



**GOD'S SAVING &
TRANSFORMING
GRACE**

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180°: God's Saving & Transforming Grace • Romans
Adult Bible Study Leader's Guide

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How to Use *Truth for Living*

Truth for Living:

A comprehensive, trustworthy curriculum that presents the truth of God's Word without compromise. The curriculum plan includes through-the-Bible courses as well as topical courses. Perfect for adults who want a guide in using all of God's Word as God intended.

As you prepare to teach these lessons, keep these two factors in mind:

- The FOCUS of productive adult Bible learning is the learner. The intent of teaching is not teaching, but learning—the learner's learning.
- The GOAL of productive adult Bible learning is an appropriate life-response to Biblical truth. You do not teach simply to impart information; you teach so that the Holy Spirit of God can use the truths of the Word of God to change the child of God into the image of the Son of God.

The Lesson Plan

Each *Truth for Living* lesson has three distinct parts. GETTING STARTED is the attention-getter. The questions and activities “set the table,” as it were, for the study. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES is the heart of the lesson. A series of study questions leads the teacher and learners through the Biblical text. MAKING IT PERSONAL applies the truth to life.

As is true of any teaching experience, you can adapt the parts of the lesson to fit your particular class. You may choose to alter the beginning activities or change the focus of the application. You will find more material in the study than you can probably cover in one class session.

The Study Book

This leader's guide is designed to accompany the Bible study book. We encourage you to distribute Bible study books to your learners. Urge them to complete the study before class. The more your learners have studied on their own, the better the class discussions will be. Most of the questions in the leader's guide are picked up from the Bible study book. You will notice the question numbers in parentheses after the questions. The answers to the questions are in italics following the questions.

Other Resources

The resource CD has PowerPoint presentations for every lesson. They incorporate the resource visuals and provide a good way for teachers and learners to track the lesson. The resource CD also has Prezi presentations for some of the lessons. Instructions for using the Prezi presentations are on the CD. Other resources include lesson outlines, case studies, and verse cards.

Preface

A strong contrast exists between the hopeless, terrible condition of sinful people and the hope-filled, wonderful state of the redeemed believer. Overcoming the difference between the condition of the sinner and the state of the believer does not take gumption, grit, or grinding it out. It takes grace—God’s transforming grace. This is a Scriptural reality.

But what is Biblically true is not readily acknowledged by the unrighteous. Indeed, it is in effect denied. The purposefully evil person, the self-righteous judgmental person, and the self-satisfied religious person deal with God in totally ineffective and, in terms of Who God is, divinely offensive ways. As a result, each is condemned by God. The unrighteous person has no hope in or desire for a loving relationship with his Creator.

Sadly, many believers themselves do not adequately understand the Scriptural reality of God’s transforming grace. Having been saved by grace, they have somehow failed to understand the place of grace in daily Christian life. As a result, the redeemed saint fails to realize all that God has provided through His gospel.

180° is a study of the gospel of God, a doctrine that addresses the needs of the sinner and the believer. In Romans, Paul laid out the gospel truth for the sinner and the believer. This truth is summarized as *the power of God unto salvation* (Romans 1:16). *180°* presents the need for and the provision of salvation as the gracious gift of God to those in need of divine redemption. It also presents grace as the means available to the believer to enjoy the full benefits of God’s complete, transforming redemption.



180° Change



Topic

The gospel

Theme

Jesus Christ, the center of the gospel, uses people to spread His powerful gospel around the world.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will define the gospel, consider his or her need of salvation, and identify steps he or she needs to take in becoming a stronger witness.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 2

Scripture Focus

Romans 1:1–17

Summary

Lesson 1 introduces the study of Romans through a brief look at Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul understood personally the power of the gospel and desired to share its message with those at Rome.

