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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Pauline Paradox Part 5: Romans

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching begins by explaining that the book of Romans is foundational for understanding Paul's theology and his relationship to the Torah. Because Romans contains many of Paul's most frequently misunderstood statements about the Law of God, the teaching encourages viewers who have not already done so to begin with the earlier lessons in the Pauline Paradox series. Those previous teachings establish the principles that will be used throughout this study of Romans. The purpose of the series is not to debate every theological issue found in Romans, but to demonstrate that Paul's message is consistent with the teaching of Yeshua and the whole Word of God.

The teaching explains that Paul wrote Romans to a mixed audience of Jewish and Gentile believers in the mid-first century. One of Paul's primary concerns was to show that both groups are saved by the same gospel. Jewish heritage does not guarantee salvation, and Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to be saved. Both groups stand equally in need of God's grace through faith in Messiah. At the same time, Paul teaches that God's Law remains applicable to both Jews and Gentiles when understood and practiced through faith.

The lesson begins with Romans 1 by focusing on Paul's opening statement that grace and apostleship are given to bring about the "obedience of faith." The teaching argues that Paul's mission was not simply to proclaim forgiveness but to call all nations into faithful obedience. This message is shown to be consistent with Yeshua's Great Commission, which commands believers to teach all nations to observe everything He commanded. Obedience is therefore presented as the natural result of genuine faith rather than its replacement.

Paul then describes the downward spiral of humanity apart from God. Although all people possess evidence of God's existence through creation, mankind exchanged the truth for idolatry and rejected the Creator. As people abandoned God's truth, they also

abandoned His instructions, leading to moral corruption and increasing rebellion. The teaching emphasizes that Romans 1 demonstrates humanity's need for salvation because everyone has departed from God's righteous standards.

Moving into Romans 2, Paul warns those who judge others while practicing the same sins. God's judgment is impartial and applies equally to Jews and Gentiles. Merely possessing the Torah does not make someone righteous; what matters is hearing and doing God's instructions. Paul teaches that Gentiles who respond to God's truth demonstrate that the work of the Torah is written on their hearts, anticipating the promises of the New Covenant found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The teaching emphasizes that Paul is not minimizing the Torah but affirming its proper role in the life of every believer.

The lesson then addresses Paul's discussion of circumcision. Paul explains that outward circumcision alone cannot produce righteousness. Circumcision of the heart must come first through faith. However, the teaching carefully points out that Paul does not discard physical circumcision. Instead, he later states that circumcision still has value because it remains part of God's Torah. The issue is one of proper order. Faith comes first, followed by obedience as the evidence of faith. Salvation is never earned through circumcision or any other work of the law.

Romans 3 continues by establishing humanity's universal need for salvation. Paul declares that none are righteous because all have sinned. The teaching explains that Paul is referring to those who stand guilty before God because they are under sin. The Law of God exposes sin but cannot justify sinners. Rather than abolishing the Torah, the law reveals humanity's need for a Savior by defining what sin is. Through the law comes the knowledge of sin, making God's standards known so that people recognize their need for God's grace.

The teaching reviews the seven different "laws" Paul discusses throughout Romans, explaining that understanding these distinctions is essential for interpreting his letters correctly. The Law of God defines righteousness, while the Law of Sin represents humanity's fleshly nature. Sin brings people under the Law of Sin and Death, but through faith believers are brought into the Law of the Spirit of Life. This framework becomes the foundation for understanding Paul's statements about being "under law" and "under grace."

Paul then introduces Abraham as the great example of justification by faith. Abraham was counted righteous before receiving circumcision, demonstrating that faith has always been the basis of justification. Circumcision later served as a sign of the covenant rather than the means of entering it. The teaching emphasizes that Paul's use of Abraham proves that salvation has always been by grace through faith and never by human effort. At the same time, Abraham remained obedient to God's commandments, showing that faith and obedience belong together.

The teaching next examines Romans 5 and explains that through Adam sin entered the world, bringing death to all humanity. Through Messiah, however, grace and life are made available. God's grace is greater than humanity's sin, but grace never becomes permission to continue sinning. This prepares the reader for Paul's argument in Romans 6, where he directly addresses whether grace encourages continued disobedience.

In Romans 6, Paul asks whether believers should continue in sin so that grace may abound. His answer is emphatically no. Since believers have died with Messiah and been raised to walk in newness of life, they should no longer live according to sin. The teaching reminds viewers that Scripture defines sin as breaking God's Law. Therefore, Paul's command to stop living in sin necessarily means living according to God's instructions. Paul's argument is that believers are no longer slaves to sin but servants of righteousness.

