



WITH DR. MICHAEL WRIGHT

Lesson Brief | Season 2 | Episode 1 “A Deal with God”

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Introduction. Letter of Paul to the Romans.

The Letter of Paul to the Romans is considered to be the most magnificent book in all the Bible. Martin Luther wrote, “The epistle to the Romans is the true masterpiece of the New Testament and the very purist gospel. It can never be too much or too well read or studied, and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.” Luther gives his praise because it was from Romans he read and understood for the first time that salvation was not the result of good works, as his Catholic faith ascribed, but by faith alone in Jesus Christ. He rejoiced when he read, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16-17)

The reason for such accolades will become clear with deep study. In Paul’s letter contains the great doctrines of the Christian life. Every Christian should become thoroughly knowledgeable about these doctrines, some of which include grace, justification, law, righteousness, reconciliation, sin, and, of course, the gospel. In Ray Stedman’s commentary entitled, *Expository Studies in Romans 1-8*, he challenges Bible students to read and memorize Romans. “Master the Book of Romans – be so well acquainted with it that you can outline it and think of its great themes without referring to your Bible. That requires reading it, studying it, and thinking it through in careful detail.” (Word, 1978)

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By deeply studying Romans, we will discover rich truths that will transform your life. The plan is to learn from the first 8 chapters of Romans in 26 weeks. You can listen to each recorded message by subscribing to Apple Podcasts (free) or go to GospelInRealLife.org. There you will find the GRL Podcast tab for the GRL Blog tab for the Lesson Brief.

Test then know. The will of God.

Why study Paul’s Letter to the Romans? There are several good reasons. One, we should study Romans because we need to know and do the will of God. The teachings in this book provide Truth to do that. In Romans 12:1-2 Paul writes, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Paul emphasizes personal worship as being a living sacrifice (as opposed to a dead one). To live daily for Christ and die to self is the “order of worship” for the believer. True

personal worship is necessary for knowing what God desires. He also says to avoid being conformed to pressures which are derived from the outside world of philosophies. Rather Paul says to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Transformation is a dramatic change which begins in the very center of the heart of man and moves out so as to be seen in the actions of everyday life. The mind must experience renewal to know and do God's will.

People who have been redeemed and are renewed of mind will be able to test the lies that flesh is heir to and clearly see the Truth about God. Paul calls this "discerning what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Want to know what God's will is for your life? Be saved. Be transformed. Read the book of Romans. Read all of the Word of God.

Two, we should study Romans because the world culture is dramatically shifting. If not careful, good Christian people can be influenced by world events and the media outlets that report about them. If not vigilant, believers may be shaped by culture instead of influencing the culture. I am not suggesting becoming a student of culture but being a student of the shifting culture via the lens of the Word of God. In particular, focus on the Gospel.

Three, we should study Romans because of the mighty work of the Gospel. Paul says that the Gospel is the power of God for salvation. To be saved, people must place faith and trust in Christ alone to be born again. Political parties and other powerful organizations cannot save the human soul of a reprobate condition. Thus, we study Romans to increase our knowledge of the doctrine of salvation and grow our confidence in presenting the Gospel.

Finally, we study Romans (and subsequently the Gospel) because it reveals the righteousness of God. Paul says, in the Gospel "the righteousness of God is revealed." When the topic of righteousness is introduced, the human mind is tempted to think about self-righteousness. People often measure their righteousness according to the level of perceived goodness they bring to the world. However, Paul contradicts this with, "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God." (Romans 3:10) Anyone who boasts of human righteousness is deceived. However, when we test the idea about self-righteousness, we are able to garner the Truth. The Gospel does not promote human righteousness, but the pure righteousness of God. As we will learn in our forthcoming lessons from *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, there are many who seek to suppress the righteousness of God. They do this through unrighteous living. Ultimately, they will experience judgment now and in the eternal future.

Thanks for Reading. Listening.

I truly pray that the Gospel in Real Life Lesson Brief is helpful to you. Make sure you listen to the first GRL Podcast and the Introduction to Romans. If you have a comment or question about Gospel in Real Life, please write me at mwright@drmichaelwright.com or go to GospelInRealLife.org and see all the good content available to you. In the meantime, be blessed and happy New Year.