“Thoughts on the book of Romans”

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This writing represents my own thoughts about some passages in the book of Romans. I will give sources from time to time but I expect most of the words will be my own. I plan to take most of the Bible quotes from the NET Bible. THE NET BIBLE, NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION, COPYRIGHT © 1996 BY BIBLICAL STUDIES PRESS, L.L.C. This Bible is a free download from [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org/). The First edition without notes is free from<https://netbible.com/download>. The second edition with notes is $4.95 download as of 2018. The NET 2nd edition can be read online for no cost at <https://netbible.org/bible/Romans+1> (starts at Romans Chapter 1).

The general organization of this document is to present verses taken from the NET 2nd edition and then follow them with my comments. The “….” pattern means I have deleted some words from the quoted passage to make this document shorter. You should read the full passages. Usually I will put “(glc)” in front of my comments. I am not commenting on every verse or every paragraph in Romans.

ROMANS

Chapter 1

READ Romans 1:1-6 “From Paul ... set apart for the gospel of God. 2 This gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 concerning his Son who was a descendant of David with reference to the flesh, 4 who was appointed the Son-of-God-in-power according to the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 ….to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name. 6 You also are among them, called to belong to Jesus Christ. “

(glc) The gospel: the message of truth and of hope, the message that Jesus Jesus' sacrifice brought forgiveness of sins to anyone who accepts that Jesus is the son of God and trusts Jesus to forgive their sin. This gospel is contained in the Old Testament as God works to restore his people.

Jesus was validated completely by his resurrection from the dead.

Those who accept Jesus personally receive grace (unmerited favor from God), and receive a place in the body of Christ to have a role in advancing God’s kingdom on Earth.

Jesus was human, a descendant of David, and he is God, resurrected to take his rightful place in heaven. If we make Jesus one-dimensional (only human or ony God) we miss out on understanding the full plan of God. Jesus came to earth in human form to live among people, teach them about God, and then to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Hebrews 9:**11-14** “...Christ has come as the high priest .... He passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands..., **12** and he entered once for all into the most holy place not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and so he himself secured eternal redemption. ... **14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.”

READ Romans 1:**8-10** “... I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. **9** ... I continually remember you **10** and I always ask in my prayers, if perhaps now at last I may succeed in visiting you....”

(glc) We should have a positive spiritual reputation. We should pray for other christians, especially those we know. And we should spend time with other believers. This thought is amplified in Hebrews 10

Hebrews 10:24, 25 24 “And let us take thought of how to spur one another on to love and good works, 25 not abandoning our own meetings... encouraging each other....”

READ Romans 1:**16-17** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes.... **17** ...the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith … “***The righteous by faith will live***.””

(glc) Don’t be ashamed of identifying as a christian and of telling people about the good news of Jesus sacrifice for us. The truth of the gospel is powerful to lead us to salvation. God no longer just identifies with the Jewish people (Old Testament), but now has reached out to the whole world.

READ Romans 1:**18-20** “For the wrath of God is ...against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth ..., **19** ...what can be known about God is plain to them,because God has made it plain... **20** For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, because they are understood through what has been made. So people are without excuse. “

(glc) God is displeased with how people have ignored him and have even fought against the truth of the gospel. God is completely capable of making us all into robots who obey him, but he has chosen to let us make the choice to obey him. The main characteristics of God are revealed to those who carefully consider what they see in the world and universe around them. There are science theories that seek to explain how the mass and energy we see in the universe came to exist from nothing. Those theories claim that the positive amount of mass and energy we observe are matched by an identical amount of negative energy contained in space itself. Thus, they argue that there was nothing before the Big Bang and there is a net of nothing now, so Conservation of Energy is not violated. I do not subscribe to this theory. I admit my lack of knowledge, both about the details of this science theory, and about how God can be infinite and have the power to create the universe. But I fully trust the Bible, and fully trust the God who has impacted my life. In my view God created science as he created this universe. The created person should not take the role of complaining against the creator. See my document on Genesis and Exodus for more Bible passages, and my thoughts, related to this.

READ Romans 1: **21-23** “...although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and their senseless hearts were darkened. **22**Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image resembling mortal human beings or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.”

(glc) Since those who didn’t believe in God could not explain the universe they invented explanations. (This still takes place today.) As they did this they put other things and values in the place of first importance in their lives instead of having God as first in importance. In the Old Testament there were actual physical shapes that served as idols. Today, idols take other forms. Examine how you spend your time, where you turn for comfort, and what you value in your life to identify possible idols in your life.

READ Romans 1:**24** “...God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to dishonor their bodies among themselves. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. ...women exchanged the natural sexual relations for unnatural ones, 27 and ...men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed in their passions for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

(glc) God does not control us as robots. We make our own decisions. God has allowed people to follow their desires related to sexual relations, and related to other areas listed in the verses that follow Romans 1:24-27: wickedness, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, hostility, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, contrivers of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, covenant breakers, heartless, ruthless. I believe God created men and women to be in marriages, one man to one woman. Gay and lesbian behavior is not a sin to be singled out as more serious than other sins we all commit. But it is a sin, it is not God’s plan for men and women. I pray that those involved in all sins will recognize God, and come to Jesus for forgiveness and direction on how to live as God desires. The book of Romans has important messages about sin in the chapters that follow.

The following discussion of “sin” is taken from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/scofield-reference-notes/romans/romans-3.html#ro3_23>

“Sin, Summary: The literal meanings of the Heb. and (Greek - [ajlektorofwniva](http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/alektorophonia.html) sin," "sinner," etc)., disclose the true nature of sin in its manifold manifestations. Sin is transgression, an overstepping of the law, the divine boundary between good and evil [Psalms 51:1](http://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/51-1.html) ; [Luke 15:29,](http://www.biblestudytools.com/luke/15-29.html) iniquity, an act inherently wrong, whether expressly forbidden or not; error, a departure from right ; [Psalms 51:9](http://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/51-9.html) ; [Romans 3:23,](http://www.biblestudytools.com/romans/3-23.html) missing the mark, a failure to meet the divine standard; trespass, the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority [Ephesians 2:1,](http://www.biblestudytools.com/ephesians/2-1.html) lawlessness, or spiritual anarchy [1 Timothy 1:9,](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-timothy/1-9.html) unbelief, or an insult to the divine veracity [John 16:9](http://www.biblestudytools.com/john/16-9.html) .

