

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 1

Today we're kicking off a new series that we have titled, "When in Romans." If you're new to ACCH we place a high priority on teaching God's Word and we usually do so in the form of series. This series is going to revolve around Paul's letter to the church in Rome. For the next six weeks, we're going to go chapter by chapter through the book of Romans.

The Back Story

It's believed that the church in Rome was started by Jewish people who were living in Rome.

These Jewish people would have returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost.

They were present when the Holy Spirit fell in Acts chapter 2.

These new Jewish Christians went back to Rome and started this first century Roman church.

They were Jewish people living in a Roman World.

Now because these new believers and on fire for Jesus, people from all over Rome began flooding into this church to see what the hype was about.

So picture this, you have Jewish people from a strict hyper religious background, doing church with Roman people from a perverse and pagan background.

It was messy!

So Paul writes this letter to the leadership of this church to say, "Here's what's essential and here's what's not essential. Here's what Christ has done for us, and this is what you need to do in response to that."

Romans 1:1-7 (Paul's Greeting)

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the *gospel...*

There are several keywords in the book of Romans that are found more often in that book than all the other books of the Bible. The word **“gospel”** is one of those words. The word “gospel” means **“good news.”**

...separated to the **gospel**, which He promised through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, *and* declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Through Him we have received **grace** (*divine favor, another key word throughout the book of Romans*) and apostleship for obedience to the **faith** (*another key word*) among all nations for His name, among whom you are the called of Jesus Christ; to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul starts with this beautiful greeting and then he says, “Now I have good news, and I have bad news.”

I recently heard a story about an older fella who loved baseball; he also loved the Lord.

So, he began to wonder if there would be baseball in Heaven. If Heaven is a joyful place then there must be baseball in Heaven. So, he made it a matter of prayer. For weeks he asked the Lord, “Will there be baseball in Heaven?”

Late one night, an angel appeared to him. The angel said, “Your prayer has been heard and I’m here to answer your question. I have good news and bad news. The good news is, there is baseball in Heaven. But not only is there baseball in Heaven, there’s no bad weather in Heaven, so that means there’s nonstop baseball in Heaven.

The man said, “That’s awesome! What’s the bad news?”

The angel said, “It’s your turn to bat.”

For the first three chapters, Paul unpacks the bad news. The reason why the bad news is so important is because if you don’t understand the bad news, you won’t understand your need for the good news.

So for the next two Sundays we're going to talk about the bad news. Welcome to church everybody!

The Bad News

Romans 1:18-32

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, against those who suppress the truth... They profess to be wise, but they became fools. They knew God, but they wouldn't worship him or even give him thanks.

For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. Women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷ And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

Right out of the gate, Paul addresses the topic of homosexuality. He hits this topic head-on with no apologies and he draws a deep line in the sand on that issue.

Keep in mind he's writing to a church in Rome, and he is addressing issues within that church.

- The fact that he is addressing this topic to this church tells me that homosexual people were attracted to this church and the message of Jesus.
- It's a known fact that homosexuality was common in Roman culture during that time.
- So Paul was helping the leadership of this church navigate those waters.

I don't know how many times I've heard people say, "I wish we could go back to being an Acts chapter 2 church."

I want you to understand what that would look like.

Yes, it would be a church made up of people on fire for Jesus.

Yes, it would be at church where the Holy Spirit was moving.

Yes, it would be a church where miracles were happening.

But it would also be a church that would attract unchurched people.

Broken people.

People who didn't look churchy.

People living in sexual immorality.

Hurting people.

People struggling with addiction.

And the love to God, and the power of the HS, and the truth of His Word would transform their lives.

Winning people to Jesus is messy work!

To embrace someone where they are is Christ-like; to an ungodly lifestyle is deception.

I'm so glad that 36 years ago, Jesus met me right where I was, and he loved me as I was, where I was. But I'm so glad he loved me too much to leave me where I was.

Let me remind you that the Bible refers to itself as "a sword" and a sword will do one of two things: it will cut you loose and free you or it will cut and hurt you. When you hear a message like this, don't let it offend you, let it free you.

Romans 1:28-32

God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, haters of God, violent, proud, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ untrustworthy, unforgiving, ³² *those who practice such things* are deserving of death, *even those who approve of those who practice them.*

So here's what Paul does, he comes out addressing homosexuality and he starts addressing things like strife, pride, unforgiveness... and in doing so, he puts us all on equal ground and says, "We've all sinned, and we need a Savior."

