

Called and Beloved

Week 1 | Romans 1:1–7, 14–17 | September 13, 2026

Use this study on your own or with a group. Individuals: write and reflect on the questions. Groups: discuss them together, allowing time for personal reflection.

Begin with prayer.

As you work through the four questions below, ask: What **in the passage** supports your answers?

Read and notice

Read Romans 1:1–7 and 14–17.

Between these sections, Paul thanks God for the Roman believers and hopes to visit so they can encourage one another's faith. Notice repeated words and descriptions of Jesus and his people.

What word or phrase catches your attention? What questions come to mind after reading the passage?

1. Who is God?

In verses 2–4, what do God's promises and the description of his Son reveal about God's character and nature? What does the greeting in verse 7 add?

2. What has God done?

What did God promise (verse 2)? What happened to Jesus (verse 4)? What does the gospel do (verses 16 and 17)? Why is Paul confident in the gospel? What challenges your confidence in the gospel?

3. What does the passage say about who we are?

How does Paul describe himself in Romans 1:1? How does he describe the believers in verses 6–7? What do they receive from God?

Verse 7 says these believers are loved by God and called to be holy, set apart for God and his purposes. How are God's love and the way we live connected? Do we live for Christ to earn his love or because he loves us?

Read Romans 1:11–12. What does Paul hope to receive from other believers? How does this challenge the idea that faith is something we live out alone?

4. So what?

What most shapes how you see yourself: your successes, mistakes, responsibilities, or what others think? You might think of grades, work, family life, or a changing role. How might belonging to Christ change the way you see these things?

Picture this: *You can face a disappointing grade, a setback at work, a changing role in your family, or a challenging conversation without letting it define who you are, because you belong to Christ.*

Whether you're studying, working, caring for someone, or retired, where do you feel pressure to prove your worth? Choose one situation this week. What would trusting and following Jesus look like in that situation? How can we respond to his grace rather than trying to earn his love?

Picture this: *You are part of a church where your age, job, or popularity does not decide how much you matter, because we belong to the same Lord. A place where we are reminded that we are loved because God has chosen to love us, not because of anything we have done to earn or deserve it. How might you help this picture be true of our church?*

Who in our church could you learn from or encourage this week (someone your age, older, or younger)? What is one way to receive from others, not only help them?

After studying the passage today, ***what might be your next faithful step in response?***

This week: Return to the passage and your next faithful step. Tell someone how their faith has encouraged yours.

For further study of identity, see Genesis 1:26–2:4.

Connecting to Sunday

We are building a shared understanding of the gospel and a common way to explain it. To help us, we have created a Gospel Catechism—a series of questions and answers for learning and remembering together. This week, Q1, Q3, and Q4 connect with our passage and Sunday's message. Q2 asks why we need salvation; we will return to it when we explore sin and our need for grace more fully.

Q1: What is the gospel?

The gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16–17).

Q3: What was God's plan?

God promised to rescue his people and restore his creation; a promise passed down from generation to generation.

Q4: How did God fulfill his promise?

The Father sent his eternal Son, who became human. In Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God has come near. Jesus lived a sinless life, died for our sins, rose victorious, and reigns as Lord.

During the week, you can practice these answers as a way to remember and share what you are learning. *Catechism references: Q3—Isaiah 52:7–10; 65:17–25. Q4—John 1:1–3, 14; Mark 1:14–15; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Ephesians 1:20–22.*

Closing Prayer

Thank God for what you have seen of him. Name where you struggle to trust God or what you struggle to trust God with. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you respond in faith and obedience, and pray for someone who needs encouragement.

By Grace, Not Achievement

Week 2 | Romans 3:21–31 | September 20, 2026

Use this study on your own or with a group. Individuals: write and reflect on the questions. Groups: discuss them together, allowing time for personal reflection.

Begin with prayer.

As you work through the four questions below, ask: What **in the passage** supports your answers?