Sin originated with Satan [Isaiah 14:12-14,](https://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=Isaiah+14:12-14) entered the world through Adam [Romans 5:12,](http://www.biblestudytools.com/romans/5-12.html) was, and is, universal, Christ alone excepted ; [Romans 3:23](http://www.biblestudytools.com/romans/3-23.html) ; [1 Peter 2:22,](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/2-22.html) incurs the penalties of spiritual and physical death ; [Genesis 2:17](http://www.biblestudytools.com/genesis/2-17.html) ; [3:19](http://www.biblestudytools.com/genesis/3-19.html) ; [Ezekiel 18:4](http://www.biblestudytools.com/ezekiel/18-4.html) [Ezekiel 18:20](http://www.biblestudytools.com/ezekiel/18-20.html) ; [Romans 6:23](http://www.biblestudytools.com/romans/6-23.html) and has no remedy but in the sacrificial death of Christ ;[Hebrews 9:26](http://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/9-26.html) ; [Acts 4:12](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/4-12.html) availed of by faith [Acts 13:38](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/13-38.html) [Acts 13:39](http://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/13-39.html) . Sin may be summarized as threefold: An act, the violation of, or want of obedience to the revealed will of God; a state, absence of righteousness; a nature, enmity toward God.”

READ Romans 1:**32** “...they fully know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.”

(glc) It seems that those who sin habitually even approve or encourage others to sin. Some people are not content to be alone in their sin, they want others to also sin. Perhaps when others are also sinning they don’t feel so condemned in their conscience. They can perhaps say that they are not so bad because others are engaging in the same activity they are engaging in.

Romans Chapter 2

READ Romans 2:1-8 “...you are without excuse... when you judge someone else. For on whatever grounds you judge another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things. 2 ...God’s judgment is in accordance with truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think... when you judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape God’s judgment? 4 Or do you have contempt for the wealth of his kindness, forbearance, and patience, and yet do not know that God’s kindness leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment is revealed! 6 He will reward each one according to his works: 7 eternal life to those who by perseverance in good works seek glory and honor and immortality, 8 but wrath and anger to those who live in selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but follow unrighteousness.”

(glc) It is a big mistake to put yourself in the place of God to judge others, especially when you have ongoing sin in your life. Only God and God’s word is the true judge of people. We all have sin in our lives. All forms of sin are sin against God. But there is occasional sin (we all have) and there is habitual sin (that is more of a concern).

This passage is not saying that you can earn salvation by your works. See Galatians chapters 2 and 3. Living your life according to God’s plan will bring you eternal reward (not salvation, but having God’s approval). See Matthew 6:20, Luke 12:33, Matthew 19:21

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 “For no one can lay any foundation other than ... Jesus Christ. **12** If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, **13** each builder’s work will be plainly seen, for the Day will make it clear, because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what kind of work each has done. **14** If what someone has built survives, he will receive a reward. **15** If someone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”

Galatians 6:1 “Brothers and sisters, if a person is discovered in some sin, you who are spiritual restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness. Pay close attention to yourselves, so that you are not tempted too.”

(glc) We are not to ignore sin in people. We are to help them be restored to God’s way of living. But keep your distance from the sin, don’t get familiar with the sin. Don’t deceive yourself in thinking that you can explore the sin just to see what it is like. You will be in danger of being captured by that sin.

Romans 3:23” … all have sinned…”

(glc ... and all can receive God’s forgiveness through Jesus sacrifice)

Hebrews 6:**4-6 “** For it is impossible in the case of those who have ... become partakers of the Holy Spirit, **5** tasted the good word of God and the miracles of the coming age, **6** and then have committed apostasy, to renew them again to repentance, since they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves all over again and holding him up to contempt. “

(glc) Hebrews 6:4 indicates this applies to Christians (partakers of the Holy Spirit). Apostasy: Defection from the faith, an act of unpardonable rebellion against God and his truth. The sin of apostasy results in the abandonment of Christian doctrine and conduct. Source:Bakers Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology online at biblestudytools.com. Be careful about decisions you make about God.

Hebrews 10:**26-27** “...if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for us, **27** but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and *a fury* *of fire that will consume God’s enemies*.”

(glc) This may refer to someone who hears the gospel message and rejects it, but the word ‘receiving’ implies accepting the gospel message. I do not subscribe to the view that one cannot lose their salvation after accepting salvation.

Colossians 1:**21-23 ”** ...you were at one time strangers and enemies in your minds as expressed through your evil deeds, **22** but now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death to present you holy... and blameless before him – **23** if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the gospel .... This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven....”

(glc) Our task is to remain in the faith, keep trusting in Jesus sacrifice for forgiveness of sin.

What is the best plan of action? For me it is to fear losing my salvation and stay in repentance, avoid habitual sin, etc. If I find out when I get to heaven that I could not have lost my salvation I am still in heaven. If I die and find myself in hell because I thought I could not lose my salvation I would be in a much worse (infinitely worse) situation.

\*\*\* For more reading on this read:

Hebrews 2:1 Galatians 5:4 Luke 8:13 1 Peter 1:22 2 Peter 1:5-10

1 John 1:**5-10 “** Now this is the gospel message ... God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves ... **9** But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.”

(glc) Don’t mislead yourself. We need to accept Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins because we have sinned. No one has avoided sin except Jesus.

John 8:**3-8 “** The experts in the law... brought a woman who had been caught committing adultery. ...**4** and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. **5** In the law Moses commanded us to stone to death such women. What then do you say?” **6** (Now they were asking this in an attempt to trap him....) Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.**7** When they persisted in asking him, he stood up straight and replied, “Whoever among you is guiltless may be the first to throw a stone at her.” **8** ...”

(glc) We can’t put ourselves in the place of God. But that does not mean that people can sin and then say “No one can judge me. I can do anything I want.” God will judge all people individually at some point in the future.

READ Romans 2:**12-13 “** For all who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. **13** For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous before God, but those who do the law ....”

(glc) It is only possible to satisfy the law when you accept, by faith, Jesus’ sacrifice for your sins.

READ Romans 2:**17-24** But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relationship to God **18** and know his will and approve the superior things ... **19** and if you are convinced that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, **20** ... because you have in the law the essential features of knowledge and of the truth – **21** therefore you who teach someone else, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? **22** You who tell others not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? ... **23** You who boast in the law dishonor God by transgressing the law! **24** For just as it is written, “***the name of God is being blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you***.” “

(glc) Carefully consider how your behavior affects people’s view of God. As a Christian you are God’s ambassador and can affect God’s reputation in the view of the eyes of other people.

ROMANS Chapter 3

READ Romans 3:1-4 “... **3** What then? If some did not believe, does their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? **4** Absolutely not! Let God be proven true, and every human being shown up as a liar, just as it is written: “***so that you will be justified*** ***in your words and will prevail when you are judged***.”