A prayer to be a church that reaches lost people.

A prayer for holiness: HS show me. HS cleanse me. HS fill me.

An invitation for salvation.

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 2

We are in a series that we have titled, “When in Romans” and in this series, we are unpacking chapter by chapter the book of Romans. If you’re new to ACCH we place a high priority on teaching God’s Word and we usually do so in the form of series.

It’s believed that the church in Rome was started by Jewish people who were living in Rome.

- These Jewish people would have returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost.
- They were present when the Holy Spirit fell in Acts chapter 2.
- These new Jewish Christians went back to Rome and started this first century Roman church.
- Now because these new believers are on fire for Jesus, people from all over Rome began flooding into this church to see what the hype was about.

So you have Jewish people from a *strict hyper religious background*, doing church with Roman people from a *perverse and pagan background*.

It was messy!

So Paul writes this letter to the leadership of this church to say, “God’s moving and I’m celebrating with you. Now let me help you understand what’s essential and what’s not essential.”

Paul starts the Book of Romans with a beautiful greeting and then he says, “Now I have good news, and I have bad news.” And for three chapters, Paul unpacks the bad news.

The reason why the bad news is so important is because if you don’t understand the bad news, you won’t understand your need for the good news.

Coach Budroe and the coaching staff

Some of what I share could be difficult to hear. But I am making a commitment to you, a commitment to do two things.

1. To teach the word of God, line by line, accurately and unapologetically.
2. And at the same time, to teach the difficult subjects with kindness and grace.

Romans 1:18, 24-25 NKJV

For the **wrath** (appears 12 times in the book of Romans) of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the **truth**. (appears 7 times in Romans)

Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, **to dishonor their own bodies**,²⁵ and exchanged the **truth** of God for **the lie**...

Notice the Bible doesn't say, **"a lie,"** it says, **"the lie."**

It's important to understand the historical context of what Paul is writing. Historically something was happening in that culture at that time, and it started within the leadership of Rome.

When Paul wrote this letter, Nero was the Emperor of Rome.

Nero was married three different times.

His first marriage was more political than relational.

His second wife was to a woman by the name of Poppaea.

Their relationship was scandalous and began with an affair.

Nero was obsessed over Poppaea.

He became jealous & controlling & while she was pregnant with their second child, he beat her to death.

Shortly after her death, Nero married a young boy.

The boy's name was Sporus.

He had the boy castrated; his genitals were removed.

He was given a new name.

He was taught how to walk like a lady and talk like a lady.

He was dressed like a lady.

This all happened in the year 67 AD.

They dishonored their own bodies, and exchanged the truth of God for the lie...

Culturally speaking the narrative was, or *“the lie”* was, you can love whoever you want to love and be whoever you want to be.

And Paul is writing this letter to say, *“It doesn't matter what culture says, or the political leaders of our day says, God's word doesn't change.”*

- It's important to read and ingest the parts of the Bible that are wonderful and hope filled.
- But it's also important to read and ingest the parts of the Bible that challenge you. Because anything that doesn't challenge you will never change you.

You cannot change until you confront what's holding you back. Transformation begins with confrontation.

Any destructive habit or behavior that I defend will become a stronghold.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 NKJV

With all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

To embrace someone where they are is Christ-like; to an ungodly lifestyle is deception.

An invitation for salvation.

I am not who I used to be (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I am not what I once did (Isaiah 54:4).

I am who God says I am

He says I am forgiven (Psalm 103:12, [Ephesians 1:7](#), [Colossians 2:14](#)).

He says I am chosen ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

I am called (1 Peter 2:9).

I am royalty (1 Peter 2:9).

I have the mind of Christ, and He gives me wisdom when I ask ([1 Corinthians 2:16](#), [Philippians 2:5](#), [James 1:5](#), [Proverbs 2:7](#)).

I have received the power of the Holy Spirit, and I have authority over the enemy in this world ([Mark 16:17-18](#); [Luke 10:17-19](#)).

I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).

I take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Sin does not have dominion over my life (Romans 6:14).

Whom the Son has set free, is free indeed (John 8:36).

As I hear God's Word, I do what it says, and I am blessed ([James 1:22](#), [25](#)).

I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)

I am free from the curse of sin, sickness, and poverty ([Deuteronomy 28:15-68](#), [Galatians 3:13](#)).

