



TRANSFORMED
BY THE GOSPEL

Romans 9-16

Term 3 Sermon Series

About These Studies

Our Term 3 Bible Study series based on Romans 9-16 has nine pre-written studies. These studies are generally designed to be completed by your group after you have heard the passage preached on a Sunday. Each study consists of roughly seven to ten open-ended questions for your group to discuss.

It may help to think about these questions as “discussion starters” rather than a set of questions to answer one after another. You should allow about 30 to 40 minutes for this discussion. The studies do not aim to guide your group in detailed exegesis of each passage. Rather, they aim to:

- Revisit the exegesis that was presented in the Sunday sermon
- Help your group address remaining questions that you have about the passage
- Provide your group with ample opportunity to consider possible passage applications



This term we have again included some Head/Heart/Hand icons throughout the studies to help signal where a question is moving into application. The HEAD symbol indicates that the question is aimed at sharpening the way we THINK. The HEART symbol indicates a question more closely tied to our DESIRES/EMOTIONS/AFFECTIONS. The HAND symbol indicates that we are getting more PRACTICAL or moving toward TAKING ACTION.

It is recommended that each group member listens to the relevant sermons before the group meeting. Members may also wish to listen to the corresponding episode of Sermon Seasonings podcast (on the weeks when these are available).

Special thanks to Ross Hansen, Leigh Cartwright and Seb Lane who were involved in writing draft studies for this term. The studies have also been reviewed and given a final edit by Seb Lane. The study booklet has been designed by Justine Kim. The Bible verses throughout this study booklet are generally quoted from New International Version (NIV), Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc.

Special Request from our Mission Team - '2 for 2'

This term in Growth Group we want to encourage group leaders and members to be thinking intentionally about those friends and family that you have that do not yet know Jesus. We believe that only God can change the hearts of those who are dead in their sins. So, we must bring them before God in prayer.

If you are a leader it would be fantastic if you could encourage each member of your group to choose two people in their life that they would particularly like to be praying for. Then share these names across the group and pray for them. It would be fantastic to spend some time early in the term praying together as a group for each member's 2 chosen people and then determine how you will keep praying together for these people ongoingly.

For example, our group (Braydon and Merryn's GG) will split in two's to pray for these people every second week as part of our normal group's time in prayer. This is just one way to keep these people in our prayers. Our Explore course will also be running again this Term and could be an awesome goal to bring along the friend you have been praying for!

Table of Contents

05. Introduction to Romans

12. Study One | Sovereign Election - Romans 9

16. Study Two | Beautiful Feet - Romans 10

20. Study Three | Israel's Future - Romans 11

24. Study Four | Living Sacrifice - Romans 12:1-2

28. Study Five | Gifts of Grace - Romans 12:3-21

32. Study Six | Christian Citizenship - Romans 13:1-7

36. Study Seven | Love: Our Debt - Romans 13:8-14

40. Study Eight | Faith, Weakness & Strength - Romans 14-15:3

44. Study Nine | Gospel Partnership - Romans 15:14-16:27

Introduction

Author and Date

Who wrote Romans? The letter of Romans opens with, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” (Rom 1:1).¹ From the very beginning the letter itself claims to be written by the apostle Paul and there is little reason to doubt this claim (nor is it seriously disputed amongst scholars). It’s perhaps worth noting though that Paul himself indicates that he had assistance in some form in the writing of the letter by his scribe Tertius (see Rom 16:22), which was customary at the time. When was Romans written? The likeliest window for dating the letter is between AD 55 and 58.² Some propose Paul wrote Romans from Corinth, toward the end of his third missionary journey in A.D. 57 (cf. Rom 15:22-29, Acts 20:1-6).

Recipients

Paul’s letter was written (as the name suggests) to the Christian churches in Rome. The origin of these churches remains uncertain. They were not founded by Paul himself, because Paul had not yet been to Rome and yet clearly the churches had existed for some time (cf. Acts 18:1-2; Rom. 16). These churches were made up of a mixed group of Jewish & Gentile Christians, likely consisting of a majority of Gentile Christians.

Main Theme

The main theme of Romans is the gospel. The word “gospel” and its associated verb “evangelize” are used by Paul to frame his letter in both the introduction (1:1, 3, 9, 15) and the conclusion (15:16, 19).³ The gospel and the revelation of God’s judging and saving righteousness are also at the centre of Paul’s theme statement in chapter 1,

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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 key elements of the gospel, mentioned by Paul in both summaries, are these: it comes from God; its subject is Jesus; it is as promised in the Old Testament; it is for all people; and it calls everyone to believe and obey.⁴

¹ The Bible verses throughout this brief are generally quoted from New International Version (NIV), Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc.

² For more about the Dating of Romans see, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans (2nd Ed.)*, Baker Exegetical Commentary (Baker Publishing Group, 1998, eBook edition in 2018), 3-4 (Accordance); and Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans (2nd Ed.)*, NICNT (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 2. (Accordance)

³ For more on the ‘Theme’ of Romans see: Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans (2nd Ed.)*, NICNT (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 25-28. (Accordance)

⁴ Bishopsgate, St Helen’s. *Read Mark Learn: Romans: A Small Group Bible Study* (Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 20. (Kindle Edition)

Purpose

Paul doesn't spell out exactly a neat single cause reason for why he wrote Romans. This reality has led to what has sometimes been called The Romans Debate about why Romans was written. At one of our previous 'Intro Nights' on Romans 1-8 (T4, 2022) our guest speaker Chris Conyers summarised the purpose of Romans in this way: "To begin a partnership with the Roman Christians taking this all-nation gospel of faith, hope, and love which came from the Jews to the Western Empire." Paul himself comes close to explaining his reason for writing in Romans 15:15-16 (cf. also Rom 1:11-16), and he expresses his own clear desire to take God's gospel further abroad into Spain (cf. Rom 15:14-29). Others have also noticed Paul's theological concern in explaining the priority and future of Israel (Rom 9-11) and his pastoral concern for addressing problems of division within the church community (Rom 14-15)

Structure

The letter of Romans is framed with an introduction (1:1-17) and a conclusion (15:14-16:27). Between this frame are four main movements to Paul's overall letter.