Outline

- I. Jesus Is the Commander of the Gospel Mission (1:1)
 - A. Jesus confronted Paul
 - B. Jesus chose Paul
- II. Jesus Is the Center of the Gospel Message (1:2–4)
- III. Jesus Is the Commissioner of the Gospel’s Messengers (1:5–7)
- IV. Jesus Is the Controller of the Gospel’s Movement (1:8–15)
- V. Jesus Is the Conveyor of the Gospel’s Might (1:16, 17)

Memory Verse

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”
(Romans 1:16).*

GETTING STARTED

A 180° Change

ASK: Describe a time when you drastically changed your mind.

ASK: What caused you to change your mind?

A Pharisee named Paul had a 180-degree change of heart. He went from killing Christians to putting his life on the line for the cause of Christ. What caused him to change his mind? Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel radically changed Paul.

This course will help us understand the gospel and Jesus Christ, the commander of the gospel mission, the center of the gospel message, the commissioner of the gospel's messengers, the controller of the gospel's movement, and the conveyor of the gospel's might.

You're Going the Wrong Way!

ASK: Have you ever thought you were making good time on a trip only to discover you were going the wrong way? If so, what tipped you off? (Q1)

ASK: What did you think of your navigating skills once you realized you were going the wrong way? (Q2)

A Pharisee named Paul was headed in the wrong direction in his efforts to please God. The gospel turned him around.

This course will help us understand the gospel and Jesus Christ, the commander of the gospel mission, the center of the gospel message, the commissioner of the gospel's messengers, the controller of the gospel's movement, and the conveyor of the gospel's might.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. Jesus Is the Commander of the Gospel Mission (1:1)

A. Jesus confronted Paul

The apostle Paul, the writer of Romans, was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:25–29). He was born and raised in Tarsus, a coastal city in Cilicia, about 350 miles north of Jerusalem (22:3). While many Jews were Hellenistic, speaking Greek and adopting Greek customs, Paul was not. He was a *Hebrew of the Hebrews* (Phil. 3:5), which means he spoke Aramaic and retained traditional Jewish customs.

Paul's parents sent him to Jerusalem to learn from the renowned teacher Gamaliel (Acts 5:34). Gamaliel taught Paul *according to the perfect manner of the law* (22:3); that is, according to strict Pharisaic tradition.

READ: Galatians 1:13, 14. **ASK:** How seriously did Paul take his religion? (Q3)
Paul was perhaps as religiously zealous as he could be. He went to the extreme of killing Christians whom he saw as a threat to Judaism.

ASK: As a Pharisee, how aware was Paul of his need of salvation? (Q4) *Paul believed that God was pleased with him. He did not know he needed a Savior.*

Paul saw himself as a good person. He firmly believed he served God's mission on earth. But that was not reality. Paul fought against God's mission. He was God's enemy.

ASK: Whom do you know who is admirably religious but in need of salvation and essentially an enemy of God? (Q5)

While on his way to Damascus to arrest believers, Jesus Christ arrested Paul. A bright light shone from Heaven, blinded Paul, and knocked him to the ground. When Jesus Christ spoke from Heaven (Acts 22:7), Paul realized that his religious devotion was misplaced. God was unmoved by Paul's zealousness. In response Paul trusted in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Later, the Lord instructed Ananias to find Paul and disciple him (9:6, 10–22). The Word continued to transform Paul's life as he prepared for his apostolic ministry.

ASK: What can we learn about the power of the gospel from Paul's testimony? (Q6) *The gospel is powerful enough to transform its most passionate, zealous enemies.*

B. Jesus chose Paul

Paul began his letter to the Romans with a statement of his relationship to Jesus Christ. He called himself a *servant of Jesus Christ* (Rom. 1:1), meaning he played the role of a *slave*. Jesus Christ owned Paul and called the shots in his life.

ASK: What does Paul's self-identification as a slave of Christ Jesus tell you about his commitment to the cause of Christ? (Q7) *It shows that he recognized Christ as his master and that he had laid aside his selfish desires and ambitions. He committed himself to Jesus Christ above all else.*

As a Pharisee, Paul strove to make himself look good. As a Christian, Paul strove to please Jesus Christ, the Commander of the mission to spread the gospel.