The teaching spends considerable time explaining Romans 6:14, one of Paul's most debated statements: "You are not under law but under grace." Rather than referring to the Law of God, the teaching argues that Paul is referring to the Law of Sin and Death. The surrounding context discusses freedom from sin's dominion, not freedom from God's commandments. This interpretation is confirmed by Romans 8:1–2, where Paul explicitly states that believers have been set free from the Law of Sin and Death through the Law of the Spirit of Life. Grace therefore frees believers from condemnation, not from obedience to God's Word.

Romans 7 is then examined in detail. Paul asks whether the Law is sin and immediately answers, "By no means." Instead, the Law reveals what sin is. Without the commandment against coveting, Paul says he would not have recognized covetousness as sin. The teaching emphasizes Paul's repeated positive statements about the Torah. He calls it holy, righteous, good, and spiritual. Paul delights in the Law of God and serves it with his mind, while acknowledging the ongoing struggle between his flesh and the Law of Sin.

The final portion of this section focuses on Romans 8. Paul contrasts life according to the flesh with life according to the Spirit. Those who walk according to the Spirit fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law because the Spirit writes God's Torah on the hearts of believers and empowers them to obey. The carnal mind remains hostile toward God's Law, while the spiritual mind delights in it. The teaching concludes that Romans consistently presents the Law of God as holy and good while teaching that believers have been delivered from sin and death through the work of Messiah. Rather than abolishing the Torah, Paul teaches that faith establishes the Law and enables believers to walk in it through the power of the Spirit.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Paul wrote Romans to both Jewish and Gentile believers.
- The gospel calls all nations to the obedience of faith.

- Creation reveals the existence and power of God.
 - Humanity rejected God's truth and fell into sin.
 - God judges impartially without favoritism.
 - Hearing the Torah is not enough; believers are called to do it.
 - Circumcision of the heart is essential.
 - The Torah reveals sin but cannot justify sinners.
 - All people have sinned and need God's grace.
 - Abraham was justified by faith before circumcision.
 - Circumcision is a sign of the covenant, not the means of salvation.
 - Grace does not give believers permission to continue in sin.
 - Believers have died to sin and are called to walk in newness of life.
 - "Under grace" does not mean God's Law has been abolished.
 - The Law of God is holy, righteous, good, and spiritual.
 - Paul delighted in the Law of God.
 - The Spirit empowers believers to obey God's instructions.
 - Faith establishes the Law rather than nullifying it.
 - Believers are no longer under the Law of Sin and Death.
 - Life in the Spirit results in righteous living.
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FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. Paul said his ministry was to bring about the obedience of _____.
2. Creation reveals the invisible attributes of _____.
3. All have _____ and fall short of the glory of God.
4. Through the Law comes the knowledge of _____.
5. Abraham was justified by _____ before he was circumcised.
6. Circumcision is a _____ of the covenant.
7. Paul asks if believers should continue in sin so that _____ may abound.
8. Sin shall not have dominion over believers because they are under _____.
9. Paul describes the Law as holy, righteous, and _____.

10. The Spirit enables believers to fulfill the righteous requirement of the

_____.

Challenging

1. Romans teaches that Gentiles demonstrate the work of the Torah written on their

_____.

2. Paul says God will judge the secrets of men through

_____.

3. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as

_____.

4. Romans 3 asks, "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith?" Paul's answer is, "By no means! On the contrary, we _____ the law."

5. Through one man, _____ entered the world, and death through sin.

6. Paul teaches that believers have become slaves of

_____.

7. Romans 6 defines the alternative to slavery to sin as slavery to

_____.

8. In Romans 7, Paul says, "I would not have known

_____ if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"

9. Romans 8 teaches that the law of the Spirit of life has set believers free from the law of sin and _____.

10. Paul says the mind set on the flesh does not submit to the Law of

_____.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Paul begins Romans by emphasizing the "obedience of faith" rather than simply faith?
 2. How does Romans help us understand the relationship between God's grace and obedience?
 3. Why is it important to understand that the Torah defines what sin is?
 4. What can we learn from Abraham about the relationship between faith and obedience?
 5. Why does Paul repeatedly describe the Law as holy, righteous, good, and spiritual?
 6. What does Paul mean when he says believers are no longer "under law but under grace"?
 7. How does distinguishing between the Law of God and the Law of Sin and Death help us better understand Romans?
 8. What practical difference does it make to walk according to the Spirit instead of according to the flesh?
 9. How does the New Covenant promise of God's Law being written on our hearts relate to Paul's teaching in Romans?
 10. After studying Romans, what has most challenged or strengthened your understanding of Paul's view of God's Law?
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ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Faith
2. God
3. Sinned
4. Sin
5. Faith
6. Sign
7. Grace
8. Grace
9. Good
10. Law

Challenging

1. Hearts
2. Yeshua Messiah
3. Righteousness
4. Establish
5. Sin
6. Righteousness
7. Righteousness
8. Coveting
9. Death
10. God