Read and notice

Read Romans 3:19–31. Verses 19–20 give the immediate context for the primary passage, verses 21–31. Mark what the passage says people have done or cannot do. Then mark what God has done. Notice the repeated words all, faith, law, God, and boasting. What word or phrase catches your attention? What questions come to mind after reading the passage?

1. Who is God?

What do verses 21 and 25–26 reveal about God’s righteousness? Why can Paul say that God is both just and the one who justifies? What do verses 29–30 add about the one God and the people he saves?

2. What has God done?

In verses 23–26, list the words Paul uses to describe God’s saving action. What do gift, grace, redemption, and Jesus’ blood each help us understand? How does the cross show both the seriousness of sin and the generosity of God?

3. What does the passage say about who we are?

Paul says there is “no distinction”: all have sinned, and those who trust in Christ are justified freely by God’s grace. How do verses 23–24 keep us from either minimizing our sin or treating our sin as if it has the final word?

Read verses 27–30. Why is boasting excluded? What accomplishments, failures, religious experiences, or comparisons are you tempted to use when deciding how much you—or someone else—matter?

Read Romans 4:4–5. What is the difference between receiving a gift and earning wages? What would it mean to say, “In Christ, my place with God is received, not achieved”?

Last week we learned that we are called to belong to Jesus Christ and loved by God. This week shows us how sinners receive that place: God saves us by grace through faith. Put those truths together. How would you complete the sentence, “In Christ, I am...”?

4. So what?

Faith is trust. It is not a work we perform, confidence in the strength of our trust, or a way to avoid the truth about sin. Like receiving a gift instead of collecting wages, faith relies on Jesus Christ and rests in what he has done. Why can it be hard simply to receive? How do verses 27–28 keep us from making faith something to boast about?

Picture this: You receive a disappointing grade or review, make a parenting mistake, or need to confess a sin. Your first impulse is to explain, minimize, or prove you are still good enough. Faith tells the truth and trusts Jesus as the ground of your standing with God.

Choose one situation where you feel pressure to prove or defend yourself. What are you trying to earn? What would it mean to receive Christ's grace instead? What could trusting him help you do next?

Picture this: You are part of a church where no one has to prove that they belong. Our achievements, background, knowledge, or even the felt strength of our trust do not create different levels of standing. We come with empty hands, receive the same Christ, and stand on the same grace.

Where do you compare your record or the strength of your trust with someone else's? What makes it hard to stand beside them with empty hands, receiving the same Christ as a gift?

After studying the passage today, **what might be your next faithful step in response?**

This week: Each day, name what you are tempted to trust instead of Christ. Open your hands as you pray: "Jesus Christ, I trust your promise. I cannot justify myself. I entrust myself to you. Help me receive your grace and rest in what you have done."

For further study, read Romans 4:1–5 and 16–25.

Connecting to Sunday

We are building a shared understanding of the gospel and a common way to explain it. This week, Q2 names why we need salvation, and Q5 tells how God's gift is received.

Q2: Why do we need salvation?

God made us for life with him, to desire him, but we turned away. Sin and death entered the world, separating us from God.

Q5: How do we receive salvation?

Salvation is God's gift, received by grace through faith, not by works. The Holy Spirit gives us faith and unites us to Christ. In Christ, God forgives us and brings us back to himself.

Q1, Q3, and Q4 were introduced last week and provide the gospel story behind these answers.

Q6 and Q7 will be developed as we explore new life in Christ and our hope.

During the week, practice these answers as a way to remember and share what you are learning.

Catechism references: Q2—Genesis 3:1–24; Romans 3:19–23; 5:12–19. Q5—Romans 3:21–28; 4:1–5; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:4–7.

Closing Prayer

Confess where you have sinned or tried to justify yourself. Thank God for what you could never earn through Jesus Christ. Tell Christ you trust him rather than your record. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you rest in Christ and our church live without boasting or comparison.