ASK: To what degree did the gospel change Paul? (Q8) *The gospel brought a 180-degree change in Paul's life. He went from zealously hunting Christians to zealously spreading the gospel.*

Paul rightly identified himself as a slave of Jesus Christ, but that didn't mean he spoke without authority. He quickly pointed out that he served Christ as an *apostle* too (Rom. 1:1). According to the New Testament, a man had to meet two qualifications to be an apostle: (1) he had to be an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1), and (2) the Lord had to commission him for apostolic service. Jesus Christ appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and subsequently called him into His service (Acts 9).

The Lord clearly identified Paul's specific ministry calling. He said of Paul, *He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel* (Acts 9:15b). After several years of preparation, Paul indeed traveled far and wide as the apostle to the Gentiles (13–28). During these years

Paul faithfully preached to the unsaved and encouraged and exhorted believers through his letters. He wrote the book of Romans in Corinth on his third missionary journey, likely in the winter of AD 57 or perhaps the early spring of AD 58 (20:3).

ASK: Why was it important for Paul to state his apostleship when writing a letter such as Romans? (Q9) *His letter is a thorough presentation of the gospel. The church needed to know that Paul wrote on such a crucial topic as one of God's authoritative apostles.*

Paul viewed his apostleship with utmost seriousness. He described himself as *separated unto the gospel of God* (Rom. 1:1). To be *separated* meant he was set apart for the work of the gospel of God. God called Paul away from all other endeavors so that he might preach the gospel of his Commander, Jesus Christ.

God took proud, self-reliant Paul and humbled him. As a result, Paul turned his focus from himself to Christ. He devoted his life to the gospel of Christ so that others might have life and might themselves become strong witnesses for Christ.

II. Jesus Is the Center of the Gospel Message (1:2–4)

Since the church at Rome was predominantly made up of Gentiles, Paul wisely added that the gospel message he so diligently preached has its roots in the *holy Scriptures*, a reference to the Old Testament (1:2). The gospel was not a new message. Rather, it was the culmination of God's plan that He determined in eternity past (Rev. 13:8) and revealed in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15).

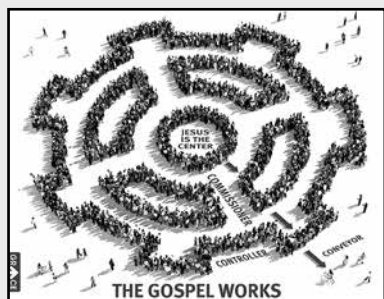
Who is at the center of this plan? Jesus Christ is (1:3). There is no gospel without Jesus Christ. Being fully God, He came to earth as a fully human descendant of David, meaning He was qualified to be the Messiah, the Savior of the world (1:3). After Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, God the Father *declared* (Him) *to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead* (1:4). What is Paul saying here? Simply that Jesus rose from the dead and then lived by the power of the Spirit before ascending to Heaven. God then highly exalted Jesus (*declared to be the Son of God*) for willingly dying for the sins of the world (Phil. 2:5–11). Jesus' humiliation on the cross led to His exaltation by the Father.

RESOURCE: Display resource 2. Point out that Jesus Christ is at the center of the gospel. Also, point out that people play a vital role in the gospel. That's why the *gear* in the visual is made up of people. God works through people to spread His good news throughout the world.

READ: 1 Corinthians 2:1–5. **ASK:** Why was it important for Paul to preach Christ as the center of the gospel? (Q10) *So that those who heard the gospel would put their faith in Jesus for salvation.*

III. Jesus Is the Commissioner of the Gospel's Messengers (1:5–7)

Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation did not end His work regarding salvation. In fact, all that work laid the foundation for Christ's current ministries. Jesus is now the commissioner of the gospel's messengers. He sends



believers around the world to share His good news.

Christ commissioned Paul face to face. Paul considered it a gracious gift to be commissioned by Christ to share the gospel (1:5).