Introduction: The letter opening (1:1-17)

I. The heart of the Gospel: Justification by Faith (1:18-4:25)

II. The assurance provided by the Gospel: The Hope of Salvation (5:1-8:39)

III. The defence of the Gospel: The Problem of Israel (9:1-11:36)

IV. The transforming power of the Gospel: Christian Conduct (12:1-15:13)

Conclusion: The letter closing (15:14-16:27)⁵

⁵ Following: Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans* (2nd Ed.), NICNT (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 30-34.

Some Reader Guidance

As we prepare to pick-up our series in the second half of Romans it may be helpful to take a moment to remind ourselves how this next section of this great letter relates with what's come beforehand. One writer offers this helpful reflection,

“Many people see almost no relationship between chapters 9 through 11 and the previous eight, or the subsequent five. The first eight chapters are about how we are made righteous, and how God works in and for his righteous people; the last five detail how righteous people live. But in between come three complex, difficult chapters that can be seen as a long diversion from the letter Paul sat down to write (and, we may think, should have written!), in which 8:39 is followed by 12:1. Why are chapters 9 – 11 in the book of Romans at all?! Romans 8 ends in a tremendous crescendo of confidence, as Paul explains that God guarantees our final perseverance because our salvation is not based on our will and strength. Rather, God has called us, opened our minds to the truth and now carries us on to final glory. “Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (8:30). But now Paul can imagine someone coming and saying: Hold on, Paul! You say that when God calls someone, he always brings them all the way home. But what about the Jews? God called them and came to them but most Jews have rejected Christ at the present time. So maybe God’s calling and purpose can be rejected! If God promised that Israel would be his people, yet the majority did not believe in Christ, does that mean God’s promise, power, or mercy is failing? So the question of Jewish unbelief is of vital importance not only to first-century churches containing both Jews and Gentiles, but for us, too. It takes us deep into who God is, and how he works.”⁶

⁶ Timothy Keller. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (The Good Book Company, 2015), 45-46. (Kindle Edition)

Recommended Resources

Highly Accessible / Non - Technical

Sermon Seasonings



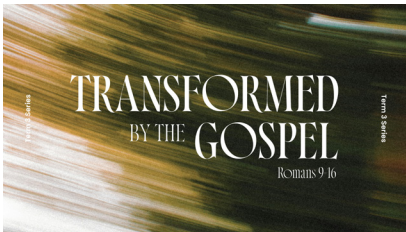
Apple iTunes, Spotify or, online via:
<https://anchor.fm/sermonseasonings/>

Romans 1-8 Intro Night



<https://youtube/xO-02DsABDk>

Romans 9-16 Intro Night



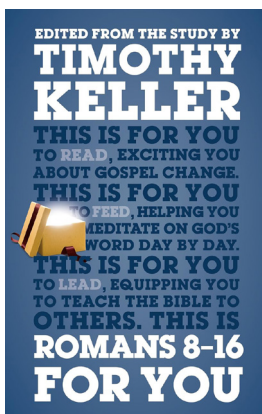
Chris Conyers - Mon 22 July 2024 –
7:30pm @ Christ Church

Big Picture Overview: Romans (Part 1 and 2) by the Bible Project



Part 1 (Romans 1-4): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ej_6dVdJSIU

Part 2 (Romans 5-16): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSVTI4Xa5fY>



Romans 8-16 by Timothy Keller

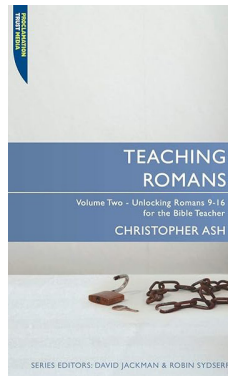
This is a non-technical commentary which addresses the big issues of each passage and offers some considerations for application.

Low/Mid-Range Accessible / Semi-Technical

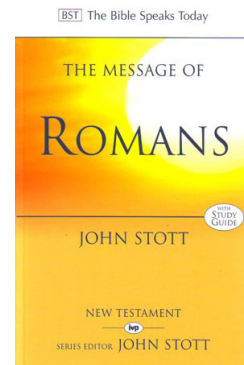
These three resources would be helpful for anyone in teaching roles at church. The first two are especially geared towards those who lead Bible Studies.



RML - Romans
by Williams Taylor



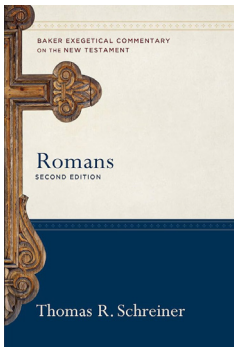
Teaching Romans
by Christopher Ash



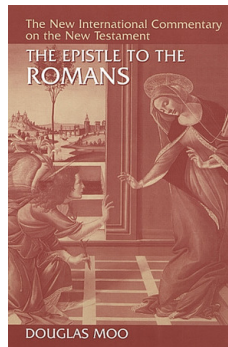
Romans BST
by John Stott

Highly Technical Commentaries

These are two of the leading commentaries on Romans. Both of them provides highly technical commentary on Romans, incorporating insights from the Greek text and engagement with wide scholarship.