United to Christ

Week 3 | Romans 6:1–14 | September 27, 2026

Use this study on your own or with a group. Individuals: write and reflect on the questions. Groups: discuss them together, allowing time for personal reflection.

Begin with prayer.

As you work through the four questions below, ask: What **in the passage** supports your answers?

Read and notice

Read Romans 5:20–6:14. Highlight every phrase that joins us with Christ, and each command in 6:11–13. Notice how often Paul speaks to “we,” “us,” and “you” together. What word or phrase catches your attention?

1. Who is God?

What do verses 4 and 8–10 show about the Father and the Son? What has changed because Christ died once for all, was raised through the Father’s glory, and now lives to God? How does verse 14 describe the power of grace?

2. What has God done?

List what God has done in verses 3–11: Which action most helps you understand salvation as more than forgiveness alone?

3. What does the passage say about who we are?

Paul says we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. How is that different from saying temptation has disappeared? What do the commands in verses 12–13 reveal about the struggle that remains?

Read verse 6. Sin is no longer our master. Where do shame, habit, fear, or desire still speak as though sin owns you? How does verse 14 answer that voice?

Paul addresses a baptized “we,” not only isolated individuals. How does belonging to Christ also join us to people who can remind us of grace, hear confession, encourage change, and walk with us?

In week 1 we heard that we are God’s beloved; we are called, and we belong. Last week we learned that we receive salvation by grace through faith. This week reveals to us the good news that the Spirit unites us to Christ, so his death and risen life become the foundation of our new life.

4. So what?

Paul moves from what God has done to three responses: consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God; do not let sin reign; present yourself and your body to God.

Which response do you most need to practice now?

How do you do that?

Picture this: A familiar temptation speaks as though it still owns you. You tell the truth about the struggle without surrendering your identity: *“In Christ, I am dead to sin and alive to God. Sin will not rule me, because I am under grace.”*

If Jesus is Lord, then he is Lord over every part of our lives. What part of your life would change this week if you lived as though that were true? The way you speak? Your appetites? Your sexuality? Your finances? Your work? How you spend your time? Pray for the Spirit's guidance to help you answer that question, then invite Jesus to be Lord over that part of your life, too.

Picture this: We are a church where no one has to pretend the struggle is over, and no one is left to struggle alone. We confess sin, remember whose we are, receive grace, and help one another live as people joined to Christ.

Whom could you invite to pray, tell you the truth, or help you take a faithful next step? How could you offer that same grace-shaped companionship to someone else?

After studying the passage today, ***what might be your next faithful step in response?***

This week: Each morning pray, “In Christ, I am dead to sin and alive to you, God.” Name one part of your day and present it to him. Each evening, thank God for grace, confess where you obeyed sin, and receive Christ’s mercy again.

For further study, read Romans 5:12–21 and Colossians 3:1–4.

Connecting to Sunday

Q5 introduced union with Christ. Romans 6 develops that truth, and Q6 names the changed life that follows.

Q5: How do we receive salvation?

Salvation is God’s gift, received by grace through faith, not by works. The Holy Spirit gives us faith and unites us to Christ. In Christ, God forgives us and brings us back to himself.

Q6: How does this salvation change our lives?

The Holy Spirit dwells within us, reorients our desire, and makes us more like Christ. By his grace, we turn from sin, trust Jesus, and follow him.

Romans 6 grounds union, turning from sin, and new life; Romans 8 names the Spirit’s transforming work.

Q1–Q4 give the gospel story; next week Q7 will name our hope.

This week, practice Q5 and Q6 together.

Catechism references: Q5—Ephesians 2:8–9; Philippians 1:29; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:18–21. Q6—Romans 8:9–11, 29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Mark 1:15–17. See also Romans 6:1–14.

Closing Prayer

Thank God for joining you to the crucified and risen Christ. Confess where you have obeyed sin as master. Ask the Spirit to help you live as one alive to God, and pray that our church would remember grace and present our shared life to him.

