A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

The Good News in Romans

Starting Out with Christ · Book 6



A walk through Paul's letter of grace

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Introduction

If someone asked me where to go in the Bible to understand the gospel, I would send them to Romans. Paul lays out the problem of sin, the gift of God's righteousness, the new life of the Spirit, God's faithfulness to His promises, and how believers are to live.

When someone asks where to start to understand the whole gospel, I point them to Romans. Translating Romans word for word for the Steadfast Literal Bible made me slow down and trace every step of Paul's argument about sin, grace and faith. I wrote this book to walk everyday readers through Romans in plain steps.

This book is a short walk through that letter. It will not answer every question Romans raises, but I hope it gives you a map so that when you read it for yourself, you can see where Paul is going.

1 Paul and the church in Rome

Romans 1:1 (SLB) identifies Paul as the writer, and Romans 16:22 (SLB) tells us a man named Tertius wrote it down for him. The letter was likely written between A.D. 56 and 58 from Corinth, just before Paul carried an offering to the poor believers in Jerusalem. Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, probably carried it to Rome (Romans 16:1, SLB).

Paul had wanted to visit Rome for a long time and hoped to go on to Spain (Romans 15:24, SLB). His

plans were interrupted when he was arrested in Jerusalem, and he finally reached Rome as a prisoner.

Paul opens by calling himself "a slave of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1, SLB). He explains that the gospel was "promised beforehand through His prophets in holy Scriptures," and that Jesus "came from the seed of David according to the flesh" and "was declared Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead" (Romans 1:2-4, SLB). Jesus is both truly human and truly God.

2 Not ashamed of the gospel

> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is **the** power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, both to **the** Jew first and to **the** Greek.*
>
> **Romans 1:16 (SLB)**

Romans 1:16-17 (SLB) is the theme of the whole letter. The gospel is not just good advice. It is the power of God to save. In the gospel "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," and "the righteous by faith will live."

Then Paul shows why we need it. From Romans 1:18 to 3:20 he explains that Gentiles who ignored God and Jews who had His law both fell short. His conclusion is plain: "There is not a righteous one, not even one" (Romans 3:10, SLB). Everyone stands guilty before God.

When I was a boy in Victorville, Pastor Jimmy Carter was not embarrassed to invite a neighborhood kid to

church. His example stayed with me. Living unashamed of the gospel starts with remembering it is the only message with real power to rescue people (Romans 1:16).

3 Righteousness provided

Beginning in Romans 3:21 (SLB), Paul turns to the answer. "But now apart from law the righteousness of God has been manifested" (Romans 3:21, SLB), and it comes "through faith of Jesus Christ" and "is to all and upon all who believe" (Romans 3:22, SLB). We are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24, SLB).

Paul points to Abraham as proof that this was always God's way. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3, SLB). He was declared righteous before he did anything to earn it.

> *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
> **Romans 5:8 (SLB)**

Romans 5:8 (SLB) may be the clearest picture of grace in the Bible. God did not wait for us to get our lives together. Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Because of that, "having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1, SLB).

Many of us grow up thinking God grades on a curve, as if our good just needs to outweigh our bad.

Romans 3:21-22 says God provides His own righteousness through faith in Jesus, because none of us could earn it. Salvation is not a wage we earn. It is a gift we receive.

4 New life in the Spirit

Romans 6 through 8 answers the question of how a forgiven person should live. If grace covers sin, should we keep sinning? Paul's answer is, "May it not be!" (Romans 6:2, SLB). In Christ, sin's power over us has been broken.

Romans 7 is honest about the struggle. Paul describes wanting to do good and still doing what he hates. Even believers wrestle with the flesh. But Romans 8 brings the victory. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1, SLB), and anyone who belongs to Christ has His Spirit (Romans 8:9, SLB).

The chapter ends with one of the greatest promises in Scripture. Paul was persuaded "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39, SLB).

In chapters 9 through 11, Paul explains that God has not forgotten His promises to Israel. His righteousness is received by faith, by Jew and Gentile alike. Romans 10:9 (SLB) says, "if you confess with your mouth Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him out of the dead, you will be saved."

Before May 29, 2020, I knew the war Paul describes in Romans 7: wanting to do right and falling back into the same pattern. Willpower failed me every time. When I surrendered in 2020, God broke a habit I could never break on my own (Romans 8:1-2). New life in Christ is not a cleaner set of rules. It is a new power living inside you.

5 Righteousness practiced

> *Therefore I exhort you, brothers, through the compassions of God, to present your bodies **as** a living, holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, your reasonable service.*
> **Romans 12:1 (SLB)**

Romans 12 through 15 shows what the gospel looks like in everyday life. Because of God's mercy, I give my whole self to Him. That means a renewed mind (Romans 12:2, SLB), humility about my gifts, real love for others, and submission to rightful authority.

It also means leaving revenge to God. Romans 12:19-21 (SLB) says, "not avenging yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath," and "overcome the evil with the good." Paul also asks strong believers to be careful not to trip up weaker ones over matters of conscience (Romans 14, SLB).

Paul's prayer for the Romans is a good prayer for us: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you abound in the hope in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13, SLB).

When my wife caught me in 2020, she took me to my first 12-step meeting that same day. She refused to

cover for me, and she stayed and did the hard work of rebuilding our marriage. She showed me truth and grace side by side (Romans 12). Real faith shows up in how we treat the people under our own roof.

The Good News in Romans

✦ ✦ ✦

If you want to understand the gospel, Romans is the place to go. This short walk through Paul's letter covers why everyone needs God's grace, how He provides righteousness through faith in Christ, new life in the Spirit, and what the gospel looks like in everyday life.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, both to the Jew first and to the Greek.

Romans 1:16 (SLB)

Book 6 of 11 in the collection Starting Out with Christ

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