Romans
by Thomas Schreiner
(2nd Ed, Baker Exegetical)



Romans
by Douglas Moo
(2nd Ed, NICNT)

Study One | Sovereign Election

Romans 9

Study Big Idea

God freely chooses His people through election, displaying His mercy, power, and wrath.

Discussion Question

What's an example of a difficult passage in the Bible you've needed to wrestle with?

"Many mysteries surround the doctrine of election, and theologians are unwise to systematize it in such a way that no puzzles, enigmas or loose ends are left. At the same time, in addition to the arguments developed in [...] Romans 8:28-30, we need to remember two truths. First, election is not just a Pauline or apostolic doctrine; it was also taught by Jesus himself. 'I know those I have chosen,' he said (cf. John 13:18, 15:16; 17:6). Secondly, election is an indispensable foundation of Christian worship, in time and eternity. It is the essence of worship to say: 'Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory' (Ps.115:1). If we were responsible for our own salvation, either in whole or even in part, we would be justified in singing our own praises and blowing our own trumpet in heaven. But such a thing is inconceivable. God's redeemed people will spend eternity worshipping him, humbling themselves before him in grateful adoration, ascribing their salvation to him and to the Lamb, and acknowledging that he alone is worthy to receive all praise, honour and glory (Rev 5:12f.; 7:10ff). Why? Because our salvation is due entirely to his grace, will, initiative, wisdom and power."

John Stott, *The Message of Romans*, BST, (Intervarsity Press, 1994), 268.

Brief Recap

What are some of the big themes and ideas raised in the first eight chapters of Romans?

Read Romans 9:1-5

1. What is the source of Paul's sorrow?

2. Why does Paul list so many of the privileges that Israel had?



3. When have you also felt burdened or grieved for people rejecting Jesus like Paul?

Read Romans 9:6-24

4. a) Why does Paul feel the need to emphasise that the Word of God has not failed?

b) Split into 3 groups and complete the table below for your group's passage together.

	Rom. 9:6-13	Rom. 9:14-18	Rom. 9:19-24
What question is Paul answering or pre-empting?			
What does it tell us about who the true people of God are?			
Where do we see God choosing?			
What does this teach us about who God is, and what He is like?			

Share back with the rest of your Growth Group what you've found.



5. How does Paul explain the doctrine of election? Why is this doctrine so important?

6. Consider Paul's argument in Romans 3:9-18; how should that help us further understand how to feel about God's sovereignty and purpose in election?

Timothy Keller comments on Romans 9 and the doctrine of election saying, "...in election God comes in, softens our hearts and makes us good. In hardening, God simply passes over and lets people have the way they have chosen. In John Stott's words: "If ... anybody is lost, the blame is theirs, but if anybody is saved, the credit is God's. This antinomy contains a mystery which our present knowledge cannot solve; but it is consistent with Scripture, history, and experience."
(The Message of Romans, page 270)

D. James Kennedy offers a very helpful illustration here:

"Here are five people who are planning to hold up a bank. They are friends of mine. I find out about it and I plead with them. I beg them not to do it. Finally they push me out of the way and they start out. I tackle one of the men and wrestle him to the ground. The others go ahead, rob the bank, a guard is killed, they are captured, convicted, sentenced ... The one man who was not involved in the robbery goes free. Now I ask you this question: Whose fault was it that the other men died? ... Now this other man who is walking around free - can he say, "Because my heart is so good, I am a free man"? The only reason that he is free is because of me; because I restrained him. So those who go to hell have no one to blame but themselves. Those who go to heaven have no one to praise but Jesus Christ. Thus we see that salvation is all of grace from its beginning to its end."
(Truths That Transform, pages 39-40)"

Keller, Timothy. *Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading* (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (pp. 55-56). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

Read Romans 9:25-33

7. Paul quotes from Isaiah and Hosea in verses 25-29. How do these quotes add to our understanding of who the true people of Israel are?

(Optional) Read 1 Peter 2:4-10

8. 1 Peter picks up some of the same Old Testament quotes and themes as Romans 9, and looks at the many privileges we have today as Christians.

a) In what ways are we as Christians similar to Old Testament Israel?

b) In what ways are we different?

 9. How might God's election be fuel for our personal evangelism and mission together?⁷

Pray in Response

⁷ Further reading: "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God" - J.I. Packer

Study Two | Beautiful Feet

Romans 10

Study Big Idea

The proclaimed gospel of Christ fulfils God's purposes in the law despite Israel's failure

Discussion Question

How did you first hear about Jesus? Who helped you get to know him better as your Lord?

"But "how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (v 14). The message must be communicated. The word translated "preaching" is kerysso, which means to be a "herald" or to make announcements. A herald was, in a sense, a living newspaper; heralds were a major means of transmitting news by making announcements in the marketplace and city streets. So the word "preach" does not refer only to what today are called "sermons." Heralds operated in the streets.

"And how can they preach unless they are sent?" (v 15). Someone must do the communicating, must be the herald. The Greek word rendered "sent" is apostello. Paul probably has two aspects in mind when he writes "sent." First, that Christ has sent us authoritative witnesses and teachers, the apostles, whose message is in the Bible. Second, "sent" likely also refers to the way Christ through his church sends out missionaries, preachers, and ordinary Christians in all places and all times to be messengers of that apostolic word. God has sent us with the message of salvation. He may send us overseas, into the pulpit, or across the street to our neighbour. But ours are the beautiful feet, bringing good news (v 15)."

Keller, Timothy. *Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading*
(The Good Book Company, 2015), 67. (Kindle Edition)

Brief Recap

Compare the opening verses of Romans 9 and 10? What do you notice is similar/different?

