



Restored Relationship

CHRIST DIED FOR SINNERS, MAKING RECONCILIATION
WITH GOD POSSIBLE FOR ALL.

Scripture Passage: Romans 5:1-11, 18-21 Memory Verse: Romans 5:19

I was just a child the first time I heard the word “reconciliation.” My mom and dad had separated with the intent of pursuing a divorce. My heart was broken. I couldn’t imagine how this could happen. As a child, I thought we had the perfect life, and now it was crashing in around me.

However, one day my dad told me that they were seeking reconciliation. I didn’t know what that meant, but I watched two people at odds with each other work to restore their relationship and move forward. Sadly, they concluded that too much had happened. For the marriage, reconciliation was not possible—though they maintained a loving relationship with me and with God.

Reconciliation is a relationship word. It starts with a division, but something works to heal that rift, to bring the two sides back together. The divide between God and man began with sin. In Romans 5, Paul taught how that relationship can be reconciled. As you prepare to lead this lesson, reflect on the power of reconciliation in your life. Be ready to share your story and encourage adults to trace their reconciliation stories as well.



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Reconciliation paints a picture of love at work. Imagine two children in trouble with their mom. When their mother confronted them about their disobedience, their responses were tinged with disrespect. Their bad behavior built a wall between themselves and their mother. She knew that something had to be done to restore the relationship. Because she loved her children, she took the first step toward making things right. So did God when Christ died for us. (PSG, p. 37)

When have you seen reconciliation in action lately?
With whom have you sought reconciliation?



Understand the Context (Romans 5:1-21)

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul explained the irreconcilable differences that create friction between God and the people He created. The whole Gentile world was under the wrath of God because of their godlessness and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). Even though they could plainly see God's creation and were without excuse, they worshiped idols instead of worshiping the living God (1:21-23). Because of this, God gave them over to their own sinful pride, and a rift existed in the relationship between God and the Gentiles.

Meanwhile, the Jews had the law of Moses, delivered straight from the hand of God on Mount Sinai. But that did not bring the relationship between God and sinful Jews together. They too had no excuse for their sin (2:1). Even though the Jews thought the act of circumcision gave them right standing with God, Paul revealed that God wanted more than physical signs of their relationship with God. He wanted a circumcision of the heart (2:29).

So, whether people were under the law or without the law, they all stood guilty before Him. They all would perish because their relationship with God was broken (2:12).

In Romans 3, Paul expounded on this argument that the whole world was guilty before God. No people were righteous on their own merit

(3:10). Instead, every human being (aside from Jesus) had fallen short of meeting God's perfect standard, His glory (3:23). Nobody could boast that they reconciled themselves to God (3:27).

Paul spent the fourth chapter of Romans emphasizing that justification (declared right with God) happened not by works of the flesh but by faith in Christ. Even Abraham, the Jewish paradigm for being right with God, was justified by faith instead of works (4:3). Just as God justified Abraham by faith, He also offers justification to people today through faith. None of us can be made right with God by trying hard, doing good things, or refraining from bad things. Reconciliation is the direct result of justification. Because God has justified people, He has also reconciled them to Himself.

The results of reconciliation with God are numerous. Paul listed three of these blessings in Romans 5. First, reconciliation provides a new peace with God (5:1-5). It also testifies to a proven love (5:6-11). Finally, reconciliation initiates a redeeming grace that transforms the life of the believer (5:18-21).

Read Romans 5:1-11, 18-21 in your Bible. Identify all the things a believer gains through faith in Christ. How are these benefits of salvation connected? (PSG, p. 38)

ENGAGE



PREPARE: On a focal wall, display **Pack Item 5** (Poster: Key Verse: Romans 5:19). Make copies of **Pack Item 9** (Handout: Praying Scripture in Romans). Gather several Bible dictionaries.

INTRODUCE:

Direct the group to read the opening paragraph on page 37 of the PSG to themselves. Encourage them to reflect on times when they have been on either side of the adult-child conversation.

REFLECT:

With whom have you sought reconciliation? (PSG, p. 37)

DISCUSS:

Draw two columns on the board or a large sheet of paper: *Forgive others* and *Seek Forgiveness*. Encourage adults to share which one they feel is easier and why. Record their thoughts in the appropriate column. Point out that every person needs to be reconciled to God.

