

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 fact 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 Christ Jesus* (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 Christ Jesus*. 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, “. . . *everyone who sins is a slave to sin*” (Jn 8:34b). If you are not a *slave* to Jesus, you are a *slave to 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 Ephesians 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 *set apart* (Rom. 1:1c). The word translated *set apart* or “separated” (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 *set apart for 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: *the gospel he promised beforehand through 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 his 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: *Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship* (1:5a). *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 the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith* (1:5b). 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 the obedience that comes from faith* because Paul writes: *And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ* (1:5-6). This means **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 in Rome who are loved by God and 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 and peace to you from God our Father and from 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?