Read Romans 10:1-5

1. How does Paul describe the Israelites in verses 2-4? What error have they made in relation to God's righteousness? (See also, Rom 9:30-33)

2. Look at Romans 10:5. What point is being made by Moses about righteousness that is by the law? Why is this such a big problem for Israel? (See also, Gal 3:10-12)



3. When are you tempted to rely on rule-keeping as a way to be right with God? What effect does this have on your relationship with God?

4. Why do you think many people today continue to misunderstand Christianity as being mainly about trying harder to be right with God through what we do? What difference does it make knowing that God's righteousness is a gift to be received by faith?

Read Romans 10:6-13

5. In verses 6-8, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30:11-14. List the key points that Paul is making. How do these verses fit into Paul's argument?

6. What response is required for anyone to be saved according to verses 9-13?

“The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not affect the necessity of evangelism. Whatever we may believe about election, the fact remains that evangelism is necessary, because no man can be saved without the gospel. ‘There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek,’ proclaims Paul; ‘for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord (Jesus Christ) shall be saved.’ Yes; but nobody will be saved who does not call upon the name of the Lord, and certain things must happen before any man can do this. So Paul continues: ‘How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?’” (Rom x.12ff) They must be told of Christ before they can trust Him, and they must trust Him before they can be saved by Him. Salvation depends on faith, and faith on knowing the gospel. God’s way of saving sinners is to bring them to faith through bringing them into contact with the gospel. In God’s ordering of things, therefore, evangelism is a necessity if anyone is to be saved at all.

We must realize, therefore, that when God sends us to evangelize, He sends us to act as vital links in the chain of His purpose for the salvation of His elect. The fact that He has such a purpose, and that it is (so we believe) a sovereign purpose that cannot be thwarted, does not imply that, after all, our evangelizing is not needed for its fulfilment. In our Lord’s parable, the way in which the wedding was furnished with guests was through the action of the king’s servants, who went out as they were bidden into the highways and invited in all whom they found there. Hearing the invitation, the passers-by came.’ It is in the same way, and through similar action by the servants of God, that the elect come into the salvation that the Redeemer has won for them.”

Packer, J.I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*
(InterVarsity Press, 1961), 97-98.



7. (Optional) The Bible holds the tension of God’s sovereignty in election (see Romans 9) and the open invitation to everyone to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved (Romans 10) side by side.

a) How do we as Christians understand these two truths together?

b) What could be the impact of neglecting one of these truths?

Read Romans 10:14-21



8. Have a look at Romans 10:14-15. The gospel needs to be proclaimed by people who need to be sent out.

a) How are we going individually and as a group at expressing our partnership with our group's link Mission partner?

b) Where do you see needs or opportunities to share the gospel with someone yourself? If you haven't already read the '2 for 2' blurb together on p.3 of this booklet.

9. (Optional): Verse 17 says faith comes through hearing the word about Christ. What happens to those who haven't heard about Christ? How does this passage help us think through this issue? (See also, Psalm 19 and Romans 1:18-20)

Pray in Response

Study Three | Israel's Future

Romans 11

Study Big Idea

God always keeps a chosen remnant & his gospel purposes lead us to humility & praise

Discussion Question

What is one of your favourite stories about God and his people in the Old Testament? Why?

“So far, in addressing the issue of the Jews’ apparent unbelief, Paul has explained what has happened from two perspectives. In 9:1-29 we saw God’s perspective. Paul has shown us that God’s people have always been defined by His choice, rather than through ancestry or human worthiness, and that God has always said that many Jews were not chosen. Then, in 9:30–10:21, we saw Israel’s failure from the human perspective. Israel made the error of trying to obtain righteousness through obeying the Law (9:32), by their own efforts. By doing this they failed to trust God and rejected His promise of rescue through Christ, to whom the Law pointed for salvation. Although salvation was now readily available through Jesus, they would not accept it, and because of their rebellion God turned to other nations instead. This, however, is not the end of the story for the Jews. Paul first shows that there are, as there always have been, a few Jews whom God has preserved; from among those who are hardened there are some who will be saved (although Paul does not say who they are or when this will be). He also explains that the Jews have been hardened so that the gospel may go to the Gentiles. This chapter picks up the idea that Paul wrote about in 9:6, that the nation of Israel and God’s chosen people (the true Israel) are two different things. The nation is no longer the locus of God’s activity. God does have a plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, and by this plan He will save a fixed number of each (11:25-26). Paul ends this section of his letter, which began at 9:1, by praising the God whose ways are infinitely higher than ours.”

Bishopgate, St Helen’s. *Read Mark Learn: Romans: A Small Group Bible Study*
(Christian Focus Publication, 1999), 192. (Kindle Edition)

Brief Recap

What have been a few things we’ve learnt about God / Israel / and the Gentiles so far from Paul’s argument in Romans 9 and 10? What tone did chapter 10 finish on?

Read Romans 11:1-10

1. What evidence does Paul present that God has not totally rejected Israel in these verses?

2. Look at verses 4-6. Elijah underestimated how many people God had reserved for himself in his own day. A regular theme of the Bible is that God preserves a remnant people to be faithful, and who are saved (cf. Romans 9:27, 1 Peter 3:20, Num. 32:9-13).

a) What does this tell us about God's grace and purposes in election?

b) Who are you tempted to think is beyond God's reach? What implications might these verses have for our own Christian experience and evangelism today?

Read Romans 11:11-32

3. Split into groups of 3, and use Appendix 1 (page 44) for some group work. Highlight in three different colours:

- Phrases related to Israel's rejection
- Phrases related to Gentile inclusion/salvation
- Phrases related to Israel's salvation

Discuss and share-back together:

a) What patterns emerge in Paul's ordering of these themes?

b) How does this section help us to better understand God's saving plans and purposes with regards to both Gentiles and Jews?