READ: Romans 1:5. **ASK:** Why is a commission to share the gospel a gracious gift from God? (Q11) *Because such a commission allows the believer to be involved in a work that brings eternal blessings and reward. It allows the person to be involved in the most important work on earth.*

ASK: What might be true of a believer who sees Christ's commission to share the gospel as a burden or even a punishment? (Q12) *Such a believer is perhaps self-centered and earthly-focused rather than eternally-focused.*

The goal of Paul's work as an apostle was to bring about *obedience to the faith* in the people he met (1:5). The words *obedience* and *faith* represent two ways to look at the same response. A person cannot obey God without faith, and faith will show itself in obedience. And a believer who has faith in God will obey Him by sharing the gospel wherever Christ sends him. So, Paul's ministry focused on reaching people for Christ so that they might in turn reach others for Christ. Christ's name was magnified throughout the nations by such a focus.

RESOURCE: Display resource 2 to point out the role of believers in reaching and discipling other believers to be part of the spread of the gospel. Again, the *gear* represents Christ's work in spreading the gospel. Christ's work grows as believers reach people and then enlist them as a messenger of Christ.

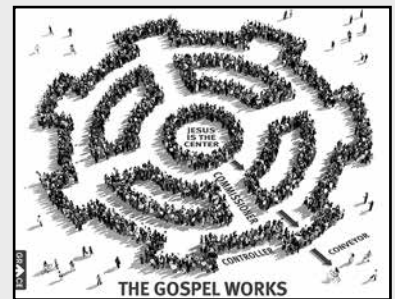
Paul went on to address the believers in Rome specifically. He said they were *the called of Jesus Christ* (1:6). That phrase conveys the idea of ownership and means the Roman believers were called to belong to Christ (1 Cor. 6:20). They were added to God's family and enlisted in Christ's workforce as messengers of the good news. They were *saints*, or *set-apart ones*, who existed to accomplish Christ's work on earth.

READ: Romans 1:7a. **ASK:** What truth in this verse shows that being part of Christ's work on earth is a wonderful privilege? (Q13) *God's love governs a believer's enlistment into Christ's work on earth.*

ASK: Do you think believers today are as concerned about God's calling on their lives as they should be? Explain. (Q14)

IV. Jesus Is the Controller of the Gospel's Movement (1:8–15)

Paul expressed thanks to God for the Romans because their faith was known *throughout the whole world* (the Roman Empire) (1:8). Although small in number compared with the total population of the empire, those believers cast a beam of spiritual light into distant places. Wherever Paul went, he heard about the firm, remarkable faith of the saints in Rome.

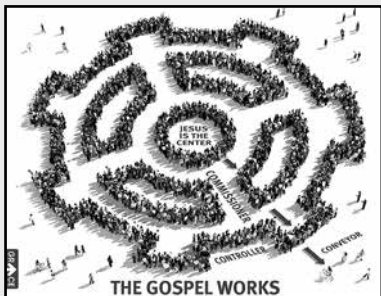


Paul used the term *spiritual gift* to describe the agent of change he would bring to the Roman believers (1:11).

By doing so, he put the emphasis on God as the agent of change. Paul did not believe he had any natural abilities or talents that could affect true change in the Roman believers (1:11).

The *Greeks* included everyone who had adopted the Greek culture and language. Those who spoke a language other than Greek sounded to the Greeks like they were babbling. The word *barbarian* comes from that babbling sound.

The Greeks and Romans of Paul's day thought they were wise, knowledgeable people while everyone else was ignorant. Paul showed later that one's understanding and acceptance of God made a person either wise or unwise (1:18–22). Culture and language had nothing to do with wisdom.



READ: Romans 1:8. **ASK:** Why was it appropriate for Paul to give thanks to God through Jesus Christ for the proclamation of the Roman believers' faith throughout the Roman Empire? (Q15) *Because God through Christ was ultimately responsible for the Roman believers' faith and strong testimony.*

Jesus is the controller of the gospel's movement—both the spread of the gospel to unbelievers and the effects of the gospel on the life of a believer. He works in lives of believers and magnifies His name through them. That is why Paul was so fervent in prayer for the believers in Rome (1:9). He recognized that any fruit in their lives would come through Christ's work in their hearts.