I am healed and whole because of Jesus ([Isaiah 53:5](#), [1 Peter 2:24](#)).

I am seated with Christ in heavenly places ([Ephesians 2:5-6](#), [Colossians 2:12](#)).

No weapon formed against me can prosper (Isaiah 54:17).

The angels of the Lord encamp around me (Psalm 34:7).

I am blessed!

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 3

We are in a series that we have titled, “When in Romans” and in this series, we are unpacking chapter by chapter, Paul’s most influential letter, the book of Romans.

It’s believed that this was started by Jewish people who were living in Rome.

- These Jewish people would have returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost.
- They were present when the Holy Spirit fell in Acts chapter 2.
- These new Jewish Christians went back to Rome and started this first century Roman church.
- Now because these new believers and on fire for Jesus, people from all over Rome began flooding into this church to see what the hype was about.

So you have Jewish people from a *strict hyper religious background*, doing church with Roman people from a *perverse and pagan background*.

It was messy!

So Paul writes this letter to the leadership of this church to say, “God’s moving and I’m celebrating with you. Now let me help you understand what’s essential and what’s not essential, what Christ has done for us and what you should do in response to that.”

Paul starts the Book of Romans with a beautiful greeting and then he says, “Now I have good news, and I have bad news.” And for three chapters, Paul unpacks the bad news.

The reason why the bad news is so important is because if you don’t understand the bad news, you won’t understand your need for the good news.

Keep in mind that Paul is addressing two groups of people in this letter:

1. The unrighteous.
2. The self-righteous.

3. The Gentiles, the Romans.
4. The Jews.

Both were bound by something.

1. The Romans (unrighteous) were bound by perversion.
2. The Jews (self-righteous) were bound by legalism.

We've talked about perversion the past two weeks, now let's address legalism.

We all have our battle with legalism. We can also call legalism - perfectionism. If you're a little OCD, like me, than everything has to be a certain way...

Let's talk history for a minute: For 1,500 years the Jewish people had lived under a strict set of rules called *The Law of Moses*.

- Four OT books make up The Law: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- Contained within The Law were the 10 Commandments.
- But The Law didn't stop with the Commandments.
- In those four OT books, you have 613 rules and restrictions.
- For instance, take the fourth commandment, remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
- That one commandment.
- The law listed 39 rules and restrictions to clarify what it meant to keep the Sabbath holy.

By the time a Jewish boy was 10 years old, he had every line of the law memorized. He could actually quote word for word the first five books of the OT. This was ingrained in them.

In chapter 3 Paul explains why the Law was given in the first place.

Romans 3:19-20 NKJV

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:27-28 NLT

Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

On a side note: And because the law said that a male had to be circumcised on the eighth day, these Jewish leaders were telling Roman men, (men who were coming to faith) “you can’t be a Christian without being circumcised.”

And Paul is writing to these leaders who are bound in legalism and he’s say, “Put the knife down, Cletus. You’re not going to win that guy to Jesus that way.”

Let’s back up and look at Romans chapter 2. Notice what he says to the self-righteous.

Romans 2:1 NKJV

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for when you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Romans 2:5-6 NKJV

You are treasuring up for yourself **wrath** in the day of **wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶who “will render to each one according to his deeds.”

Romans 2:8-9 NKJV

But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the **truth**, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and **wrath**,⁹ tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.

Paul is saying, “You think that because you have this long list of rules and because you work real hard to cross every “T” and dot every “I” that somehow that makes you special and even exempt.

But the truth is, you can’t earn your way to Heaven, and because of your self-righteous attitude, you’ll be first to stand before God condemned.”

Now, how does this apply to us?

1. We should love people right where they are.

To embrace someone where they are is Christ-like; to embrace an ungodly lifestyle is deception.

It means that you can go to church every Sunday.

You can sing all the right songs.

You can get in a group.

And even serve on a team.

And yet even though those things are important, none of that makes you right with God.

The only thing that makes you right with God is putting your faith in Jesus Christ.

Lots of people have met religion without meeting Jesus.

A lot of people have met church without meeting Jesus.

- A prayer to be a church that reaches lost people.
- A prayer for holiness: HS show me. HS cleanse me. HS fill me.
- An invitation for salvation.