(glc) The Jewish people were chosen by God to have a special relationship with him. Many Jews did not remain faithful to him. The actions and decisions of people do not change the characteristics of God. Rather, it just highlights the faithfulness of God vs. the unfaithfulness of people.

READ Romans 3:5-8 “**5** ... The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is he? (I am speaking in human terms.) **6** Absolutely not! For otherwise how could God judge the world? **7** For if by my lie the truth of God enhances his glory, why am I still actually being judged as a sinner? **8** And why not say, “Let us do evil so that good may come of it”? – as some who slander us allege that we say….”

(glc) We can’t rationalize our sin by saying that our sin just shows that God is better than us.

READ Romans 3:9 - 18 “ **9** What then? Are we better off? Certainly not, for we have already charged that Jews and Greeks alike are all under sin, …”

(glc) All people are under sin.

READ Romans 3:19-26 “**...** **20** For *no one is declared righteous before him* by the works of the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. **21** ... apart from the law the righteousness of God...has been disclosed – **22** …. through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. ..., **23** ... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. **24** But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. **...**.”

(glc) We gain a right relationship with God through our faith in Jesus, not by trying to obey the OT law.

READ Romans 3:27-31 “...a person is declared righteous by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles too? Yes, of the Gentiles too! 30 Since God is one, he will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ...”

(glc) God is God for all people. In the OT God’s special relationship was with the Jews. Jesus’ sacrifice for sin was for all people. We are justified in God’s sight by our faith in Jesus.

Romans Chapter 4

READ Romans 4: 1 - 12 “ ... what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”4 ...5 ... to the one who does not work, but believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith is credited as righteousness.

6 So even David himself speaks regarding the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8…... “faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.” 10 ... Was he circumcised at the time, or not? No, he was not circumcised but uncircumcised! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised, so that he would become the father of all those who believe but have never been circumcised, that they too could have righteousness credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised, who are not only circumcised, but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham possessed when he was still uncircumcised.”

(glc) Abraham was viewed as righteous by God based on his faith, his trust in God.

READ Romans 4:13-22 “**13** ... the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not fulfilled through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. **...**it is by faith so that it may be by grace, with the result that the promise may be certain to all the descendants – not only to those who are under the law, but also to those who have the faith of Abraham... He did not waver in unbelief about the promise of God but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. **21** He was fully convinced that what God promised he was also able to do. **22** So indeed it was credited to Abraham as righteousness.”

(glc) God blessed Abraham and those who have faith like Abraham. The blessing is a right relationship with God. God keeps his promises.

READ Romans 4:23-25 “**23** ... the statement ***it was credited to him*** was not written only for Abraham’s sake, **24** but also for our sake, to whom it will be credited, those who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was given over because of our transgressions and was raised for the sake of our justification.”

(glc) We are credited with righteousness when we believe in Jesus. Jesus took on our sin and was raised to life in victory over sin.

Romans Chapter 5

READ Romans 5:1-5 “... since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.... **3** … we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance, character, and character, hope. **5** And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

(glc) Those who have faith in Jesus are at peace with God. But we live in a fallen world. We may suffer in our lives. We can respond to those sufferings positively and have an increase of our endurance, character, and hope. Our hope is not an abstract hope, but rather a confident hope provided by our trust in God. For more on this read Romans 8:18 and Philippians 3:8, 1 Peter 4:1.

READ Romans 5:6-11 “**6** ... while we were still helpless, ...Christ died for the ungodly. **...8** But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9...** because we have now been declared righteous by his blood, we will be saved through him from God’s wrath…**.** **11** ... we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.”

(glc) We don’t have to clean up our life before putting our faith in Jesus. God extended his love to us while we were still in a state of sin (not doing what God wants us to do).

READ Romans 5:12-17 “**12** ... sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned – **13** ...before the law was given, sin was in the world.... **14** Yet death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam transgressed. **15** ...For if the many died through the transgression of the one man, how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the many! **16** ... **17** For if, by the transgression of the one man, death reigned through the one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ!”

(glc) Sin got its start in the world with the first people who lived, who chose to disobey God. But God has overcome that decision through the gift of Jesus’ sacrifice for sin on our behalf. Your task is to put your faith in Jesus.

READ Romans 5:18-21 “**18** ... condemnation for all people came through one transgression, so too through the one righteous act came righteousness leading to life for all people. **19** ... through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous. **20** ...**21** ... grace will reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(glc) Jesus’ righteous act provides righteousness for all who have faith in Jesus. Those who have faith in Jesus can look forward to eternal life in God’s presence.

Romans Chapter 6

(glc) Be dead to sin but alive to God.

READ Romans 6:1-14 ...6 We know that our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ...11 So you too consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires, 13 and do not present your members to sin as instruments to be used for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead and your members to God as instruments to be used for righteousness. ...“

(glc) By accepting Jesus’ forgiveness for our sins we have been freed from the power of sin to control us. But we need to continue to make the choice to turn away from sin and turn to God.

READ Romans 6: 15-23 “15 ...Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not! 16 ... you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 ...and having been freed from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. ... present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ...21 So what benefit did you then reap from those things that you are now ashamed of? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your benefit leading to sanctification, and the end is eternal life. 23 For the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life inChrist Jesus our Lord.“

(glc) We are not to use God’s gift of forgiveness as a license to sin. We are to obey God and move to righteousness. As we obey God we become more sanctified, holy, separated from the world, and more useful to ourselves and to God. As we trust in Jesus sacrifice for our sins and seek God we move towards eternal life with God.

Romans Chapter 7

READ Romans 7:1 - 6 “... the law is lord over a person as long as he lives? **2** For a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of the marriage. ... But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she is joined to another man, she is not an adulteress. **4** So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you could be joined to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, to bear fruit to God. ...**6** But now we have been released from the law, because we have died to what controlled us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code.”

(glc) We no longer are controlled by the OT law. The OT law is not bad but it was not powerful enough to restore our relationship to God. Our relationship to God is defined by our faith, or absence of faith, in Jesus. As Christians we are (should be) guided by the Holy Spirit in our daily lives and serve God. We won’t always serve God as we should. We will still sin from time to time. But our lives will be moving toward God and doing what he wants us to do. When we sin (miss God’s plan for us) we can admit our sin to God and receive forgiveness.

Romans Chapter 7

READ Romans 7:7-12 “**7** ... Is the law sin? Absolutely not! ... **8** But sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of wrong desires. ... I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life brought death! **11** For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it I died. **12** So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good.”

(glc) The law is not bad, it is good. But, without faith in Jesus, we respond to the law by exploring sin, making sin more a fixture in our life, and full blown rebellion in sin. That is not the law’s problem, it is our responsibility and our problem.