4. What points are being made with the 'grafted branches' illustration in verses 17-21?


“... Paul calls us to meditate on “the kindness and sternness of God” (v 22). Whether his kindness or sternness rests on you depends on whether you believe or disbelieve. The example of disbelieving Israel should prevent any casual complacency. [...]

The point Paul is making is that faith is not presumption. Throughout Romans, his whole argument about the Jews is: Though they were the chosen people, they began to think they were the choice people. They became confident that they were “in” no matter how they lived, simply because they were Abraham’s physical descendants. That is not the case. So now Paul says: Don’t fall into the same presumption! He exhorts them to “continue in [God’s] kindness” (11:22). The only way we know that God’s sovereign love is upon us is that we continue; we persevere in seeking to be like Jesus, until the day we meet Jesus. If that continuing disappears—if we start to live for ourselves and live in sin, or start to rely on our own performance for our relationship with God—then we will and should begin to wonder if his kindness is upon us, if we were ever chosen.

We must not pit this kind of exhortation against 8:30 (“those he justified, he also glorified”) and the many other passages where Paul insists we are safe in God’s love. 1 John 2:19 says: “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us.” There is no talk of “losing salvation” here, only of the revelation of counterfeits. Hebrews 3:14-15 is similar: “We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...’” If we have faith in Christ Jesus, we can be assured; but we must never be arrogant.”

Keller, Timothy. *Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading* (The Good Book Company, 2015), 100. (Kindle Edition)

 5. How can we avoid attitudes of complacency and arrogance as Christians?

 6. Verse 26 says that “all Israel will be saved”; Christians often have different views on this, from who Israel is to the timing of when all Israel will be saved.⁸

What do you think Paul means by this? Why? (cf. Romans 9:6; 11:25)

⁸ Further Reading: <https://www.lionelwindsor.net/2011/02/04/what-does-all-israel-will-be-saved-rom-1126-mean/>

Study Four | Living Sacrifice

Romans 12:1-2

Study Big Idea

Offer yourselves to God as a living sacrifice, transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Discussion Question

What's an example of a sacrifice you have made for someone or something else?

“The beginning of chapter 12 is a pivotal point in Paul’s letter to the Romans. It represents a major shift, as he turns from instruction to exhortation. [...] The first two verses of chapter 12 are the key to the whole section. First, they link Paul’s exhortation about daily living with all that he has written earlier. Thus, ‘in view of God’s mercy’ refers to the theme of all the previous eleven chapters – the gospel. Then, these verses outline the essence of the Christian’s response to God’s mercy, a response that will be the theme for the rest of the section. At the heart of this response is a transformation, and this should happen within the life of a believer as a result of the new mind that he has been given. This idea picks up on an important issue that was discussed in chapters 6–8. At his very heart, the Christian is no longer a rebel, but rather, through God’s work in his life, he now delights in God’s law in his inner being (7:22). Yet he still needs actively to offer God his body (as Paul insisted in 6:13), a body that remains influenced by the sinful realm of Adam and which will, therefore, still rebel instinctively against God (7:23, 25) until it is resurrected (8:11). So now we see the reversal of the situation described in chapter 1: when we were rebels, fundamentally, against God, our bodies were given over to sinfulness (1:18-32), but now that God has given us new minds, by giving us His Spirit, we are to give ourselves back to God.”

Bishopsgate, St Helen’s. *Read Mark Learn: Romans: A Small Group Bible Study*
(Christian Focus Publication, 1999), 209. (Kindle Edition)

Brief Recap


Create a flow-chart to help show some of the big picture arguments across Romans 1-11.

Read Romans 12:1

1. (Using your flow-charts) What has Paul been teaching the Christians in Rome about the mercy of God so far in his letter? (see also, Rom 3:21-26; 5:1-11; 9:6-29; 11:30-36)

2. a) What are some possible ways people might define 'worship' today?

b) What is our 'true and proper worship' according to Rom 12:1? (see also, Heb 12:28-29)

 3. Why does Paul use the term "living sacrifice" here? In what ways, have you seen gospel transformation in your own life (or others close to you) since becoming a Christian?

 4. How can we continue to practically keep God's mercies front and center in our Christian walk?

“The early Christians in the first and second centuries hazarded their lives for love of Christ. They were a despised, illegal group, and knew that at any moment imperial Rome might attempt to crush them out of existence: yet they refused to compromise, or worship Caesar, or offer sacrifices. They continued to meet for worship even when hounded from pillar to post. They sang praises to the Lord, even when they were being burned at the stake, or being torn limb from limb in the arena. They refused to be stamped out. Through each succeeding wave of bitter persecution, their faith and courage grew, and they offered “sacrifices... well-pleasing to God.”

Missionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave up so much that this world values in order to reach the four corners of the earth with the Good News of Jesus Christ. They left behind home and loved ones, undertaking journeys in those days of up to five months, with no possibility of communication or frequent furloughs. They left behind the relative security of Western civilization with its systems of justice in a time when many other parts of the world were ruled by despotic cruelty. They faced hunger, imprisonments, floggings, often with no knowledge of the crimes of which they were accused, apart from being “foreign devils.” They gave up all prospects of the security of a salaried job, accepting often a meagre pittance, in order not to burden a local church with their support. They went where there were no doctors or modern medical science to help them in time of physical need and pain, risking their lives that others might live. They deliberately chose to leave the ease and pleasures among which several had grown up, to accept in exchange the rugged hardships of trekking in the jungles in an inhospitable climate, among nationals with unknown languages, cultures and dietary habits.