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 4

We are in a series that we have titled, “When in Romans” and in this series, we are unpacking chapter by chapter the book of Romans. If you’re new to ACCH we place a high priority on teaching God’s Word and we usually do so in the form of series.

There’s 16 chapters in the book of Romans and in those chapters there’s good news and there’s bad news.

The reason why the bad news is so important is because if you don’t understand the bad news, you won’t understand your need for the good news.

Romans 3:19-22 NKJV

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ **But now** the righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all (and on all) who believe.

For three chapters Paul unpacks the bad news.

- He has addressed two groups of people: the unrighteous and the self-righteous.
- He’s reminded both groups that they are guilty before God and that everyone will all stand before God one day.
- He has explained that the law and the commandments were given so that we would realize our brokenness and our need for a Savior.
- Then in verse 21 two words become a holy conjunction on which the entire story changes, those two words are: **But Now...**

I love the word “but” in the Bible, because the word “but” in the Bible is like the word “void” on a check, it cancels out everything that came before it.

Has anyone ever tried to apologize to you for something they said or did and in their apology they threw in the word “but”? Like, “I’m sorry for what I said, but you...” I’m sorry for how I acted, but...” No! No! No! The word “but” cancels out any attempt to make things right.

The Bible is full of “but moments.”

There are 3819 “Buts” in the Bible.

216 “Buts” in the book of Romans.

There are 45 “But God” moments in Scripture. Moments of defeat. Moments of despair and hopelessness, but God stepped in and turned it around. Come on church!

And there are 77 “But Now” moments in the Bible.

Ephesians 2:12-13

At one time you were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of God’s people, strangers who had no hope, and without God in the world. ¹³ **But now** in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

So, I want to take you on a “*but now*” journey through the book of Romans.

Romans 6:20-22 NLT

²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²¹ And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. ²² **But now** you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.

Romans 7:5-6 NLT

When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires, resulting in death. ⁶ **But now** we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

- The law was about perfection.
- The grace of God is about affection.

- The law was about living right.
- The grace of God is about loving right.

Romans 11:30

For you were once disobedient to God, **but now** have been shown mercy...

Romans 16:25-26

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ **but now** made manifest by the **prophetic Scriptures** made known to all nations...

In the fourteen letters Paul wrote to the churches in the New Testament, he references the Old Testament prophets almost 400 times.

The reason he does that is because Jesus is found all over the Old Testament.

The Old Testament pointed us to Christ.

We see Jesus in every Old Testament book.

Let me show you.

In Genesis He's the heel that crushed the serpent's head.

In Exodus He's the Passover Lamb.

In Leviticus He's our High Priest.

In Numbers He's the cloud by day and the fire by night.

In Deuteronomy He's our city of refuge.

In Joshua He's the commander of the Lord's army.

In Judges He's our Judge and Law Giver.

In Ruth He's our kinsman Redeemer.

In 1 & 2 Samuel He's the Holy Prophet.

In 1 & 2 Kings He's the reigning King.

In 1 & 2 Chronicles He's the beautiful Temple.

In Ezra He's the faithful Scribe.

In Nehemiah He's the rebuilder of everything broken.

In Esther He's our Intercessor and our Deliverer.

In Job He's the answer to our questions when suffering.

In Psalms He's our Shephard.

In Proverbs He's our Wisdom.

In Ecclesiastes He's our meaning of life.

In Song of Solomon He's the loving Bridegroom.

In Isaiah He's the Prince of Peace.

In Jeremiah He's the Righteous Branch.

In Lamentations He's the weeping Prophet.

In Ezekiel He's the Son of Man.

In Daniel He's the fourth Man in the fiery furnace.

In Hosea He's the faithful husband.

In Joel He's the promise of the Holy Spirit.

In Amos He's the burden Bearer.

In Obadiah He's the mighty Savior.

In Jonah He's the God who forgives.

In Micah He's the everlasting Ruler born in Bethlehem.

In Nahum He's the Avenger of God's Elect.

In Habakkuk He's the watchman.

In Zephaniah He's the Restorer of the remnant.

In Haggai He's the Cleansing Fountain.

In Zechariah He's the one pierced for us.

In Malachi He's the Son of Righteousness with healing in His wings.

His name is *Jesus*!

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 5

We are in a series that we have titled, “When in Romans” and in this series, we are unpacking chapter by chapter the book of Romans. If you’re new to ACCH we place a high priority on teaching God’s Word and we usually approach God’s Word in the form of series. Currently our series is on what is arguably Paul’s most influential letter, the letter he wrote to the church in Rome.