READ Romans 7:13-20 “**13** ... **14** For we know that the law is spiritual – but I am unspiritual, sold into slavery to sin. **15** .... For I do not do what I want – instead, I do what I hate. **16** But if I do what I don’t want, I agree that the law is good. **17** But now it is no longer me doing it, but sin that lives in me. **18** For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. **19** For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want! **20...**”

(glc) The unspiritual person (the person who does not have faith in Jesus) is under the control of sin. And, sin still has an influence in the lives of Christians. We can’t do the right thing (consistently) in our own strength. What is the solution?? Read on.

READ Romans 7:21-25 “**21 ...22** For I delight in the law of God in my inner being. **23** But I see a different law in my members waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members. **24** ... Who will rescue me from this body of death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”

(glc) Even Paul struggled with sin. All Christians struggle with sin. The solution is moving closer to Jesus...moving closer to God’s word (the Bible). Let Jesus and the Bible be active in your life and you will move away (but won’t be completely separate) from sin in your life on Earth.

Romans Chapter 8

READ Romans 8:1-11 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the life-givingSpirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. ... the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ... those who live according to the Spirit have their outlook shaped by the things of the Spirit. 6...the outlook of the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is your life because of righteousness. 11 Moreover if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit who lives in you.“

(glc) Those who have asked Jesus to forgive their sins and have put their faith in Jesus now live in a different realm. We are free from the law that cannot save us. We are seen as righteous in God’s sight by virtue of our faith. We don’t have to work and do things to be seen as righteous (but we should do good things as a result of having faith in Jesus James 2:14-18). All who believe in Jesus have the Holy Spirit in them. We have the Spirit to comfort us, guide us, and to serve as a guarantee of God’s promise of eternal life. We look forward to eternal life in heaven with God.

READ Romans 8:12-17 “**12** ... **13** (for if you live according to the flesh, you will die), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. **15** you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” **16** The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God’s children. **17** And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ) – if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him.”

(glc) We have a choice. If we choose to be led by God’s Spirit and seek to avoid sin we will live. We are not perfect and we will sin. But if we admit that sin to God there is forgiveness available. After we put our faith in Jesus we have God’s Spirit in us and we are God’s children. We are adopted by God. (John 1:12,13; Galatians 4:4,5) As Christians we share in the benefit of an inheritance of eternal life in heaven. I think the last part of verse 17 tells us that we must remain faithful and endure persecution when it comes.

READ Romans 8:18-25 “**18** ...our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the coming glory that will be revealed to us. **19** For the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God. **20** ...**21** that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children. **22** ... **23** ... we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with endurance.”

(glc) Our lives on Earth have sufferings (physical and mental struggles, persecution) but those sufferings are not comparable to the glorious eternal life that is our future as Christians. This universe and us live in a state of decay. But there will come a time (our death, the end of the universe) when we will be living in a different state, in the state of eternal life in heaven with God. This hope we have is a sure hope, a confident hope, not a “wishful thinking” hope. We don’t see our future in heaven clearly at this time, but we trust in God, we trust in God’s promises, we trust in God’s provision of eternal life through Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins.

READ Romans 8:26-30 “**26** ... the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God’s will. **28** And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose, **29** because those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30** And those he predestined, he also called;and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.”

(glc) As Christians we have the Holy Spirit in us to help us in communicating our needs to God. The Holy Spirit has our interests at heart and intercedes, prays, on our behalf. God has an overall plan for us and for his purposes. God has our best interests at heart. There will be times when we have troubles and difficult situations. Those are situations that are not to be taken lightly, but they are situations that need to be placed in the framework of the eternal plans of God. We need to respond to those situations with confidence in God’s love for us. We need to respond and have the outlook of eternity. We see a very limited scope of things around us and see from the point of view of a very limited time frame. God has unimaginable love for us and has a good eternal future for us (Christians) in which we will not be scarred by what has happened to us on Earth. Read Revelation 21:4 for more on this topic.

Jesus had, what we would call, bad things happen to him. But he persevered, remained faithful, and came through those things to his glorious life in heaven afterward. As Christians we are on our individual paths to eternal life. We have been called, justified, glorified in God’s sight through the righteousness given to us by Jesus.

READ Romans 8:31-39 “**31** ... If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things? **33** Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is the one who will condemn? Christ is the one who died (and more than that, he was raised), who is at the right hand of God, and who also is interceding for us. **35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? **36** ...**37** No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! **38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(glc) God is all powerful. As God’s children (Christians) we have the benefits of being valued by God and cared for by God. We are small but we are important in God’s sight. God does not count as valid the charges brought against us (by Satan) because we have righteousness imputed to us through Jesus’ sacrifice. Read the book of Job. Things that happen to us on Earth cannot separate us from God. God values the sacrifice made by Jesus for us. I do feel that we have responsibility to not turn away from Jesus. Read Hebrews 6:1-12 The Hebrews passage is controversial. Some believe that once you are saved you are always saved. I believe that a person can reject their salvation. Therefore I guard myself to not reject salvation. I see a danger in the “once saved always saved” interpretation in that someone may take the view that they can sin as much as they want after they are saved and not worry about losing salvation. That attitude takes God for granted and turns away from pleasing God with our lives. A name can be blotted out of the book of life: Revelation 3:5. Also, Book of Life idea: Exodus 32:31-33; Philippians 4:2,3; Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:27.

Read Romans 6:1-4, we are not to continue sinning. If I am wrong in this conclusion I will reach heaven because some would say I can’t lose my salvation. If I am right in this conclusion I will reach heaven because I continually strive to be in a right relation to God, I confess my new sins that come up and accept forgiveness through Jesus. I am not living my life on Earth for myself. I am trying to live a life worthy of the sacrifice Jesus made for me. I can’t do this perfectly but I am looking to please God rather than just please myself. I also believe that God judges our behaviour. We may face consequences for bad behaviour as we live our lives on Earth. But we will certainly face consequences and judgement before God after we die. Acts 10:42; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9,10; 1 Peter 4:5; Revelation 22:12 God will give us credit for doing, on Earth, what pleases him. Our loss in heaven for doing what displeases God is that we will not receive God’s credit to us for those actions in heaven.

(glc) I do live secure in the confidence that nothing on Earth or in the spiritual realm can take away my salvation. God is bigger, more powerful, than anything on Earth or in the spiritual realm. (1 John 4:4)

Romans Chapter 9

READ Romans 9:1-5 “I am telling the truth in Christ ... **3** For I could wish that I myself were accursed – cut off from Christ – for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen, **4** who are Israelites. To them belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises. **5** To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, …..”