All this might be called “sacrifice,” be it in the first or nineteenth century, in the sense that it was a privileged love-gift to Christ. It was a thank offering to the Lord, who had loved them, and had given Himself for them. It was their only way to express the depth of their humble gratitude for so great a salvation. Like Peter and the other apostles, they forsook all in order to follow Him.

What of us in the twentieth century? We love the same God. We are bought with the same price. Christ died for our sins as much as for theirs. Are we less willing to be identified with our Lord and Saviour than they were? Are we more afraid of ridicule or indifference than they were of the stake or the arena? [...] The Christian is invited to give God all, to make Him indisputably King over every part of life: to become, as it were, His bonds slave in total obedience to His will.”

Roseveare, Helen, Dr. *Living Sacrifice: Willing to be Whittled as an Arrow*
(Christian Focus, 1980), 122-23, 127.

Read Romans 12:2

5. a) What are some examples of worldly patterns Christians are called not to conform to?

b) Where do you personally feel this pull most acutely in your life on a day-to-day basis?



6. What does a transformed mind want to do according to verse 2? (see also, Eph 4:17-19; 2 Cor 3:16-18). How do we know what God's 'will' is? (12:2b)

7. What did you think of the Helen Roseveare quote above? Where do you feel challenged in your own life to keep offering over every part of your life in service to God?

Pray in Response

Study Five | Gifts of Grace

Romans 12:3-21

Study Big Idea

Think soberly of yourself, use God's gifts to serve the body, love sincerely & seek peace.

Discussion Question

What were some reasons you started coming to Christ Church? Why have you stayed here?

“Romans 12:1-2 are the theme verses for all of 12:1-15:13, signifying that believers should be wholly dedicated to God. In 12:3-13:14 Paul sketches in for his readers some specific ways in which their new life in Christ manifests itself. Believers who live wholly for God are committed to community (12:3-8). They do not live for and unto themselves any longer, but they become involved with the new people of God and minister to the needs of others with the gifts granted to them by God. Love is the mark of Christians, the most evident insignia for the new people of God. In 12:9-16 Paul highlights character qualities that should stamp the Christian community. Such transformed character will be very attractive to the world, but it does not follow from this that believers will be bereft of enemies. Some will oppose Christians with implacable hostility. Paul summons believers to the way of the cross (12:17-21), calling them to leave vengeance to God and to overcome evil with good.”

Schreiner, Thomas R., *Romans BEC 2nd Ed*
(Baker Academic, 2018), 631. (Accordance)

Brief Recap

What have we been challenged to do in response to the gospel at the start of Romans 12?

Read Romans 12:3-8



1. What does transformed thinking about ourselves look like according to these verses?



2. How easy or challenging do you find it in practice to view yourself like this?

3. How does Paul's "body" analogy help us to have a correct attitude to ourselves and to our church? (see also, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Ephesians 4:1-16)

4. How does this "body" mindset challenge our own culture's lean toward individualism? In what ways has belonging to one another in church community been a blessing for you?

5. What examples of gifts of grace does Paul mention in verses 6-8? What do you notice about your own attitude in the ways you currently act and serve toward others at church?

Read Romans 12:9-21

6. Fill in the table below -

a) What are some of the 'love-based attitudes and actions' that Paul mentions in this section?

b) How do they contrast with some of the descriptions of 'condemned behaviour/ attitudes' Paul listed back in Romans chapter 1:21-32?

Romans 12:9-21	Romans 1:21-32



7. Which of these attitudes/actions do you need to ask for God's help with this week in particular?

8. "Practice hospitality" (Rom 12:13b)—"Meals with Members" is one of our Membership initiatives this year at Church, with the aim of increasing our hospitality and seeing every member of each congregation invited to share a meal with other members of that congregation. How have you gone so far? Do you have any plans for the rest of this year?

9. (Optional) When have you been tempted (perhaps more recently) to 'repay evil for evil' or take revenge? What are we commanded to do instead according to verses 19-21? Why?

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Six | Christian Citizenship

Romans 13:1-7

Study Big Idea

Submit to governing authorities because they are established by God to rule & to serve.

Discussion Question

When have you appreciated your own citizenship? Do you have a citizenship story to share?

“Living with Jesus as Lord in ‘Caesar’s empire Christians live with Jesus as Lord of all, and together have become part of his kingdom. It is a kingdom with a different constitution: a kingdom of love, not of law; of peace, not of war; of transformed nonconformity. It is a kingdom that does not have a specific earthly location, but exists in every corner of the world, in anticipation of the return of Jesus to rule. [...] Under [the lordship of Jesus Christ], power looks very different. He is the humble Lord, the Servant King, who graciously lays down his life for the sake of those he rules. Christians live in a society, the church, constituted by that act of grace. Yet Christians still live in other kingdoms, too. They have (at least) a dual citizenship. They remain citizens or residents of earthly nations, living under the rule of whatever governments are in place where they live. The lordship of Jesus Christ, even though it means that all earthly authorities are now subject to Christ, does not dissolve them as authorities. What it does do is relativize that authority. It shows that earthly powers are neither eternal nor absolute.”

Jensen, Michael P. *Subjects and Citizens: The Politics of the Gospel*
Lessons from Romans 12-15, (Matthias Media, 2024), 86.

Brief Recap

In what ways were Christians called to be counter-cultural at the end of chapter 12?

Read Romans 13:1-7

In pairs or triplets, use the ‘Swedish Method’ and Appendix 2 (page 45) to help you pay more careful attention to what the passage is actually saying:

1. What stands out to you in these verses?



2. What are some questions the passage raises for you?



3. What are any personal applications you can see clearly in the text? 

Share-back with each other some of your findings.