Being Made Like the Son

Week 4 | Romans 8:26-31 | October 4, 2026

Use this study on your own or with a group. Individuals: write and reflect on the questions. Groups: discuss them together, allowing time for personal reflection.

Begin with prayer.

As you work through the four questions below, ask: What in the passage supports your answers?

Read and notice

Read Romans 8:26-31 twice. Notice what the Spirit does, what God knows, and what God does. Underline “we do not know” in verse 26 and “we know” in verse 28. Notice “according to God” in verse 27 and “according to his purpose” in verse 28. Circle conformed, firstborn, called, justified, and glorified. What patterns or questions do you notice?

1. Who is God?

Make three columns: Spirit, Father, and Son. List what each does or how each is described in verses 26-31. What do you learn about God from the whole picture?

2. What has God done?

Trace the movement from the Spirit's help in weakness to God's purpose, calling, justification, conformity to Christ (sanctification), and glory.

Verse 28 says that all things work together for good. What does verse 29 tell you about that good? How is this different from saying that everything that happens is good?

3. What does the passage say about who we are?

Paul says we do not know how to pray as we ought. How does that compare with what the Spirit and the Father know? What does this reveal about our weakness and God's help?

Christ is the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. What does “firstborn” tell us about Jesus? What does “many brothers and sisters” tell us about those who belong to him?

What do you notice about the way Paul speaks of glorification in verse 30? What might that wording communicate to people whose lives remain unfinished?

4. So what?

Earlier in Romans 8, the Spirit teaches God's children to cry, “Abba, Father” (verse 15). Here the Spirit helps us pray, the Father carries his saving purpose from calling and justification to glory, and the Son is the image into which we are being formed. How do these actions fit together in our daily lives?

Where in your relationship with the Father or your pattern of life do you need the Spirit to make you more like the Son?

What are you facing that needs the assurance of verse 31: “If God is for us, who is against us?”

Picture this individually: Consider your relationships, work or school, money, body, time, rest, and suffering. Where is the Spirit making you like the Son as you trust the Father?

Choose one area. What would Christlike trust, love, or obedience look like there? Ask the Spirit for help.

Picture this at home: Consider speech, conflict, shared work, screens, rest, and welcome. Where could the Spirit make your household more like Jesus?

Choose one household pattern to practice differently. If you live alone, choose one habit that could make your home more Christlike.

Picture this in the church: If the Spirit were making our church more like the Son under the Father's purpose, what would change in our worship, forgiveness, care, shared work, and service?

Where do we most need Christ's likeness? What shared practice could help us grow?

After studying the passage today, what might be your next faithful step in response?

Each morning read Romans 8:28-30 and pray, "Father, make me like your Son today." In weakness pray, "Spirit, help me." Each evening name where you saw Christ's character and where you still need grace.

For further study, read 1 John 3:1-3, 2 Corinthians 3:18, and Philippians 3:20-21.

Connecting to Sunday

Q6 describes sanctification—God making us like Christ; Q7 looks to glorification. Romans 8:26-30 shows the one saving work of the Father, Son, and Spirit from justification to glory.

Q6: How does this salvation change our lives?

The Holy Spirit lives in us, changes what we desire, and makes us more like Christ. By his grace, we turn from sin, trust Jesus, and follow him.

Q7: What is our hope?

Christ will return, raise the dead, and make all things right. God's kingdom will come in full, and his people will live with him forever.

Q1-Q5 trace our identity in Christ; Q6-Q7 show the life and future grace creates.

Practice Q6 today; let Q7 steady your hope.

Catechism references: Q6 - Romans 8:9-11, 29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Mark 1:15-17. Q7 - John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Revelation 21:1-5.

Closing Prayer

Thank the Father for his purpose to make us like the Son. Name where you remain weak or unfinished. Ask the Spirit to form Jesus' trust, obedience, and love in you—and in our homes and church.