(glc) Paul had compassion for the Jewish people. God developed a special relationship with Israel but Israel drifted away from God. Note the statement in verse 5 that Jesus is God.

READ Romans 9:6-13 “6 It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all those who are descended from Israel are truly Israel, 7 ...8 This means it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God; rather, the children of promise are counted as descendants. 9 ... 10 Not only that, but when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac – 11 even before they were born or had done anything good or bad (so that God’s purpose in election would stand, not by works but by his calling) – 12 it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger,” 13 just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.””

(glc) God has not failed even though some (most?) Israelites turned away from God and turned away from Jesus. Israel failed to reach God through observing the OT law. God knows the future. He knew Esau would fail and Jacob would succeed in doing what God wanted done. It is within God’s power to speak a word and make everyone on Earth a follower of Jesus. But God has chosen to let people make their own choices. He knows what those choices will be. We have the personal responsibility to make the choices that please God.

READ Romans 9:14- 18 “**14** ... Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! **15** For he says to Moses: “***I will have mercy on whom I have mercy****...*” **16** So then, it does not depend on human desire or exertion, but on God who shows mercy. **17** For the scripture says to Pharaoh:“***For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you****,* ***and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth***.” **18** So then, God has mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy, and he hardens whom he chooses to harden.”

(glc) God makes the rules. That goes against our human nature to want to be in control and make judgements as to what is right. God’s rules are not unreasonable. To receive his mercy we need to accept the free gift of forgiveness through Jesus’ sacrifice. God has worked through history to show the world that he is God. Israel was in Egypt for over 400 years with most of that time spent as slaves. God led Israel out of Egypt and into the promised land (fulfilling a promise to Abraham). God hardens those who first make the decision to reject God.

READ Romans 9:19-26 “**19** You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who has ever resisted his will?” **20** But who indeed are you... to talk back to God? ***...*21** Has the potter no right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special use and another for ordinary use? **22** But what if God, willing to demonstrate his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath prepared for destruction? **23** And what if he is willing to make known the wealth of his glory on the objects of mercy that he has prepared beforehand for glory – **24** even us, whom he has called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? **25**As he also says in Hosea:“***I will call those who were not my people****,* ‘***My people****,*’ ***and I will call her who was unloved,*** ‘***My beloved***.’”

**26** ...“

(glc) Some may still argue that God is unjust. Read my previous thoughts from a few verses back. God has expanded his mercy to now include people outside of Israel.

READ Romans 9:27-29 “27 And Isaiah ..., “Though the number of the children of Israel are as the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved, ...“If the Lord of Heaven’s Armies had not left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have resembled Gomorrah.””

(glc) Only a remnant of Israel will turn to God through Jesus.

READ Romans 9:30-33 “30 What shall we say then? – that the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness obtained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith, 31 but Israel even though pursuing a law of righteousness did not attain it. 32 ... Because they pursued it not by faith but... by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, “Look, I am laying in Zion a stone that will cause people to stumble ..., yet the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.””

(glc) We get to a right relationship to God by accepting Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins. We don’t obtain a right standing with God by our own efforts. God’s plan is not understood by those who look to their own works to earn their way to God. Ephesians 2:8; Galatians 2:16

Romans Chapter 10

READ Romans 10:1 - 4 “... my heart’s desire and prayer to God on behalf of my fellow Israelites is for their salvation. **2** ...their zeal is not in line with the truth. **3** For ignoring the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking instead to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. **4** For Christ is the end of the law, with the result that there is righteousness for everyone who believes.”

(glc) Enthusiasm for religion does not lead to closeness to God if that enthusiasm is misdirected. Our salvation and eternal life in heaven depends on our faith in Jesus, not on what we decide is a good activity ... not on our good works. Faith in Jesus is the only way (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5) to obtain a right relationship to God.

READ Romans 10:5 - 13 “5 For Moses writes about ... righteousness ... by the law: “The one who does these things will live by them.” 6 But the righteousness that is by faith says:... “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we preach), 9 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 11 For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. 13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

(glc) It is not possible for us to fully obey the OT Law. On our own we cannot live up to God’s standards. We are saved (viewed as righteous in God’s sight; become a child of God) when we believe in Jesus. God does not have favorites today. In the past Israel was his special possession. Now everyone in the world has access to God through having faith in Jesus.

READ Romans 10:14-21 “14 How are they to call on one they have not believed in? And how are they to believe in one they have not heard of? And how are they to hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent?... 17 Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ.

18 ... have they not heard? Yes, they have: Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. 19 But again I ask, didn’t Israel understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous by those who are not a nation; with a senseless nation I will provoke you to anger.” 20 And Isaiah is even bold enough to say, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I became well known to those who did not ask for me.” 21 But about Israel he says, “All day long I held out my hands to this disobedient and stubborn people!”“

(glc) God has provided a witness for himself through the Bible, through missionaries, through Christians who give a witness to God, through what we see of the universe. (Read Psalm 19, creation is a witness to God.) Israel rejected God. This is a lesson for us. No one is a Christian from birth. All Christians became believers in Jesus sometime after they were born. (Side topic...I believe the young, who have not made a choice to reject God and have not comprehended the choice between God and the world, who die, do live eternally in heaven. Jesus wanted children to come to him. 2 Samuel 12:23, Matthew 18:1-6; Matthew 19:13-15; Deuteronomy 1:35-39 The young of Israel don’t die in the desert.)

Romans Chapter 11

READ Romans 11:1-4 “So I ask, God has not rejected his people, has he? Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite... **2** God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew! ...Elijah...pleads with God against Israel? **3** “Lord, ***they have killed your prophets****,* ***they have demolished your altars; I alone am left and they are seeking my life!***” **4** But whatwas the divine response to him? “***I have kept*** for myself ***seven thousand people*** ***who have not bent the knee toBaal***.””

(glc) God has not totally rejected Israel. The disciples and first believers were from the Israelites.

READ Romans 11:5-12 “**5** ... there is a remnant chosen by grace. **6** And if it is by grace, it is no longer by works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace. **7** ...Israel failed to obtain what it was diligently seeking, but the elect obtained it. The rest were hardened, **8** as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, to this very day.” 9 And David says, “Let their table become a ... stumbling block and a retribution for them; 10 let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see,....” 11 I ask then, they did not stumble into an irrevocable fall, did they? Absolutely not! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous. 12 Now if their transgression means riches for the world and their defeat means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full restoration bring?“

(glc) God’s plan includes having believers from the Jewish nation. But those believers don’t obtain a right relationship to God by following OT law and religious practices. Those who reject God can get hard hearts where they don’t see how God is reaching out to them through Jesus. God responded to rejection from Israel by making salvation available to all through Jesus. The restoration of Israel will be a blessing.