Today we’re looking at several passages from Romans 4 and 5.

What we’ve learned thus far is that there’s two ways to approach God:

1. By keeping the rules or “*the law*.”
2. By the grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus.

All that ever needed to be done to pay the penalty for our sins and to purchase salvation for all people has already been accomplished by the sufferings and death of Christ upon the cross. To suggest that anyone might need to do anything more than Christ has already done would be to reject the testimony of God’s Word and to discredit the efficacy of Christ’s atonement. In the light of this, any attempt to earn salvation by our own good works is in effect an insult both to God the Father and to Christ the Son.

- *The Spirit Filled Believer’s Handbook* by Derek Prince

Paul continually and emphatically teaches this throughout the book of Romans. Let’s start with the last verse of Romans 4.

Romans 4:25

Jesus was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand...

Romans 5:11-12

So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. ¹² When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

Romans 5:15

But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. ***But even greater*** is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:17

For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. ***But even greater*** is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

The problem most of us have, is that we think that what we've done, or that what's been done to us, is greater than what Christ did for us.

David King's story of the guy who bought a motorcycle from him... "I think I know what your problem is. You think that what you did is greater than what Jesus did."

Repeatedly, Paul mentions the terrible long-term impact of sin, then he follows with three words: *But even greater!*****

In light of what Paul says in Romans 5, let me ask you two questions:

1. When I was a sinner, did doing good deeds make me right with God?
2. Now that I have received the gift of righteousness through faith in Christ, does my failure to be perfect make me unrighteous?

21 times in the NT salvation is referred to as *“the gift of God.”*

When I first came to faith, I used to think that if I messed up in some way, that God would turn His back on me.

I used to think that way.

But that's far from the truth.

I used to think that if I didn't read five chapters from the Bible everyday that God was disappointed.

I used to think that if I didn't pray a certain length of time everyday that God was disappointed.

I used to think that if I didn't fast once a week that God was disappointed.

And if I had a bad thought, well, I felt like a failed God.

Your salvation and mine is not based on what we've done, it's based on our faith in what Christ did for us.

Every defeated Christian I've ever talked to has this one thing in common: they have doubted their salvation.

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 6

We are in a series that we have titled, “When in Romans” and in this series, we are unpacking chapter by chapter the book of Romans. If you’re new to ACCH we place a high priority on teaching God’s Word and we usually approach God’s Word in the form of series. Currently our series is on what is arguably Paul’s most influential letter, the letter he wrote to the church in Rome.

Today we’re looking at several passages from Romans 6 through 8.

The first five chapters of Romans are ***POSITIONAL***.

They reveal where we stand because of Christ.

There’s a word Paul uses 14 times in the first five chapters of Romans and it’s a legal term.

The word is justification. (***just-as-if-I’d***-never-sinned).

Because of what Christ has done for me, when he looks at me, he sees me just-as-if-I’d never sinned.

He uses this legal word 14 times in the first five chapters because those chapters are ***POSITIONAL***.

Chapters 6,7 and 8 are ***PRACTICAL***.

In chapters 1-5 we’ve learned that Christ has freed us from the law, from sin and death.

In chapters 6-8 we’re going to learn how to walk that victory out in everyday life.

Paul’s teaching on the grace of God was so radical, he had to start chapter six by answering a question that he knew everyone would be asking...

Romans 6:1-2 NLT

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ²Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?

Paul actually addresses this same question twice in chapter six.

Romans 6:14-15 NLT

Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. ¹⁵Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!

In chapter seven Paul confesses that even he struggles with temptation.

Romans 7:15 NLT

I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.

Romans 7:18-19 NLT

I want to do what is right, but I can't. ¹⁹I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

Romans 7:22-25 NLT

*I love God's law with all my heart. ²³But there is another power within me that is at war with **my mind**. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

You know, we all have our own battles with temptation.

This week I read an article on the temptation of lying.

According to the article, men lie twice as much as women?

The average woman tells just over **65,000** lies in her lifetime.

The average man, over **126,000**.

According to research, men tell 6 lies on average a day.

The average man lies 42 times a week to his wife, his boss and/or his colleagues.

Come on how many times have you lied about your height, your weight or how much you used to bench press?

I know for some guys, the older they get the bigger their lies get.