4. What are some reasons Paul gives us to obey civil authorities in verses 1-7?
5. When do you find it hard in your own life to submit to human authorities? What stops us wanting to submit?
6. Why should we pay taxes according to Paul? What are any implications for the way you approach completing your personal tax return year to year?
7. When might it be necessary for Christians to disobey those in authority? (See also, Daniel 6:6-24, Acts 4:18-20).
8. Read 1 Peter 2:11-17. How is having a godly attitude toward human authority further commended to Christians in this passage?
9. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-3. Who can we pray for in light of these verses? What can we pray specifically for them?

Pray in Response

Study Seven | Love: Our Debt

Romans 13:8-14

Study Big Idea

Our debt to love one another reflects God's love and prepares us for Christ's return.

Discussion Question

What is a debt you've been relieved to finally pay off?

"Paul says in verse 8, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another." On the one hand he encourages us to get out of debt—"Let no debt remain outstanding," while on the other hand he tells us we have an ongoing debt of love—"except the continuing debt to love one another." Origen wrote in the second century, "So Paul desires that our debt of love should remain and never cease to be owed, for it is expedient that we should both pay this debt and always owe it."¹⁶⁷ The Christian is always a love-debtor, no matter how much love he gives.

Every time we meet someone we ought to say to ourselves, "I need to show him or her the love of Christ. I have a great and wonderful debt to pay." If you have ever had a personal debt, be it ever so small, you know that the first thing that enters your mind when you see that person is that you "owe" them. We need to truly see ourselves as spiritual debtors. When we go to church, town, work, shopping, school—wherever we go, whoever we meet, we owe love. This is our debt—loving on the level."

Hughes, Kent R. *Romans: Righteousness From Heaven*
Preaching the Word Commentary, (Crossway, 1991), 250-51. (Accordance)

Brief Recap


What have been a few of the key themes so far in this section? (Romans 12:1-13:7)

Read Romans 13:8-10

1. What command is given to Christians here? Why are we to relate to others in this way?

2. How does Paul explain his reasoning in verses 9-10? Read Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:37-40. How does love fulfil the Law?

3. What is counter-cultural about having this kind of attitude towards others? What are some of the world's alternative messages?

-  4. When do you find it hard to relate toward others with love? How can we help and encourage one another in this? (See also, John 13:34-35)

“Paul concludes chapters 12 and 13 by coming back to the transition from this age to the age to come (12:1). Life under grace is the life of the age to come. Life under sin and law is life of the age that is passing away. [...]

There are two Greek words for time, time by the clock and time in its significance. When we wake someone and they ask the time, we can say ‘It’s 7 o’clock’ (time by the clock); or we can say, ‘It’s time to get up’ (time in its significance). The word for ‘present time’ means ‘time in its significance’ (rather ‘than time by the clock’). We are to understand that it is time to wake up, because the age to come is dawning. This means that ‘our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed’. [...] It is a wonderful thing that Christians can say every day, ‘salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.’”

Ash, Christopher. *Teaching Romans: Unlocking Romans 9-16 for the Bible Teacher* (Christian Focus Publications. 2009), 179-80.

Read Romans 13:11-14

5. How would you summarize (or paraphrase) what Paul is saying in these verses?



6. What helps you to keep a right perspective on the present / future as a Christian? Why does a right perspective impact how we live our lives now? (See also, 2 Peter 3:8-14)

7. What are we to clothe ourselves with and what are we to avoid? (See also, Eph 6:10-18, Col 3:1-14)



8. (Optional) What are some practical ways you have been seeking to fight the desires of the flesh in your life throughout this year? (see also, Romans 8:13)

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Eight | Faith, Weakness and Strength

Romans 14-15:13

Study Big Idea

Welcome one another in Christ by even limiting your own freedom in love for others.

Discussion Question

When have you been with another Christian who views food, drink or days differently to you?

“Since 12:1, Paul has been describing how Christians should wholly consecrate their lives to God, in response to His mercy, and has focused particularly on the transformation that should be seen in their relationships. Whereas once we were set against God and lived in enmity with one another (1:24-32), now, having been reconciled to God, we are to love one another humbly and wholeheartedly throughout our lives (12:9-16; 13:8-10). In 14:1-15:13, we are told that this love is to be extended, also, to those in the church with whom we disagree on disputable matters. This is the context in which Paul now examines the relationship between the ‘weak’ in faith and the ‘strong’.

It appears that there were some in the church in Rome who were uncertain as to the freedom they had to observe, or to ignore, certain customs and rituals, and that this was giving rise in some believers to feelings of superiority over other believers (because they themselves could enjoy their freedom in the gospel), and also in another group of believers to feelings of condemnation towards their fellow believers (because they themselves felt more strongly about following certain patterns of behaviour). Almost certainly, this was a Jew/Gentile issue [...], and in tackling it Paul is reverting once again to a major theme in his letter, the fact that the gospel is for both Jew and Gentile (1:16). The two groups have already been warned against boasting over one another (2:17-21; 11:16-32), and they have been taught that, in the light of the gospel, their relationship is to be characterised by love and humility. In spite of their differences the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ are to accept one another fully as Christian brothers and sisters.”

Bishopsgate, St Helen's. *Read Mark Learn: Romans: A Small Group Bible Study*
(Christian Focus Publication, 1999), 238-39. (Kindle Edition)

Brief Recap

Choose one key word (or phrase) to sum up each chapter in our Romans series so far.

Read Romans 14:1-12

1. Who do you think might have been the “weak” and the “strong” that Paul refers to? Why?
2. What reasons does Paul give for refraining from passing judgement in these situations?

Read Romans 14:13-15:13

3. How might you summarise the underlying principle throughout this section of teaching?
4. How are the “strong” to treat the “weak” appropriately? List some of the reasons Paul gives in this section for relating to one another this way.
5. How are the “weak” to respond? (see Rom 14:22-23; 15:7)



6. What are some of the values and priorities which should mark the Christian community according to this section of teaching?