READ Romans 11:13-16 “ **13** ..., **14**if somehow I could provoke my people to jealousy and save some of them. **15** For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? **16**... if the root is holy, so too are the branches.”

(glc) Paul is concerned for the salvation of the Jewish people.

READ Romans 11:17-24 “**17 ...** some of the branches were broken off, and you, ... were grafted in among them and participated in the richness of the olive root, **18** do not boast over the branches. ..., remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. **19** ...They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear! **21** For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. **22** Notice therefore the kindness and harshness of God – harshness toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. **23**And even they – if they do not continue in their unbelief – will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. **24** ...will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree?”

(glc) Remember that Israel was the first people-group to have a relationship with God. Non-Jewish people who come to have faith in Jesus are brought into God’s family. We should not think more highly of ourselves than we should. (Romans 12:3 ahead) Verse 22 again warns us to maintain our faith in Jesus. God brings believing-Jews back into the family of God.

READ Romans 11:25-36 “**25** For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery... so that you may not be conceited: A partial hardening has happened to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. **26**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion; he will remove ungodliness from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” 28 In regard to the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but in regard to election they are dearly loved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. 30...32 For God has consigned all people to disobedience so that he may show mercy to them all. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! ...unfathomable his ways!

34 For who has known the mind of the Lord...35 Or who has first given to God, that God needs to repay him? 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen.“

(glc) Again, don’t think more highly of your spiritual position than you should. God has not abandoned Israel. God’s promises are eternal. God has a plan for Israel. We were created with free will and chose to disobey God. But God shows us mercy and provides restoration. Our thoughts, and our judgments, are limited and short-sighted compared to God’s wide and eternal view. God does all things well, but we can’t see the whole picture so we may think God is not doing things well. That is wrong thinking, and is dangerous thinking, in that it may lead us away from God.

Romans Chapter 12

READ Romans 12:1-2 “...I exhort you, ..., by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice– alive, holy, and pleasing to God – which is your reasonable service. 2 Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God – what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.

(glc) We should encourage each other to live for God, not for ourselves. God has given us more than we can repay, but we can honor God by living for him, by seeking to be holy, by pleasing him with our lives. This takes commitment to live differently from how the world pressures us, and tempts us, to live. As we renew our minds by reading the Bible, by meditating on God’s word, by taking time to pray and seek God, we gain the ability and insight to recognize what God wants us to do, and how God wants us to live. We gain the ability and insight to direct our lives toward the good, well-pleasing, and perfect.

READ Romans 12:3-8 “3 For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith. 4 ... 5 so we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually we are members who belong to one another. 6 And we have different gifts according to the grace given to us. If the gift is prophecy, that individual must use it in proportion to his faith. 7 ...service, he must serve; ...teaching, he must teach; 8 ...exhortation, he must exhort; ...contributing, he must do so with sincerity; ...leadership, he must do so with diligence;...showing mercy, he must do so with cheerfulness.

(glc) Be humble and use the gift God has given you. Don’t compare yourself to others either to wrongly think you are better, or to think you are not valuable and thus stop using your gift.

READ Romans 12:9 - 13 “9 Love must be without hypocrisy. Abhor ...evil, cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another. 11 ..., be enthusiastic in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, endure in suffering, persist in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality.

(glc) Your love must be sincere. Stay away from evil. Turn from evil as if it was a disease that you could catch (it is). Develop the habit of doing good. Spend your time doing good so you don’t have time to do evil. Think of other people more than yourself and lift them up in the sight of others. Serve God with all your heart because God is the most important. As Christians we have a sure hope, not a maybe-it-will-happen hope. Jesus' sacrifice covers our sins and allows us to enter heaven. The Holy Spirit is in our lives as a guarantee of our future. (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1: 13,14) We have no guarantee that life on Earth will be easy. In fact, we should expect difficulties in our lives because we live in a fallen world. We live in a world that has rejected God and thus rejects us. John 15:18-21 Help other Christians.

READ Romans 12:14 - 21 “14 Bless those who persecute you.... 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly..... 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil; consider what is good before all people. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people. 19 Do not avenge yourselves... for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 Rather, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will be heaping burning coals on his head. 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

(glc) Pray for and do good to those who persecute us. Share life with people in times of joy and times of sorrow. Get along with others and don’t be “too good” to spend time with others. Fighting back tends to escalate conflicts, not settle them. Let God execute his just judgment on others. But don’t be surprised if God’s judgment does not immediately fall on the offenders. First, you may be wrong in your evaluation of the situation. Secondly, God’s timeline is not our timeline. Showing love to your enemy will impact their thinking. Don’t let evil depress you or discourage you to the point of pulling back from the world. Be in the world showing love and doing good for others.

Romans Chapter 13

READ Romans 13:1-7 “ ... be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God’s appointment,...2 ... those who resist will incur judgment 3 (for rulers cause no fear for good conduct but for bad). Do you desire not to fear authority? Do good and you will receive its commendation 4 because it is God’s servant for your well-being. ...5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath of the authorities but also because of your conscience. 6 ...pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants devoted to governing. 7 Pay everyone what is owed: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.”

(glc) Governments exist for our good. In this fallen world governments provide some measure of stability and protection for people. Since people are running the governments the governments will not be perfect. But we are called to cooperate with them and support them. Being a good citizen also includes involvement in the democratic process in the USA. You should vote and you should communicate with your local, state, and national representatives.

READ Romans 13:8 - 10 “8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9For the commandments, “Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet,” ... are summed up in this, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor….”

(glc) Our debt is always to love one another. When Jesus was questioned as to who our neighbor is, he told the parable of the Good Samaritan. The culture of Jesus’ day, and much of the culture of our day, took the view that the neighbor was someone who shared your culture and beliefs. Jesus expanded this view to include those outside your circle, and outside your social status. We show the world the power of Chrisitianity when we show love to others. The following is not to shine light on us but to let you know some of our efforts in this area. We (Pam and Greg) have financially supported children in foreign countries and the general relief efforts of World Vision and One Child Matters for over 40 years. We have given to the benevolence funds at churches we attended. We don’t excel in fulfilling Romans 13:8-10 but we acknowledge that it is important.

READ Romans 13:11-14” 11 And do this because we know the time,..., for our salvation is now nearer than when we became believers. 12 The night has advanced toward dawn; .... So then we must lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the weapons of light. 13 Let us live decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in discord and jealousy. 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to arouse its desires.”