REVIEW:

Summarize this content from page 38 of the PSG to highlight the importance of being reconciled to God:

“In Romans 5, Paul listed three results of reconciliation. First, reconciliation with God brings a new peace with God (5:1-5). Those who are justified by faith in Jesus now live at peace with God. . . . The second result of reconciliation is that it witnesses to God’s unconditional love (5:6-11). Jesus died as a substitute for the ungodly. His death served as a perfect sacrifice for sin and a perfect demonstration of God’s love. Finally, reconciliation initiates a growing grace in the life of the believer (5:12-21). . . . While Adam’s disobedience led humanity into condemnation, Christ’s obedient sacrifice leads to justification and reconciliation for all who accept Him in faith.”

TRANSITION:

Through today’s focal verses, Paul gave believers reasons to rejoice in Christ because we have been reconciled with God through faith in Him.



Group Activity Option

Music

Lead the group to sing or read the lyrics of “Count Your Blessings” (*Baptist Hymnal*, 2008, No. 585). Ask: **What blessings are you counting today?** Allow a few volunteers to share a recent blessing in their lives. Note that Romans 5 highlights the multiple blessings we receive through being reconciled with God through Jesus.

A New Peace (Rom. 5:1-5)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, **4** endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. **5** This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

(v. 1) Paul anchored reconciliation in the truth that individuals are **justified by faith**. Reconciliation is a product of justification. As God cleanses sin and declares individuals righteous, He also establishes a new relationship with them. This relationship is marked by **peace with God**.

The Greek word for *peace* corresponds to the Hebrew word *Shalom*. This is not a feeling of contentment or an abstract form of peace, but it is a state of being within a relationship. That is why Paul called Jesus our peace and declared that He tore down the wall of hostility between humans (Eph. 2:14-15). It is why he stated that Christ has reconciled us through his death (Col. 1:21-22). The road to reconciliation is not paved with good deeds and religious activities but with the blood of God's Son. God used the cross to justify sinners and to provide peace in **our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Key Doctrine

Salvation (Justification)

Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God. (See Romans 3:28; Titus 3:5-7.)

(v. 2) Sin blocked humanity's **access** to God. The Greek wording suggests people approaching God in a worship setting (Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11-14; 10:19-22; 1 Pet. 3:18). By faith, though, God both justified the sinner and restored **access**. Our **faith** and His **grace** allow us to **stand** before Him, like Old Testament priests (Deut. 17:12), prophets (1 Kings 17:1), and others whose hearts were pure before Him (Ps. 24:3-4).

Thanks to the peace and standing God provides through reconciliation, believers can **boast in the hope of the glory of God**. The Greek word for *boast* here is the same term that Paul used negatively in Romans 3:27. While believers

cannot boast in their own efforts to be right with God, they can boast in the reconciliation He makes possible.

(vv. 3-4) Christians made right with God not only boast in His glory but also in their own **afflictions**. Peace with God does not always bring peace with others, and it certainly does not always bring freedom from struggle. *Afflictions* emphasizes pressure caused by trials. Most likely, Paul was referring specifically to suffering for the sake of the gospel. Jesus encouraged joy in this kind of suffering (Matt. 5:4,10-12), as did Peter (1 Pet. 4:13-14).

Paul listed a chain of benefits that suffering can produce in the life of a believer, including **endurance, character, and hope**. *Endurance* indicates the steadfastness necessary for living as a Christ follower. This progressive faithfulness results in *character*, which speaks to how spiritual transformation affects behavior. Finally, suffering for the gospel produces *hope*. Paul often connected endurance with hope (Rom. 2:7; 8:25; 15:4-5; 2 Cor. 1:6-7; 1 Thess. 1:3).

(v. 5) The **hope** produced in suffering does **not disappoint** the one who comes out on the other side of the struggles. The Greek word suggests putting one to shame. Some falsely believe that the gospel delivers us from all suffering, but Paul emphasized hard times will come. However, those who trust God through the hard times will be sustained by His **love**.

Paul emphasized that God's love is **poured out . . . through the Holy Spirit**. It did not come with a drip or drizzle. With inexhaustible abundance, the Spirit affirms God's love for us. All believers have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13), so all believers have access to this river of love that God pours on His people.



OVERVIEW:

APPLICATION POINT: Believers should embrace their new relationship with God.