Yet, Paul recognized that God works through *people*. Paul wanted to go to Rome and meet the believers so he could have a direct part in their establishment in the faith (1:10, 11). He even humbly anticipated being encouraged and spiritually strengthened through their ministry in his life (1:12).

But all that was on hold because God had not yet made a way for Paul to get to Rome (1:13). Every time he wanted to make a trip there, God stepped in with a different plan for Paul's life. That's because God directs believers to move to specific places to minister to specific people (cf. Acts 16:6–10). Such was the case for Paul. He wished to go to Rome to meet the believers there and preach the gospel in that city, but that was not part of Christ's plan to that point in Paul's life.

Paul was obligated to minister to the Gentiles whether they be Roman citizens (*Greeks*) or those considered *barbarians* living in other parts of the world (1:14). So Paul was not wasting his time with barbarians while he was hindered in going to Rome to preach to Greeks. In fact, we could say his ministry to the barbarians took precedence for a time over his ministry to the Greeks in Rome. That was okay with Paul because he was a *debtor* to all Gentiles. No one in Paul's world was too cultured or too *barbaric* for the gospel. The good news of salvation applies equally to all lives and all levels of education and cultural sophistication.

Christ would let Paul go to Rome to preach the gospel when the time was right. Until then, he made sure the believers in Rome knew that he was longing to be with them. *As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel*, declared Paul (1:15). God had been preparing Paul for many years, but with these words, Paul stated the attitude of his own heart—his voluntary preparation. Whatever it involved (and ultimately it cost him his life), he was going to be God's ambassador to Rome.

RESOURCE: Display resource 2. Point out again that Jesus is at the hub of the *gear*. He controls its movement. He places people where they need to be to share the gospel and see souls saved.

V. Jesus Is the Conveyor of the Gospel's Might (1:16, 17)

Picking up on the theme that the gospel is for everyone, Paul stated the he was *not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth* (1:16). Why might someone be ashamed of the gospel? Because its message was so simple and because its central figure seemed to be a lowly, delusional Jew Whom the Romans crucified. The Greek philosophical thinkers rejected the gospel of Christ. They considered it foolish to put one's faith

in a failed insurrectionist. Yet Paul was anxious for the opportunity to preach the gospel in Rome. He understood that the gospel unleashed God's power to save the lost. He was Exhibit A, after all, of the gospel's power. When the gospel changed his life, Christians found it hard to believe that Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, was converted (Acts 9:26).

The most notable example of power in Paul's day was the Roman army. The Roman soldiers used brute force to beat their enemies into submission. They enforced Roman rule by terror, slaughtering any people group who tried to resist them. By comparison, the gospel's power brought deliverance and freedom, hope and peace.

Jesus then, is the conveyor of the gospel's powerful might. Through Him, God gives the believer the power over sin and death. He declares the believer righteous and alive instead of sinful and dead (1:17). Righteousness is being right and doing right by God's standards. To be righteous is to be upright, just.

The condition for receiving this righteousness is faith, while the catalyst for growth as a believer is also faith. That is why Paul used the phrase, *from faith to faith* (1:17). From first to last, the Christian life is a matter of faith in God.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Get in Gear!

ASK: Is sharing the gospel important to you? What evidence from your life supports your answer? (Q16)

RESOURCE: Display resource 2 to review the believer's part in sharing the gospel. Remind the learners that they are part of God's program to win the lost whether they recognize it or not.

ASK: How has the *gear* illustration and this lesson changed your perspective on your part in sharing the gospel? (Q17)

Ready to Engage

ASK: What do you need to do to prepare to share the gospel? (Q18) Encourage your learners to consider preparing their hearts to share the gospel.

ASK: Name some individuals Christ has brought across your path that need salvation. Commit to praying for boldness to witness to those individuals. (Q19)

Review Resource

Use resource 1 to review the response for this lesson: Know and share the gospel.