I can bench 250 pounds. No you weigh 250 pounds.

You know, temptation isn't always a sign of weakness; sometimes it's a sign of spiritual growth or even spiritual advancement.

- Because the further up the mountain you go, the harder the wind blows.
- That's why the Bible says to **count it all joy when you fall into various temptations and trails.**

So, let's get practical for a minute, let's talk about overcoming temptation.

I believe all of us need two things:

1. We need to understand how the enemy works.
2. We need a game plan.

Here's how the enemy works:

1. He attacks you mentally.
 2. He attacks you relationally.
-

Let's talk about the mental battle for a minute.

Romans 7:22-23 NLT

I love God's law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power within me that is ***at war with my mind.***

- The greatest battle you will ever fight is the one in your head.
- Realize that not all your thoughts are yours.
- The devil is a liar, and he does his best work by planting lies in your head.

- If you're tempted to cheat, he'll plant a thought, "Your spouse doesn't love you anymore."
- If you're tempted to steal from your company, he'll plant a thought, "They should be paying you..."

- Everything begins with a thought.
- You came into this life head first.
- Everything starts with the head, and the enemy knows that.
- And when you first get saved, he plants doubts in your head.
- Later when you step into your calling, he plants doubts in your head.

He works mentally and he works relationally.

- Relationally, he will do his best to separate you.
- Get you off to yourself. *Each one is tempted when he or she is drawn away...*
- Satan will use offenses, rejection, insecurity, whatever he can to separate you from God's house.
- He knows that temptation begins with isolation.
- This is why Paul says in *Romans 16* to mark the people who cause division among you and avoid them.

So, how does the enemy work?

He works mentally and relationally.

Now let's talk about developing a game plan.

Know when you're tempted and know where you're tempted and stay away.

"An Autobiography in Five Short Chapters." In my opinion, it's a story of overcoming temptation. The poem goes like this:

Chapter 1: I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I'm lost. I'm helpless. It's not my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter 2: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I'm in the same place, but it's not my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter 3: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it there; I still fall in. It's a habit, but my eyes are opened. It is my fault. I know where I am. I get out immediately.

Chapter 4: I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

Chapter 5: I walk down a different street.

The Game Plan:

1. Develop a Prayer Life

Matthew 26:42 / Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!

2. Develop a Disciplined Study Life

Jesus countered every temptation with God's Word. He would say, "It is written."

3. Don't Do Life Alone

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 7

We are in a series that we have titled, “When in Romans” and in this series, we are unpacking chapter by chapter the book of Romans. If you’re new to ACCH we place a high priority on teaching God’s Word and we usually approach God’s Word in the form of series. Currently our series is on what is arguably Paul’s most influential letter, the letter he wrote to the church in Rome.

Today we’re going to look at a verse in Romans chapter eight that is one of the most quoted verses in the Bible. It’s a verse that breeds great comfort, but it can also be a verse that breeds a lot of frustration.

Romans 8:28

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.*

When someone goes through something tragic, we often offer this verse as a word of comfort, but to the one who’s experienced the tragedy, this verse can sometimes breed a lot of frustration. Because when you’ve gone through something tragic, the last thing you need is a overly spiritual person telling you that God has a plan for your suffering.

- Now, can God and will God use your suffering to bring comfort to someone else?
- Yes.
- But that’s not what you need to hear on the heels of a tragic situation.

When reading Romans 8:28, remember this:

The word of God is consistent, reliable and unchanging. However, life is inconsistent, unreliable and always changing.

I'm a creature of habit. I take the same commute to work every day. I take 640 East, then merge onto 40 East, then take the Strawberry Plains Exit, go through McDonalds to get my coffee then to the office.

Ninety-five percent of the time, it's a 15 minute commute. Ninety-five percent of the time, it's consistent, predictable and reliable. But then there's that five percent, when someone ten minutes ahead of me made a bad decision, and the unexpected happened. Now my 15 minute commute becomes a 1 hour commute.

When life is inconsistent and unreliable does that mean that God's word is inconsistent and unreliable?

No! God's word is consistent, unchanging and reliable, even when life is not. God is faithful even when life is not.

Several years ago, I read a book by Louie Giglio entitled Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table. Let me read a paragraph from that book.