Read Romans 4:3. Remind adults that Paul taught that everyone needs to be reconciled to God, but that this reconciliation cannot be earned by good works. Note that he pointed to Abraham as a prime example of someone who was made righteous by faith, not works.

READ:

Invite a volunteer to read aloud Romans 5:1-5 as the group identifies blessings found in these verses. Point out that the first word in Romans 5:1 is “therefore,” indicating that Paul’s message here was an extension of his teaching on justification in earlier chapters.

GUIDE:

Encourage adults to share the blessings they noticed as they read the verses and record their responses on the board. Group adults into three teams and give each team a Bible dictionary. Assign each team either *peace*, *grace*, or *hope*. Instruct each team to scan the definition in the dictionary and to discuss how believers and non-believers might use the term differently. (Note: For larger groups, create more teams and allow more than one team to research the same term. For smaller groups, an individual can be a team.) After a few minutes, allow volunteers to recap their discussion.

HIGHLIGHT:

Draw attention to the reality of suffering for those who belong to Christ. Affirm that being a believer does not free us from facing afflictions in this life:

Believers can rejoice in affliction because they recognize God is at work in those difficult circumstances. Paul listed benefits that accompany suffering for the sake of the gospel. When we suffer for the gospel, God produces endurance in us. This endurance involves perseverance in continuing to live for Christ. Endurance produces character, and character produces hope. This hope is a deep sense of peace that God has a plan for our lives that no circumstance can derail (Rom. 8:28). (PSG, p. 40)

ASK:

How does “peace with God” affect your life today and in eternity? (PSG, p. 40)

SHARE:

Paul said that the hope God provides is grounded in His love for us. Through His Spirit, He covers us with that love. And, as we learn to embrace His love for us, our hope keeps growing.

A Proven Love (Rom. 5:6-11)

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. **8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. **10** For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. **11** And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

(v. 6) Paul described sinners before meeting Christ as **helpless**. This Greek term meant weak or sickly. It described those who were fastened to the executioner's block and incapable of freeing themselves. Likewise, humans have no ability to atone for their own sin. If Jesus had not moved toward us, we would be hopeless (Eph. 2:1).

God did this **at the right time**. In His own perfect timing, God sent Jesus to die for the **ungodly** (Rom. 3:26; 8:18; 13:11). Jesus was not an afterthought. He was God's plan from the beginning (John 1:1). And when the moment was right, God sent His Son to earth to accomplish His purposes for salvation (Gal. 4:4).



Salvation

What does it mean that we have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved, according to Scripture? Scan here to learn more.

(vv. 7-8) That Christ, the righteous One, died for the ungodly is astounding when compared with the natural order of the world. As Paul noted, **rarely will someone die for a just person**. It does happen, but *rarely*. A policeman might put himself in harm's way for an innocent bystander, or a fireman might rush into a burning building to save a child. However, who in society would die for a condemned criminal? Sacrificing for a **good person** is possible, but risking life and limb for a wicked person seems out of the question.

Yet, God has a way of turning conventional wisdom on its ear. In this case, He **proves his own love for us** through the sacrificial death of Jesus. In Greek, *proves* is the same word Paul used in Romans 3:5 to describe God's visual

demonstration of His righteousness. So, if people will rarely die for the just or good person (v. 7), what does Jesus's death say about God's attitude toward those who are **still sinners**? Christ **died** for them. Or, more personally, He died **for us**.

(vv. 9-10) The powerful contrast between unrighteous humans dying for good people and righteous Jesus dying for sinners could not be stronger. For this reason, Paul included an emphatic, **how much more**. Because of Jesus's death, sinners can be **justified**, declared righteous before God (see Rom. 3:24-26). This justification is accomplished only in Jesus **by his blood**. The sacrificial deaths of animals foreshadowed what He provided on the cross. Salvation is a free gift, but it came at an incredibly high price.

Justification leads to reconciliation. In addition to paying the price for our sins, Jesus's death releases redeemed sinners from the fear of God's future **wrath**. Because Jesus died for sinners, those who trust Him are right with God and freed from the fear of impending punishment.

Prior to justification, sinners were **enemies** of God. This was a term that included hostility, hatred, and animosity. Like Satan, unrighteous people are essentially at war with holy God. They embrace a way of life diametrically opposed to His standards of holiness. Paul elsewhere described sinners as "alienated and hostile" (Col. 1:21). But God has **reconciled** and **saved** those who come to Him in faith. They now serve a new Master.

