

Living In Fear?

Satan seized control of the world since luring Adam to sin and continues to deceive mankind. Why wouldn't we be in fear, if we put our trust in this physical realm? "...ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience..." (Eph. 2:2) We're not only chained to this imperfect world and flesh from birth, but live among others in the same condition.

The problem is 'the infirmity of the flesh,' that is, sin in our members. (Romans 6:19) The flesh naturally tends to trust itself and the ways of this world. Actually, the majority of our grief is often self-induced. Romans 6:21 says, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."

Take heart, "...being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...". We have a faith standing in grace and God provides His Spirit, teaching His ways, enabling Christ to live within us. (Rom. 5:1-2)

When faced with life's overwhelming challenges, and as fears arise, minimize their power. Just think differently. Step off the 'road to fear,' onto the 'faith path,' knowing and trusting the Great God and Saviour. He is on our side! "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Timothy 1:7)

Pray to "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart..." and "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge." (Prov. 3:5, 23:12) Navigate obstacles in life by a walk of faith. Focus on what God desires, not the problem. He wants us to yield our affections/lives/time to Him. God does the rest! (Read Rom. 6-8)

Get rid of unwise thinking. Close the 'window' of your mind to fear, "Neither give place to the devil." (Eph. 4:27) Don't trust your flesh or Satan's wisdom. Replace these; step onto the 'faith path.' **This is peace, a fruit of the Spirit!**

Christian Life Coach Support Services

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Just A Minute! With Scripture

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The Study of Romans: An Introduction

Designed to Establish the Body of Christ

Romans 1:11 "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."



**This issue marks the beginning of a series of articles to assist students to grow by studying the book of Romans. The goal each month will be to address one successive chapter in the book of Romans and relay a few helpful study insights.*



Are you looking for direction in personal study? The purpose of this series of articles is to encourage the study of Romans and assist students through the seeking and searching process. It is designed to help establish and strengthen understanding in the fundamentals of Grace. Consider the Father's desire:

- 1) Your personal maturity in establishing doctrines. (Romans 1:11)
- 2) Developing an openness and motivation to learn. (Proverbs 2:1-5)
- 3) Conviction to live what you know, in the details of life. (Rom. 6-16)

Initially, you may want to just read through each article for general content. However, go back a second time to reflect upon the issues presented and implement some of the recommendations. Read verses in your own Bible and consider the context surrounding the passages. Develop heart conviction through prayer & meditation, then prove all things as a Berean. (Acts 17:11)

In order for the Body of Christ to mature properly, Jesus Christ taught Paul a 'form of doctrine,' and preserved this teaching for us in Romans-Philemon. (Issue 9) God placed these books in a particular order for our edification. Isaiah 28:10 says, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Romans is designed to establish believers in the fundamentals of the faith. As in each of Paul's epistles, the goal of the book is located in Chapter 1. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." (Romans 1:11) The letters that follow build upon this foundation.

Most of the Old Testament, the Gospels and Acts were written in a historical format. These books provide characters, setting, and a factual account of what happened in time past. While these historical writings contain underlying doctrine & depth, on the surface they are story-like, designed simply, for spiritual children to understand. After all, that was who they were directed to, the children of Israel. (*Study idea: Look at the first chapter of the books of the Old Testament to search for clues to prove to whom they were written.*)

Paul's writings begin something unique, so expectations need to be different. Romans-Philemon is scripted more *directly* as training: 'doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.' (II Timothy 3:16) They are not story-like at all. Students can expect powerfully compact material, progressing them to mature spiritually. Daily reading and meditation will be crucial. We need to prayerfully approach it differently and realize that understanding comes slowly, as we read and reread passages, to capture the layered instruction. It is similar to physical developmental growth. The digestion process happens slowly, over a lifetime. Therefore, we ought to start today: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand...But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:12,14)

Personal note: Before trusting Christ, this writer was instructed to read & reread Romans 1-3. Prayerfully doing this for many days *seemed* to yield little and was quite discouraging. "Did I understand anything I just read?" However, what an opportunity to walk by faith, trusting God's way. The Word was marvelously being placed inside my inward man. Patience, continued effort, & time was needed. Though invisible, the Father was building an edifice of doctrine. So I read, prayed, and just continued to read. God's Word will accomplish His purpose. (Isaiah 55:11) **Topic continues-Page 3.**

Women's Bible Study - N. Chesterfield, VA

When: Every Fri. 1-3pm - Topic: Romans 7-8

Call for information - (804) 519-1210

What Is The Sin Cycle?