(glc) We should have the behavior of love at all times but Paul reminds us we are moving towards the end of our lives. As Christians we have spiritually left the kingdom of darkness and moved into the kingdom of light. It is important to leave (put aside) the acts of the kingdom of darkness and increase the actions associated with the kingdom of light. People don’t leave all their sins before they become a Christian. After receiving Jesus and the Holy Spirit into our lives we have the ability to move away from the sins of darkness. This requires effort on our part. It requires us to make good decisions when temptation comes into our lives. We should not be living for our own enjoyment. We should be sharing love with others and living as God wants us to live.

Romans Chapter 14

READ Romans 14:1-4 “ Now receive the one who is weak in the faith, and do not have disputes over differing opinions. 2.... 3 The one who eats everything must not despise the one who does not, and the one who abstains must not judge the one who eats everything, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on another’s servant? Before his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand...”

(glc) There are minor issues or choices that are personal preferences that don’t affect your relationship to God, illustrated in this passage by choices of what to eat. Look ahead to Romans 14:23. We are not to judge others for these differences. God knows our hearts and correctly judges our decisions and actions. There are some core Christian beliefs that are not optional: Jesus is the Son of God; Jesus came to Earth and died for our sins, rose from the grave, and is now in heaven; salvation comes by asking Jesus to forgive you for your sins.

READ Romans 14:5-12 “5 One person regards one day holier than other days, and another regards them all alike. Each must be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes the day does it for the Lord. The one who eats, eats for the Lord because he gives thanks to God, and the one who abstains from eating abstains for the Lord, and he gives thanks to God. 7 .... 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die for the Lord. ... we are the Lord’s. 9 For this reason Christ died and returned to life, so that he may be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But you who eat vegetables only – why do you judge your brother or sister? And you who eat everything – why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 ... 12Therefore, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

(glc) Again, our decisions and actions should be based on faith. Our decisions and actions should be aimed at being pleasing to God while giving thanks to God. It is not our place to judge others for their day of worship or what they eat. The important idea is that we have God at the center of our lives. All of us need to realize and carefully consider that we will stand before God and give an account of ourselves. This is not a judgement regarding our salvation, our salvation is secure if we have accepted Jesus’ forgiveness for our sins while we were living on Earth.

Summary of verses: Romans 8:1-11 no condemnation for Christians; 1 Corinthians 3:11 - 4:5 Our works will be evaluated in heaven and good works will receive a reward. Those with bad works will suffer loss but won’t lose salvation. Each will receive recognition, praise, from God for their good actions.; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 We should aim to please God. Each person will get paid based on the summary of their life on Earth.; 1 John 2:28 We don’t want to be ashamed before Christ.; Revelation 20:11-15 All people are examined to see if their name is written in the book of life.

The following are a little bit of tangent thoughts.

Related: Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 19:21 Store up treasure in heaven.

Book of Life idea: Exodus 32:31-33; Philippians 4:2,3; Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:27

Name blotted out of book of life: Revelation 3:5

READ Romans 14:13-18 “13 Therefore we must not pass judgment on one another, but rather determine never to place an obstacle or a trap before a brother or sister. 14 ... there is nothing unclean in itself; still, it is unclean to the one who considers it unclean. 15 For if your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. ... 16 Therefore do not let what you consider good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of Goddoes not consist of food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For the one who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by people.”

(glc) It is not our place to pass judgment on others for minor issues. We should seek to guide those who go against God’s ways. Galatians 6:1 “Brothers and sisters, if a person is discovered in some sin, you who are spiritual restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness. Pay close attention to yourselves, so that you are not tempted too.” We should help people follow God’s ways and not lead them into sin. Pay attention to what offends people and don’t flaunt this before them. Be considerate of others and don’t weaken their faith. Pay attention to the important things, the eternal things righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

READ Romans 14:19-23 “19 ... let us pursue what makes for peace and for building up one another. 20 .... For although all things are clean, it is wrong to cause anyone to stumble by what you eat. 21 .... 22The faith you have, keep to yourself before God. Blessed is the one who does not judge himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not do so from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin.”

(glc) Again, think of others and what would be helpful in building up their faith. We should not use our liberty (freed from the strict ritual observances of the OT) to offend others. When we know someone would be offended by our actions we should give careful consideration to avoid offending others. Put the spiritual welfare of others as a high priority in your life. Know that your actions will be judged by God. Be careful that your freedom in Christ does not become a license to have sinful behavior. Know your values, know your faith, and act based on them.

Romans Chapter 15

READ Romans 15:1-6 “ But we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak….. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself…..” 4 For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope. 5 Now may the God of endurance and comfort give you unity with one another …., 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(glc) Those who believe they have a good measure of faith and connection to God should help those who are struggling more and not look down on them. Act in the best interests of others. Help others grow in their relation to God. Accept insults as Christ did. Hopefully you don’t deserve the insults. Live your life so you are only insulted because you are following God, not because you have wronged someone. The Old Testament is useful for teaching us God’s ways. God’s love and restoring nature is evident in the OT and should give you hope. As you keep faith in God alive in you, you will have hope. Seek to get along with others, especially with other Christians. God gives us strength to endure and God gives us comfort. Our relationship to God and our confidence in God gives us comfort. God is faithful to his promises and to his children. Seek unity with other believers in Christ as this will glorify God.

READ Romans 15:7-13 “7 Receive one another, then, just as Christ also received you, to God’s glory. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God’s truth to confirm the promises made to the fathers, 9... 10 And again it says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” 11... 12 And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, and the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles hope.” 13Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

(glc) verse 7 God has accepted us. We should accept others also and not be concerned about which day people count as holy, what people eat, or other minor opinions (re-read Romans chapter 14). I don’t think we should accept different doctrines that people propose that are contrary to what is given to us in the Bible (e.g. some would say there are many ways to God while John 14:6 (and 1 Timothy 2:5) clearly tells us that accepting Jesus is the only way to be in right relation to God; e.g. some would say that we can sin freely and with premeditation and then ask Jesus to forgive us when we feel we need to while Romans 6 tells us to turn away from sin.)

Verses 8-12 Jesus came to Earth to bring Jews and Gentiles into right relationship with God. Both groups sin, and both groups need to accept Jesus ‘sacrifice for sins to become accepted by God.

Verse 13 After we accept Jesus we can have joy and peace and we can have firm confidence in our eternal future with God. The Holy Spirit is in all people who are Christians and helps us have this secure hope.

READ Romans 15:14-16 “14 But I myself am fully convinced about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. 15 But I have written more boldly to you on some points so as to remind you, ….... I serve the gospel of God like a priest, so that the Gentiles may become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

(glc) The “brothers and sisters” are Christians. We are filled with goodness and knowledge by virtue of Jesus’ sacrifice and the Holy Spirit in us. We can help each other grow in our faith. 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11; Hebrews 3:13, 10:24,25; Romans 1:12.

