

The event that split history into “before” and “after” and changed the world took place about thirty years before Paul wrote this letter. The event - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - took place in a remote corner of the extensive Roman Empire. The province of Judea in Palestine. Hardly anyone noticed, certainly no one in busy and powerful Rome.

And when this letter arrived in Rome, hardly anyone read it, certainly no one of influence. There was much to read in Rome - imperial decrees, exquisite poetry, finely crafted moral philosophy - and much of it was world-class. And yet in no time, as such things go, this letter left all those other writings in the dust. Paul's letter to the Romans has had a far larger impact on its readers than the volumes of all the Roman writers put together.

The quick rise of this letter to a peak of influence is extraordinary, written as it was by an obscure Roman citizen without connections. But when we read it for ourselves, we begin to realize that it is the letter itself that is truly extraordinary, and that no obscurity in writer or readers could have kept it obscure for long.

The letter to the Romans is a piece of exuberant and passionate thinking. This is the glorious life of the mind enlisted in the service of God. Paul takes the well-witnessed and devoutly believed fact of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and thinks through its implications. How does it happen that in the death and resurrection of Jesus, world history took a new direction, and at the same moment the life of every man, woman, and child on the planet was eternally affected? What is God up to? What does it mean that Jesus “saves”? What's behind all this, and where is it going?

These are the questions that drive Paul's thinking. Paul's mind is supple and capacious. He takes logic and argument, poetry and imagination, Scripture and prayer, creation and history and experience, and weaves them into this letter that has become the premier document of Christian theology.

#### **Commentary on Romans from The Bible Project:**

- <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/romans-1-4/>
- <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/romans-5-16/>

#### **Commentary on themes in Romans from The Bible Project:**

- Holiness: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/holiness/>
- The Law: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/law/>
- Sacrifice and Atonement: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/sacrifice-and-atonement/>
- Covenants: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/covenants/>

#### **Overview of Romans from [bible.org](https://bible.org):**

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/56-romans>

#### **Commentary on Romans 8 from [bible.org](https://bible.org):**

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/15-siding-spirit-romans-81-17>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/16-groaning-glory-romans-818-27>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/17-solace-suffering-sovereignty-god-romans-828>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/18-god%E2%80%99s-eternal-decree-romans-829>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/19-glory-god-romans-830>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/20-comforting-questions-romans-831-39>

## **READ Romans 8**

(The following discussion questions are adapted from The Serendipity Bible)

### *Opening*

- When you were young, who caused you to change your behavior by their powerful influence?
- What signs of aging or weathering are you starting to feel in your bones?
- Do you tend to see the glass half empty or half full?

### *Digging in — Discovering the Word*

- From verses 1-4, how would you explain the Gospel to someone who feels they are not “good enough” for God?
- In verses 5-11, what does Paul say about the options Christians have in living their life?
- Where is the battle for the control of your life going to be fought ... and won or lost?
- From this passage, what roles do God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit play in setting men free?
- What does it mean to be “led by the Spirit” (v.14)? How does the Spirit help us fight our battles? Give an example.
- What is the best part of being in the family of God?
- What are your expectations of the future? What do you think Paul means by “the glory” to come?
- Why do we as Christians “groan”?
- What reasons for hope do you find in this passage?
- What does the Holy Spirit do for us when we do not know how to pray? When is the last time you did not know how to pray and the Holy Spirit helped and comforted you?
- What confidence does verse 28 give believers about events that occur in their lives? When has it been hardest for you to believe this? How have you seen God bring something good out of a bad situation?
- How do verses 31-34 support Romans 8:1, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ”?
- Of the agents of separation listed in verses 35-39, which is most threatening to you?
- What phrase or verse from this passage particularly strikes you and why?

### *Connecting the Dots — Applying the Word*

- When unhealthy thoughts enter your mind, what have you found helpful in dealing with them?
- What does it mean to you that you are not God’s slave, but his child?
- What “present sufferings” are you struggling with? What have you found helpful in dealing with pain and suffering?
- What is the difference between the hope of a Christian and wishful thinking? How has your hope in Christ aided you this week?
- How are you doing in the school of hard knocks right now?
- What is the closest you have come to feeling the despair and loneliness of being separated from God like Paul describes in verses 31-39?