God.

from God (v 17): literally, also means "of God".

- Why might people have a view of the gospel that is opposite from Paul's view?

8. Why is Paul *not* ashamed (v 14, 16)?

9. Put Paul's nutshell summary of the Christian message from verse 17a into your own words.



explore more

optional

Who is the gospel for (v 14, 16)? Why does Paul underline this truth, do you think?

Who does the gospel save (v 16-17)?

What happens if we forget:

- *the unlimited nature of the gospel message?*
- *or, that people are not saved if they do not believe that message?*

Which are you more likely to forget?

10. What does the end of verse 17 remind us about the Christian life?



apply

11. What have verses 14-17 taught us about:

- the debt of the gospel?

- the power of the gospel?

- the content of the gospel?

- Why would forgetting any of these lead us to keep quiet about the gospel?

12. In what ways can we forget that “the righteous will live by faith” in the gospel?



getting personal

The gospel will always cause offense. So we will always be tempted to be ashamed of it. And the opposite of being ashamed is not willingness; it is eagerness (v 15).

Think of a time in your life when you have been eager to share the gospel. Why were you so eager?

When are you ashamed of the gospel? How will you remember verses 16-17 next time you are in that situation, and what difference will that make?



pray

Thank God:

- for your church, and how it encourages you in your faith and obedience.
- for the truth that God has both shown and offered his righteousness in the gospel.
- that righteousness is always about faith, not performance.

Ask God:

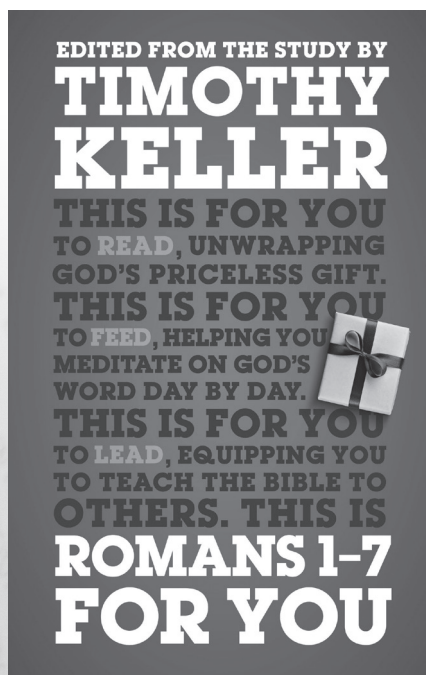
- to give you boldness in sharing the gospel, and to show you if or when you are ashamed.



Dig Deeper into Romans

ROMANS 1–7 FOR YOU

The third in a new ground-breaking series, Tim brings his trademark insights and real-world applications to the first half of the book of Romans. Written for Christians of every age and stage, whether new believers or pastors and teachers, each title in the series takes a detailed look at a part of the Bible in a readable, relevant way.



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with Tim Keller

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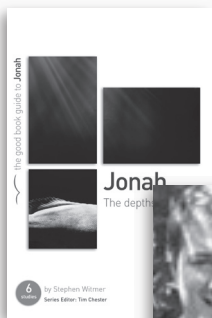


Ezekiel: The God of Glory

Tim Chester

Pastor of The Crowded House, Sheffield, UK

"Then they will know that I am the LORD" is the repeated message of Ezekiel. In a world of false hopes that will ultimately fail, this is a message for everyone.

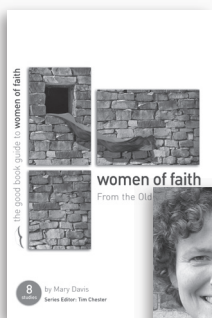


Jonah: The Depths of Grace

Stephen Witmer

Pastor of Pepperell Christian Fellowship, MA

The book of Jonah reveals to us the depths of God's grace, both to "outsiders" and to "insiders". It shows us God's compassion for the lost and His patience with His wayward people.



Women of Faith

Mary Davis

Women's Ministry Director, St Nicholas Church, Tooting, UK

Examine the lives and experiences of seven women from ancient Israel; their flaws, faith, struggles and solutions.



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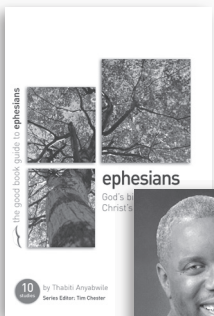


1 Corinthians: Challenging Church

Mark Dever

Senior Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington DC and President of 9Marks Ministries

The church in Corinth was full of life, and full of problems. As you read how Paul challenges these Christians, you'll see how you can help shape your own church to become truly gospel-centred.

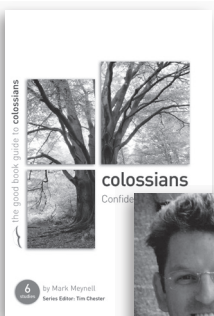


Ephesians: God's Big Plan for Christ's New People

Thabiti Anyabwile

Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Grand Cayman

If we would be healthy Christians, we would be wise to build our lives around the kind of church that emerges from the book of Ephesians.



Colossians: Confident Christianity

Mark Meynell

Senior Associate Minister, All Souls Church, London, UK

Only if we are convinced about the true identity of Christ, and certain that He alone is all we need to grow, will we mature into confident Christians.





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