The great, and sometimes frustrating challenge as a believer is to live a life pleasing unto the Father. Our flesh tries hard to produce good works. Yet since Genesis, God has taught mankind that He is NOT interested in any effort of our flesh.

Recall the sign of circumcision, 'a cutting away of the flesh,' which was given to Israel, in Genesis 17:11. "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." God's further instruction to man, "...we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses is as filthy rags..." (Is. 64:6)

The Lord simply desires a response of faith, the faith of Abraham found in Romans 4:21. "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Trusting that God 'is able,' produces resting in His provision.

Paul teaches us, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:3-4) God wants us to 'walk after the Spirit' & cease from our works, to yield to the Word. Christ does the work in us.

In contrast, the Sin Cycle (to the right) is NOT trusting God, but trying to please the Father by fleshly, self-righteous efforts. Saints will struggle with sin, throughout their life, when living 'after the flesh.' The chart shows stages of this repeating cycle. It produces grievous sin strong holds in one's thinking, ending in failure and functional death (one's service to God).

(Study idea: Stop to read Romans 7 and take time also to prove the chart. Examine verses listed under each section, then continue reading this article.)

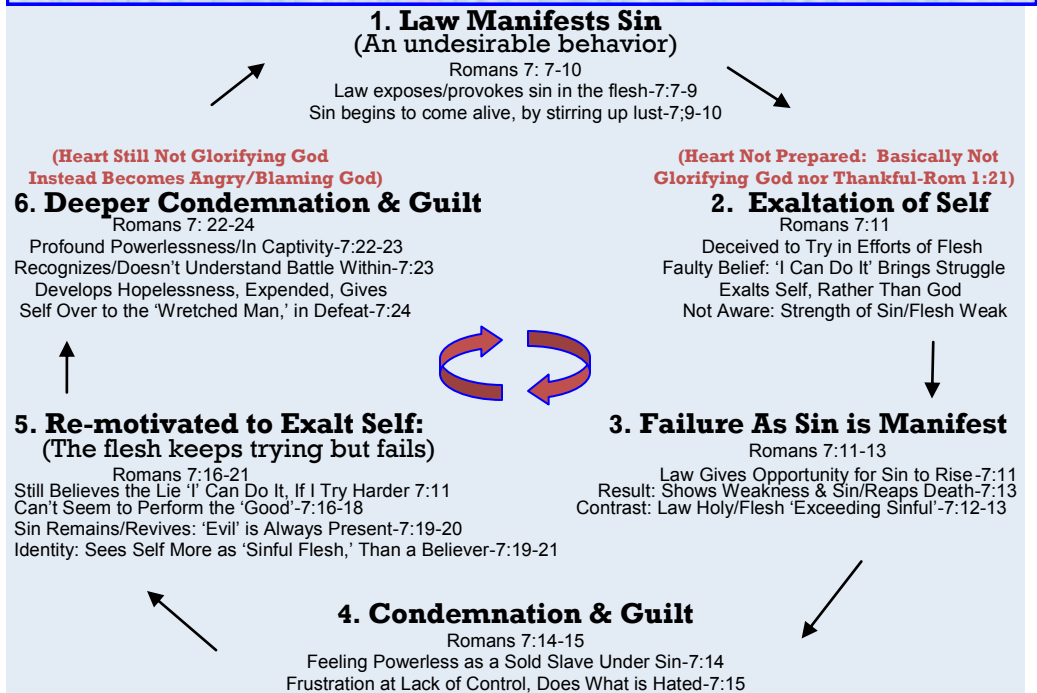
This Sin Cycle works in our lives in countless ways. To clarify, one of many possible scenarios has been chosen to walk us through the cycle. The sin is 'lusting after a woman.' Notice how sin follows the verses.

1. Law Manifests Sin: The law is known, "...Thou shalt not covet..." (Rom. 7:7) A married man observes a woman, immodestly dressed, walking by him daily. His lustful flesh stirs him to respond. He realizes coveting is ungodly, yet she seems to come into his mind a lot.

2. Exaltation of Self: He believes 'the lie,' deciding, 'I can do this, I'll do what's right...just look away. (Sometimes our flesh can do things, for a while. Eventually, the law deceives us as sin is strong and the flesh is weak.) The struggle starts.