Paul served the Gentiles to instruct them about the gospel so they would accept Jesus and be acceptable to God.

READ Romans 15:17-21 “17 So I boast in Christ Jesus about the things that pertain to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in order to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God. …”

(glc) Paul did not boast about his own life or his own heritage. His message focused on God’s plan for salvation for him and for everyone who accepts Jesus’ sacrifice for sin. Paul’s message was accompanied by signs and wonders made possible by the Holy Spirit (read the book of Acts).

READ Romans 15:22-24 “22 ...I have for many years desired to come to you 24 when I go to Spain. For I hope to visit you when I pass through and that you will help me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.”

(glc) Paul had been in ministry in the eastern Mediterranean area. Now he had plans to visit Rome. Paul was helped by Christians as he traveled and ministered.

READ Romans 15:25-29 “But now I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia are pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 ... For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are obligated also to minister to them in material things. 28 ...29 and I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of Christ’s blessing.”

(glc) Paul was helping Christians in one area to have compassion for Christians in other areas. We should help those in need and not just rely on government help for them. Many churches have benevolence programs to verify the need and allow Christians to help those in need. Paul expected his visit to Rome to bring a blessing. Paul ended up coming to Rome as a prisoner but he was still able to minister while under house arrest and provide a good example for the Christians in Rome.

READ Romans 15:30-33 “30 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to join fervently with me in prayer to God on my behalf. 31 Pray that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea and that my ministry in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God’swill I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. 33 Now may the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.”

(glc) Paul valued prayer and sought to have people pray for him. He was rescued out of Judea when the Jews tried to kill him. Paul was refreshed as people helped him while he was under house arrest. Paul wanted the best for the Christians. The best is provided by God being active in our lives.

Romans Chapter 16

READ Romans 16:1-2 “Now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, 2 so that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and provide her with whatever help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many, including me.”

(glc) Cenchrea is near Corinth, in Greece. Paul sailed from here back to Syria (Acts 18:18). Phoebe may or may not have served in the office of deacon (servant) for the church in Cenchrea. She does seem to have a ministry role as she was traveling to Rome and Paul expected the Christians in Rome to welcome and help her.

READ Romans 16:3-5 “3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 .... Not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Also greet the church in their house.”

(glc) Here (and 1 Corinthians 16:19) a husband and wife are recorded as having a ministry of hosting a church. They also traveled and did ministry (Acts 18:26, 2 Timothy 4:19). They came to Corinth because Jews in Rome were expelled (Acts 18:2 ff). Paul worked with them in tentmaking in Corinth. Perhaps Paul witnessed to them and they became Christians. In Acts 18:26 Priscilla and Aquila gave spiritual instruction to Apollos in Ephesus.

READ Romans 16:6-16 Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. 6 Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. 8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my good friend Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my compatriot. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, laborers in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother who was also a mother to me. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters with them. 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the believers who are with them. 16 .... All the churches of Christ greet you.”

(glc) Paul lists several people who had ministry (“well known to the apostles”, “worked hard in the Lord” etc.). This list includes men and women (Mary, probably Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Julia, sister of Nereus). Christianity elevated women from the cultural norm (Galatians 3:28 “...all are one in Christ Jesus”).

READ Romans 16:17-20 “17 ...watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. Avoid them! 18 For these are the kind who do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By their smooth talk... they deceive the minds of the naive. 19 Your obedience is known to all and thus I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. 20.... The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”

(glc) Each of us needs to be grounded and confident in basic Christian doctrine. We need to be able to recognize false teaching about God and have the wisdom to avoid people who bring these teachings. In Paul’s lifetime a major false teaching was that Gentile Christians had to observe the Old Testament laws after they became Christians. Paul makes it clear in his New Testament writings that following Old Testament laws does not contribute to our salvation. Only faith in Jesus brings us salvation. In today’s world (or your world after 2020) people may try to put burdens on people to have them comply with some way of living that they propose is valuable for salvation. You must reject those ideas and only trust in Jesus for salvation. After saying this I must say that living a good life (seeking to do good and not bad deeds) is God’s plan. Because we have accepted Jesus and become a “child of God” we should live a good life ( Ephesians 4:1, 4:17, 5:15, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 Peter 2:1-25, 1 John 2:6).

READ Romans 16:21-23 “21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my compatriots. 22 I, Tertius, who am writing this letter, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus the city treasurer and our brother Quartus greet you.”

(glc) Paul lists others who are in ministry with Paul or are involved in local churches. Paul had a problem with his eyes (2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Galatians 4:13-15) and this may explain why Tertius did the writing as Paul spoke.

READ Romans 16:25-27 “25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages, 26 but now is disclosed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known to all the nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith – 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever! Amen.”

(glc) We are spiritually strengthened by the gospel about Jesus. God’s plan for Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins has been revealed fully after “long ages.” The Old Testament points toward the Messiah who will redeem Israel. (Psalm 2:7 and Acts 13:33; Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 9:6,7 and Revelation 19:16; Micah 5:1-3 and Matthew 2:6 ; Hebrews 1:1,2; 1 Peter 1:10-12 ). Now God’s plan for restoring relationship between people and God is revealed to Jews and Gentiles, the whole world. Obedience of faith comes through Jesus.

Summary

Again, these are my thoughts about the book of Romans. You should read the book of Romans yourself, pray, and talk about the verses with other Christians.

Romans 1 Introduction, Faith is Key, Some Live for Themselves and not God

Romans 2 Don’t Put Yourself in the Place of God to Judge, God Will Judge, Your Heritage Doesn’t Put You In Right Relation To God

Romans 3 All Have Sinned, Faith Leads to Justification

Romans 4 Abraham Was Justified by Faith

Romans 5 While We Were Sinners Jesus Died for Us, Bringing Salvation

Romans 6 Christians Are Free From Sin’s Domination

Romans 7 We Are Free From Law But We Struggle With Sin

Romans 8 No Condemnation for Christians, Live By The Spirit, God Is For Us

Romans 9 God Has Mercy (on believers) and Judges Those Who Reject Him

Romans 10 The Old Testament Points to God’s Plan for Salvation

Romans 11 God Has Not Totally Rejected Israel, Gentiles Are Grafted In

Romans 12 Live Pleasing To God

Romans 13 Be a Good Citizen, Love Others

Romans 14 Don’t Have Minor Disputes, Consider Others as You Live

Romans 15 Build Up Each Other, Focus the Message on Jesus

Romans 16 Paul Was Not The Only Minister to the World, Strengthened By The Gospel

I am praying now that you will be blessed with spiritual wisdom and draw closer to God as you read the Bible.