

Journey Into Living God's Way

Lesson 1 . . . What God Calls Us To Be

(Romans 1:1-7)

Notes

The book of Romans is rich in practical truths that tell us how to live God's way. Paul wrote this letter around A. D. 57 during his third missionary journey. It is the first doctrinal book in the NT and follows five historical books: the four gospels that record the life of Christ and *Acts* that tells us about the early church. Of all the books in the New Testament, *Romans* gives us the most complete presentation of the Gospel preached by the apostles.

Romans enables us to see our world through God's eyes and learn how to live His way. As our culture continually changes, we need the unchanging, timeless truth of this epistle. It is God's everlasting Word that tells us what is eternally right or wrong and what is eternally true or false. This is because of what truth found in 1 Peter 1:25a?

The book of Romans has probably touched and changed more lives than any other single book in the Bible. It was the book of Romans that transformed the life of Augustine, the brilliant theologian of the fifth century, as well as the lives of John Wesley and John Bunyan. When I was a college freshman, a fine pastor, Bud Jenkins, shared with me the Roman Road (Rom. 3:23; 6:23 & 10:9-10) that led me to faith in Christ. Until Jesus returns, God will continue to use the book of Romans to change people and lead them to live His way. The key verse is the last phrase of Romans 1:17. Write it below:

It was from this phrase Martin Luther recovered the doctrine of salvation *by faith* and was moved to lead the Protestant Reformation. This phrase sums up the book of Romans and how God wants us to live—*by faith*. To begin our “journey into living God's way,” let's look at Romans 1:1-7, where we find **three things God calls us to be**.



First, God calls us to be servants (1:1).

This epistle begins: *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ* (1:1a). Before his conversion Paul was called by his Jewish name “Saul.” After his conversion he used the Roman name “Paul” because his Roman citizenship gave him rights and privileges that non-Romans could not enjoy.

Paul calls himself *a servant of Jesus Christ*. The word translated *servant* (DOULOS, doo-los) means “slave.” It is the idea of being totally at the service of another person. Actually, everyone is a slave to something or someone. Some are slaves to money, a career, a business, a relationship, drugs, sex, etc. However, God want us to be slaves to Jesus Christ. Why? Because in John 8:32 what does Jesus say happens when you accept Him as Lord or Master?



From what does Jesus set us *free*? Jesus says, “*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*” (Jn 8:34b). If you are not a *servant* of Jesus, you are a *servant of sin*, and the *sin* is whatever keeps you from **living God’s way**.

Paul also writes he was *called to be an apostle* (Rom. 1:1b). The word *apostle* means one sent forth with a message. God called Paul to make a difference in this world, and God calls you and me to make a difference also. The Bible tells us we are God’s *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus* for what purpose (see Eph. 2:10b)?

You may not be called to be a pastor or missionary, but based on your personality, gifts, talents, and unique experiences, you are called to do something for God in this world.

Paul also writes he is *separated* (Rom. 1:1c). The word translated *separated* or “set apart” (APHORIDZO, afo-rid-zo) means “to mark off with a boundary.” It basically means separation from the sins of the world. To live God’s way, there are certain things we cannot do. **Living God’s way** means there are moral boundaries we cannot cross.

Paul is *separated unto the gospel of God* (1:1c). The word *gospel* means “good news.” The “good news” is God will forgive our sins, free us from guilt, give us a divine purpose for our lives and a home in heaven. Is that “good news” or what? God calls us and wants to set us apart to serve Him for the sake of the Gospel. So, **first God calls us to be servants**.



Second, God calls us to be solicitors (1:2-6).

Paul elaborates on *the gospel of God* by writing: (*Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,*) (1:2). God *promised* this good news through His Old Testament prophets. The Gospel

is not an accident or afterthought. The Gospel is not something Paul made up. The Gospel is the fulfillment of OT prophecies, such as what prophecy found in Ezekiel 36:26a?

Paul tells us Jesus fulfilled prophecies about the Messiah because though He was God's *Son*, He was also human and a descendant of *David* (1:3). Not only did Jesus fulfill prophecies about His ancestry, He also proved Himself the divine *Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead* (1:4). So, Jesus was totally human and totally divine at the same time. Why is that important for us to know? Because now Jesus is our High Priest who intercedes for us with the Father. Since Jesus is not only divine but also human, what does Hebrews 4:15 tell us?

Jesus knows firsthand what it is like to live on this planet as a human being. He understands our problems, pain, temptations, and struggles.

Of Jesus, Paul writes: *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name* (1:5). *Grace* refers to our salvation and *apostleship* refers to our spiritual vocation or purpose. In a sense, we are all apostles or “holy solicitors” who are to call people from *among all nations* to faith in Jesus Christ. In the Jewish mind there are only two types of people—Jews and non-Jews, whom the Jews call “Gentiles.” Paul is saying God calls people of all races. This is reminiscent of what truth found in 2 Peter 3:9b?

Living God's way means we do everything we can to solicit people to *obedience to the faith* because we are *among . . . the called of Jesus Christ* (1:5-6). Thus, **God calls us to be solicitors** who lead people to faith in Christ. We are called **to be servants, to be solicitors, and . . .**



Third, God calls us to be *saints* (1:7).

Paul writes: *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints* (1:7a). The original destination of this letter was Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire and the largest city in the world, with a population of

about one million. Rome was much like America today. Sexual immorality was rampant; therefore, orgies, homosexuality, and adultery were common. The Romans also trusted in their military might to protect them against all their enemies. The symbol of the Roman Empire was an eagle. On the right hand side of the back of a dollar bill is the symbol of America—the eagle. Benjamin Franklin wanted our national symbol to be a turkey because eagles are vultures, and he thought that would send the wrong message. Rome is the ancient parallel of America, and we are headed down the same road of destruction. Therefore, we must heed what warning in Proverbs 14:34?

This epistle was written to Roman believers who were *called to be saints* (1:7). The word translated *saints* (HAGIOS, hag-e-os) means “sanctified” or “set apart” for God’s purposes. Every Christian is a saint who is “set apart” from the world to live God’s way. So, you can call me “Saint Tommy,” and that would be biblically correct.

Paul also writes: *Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ* (1:7b). *Grace* and *peace* are the cause and effect of salvation. We are saved by *grace* alone, and our salvation brings *peace* to our lives. How does Jesus describe this *peace* in John 14:27a?

The *peace* of Christ is an inner tranquility the storms of life cannot take away. *Grace* is the cause, and *peace* is the effect of the salvation found in Christ. For us as believers, *peace* is not escape from problems or pain, but an inner calm that permeates our lives, regardless of our struggles and stress. That’s God’s desire for all of us, so He inspired Paul to write the book of Romans that we might experience His *grace* and *peace*. How does John 20:19 record Jesus’ first words to His disciples after His resurrection?



Jesus came to earth, died on the cross, and was resurrected not only that we might be saved by *grace* but that we might also have His *peace*.

In these verses we find God calls us to be **three** things: **servants**, **solicitors**, and **saints**. Which of these areas needs the most improvement in your life, and what will you do about it beginning today?