7. (Optional): What might be some examples of “disputable” issues that could cause division amongst Christians in our church community? When is an issue not disputable?

“Paul is clear, [...], that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not about eating and drinking. Walking in obedience to Christ is not a matter of keeping food laws. [...]


Paul has a pretty flexible policy about what to eat, drink, and wear, but he’s completely solid on the underlying principle of Christians living together: do everything for the good of the other. We are to exert ourselves to do “what leads to peace and to mutual edification” (Rom 14:19). So here’s what Paul would have Christians do. He’d want them to look carefully at the Scriptures, with humility and seriousness, and come to their own mind. Christians will disagree, but if we are to disagree, let’s disagree because we’ve thought hard about what the Bible says and then examined our consciences. The key thing is not to do something that goes against your conscience or to trap someone else into going against their conscience. That’s not to say we shouldn’t be better informed, of course. It is better to be strong than to be weak, after all, and Paul is quite clear: “All food is clean” (Rom 14:20). There’s no excuse for remaining “weak” when you could be “strong”. The person who thinks some food is unclean is wrong, but heaven help you if you cause that person to stumble. Peace is more important than food. [...]

Christians need to examine the Scriptures together to see what they say, and not simply go with the flow or do what is fashionable in our particular community. [...]

This does not mean that every issue is of the same importance, or that you can make the Bible say what you want it to say. Not at all. Paul specifically discusses “disputable matters” here. I am afraid that if you come and tell me that the Bible allows us to be racists, or that the resurrection of Jesus did not occur, I am not going to be very tolerant of your position. Paul is not a relativist, and neither should Christians be.”

Jensen, Michael P. *Subjects and Citizens: The Politics of the Gospel*
Lessons from Romans 12-15, (Matthias Media, 2024), 156-58

8. In what ways do verses 7-13 continue to reinforce a similar theme we have been seeing since chapter 9? What do you notice is common to each of the Old Testament verses Paul quotes from?

-  9. How has this passage challenged you to respond to fellow-Christians? Are there any ways you can more proactively pursue peace with other brothers and sisters in Christ?

Pray in Response

Study Nine | Gospel Partnership

Romans 15:14-16:27

Study Big Idea

Let's be a Church that is ambitious for Gospel partnerships like Paul to the glory of God.

Discussion Question

When have you been encouraged hearing about what God is doing elsewhere in the world?

“Having dealt with the issue of potential division among the Roman Christians, Paul brings his letter to a close. He follows the convention of finishing his letter with a mixture of greetings, warnings and prayers, but within these verses we also find reference to some of the major themes of his letter. In addition to these we find that Paul returns to the themes with which he opened his letter (in 1:1-17), with the result that the main body of his letter is set within the context, or frame, of these themes: his relationship with the Romans, the nature of his ministry and the wonderful power of God's gospel. Paul's purpose here is to point his readers back into his letter and to the good news of salvation. He first explains why we should listen to his message by authenticating his ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles. He also includes a warning against listening to teaching that is different from what he has taught. Finally, he gives the assurance that the good news that God has revealed is the means by which He saves people and makes them His own for ever.”

Bishopsgate, St Helen's. *Read Mark Learn: Romans: A Small Group Bible Study*
(Christian Focus Publication, 1999), 258. (Kindle Edition)

Brief Recap

Read Romans 1:1-15. How did the letter of Romans begin? What has Paul just prayed for his readers at the end of the main body of his letter in Rom 15:13?

Read Romans 15:14-33

1. In pairs, summarise what Paul says in this section about:
 - His God-given role


- His motivation for the gospel
- His strategy and future plans

2. Discuss as a group: why does Paul tell them about his motives and plans?

3. a) What sort of gospel partnership does Paul describe in Rom 15:25-29?

b) What are some of the gospel partnerships our Church has committed to? In what ways do you seek to be personally engaged in these partnerships too?

 4. a) Paul asks his brothers and sisters in Christ to “join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.” (15:30). How can we also be specifically praying for our group’s Mission partner/s?

 b) (Optional): How could we write a brief word of encouragement to our group’s Mission partner together?

Read Romans 16:1-27

“It is tempting to regard chapter 16 as an unrelated appendix to the letter. But it is part of the ‘frame’ and – although of course there are details that just happen to relate to particular people – it echoes themes from the letter. [...] I have called these ‘gospel workers in the church in Rome.’ This does not mean they were in what we would loosely and inaccurately call ‘full-time Christian work,’ for it is unlikely that many of them were. It means their big aim in life was to work for the advancement of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. The commendation of Phoebe (vv.1,2) continues the theme of gospel partnership. She may have had a formal role (‘deaconess’) in the church (cf.. the title ‘deacon’ in Phil. 1:1), although the word may just refer informally to her active service in the church. We cannot be sure.”

Ash, Christopher. *Teaching Romans: Unlocking Romans 9-16 for the Bible Teacher*
(Christian Focus Publications, 2009), 253-4.

5. What stands out to you about Paul’s commendations and greetings at the end of his letter? Why?
6. a) What warning does Paul give in Rom 16:17-20? What are the warning signs to watch out for?

b) How does Paul’s counsel differ here compared to his teaching in 14:1-15:13? Why?
7. a) How have you been personally encouraged or challenged as we’ve worked through this series on Romans 9-16 about being transformed by the gospel?

b) Paul ends his letter on a note of praise to God. What can we similarly praise God for?

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Appendix 1: Romans 11:11-32

¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

²² Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Appendix 2: Romans 13:1-7

13 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.



Extra Notes