(v. 11) Christ serves as humanity's reconciler. We have no grounds for confidence in ourselves, but we can **boast in God**, who sent Jesus. Thanks to Him, we **received this reconciliation**. Nothing else can unite God and the enemies who once lived under His wrath.

**READ:**

APPLICATION POINT: Individuals can be reconciled to God thanks to the loving sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross.

Read aloud Romans 5:6-11 as the group listens for how God proves His love for humanity.

ASK:

Who would you be willing to die for? How do those individuals compare to people you consider your enemies?

HIGHLIGHT:

Share how Paul emphasized God's illogical love for the human race:

Jesus dying for ungodly people does not make any logical sense to us. . . . Dying for a good person who deserved the chance to live would happen only rarely. Parents would die for their children. A husband would be willing to give up his life in order to save his wife from death. In a moment of crisis, firefighters, police officers, or soldiers would sacrifice their lives in order to keep innocent people from being killed. But who would voluntarily endure pain to help an enemy? That's exactly what God did. Christ's death for us can be traced to one motivation: God's own love for us. He demonstrated His love for us when Jesus died on the cross. (PSG, p. 41)

ASK:

How does Jesus's death prove His love for humanity?
(PSG, p. 42)

SUMMARIZE:

Lead the group to share how they would summarize Romans 5:8 in ten words or less. Emphasize "still sinners." Remind adults that Jesus didn't wait for us to improve ourselves or reach a certain spiritual landmark. Affirm that He met us where we are by dying for sinners, enemies of God.

ASK:

How should we respond to this awesome gift of justification and reconciliation with God?

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: "No Trespassing" Sign

Display a "No Trespassing" sign. Explain that since Adam and Eve the entire human race has been trespassing against God. Ask: ***What happens to people who are caught trespassing?*** Highlight the legal consequences of trespassing. Share that our trespasses against God are much more serious because they make us enemies of God and place us under His wrath. Discuss how the truth of Romans 5:8 offers hope for those who are guilty of trespassing against God.

A Growing Grace (Rom. 5:18-21)

18 So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone. **19** For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. **20** The law came along to multiply the trespass. But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more **21** so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(v. 18) Paul often referred to the Old Testament to illustrate New Testament truths. Here, he pointed back to Eden, stating that ***through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone***. Adam and Eve's rebellion unleashed sin as a powerful reality in the world, a spiritual sickness that infected all people and left them condemned under the wrath of God. Adam's offspring inherited this sin nature, as evidenced by Cain killing his brother, Abel (Gen. 4:8). But every human is also a sinner by nature and by their own sinful actions.

On the other side of the equation, ***one righteous act*** rewrote history. Jesus's death brought ***justification*** and ***life for everyone***. When Adam sinned, death spread to all. But when Jesus died, ***justification*** became available to all who would trust in Him.

Paul did not imply that Christ's death automatically justified everyone. Such universalism (the idea that everyone will be saved) runs counter to Scripture's teaching about God's judgment of sin (Rev. 19:11-15). While Jesus's sacrifice makes eternal life *possible*, it only becomes a *reality* for those who have faith in Christ.

(v. 19) People often think that obeying God's rules makes them right with God. But Paul affirmed that we can only be reconciled to God through Jesus's death. Through Adam's ***disobedience***, all were made ***sinners***. Adam had a choice to obey God or disobey, and he voluntarily chose disobedience. As the head of humanity, his choice profoundly affected God's good creation, as ***many*** fell away from God. While ***many*** might seem to leave some wiggle room, Paul was clear that all humanity joined Adam in his rebellion (Rom. 3:10,23).

However, Christ's death offers justification. ***Many will be made righteous*** because He obediently fulfilled the Father's plans. All are in Adam, so all are sinners. However, not all are in Christ. Only those who receive grace are in Christ (John 1:12; Acts 2:38; Rom. 5:17; 1 Tim. 1:16).

(v. 20) Where does the ***law*** fit into this discussion? Paul explained that the Mosaic law serves to ***multiply the trespass***. The more people studied the law, the more they recognized their rebellion against God. It revealed how even the best people cross the line into disobedience in multiple ways. So, knowing the law didn't save people. It simply made their inability to obey the law more obvious and increased their accountability before the Lord. Thankfully, ***grace multiplied even more***. The benefit of the law was that it highlighted humanity's need of God's grace.