"When life gets tough, it can seem logical to check out spiritually. Turning from God and turning to an addiction or a substance of some sort seems understandable, and that's what a lot of people do when times get tough. When life gets hard, we're almost always tempted to welcome the Enemy at our table. But Jesus invites us to follow Him *even though* life gets hard. That's what we see all through the Bible."

Think about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

They were three Hebrew boys who refused to worship a golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar. Because they did the right thing, they were going to be thrown into a blazing furnace. Notice what they said to the king...

Daniel 3:17-18 NLT

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. ¹⁸ **But even if he doesn't**, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.

Here's the Question:

Do I have "even if he doesn't" faith?

Do you have "even if he doesn't" faith?

Or do we have "only if he does" faith?

Brag on the Judy Cooks in the room, then brag on the Stephanie and Mark Best's and the Angie Lampkins and Valerie Whitakers.

Notice what the prophet Habakkuk said...

Habakkuk 3:17–18 GNT

Even though the fig trees have no fruit and no grapes grow on the vines, **even though** the olive crop fails and the fields produce no grain, **even though** the sheep all die and the cattle stalls are empty, **I will** still be joyful and glad, because the Lord God is my savior.

Notice the two phrases repeated three times in Habakkuk's prayer?

Even though . . . I will . . .

Do you have an "even though... I will" kind of faith?

Or do you have an "only if you do... I will" kind of faith?

When the Bible says, *“All things work together for good...”* that doesn’t mean that I will always get my expected outcome. But it does mean that no matter what happens to me, I’m not a victim, I’m a victor. And, at the end of the day, God can and will use what the enemy meant for evil, to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Think about each New Testament apostle and how they died.

- James, Son of Zebedee was the first apostle to be martyred. King Agrippa had him ran throw with a sword.
- Peter was crucified upside down in Rome.
- John was exiled and imprisoned on an island where he later died.
- James, Son of Alpheus was thrown from the temple and then stoned to death.
- Andrew was crucified in Greece.
- Philip was crucified in Asia Minor.
- Bartholomew was flayed open alive.
- Thomas was speared to death in India.
- Matthew was ran through with a sword in Ethiopia.
- Jude or (Thaddaeus) was shot with arrows and killed.
- Simon the Zealot was sewn in half in Persia.
- Paul was beheaded in Rome.

But a first century historian said, “The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. When one died, ten thousand came to faith.”

Job said, *“Though he slay me, yet will I serve him...”*

In their book, *Pivotal Prayers*, Tim Elmore and John Hull, tell a powerful Romans 8:28 story.

His life's dream was to be a missionary, and it looked as though it was finally coming true. As the nervous young man sat in the mission agency's office, he assured the interviewer that he and his new bride were committed to working hard, managing their resources as good stewards, and sharing Christ with as many people as possible. His future looked bright.

Then, it all seemed to come crashing down. During their cross-cultural preparation, he and his wife realized she could never endure the rigors of life overseas. Her body was fragile and frail. If they went to Africa as planned, she would certainly die. Confused and emotionally crushed, the young man returned home. His tragic tale continued as he failed to find a ministerial position, anywhere.

One night he awoke from his sleep feeling the weight of his failed dream. He began to wrestle with God over his calling. How could God call him to change the world and then close all the doors to ministry? It was during that time of prayer that God reminded him of his original commitment – to work hard, to manage his resources, and to share Christ with as many people as possible.

He decided to work for his dad, a dentist who had a small business on the side that produced juice for church communion services. He built the company into a large enterprise. In fact, you probably have purchased some of his juice. His name was Welch, and his grape juice is sold in supermarkets everywhere. Mr. Welch has not only given huge sums of money to world missions; he has impacted the world for Christ in a far greater way than if he had gone overseas himself."

WHEN IN ROMANS – PART 8

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The first 11 chapters of Romans are very doctrinal, and we’ve spent a lot of time unpacking those chapters. Chapters 12-16 are very practical. There’s a short-two-word phrase that appears 13 times in the last 5 chapters of Romans.

It’s the phrase “one another.”

Romans 12:9-17

*Let love be without hypocrisy. Despise what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to **one another** with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to **one another**; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.*

*¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward **one another**.*

Several years ago, I heard a story about a man who was driving down a country road. As he neared an upcoming bridge, it appeared as though a man was preparing to jump and take his own life. Pulling onto the bridge, the driver stopped his car, jumped out and shouted, "Don't do it!"

The suicidal man said, "I don't want to live anymore. No one loves me."