Understanding the Sin Cycle of Romans 7:7-24 Part I

Take time to look up these verses for yourself to make this real to YOU!



Note: No matter what the sin is, we are responsible for the decisions we make. God set in place a sowing and reaping process to help us learn. Additionally, we stand before God, even as believers. (1 Corinthians 3)

3. Failure of the Flesh: Mentally, he waits for her to walk by; his flesh tempts him with ungodly ideas. Sin begins as he 'gives place' to it in his thoughts. He is "...drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Jesus taught, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Jas. 1:14-15/Matt. 5:28) He justifies/excuses himself, finding ways to blame his wife/situation. Frustration mounts and sin progresses to be 'exceeding sinful.'

4. Condemnation/Guilt: The sin of the mind can be unconscious, but he is still responsible. Carnal thinking increases in depravity, visualizing 'behaviors' of infidelity, preparing/transitioning him into a 'sin action;' he succumbs to flirting. Shame and guilt begin, so 'justifying behaviors' increase as a countermeasure. Conviction lays heavy on him, engulfed in ungodliness. He hates the sin and feels powerless, yet it can also feel good. He knows it's wrong, what a struggle! Sin often controls & momentum builds. He feels worse about himself; which spurs on more trying.

5. Re-motivated: His will to do good is renewed, he refocuses, & is determined, still trusting 'self.' Exalting his flesh, he 'tries harder,' but lustfulness intensifies. He fails again, going further down the road of sin. He can't believe he set a date to meet the woman. Feeling weak/vulnerable/driven, he's lost sight of who he is in Christ.

6. Deep Condemnation: Guilt ridden, caught in a hole of sin, he hates himself and may become angry at God. Sinful behavior often spirals out of control, going deeper into depravity. He is a slave to his own flesh & commits adultery. Blaming and excusing intensify, and he's wholly given to the grievous Sin Cycle. It's a confusing war inside; 'the law in his members' with 'the law of his mind.' There may be repeated but futile attempts to stop the ungodliness. He becomes functionally dead, impacting others, especially loved ones. "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24) He gives into it, losing hope!

Though a heart wrenching battle, this man is in sin and accountable for his decisions, as are we all. *He has not trusted God & His Word to be his provision, so he's unable to access the power of Christ in him.* Understanding what happens in this Sin Cycle needs to come first. **Next month's issue will explain God's glorious answer** to effectively deal with this sin treadmill; it is the Grace Cycle, found in Romans 8. Romans 7:25 gives a preview and the answer to the 'wretched man': "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Study and think about these things this month. It will be helpful in preparing your heart and mind to gain victory over sin and ready you for Part II, the Grace Cycle. Until then, if you need help, don't wait; pray & seek a wise mentor or life coach! (Look for Part II in the February issue.)

God Has the Answers and Is Your Power!

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Things To Do:

- 1. Search things as a 'Berean' (Acts 17:11)
- 1. Do you live in fear? Pray to trust God, get on a wise path.
- 2. Study Romans 1 this month, using some ideas on page 3.
- 3. Look up & prove verses in the sections of the Sin Cycle.
- 4. Get a mentor/coach if help is needed with sin strongholds.

Designed to Establish the Body of Christ

Romans 1: Student Study Insights (continued from page 1)

Key Verse: Romans 1:11 "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."



Helping One Another Study

General insights: Be sure to enjoy the process of examining the Word; it's a wondrous privilege & honor. Remember also that Scripture is to be our final authority.

The book of Acts is background that can help readers understand the historical setting of Romans. In Acts 7, Jewish leaders continued in rebellion, even to blaspheme the Holy Ghost at the stoning of Stephen. (Mark 3:29) As a result, God's focus moves from Peter and the Little Flock creating Paul's new ministry. Acts 7-28 documents this major shift, as God sets Israel aside. He raises up Paul as the 'Apostle to the Gentiles,' creating the Body of Christ, a new avenue to manifest His power/glory. The Acts 28:28 decree transitions students into 'the dispensation of Gentile Grace,' found in Romans-Philemon. "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Study ideas: Skim Acts to see this key change in how God dealt with man. Read more about it in Romans 9-11.)