(v. 21) Paul told his readers that ***sin reigned in death***, but ***grace will reign through righteousness***. Death is the fate of those who live under the curse of sin, but ***eternal life*** awaits those who live under grace. This shift happens ***through Jesus Christ our Lord***. His crucifixion and resurrection brought the reign of sin and death to an end, offering reconciliation and eternal life to everyone who accepts His sacrifice as the penalty for their rebellion against God. Sin is no match for the power of God's grace.

Praying Scripture

Romans 5:19

Spend time praying Scripture using Romans 5:19. Read the verse, then respond to these questions:

- How does God reveal Himself in this verse?
- How should I respond to what He reveals?

Example: Acknowledge your sinfulness to God and confess anything that may be hindering your relationship with Him. Thank Him for "the one man's obedience" that allows you to stand righteous before God.

EXPLORE Romans 5:18-21



APPLICATION POINT: Our lives can be transformed by the matchless grace of Jesus.

READ:

Invite a volunteer to read Romans 5:18-21 while the group considers the contrast between Adam and Jesus.

DISCUSS:

On a whiteboard draw a two-column chart. Label one column *Adam* and the other *Jesus*. Lead a brief discussion on what the verses say about each one. Record responses on the chart.

REVIEW:

Summarize this content from page 43 of the PSG to highlight how Jesus's death overcame the curse of Adam's sin:

"Adam's act of disobedience had a ripple effect on everyone everywhere. . . . Just like Adam, we face the certainty of God's judgment. In stark contrast to the darkness of eternal punishment that awaited us, the obedience of Christ glistened with the brilliant light of eternal hope. Through His obedience, Jesus changed everything for us. By being obedient, He became the appropriate sacrifice for our sinful disobedience."

GUIDE:

Direct attention to **Pack Item 5** (Poster: Key Verse: Romans 5:19). Read the verse aloud together as a group. Distribute a sticky note and pen to each person, encouraging them to copy the verse and place it in their Bible to focus on memorizing.



ASK:

How do I know Jesus's death was meant for me?
(PSG, p. 44)

TRANSITION:

Affirm that what Adam lost, Jesus restored. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 9** (Handout: *Praying Scripture in Romans*). Encourage adults to pray Romans 5:19 back to God as noted on page 52 of the Leader Guide.



Group Activity Option

Bible Skill

Use a Bible dictionary and other Bible study tools to learn more about the life of Esau, focusing on the reconciliation of Esau and Jacob. Identify the events that prompted Esau to hate his twin brother Jacob. Read Genesis 33 and reflect on the brothers' reconciliation. Consider: **What anxiety did Jacob feel about reconciliation? What had to happen before the two brothers could be reconciled? How did Jacob try to reconcile with gifts and good works? Why was reconciliation ultimately dependent on Esau's grace?**

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE:

Review these points from Apply the Text on page 45 of the *Personal Study Guide*.

- *Believers should embrace their new relationship with God.*
- *Individuals can be reconciled to God thanks to the loving sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross.*
- *Our lives can be transformed by the matchless grace of Jesus.*

EVALUATE:

Using a scale of one to five, with one being “seldom” and five being “often,” direct adults to respond to these statements:

- *My attitude toward myself reflects my relationship with Christ.*
- *Knowing I am reconciled with God affects my daily life.*
- *It is easy for others to see that my life has been transformed by the matchless grace of Jesus.*

DISCUSS:

Lead a brief discussion on the first set of questions on page 45 of the PSG: *Identify all the promises given to believers in this week’s focal passage. Which of these truths is hardest for you to embrace right now? How can your group encourage one another to live in that promise?*

PRAY:

Refer back to **Pack Item 5** (Poster: Key Verse: Romans 5:19). Encourage the group to use **Pack Item 9** (Handout: *Praying Scripture in Romans*) as they continue praying through that verse this week. Close the session in prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus as Savior and asking Him to reveal opportunities to share the gospel with someone else during the week.

AFTER THE SESSION

Send the group a text or email during the week to focus on the second set of questions on page 45 of the PSG. Encourage them evaluate their walk with Jesus honestly and to consider the difference He should make in their lives each day. Consider calling any adults who have not attended this quarter. Share what has been covered in Romans to this point and encourage them to join the group for the next session.

LEADER EXTRAS



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