The good Samaritan said, "God loves you. Do you believe in God?"

The man said, "Yes."

He asked, "Are you a Christian?"

The man said, "Yes."

He said, "Are you a Protestant or Catholic?"

The man said, "Protestant."

He said, "What denomination?"

The man answered, "Baptist."

He said, "Northern Baptist or Southern Baptist?"

The man said, "Northern Baptist."

He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist or Northern Liberal Baptist?"

The man responded, "Northern Conservative Baptist."

He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region, or Northern Conservative Baptist Eastern Region?"

The man said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region."

He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1879, or Council of 1912?"

The man said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912."

He said, "Die, you heretic!" And he pushed him off the bridge.

The reason why Jesus said, "If two agree touching anything, it shall be given to them," is because you can't get three people to agree on anything.

The phrase "one another" isn't found only in the book of Romans, it's actually found 100 times throughout the New Testament.

1. Be at peace with one another (Mk 9:50)

2. Love one another (Romans 13:8)
3. Accept one another (Ro 15:7)
4. Speak truth to one another (Ep 4:25)
5. Don't bite and devour one another (Ga 5:15)
6. Tolerate one another (Ep 4:2)
7. Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ep 4:32)
8. Confess sins to one another (Jas 5:16)
9. Serve one another (Ga 5:13)
10. Comfort one another (1 Th 4:18)
11. Husbands and wives: don't deprive one another of physical intimacy (1 Co 7:5)
12. Bear one another's burdens (Ga 6:2)
13. Encourage and build up one another (1 Th 5:11)
14. Pray for one another (Jas 5:16)
15. Be hospitable to one another (1 Pe 4:9)

My Christianity is only as real as my love is. In fact, where there is persistent unforgiveness or disputing in a church, a family, or individual's life, the demonic world has unhindered access. - *The Three Battlegrounds*

In our text, Paul encourages the believers in Rome to honor one another.

Honor is a lost trait in our society.

Today, we dishonor authority, and we honor stupidity.

Honor is something you will learn the right way or the hard way.

The truth is, if you don't learn to honor, one day you might be saying, "Yes your honor, no your honor."

A lack of honor turned Lucifer an Ark Angel into satan the devil.

In the OT, we read about a man by the name of Daniel. The Bible says that Daniel had an excellent spirit, and he was elevated to a place of great authority.

Daniel had a spirit of honor.

A spirit of honor will propel your life and a lack of honor will limit your life.

Daniel honored and served his authority the king of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar.

Who by the way, was one of the most wicked kings to ever live.

Daniel worshipped God.

Nebuchadnezzar worshipped idols.

Daniel prayed to God.

Nebuchadnezzar wanted everyone to pray to him.

Now listen to me, you can disagree with someone and still honor them. In **Romans 13:1**, says that we are to be subject to governing authorities, to show them honor.

I feel like this is a good place to insert a good political joke. A politician was driving through rural America when he came upon a large piece of farmland where a heard of sheep were grazing. The shepherd was near the fence line, so the politician pulled his truck over and began talking to the shepherd.

He said, "If I can guess how many sheep you have, can I have one?" The shepherd said, "Okay, guess." The politician thought for a moment and said, "578." The shepherd said, "I can't believe it. That's exactly how many I have." The politician reached down, picked up an animal and started to put it in his truck.

The shepherd said, "Wait a minute. If I can guess what you do for a living, can I have that animal back?" The politician said, "Sure." The shepherd said, "You're a politician." He said, "How did you know that?" The shepherd said, "Put my dog down and I'll tell you."

Daniel didn't agree with everything his king did, but he still honored him.

If you can't honor the person, honor the position.

Daniel's attitude of honor eventually influenced the King.

If you want to be a person of great influence, learn to honor.

Think about the story in Mark 6, when Jesus went to his own hometown and the people who knew him best, honored him the least.

Jesus has been on a roll.

His ministry has exploded.

He goes back to His hometown to preach, and the people dishonored him with their unbelief.

And the Bible says that Jesus could not do many miracles among them because of their unbelief.

A lack of honor will shut you off from the supernatural.

The reason why I'm still pastoring today and the reason why ACCH is where it is today is because of the grace of God, and my wife, my children, our team, and our wonderful church body. There's never been a time when I felt like I knew what I was doing.

My parents...

Those who have been here from a long way back...

Those who have recently joined us because you sense something special...

Those who have pastored before...