Romans: Observe for yourself how Paul begins all his letters by introducing himself, then goes on to document 'to whom' he's writing. Notice a key issue in Romans 1:1-7, which takes the reader back through the whole Bible in order to validate his apostleship. 'His' Lord Jesus Christ is the same Son of God, of the seed of David of the Old Testament/Gospels. It's the same God & Father who called him to be an apostle, linking the whole Bible, prompting saints to study it further.

Romans 1 introduces the entirety of Paul's epistles, the fullness of the 'gospel of Christ,' which basically is God's righteousness by faith. The first chapter deals with the character and actions of God and man, examining their relationship. It unveils man's sin condition and rebellious ways: the tendency to reject truth and seek vain imaginations, self-worship, and idolatry.

Students learn and approach the study of Scripture uniquely, however, all are to prayerfully be led by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:14) How to focus your time is a choice. You can spend days, weeks, or even months in the study of this chapter. Suggestions below are designed to assist in the process. (Apply 1 or 2 that appeal to you.)

1. **Prepare your heart:** The first time through Romans, you may want to give yourself permission to just slowly read/reread each chapter, then pray/meditate on what was learned. Examine detail the next time.

2. **Notice specifics:** Read the chapter several times daily to observe/think about key characters, topics, repeating terms/word patterns, & questions. Underline, highlight, or jot them down; reflect prayerfully.

3. **View every word as significant:** Be observant for key, repeating, or new words. Paul also uses many 'helping words or phrases' as a method to teach. For example, words are used to prompt reflection, or make comparisons, contrasts, time changes, and conclusions. Examples: know ye not, but, not as, so as, now, but now, for, therefore, etc. Take time to look up definitions to expand understanding.

4. **Topic/Key Verse:** Read/study to recognize the topic

of the chapter and find the 'key verse' that reflects the major focus. Results will vary.

5. **Find the organization to the chapter:** Read the chapter to section off logical themes. This expands understanding & study. Actually, some Bibles already have captioned sections. (Not all are accurate.) Prove them by re-labeling; this is a great occasion to learn. Students will divide them differently. In time, maturity will bring increased insight. An example:

1:1-7 - Introduction

1:8-12 - Prayer

1:13-17 - Basics of Gospel

1:18-23 - God's wrath/progression of sin

1:24-32 - Why God gave man over to himself

6. **Progress through each section of Chapter 1, verse-by-verse:** Focus on Section 1, reading and thinking about passages individually. Target key words or new insights. For example, think about Romans 1:1. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God...". Purpose to ask your Father for help.

When Paul quotes a passage or refers to an historical event, God is providing a learning opportunity. It is designed to send students on a journey through Bible doctrine. Look back at passages and compare what you think you know with what the verses actually teach.

When Scripture says Paul is 'a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,' ask yourself, "When/how did this happen?" Use your Bible's cross-reference system or a concordance. (This is possible if you know key words, like 'chosen vessel,' or recall where it happened, 'Damascus.') You may know there are three accounts detailed in Acts 9, 22, & 26. Read them in their context & reflect. God will provide deeper understanding in unexpected ways.

7. **Pray to be a seeker/searcher of the treasures within Scripture:** (Proverbs 2) Be alert to words/topics that 'jump out' or seem interesting. The Holy Spirit stirs interest and motivation to study. Use a dictionary or concordance to gain depth. For example in Verse 1, a student can define 'apostle' and look for verses about Paul being an apostle in the concordance, reading the context surrounding passages. (i.e. Rom. 11:13/1 Cor. 9)

8. **Ask yourself questions:** Come to passages with an inquisitive mind. In section two, Verses 8-12, you could ask: "Why is this prayer here and what does it teach me?" or "What are the elements contained within Paul's prayer?" (Ask who, what, when, where, why, & how.)

9. **Make a point to study the whole Bible:** "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4) However, be cautious about directly 'applying' passages that are outside of Paul's epistles, until you have maturity in Pauline Truth. Whenever doctrine conflicts with Paul's teachings, it is a warning flag. It may not apply to us, the Body of Christ. Decide to pray and study it further. God raised Paul as our Apostle, and his writings were given to him by the risen Christ for us. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor. 11: 1) To God be the glory!

If this study is helpful, share or use it to teach others!

What's So Important About Being Thankful?

1 Timothy 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."



"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD..." It seems God desired to have a 'heart to heart' talk with His Nation. He implored Israel to reflect on His goodness & 'learn to do well,' having a receptive attitude. God yearned to give them all good things, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land..." (Is. 1:17-19) Unfortunately, they were rebellious & resistive.

Israel remained blind to this lesson. God never expected perfection, but rather, a humble heart. A clear example is when God asked Abram, "...walk before me, and be thou perfect," Abram could have been prideful, as Israel in Exodus 19:8. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do..." Instead, Genesis 17:3 reveals he learned what God was teaching him, "And Abram fell on his face..." Fleshly works were not what God wanted at all, but a heart of faith. God's hope for Abraham, Israel, & also the Body of Christ today, is to trust Him.

God is a merciful Father, loving you with unfathomable love. He proved it with the sacrifice of His only Son, even making the Lord Jesus Christ the head of the Body, the Church today. The 'only wise God' has great desires for each individual, as a Father does for His children. (Romans 6-16) He wants you to grow up & become educated in the doctrine He has given through the Apostle Paul and live it. To do this, you need to decide to put aside 'the flesh,' even when it screams for your attention. This is an example of being led by the Spirit as an adult son or daughter. (Romans 8)

Are believers strong enough to walk with a foot in both worlds? Scripture documents that man is clearly not able. What you think about affects your attitude, so...what are you minding? (Rom. 8) If you are hyper-focused on the problems, failures, and overwhelming concerns of this life, you will not have peace, grow up spiritually, nor develop thankfulness. Pray, study, & reflect.



God's instruction is to be thankful, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Colossians 3:15) Make a new habit: meditate on all God does/has done for you. Write them down & review daily. Especially focus upon spiritual blessings and how they impact your very spirit & soul.

Regular, genuine thankfulness indicates the vital understanding about how God is your Perfect Provider. In love and grace, God has freely given all things, though nothing has been done to deserve this great love. Thankfulness prompts a life of service and obedience to what God is teaching through His Word. Though you are free to do as you please 'under grace,' a thankful heart motivates 'yielding unto God,' living the very life of our Lord Jesus Christ. A humble response of faith is what God has always desired. As you yield, the Lord does the work within. So then, "...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:14)

When you allow your flesh to rule, you are actually 'offering' Satan your time, energy, & heart. Put your life into perspective, evaluate time use, even family & religious responsibilities. If they replace or interfere with reading, learning, thinking, & living what God instructs, 'they' have your affections. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17) Pray to 'really' listen & hear what God is teaching.

What is so important about being thankful? *When truly grateful, you return God's love in grace by serving Him, realizing that whatever He asks is always for your good.* Now, as you become aware, pray and slow down your life for a week **Or** even take a break from TV/electronics to reflect! Are you consumed by the issues of this bodily existence, or mainly absorbed with God's spiritual realm? Satan will try to blind/distract/prevent you from seeking the Truth. Will he succeed and reign? Or, will the True and Living God be your life? He is the "...King of kings and Lord of lords..." (1 Timothy 6:15) **Choose wisely!**

Family Bible Study In N. Chesterfield

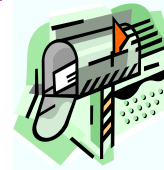
Brian's Topic: How strong is the flesh?

Time: Fridays, 7-9 pm Call for details - (804) 519-1210

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined, numbered, or made bold for emphasis.

'On A Personal Side'

Please forward testimonials, praises, personal growth stories or feedback about this newsletter, 150 words or less. We'll print all we can.



From Our Readers...

"Thank you for emailing me these newsletters... I went online and ordered the dictionaries that were recommended and I am finding Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary so very helpful. I don't know how I lived without it... Thank you again for you and your husband's ministry! Could you provide me information on a way I could donate money to your ministry? Keep in touch! (Chicagoland)

"For whatever reason, this is the first (news) letter I have received! Yes! I want to keep receiving them! May our Lord continue to use you mightily. (Florida)

A New Year, 2016

A few objectives of Just A Minute...

- Clarify the Gospel and the Gentile Grace message today.
- Expand study skills and their use.
- Help others to develop a strong foundation in the fundamentals of Pauline Truth, while valuing all Scripture.
- Encourage others to prepare their heart, stirring up the doctrine in order to motivate pressing forward in faith, ministry, and living out what the Spirit teaches.
- Assist in practical living and problem-solving using sound doctrine.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Orlando, Florida - Friday & Saturday, April 15-16

Topic: The Key to Please God: Let Grace Reign

More details to come

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