

the WORD among us

simply ROMANS

the best news you will ever hear, period.

a leader's guide.

simple church

a very old new idea

TM



simplifying life
re-prioritizing life
cultivating a deeper walk with God

All Bible verses are taken from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

The following people contributed to this study guide.

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You may copy this resource or any part of it to build up God's Kingdom.
Please include the following reference information:

More studies available at
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

the WORD among us
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Outline

[the WORD among us](#)
[How to use this Leaders' Guide](#)

accepted by God

1. [Called & Chosen](#), 1:1-7
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3. [God Has Feelings Too](#), 1:18-32
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5. [Gaining God's Approval](#), 1:28 – 2:16
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13. [How to Die Right and Live to Tell About It](#)
- part one, Romans 6:1-14
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- part two, Romans 6:15-23
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21. [Salvation is for Everyone](#), Romans 10
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28. [Build Each Other Up](#), Romans 14:12-23
29. [Secrets of Happiness](#), Romans 15:1-13
30. [Living a Life that Counts](#), Romans 15:14-33
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extra resources

[who are God's children?](#)
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the WORD among us

the WORD among us series is different. These leader's guides capture real group life, where secular and unchurched people's lives are being changed.

People need the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People also need safe and authentic friendship with Christians. Most unchurched people will not seek you or your group's friendship. You will have to intentionally seek their friendship.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to “spend” with unchurched people.

how to use this leaders' guide

This leaders' guide assumes you have:

1. read through the www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com web page.
2. completed the online Simple Church training.

Simple Church Start-up Guidelines: Download and print this guide to help you start a successful Simple Church. It can be downloaded from the DropBOX found on the Simple Church training web page.

title

[outline](#)

Bible story reference

Message of Hope: Have this idea crystal clear in your mind. This is what you want people to remember for the rest of the week.

Leader's Tip: These tips show up here and there.

Needed for Today: Additional items that you will need.

Planning Ahead: This includes items coming in future weeks that you may need to plan for ahead of time.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to share and contribute.
- Cell phones should be put on “vibrate,” or turned off.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name, and what was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions: (Check-In is not used in Growth Groups)

Week 1: How are you simplifying your life?

Week 2: How are you re-prioritizing your life?

Week 3: What would it take to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

Week 4: How are you simplifying your life?

Week 5: etc.

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or, they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments: *(This part is hard for church people. They will have to learn how to be comfortable with "quiet space." People will need time to think, and will need encouragement to share. Learn to let Jesus be the leader of your group and see how and where He leads. This time is often a mixture of sharing, singing, praying; a time when people share their prayer requests, reflections, praise, joy, and thankfulness to God. This is body-life.)*

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) text

page 2 of a typical leaders guide for a given week

Message of Hope: Have this idea crystal clear in your mind. This is what you want people to remember for the rest of the week.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Bible story reference

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Here are some helpful pointers:

1. Remember, there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions.
2. You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the the questions listed. Use them as a resource from which to select during your discussion.
3. Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on Listening & Learning Questions.
4. Affirm each answer, no matter what is said, by saying something like, "Excellent, someone else"; "Thanks for sharing, someone else"; "Good, someone else"; "How about the rest of you,

- what do you think?"
5. Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
 6. If someone gets off-focus, I will say (after they have stopped talking), "Thanks. How about some else?" then restate the question to refocus the discussion.

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Some helpful pointers:

1. Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on Heart Questions.
2. These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it engages with the Bible study.
3. This is not a doctrinal study. This is not a life application study. It is a relational Bible study. There is a big difference.
4. At appropriate times, affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

1. Keep is simple.
2. Taco Salad (Mexican Haystack).
3. Hostess (one of the CORE4) provides the beans.
4. During lunch have Taco Salad sign-up sheet available.

chosen & called

[outline](#)

Romans 1:1-7

Message of Hope: God has chosen you and called you. You belong to Jesus Christ.

***Planning Ahead:** Be sure to order the DVD, “The Milky Way and Beyond,” to be used in week 4. This DVD is part of the [Journey to the Edge of Creation](#) two-part series.*

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Simple Church Start-up Guidelines: Download and print this guide to help you start a successful Simple Church. It is found on the online Phase Two training web page.

Breakfast

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or, they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.

- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* What was some of the best news you ever received?

Message of Hope: God has chosen you and called you. You belong to Jesus Christ.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 1:1-7
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. In Paul's day there were two groups of people, Ethnic Jews and Gentiles. If you were not a Jew by birth, then you were a Gentile. Into which group do you fall?
3. If you are a Gentile, then Paul wrote this book in the Bible for people like you. Paul was chosen and called to tell Gentiles everywhere God's good news. Based on these seven verses, how would you summarize Paul's good news?
4. Why does Paul think this news trumps any other news?
5. Why is it so important for Paul that God would raise Jesus from the dead?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. When you run across a "good deal," how do you go about getting the the news out?
2. Remember those elementary school games where everyone would line up? Two team captains would be chosen, then the captains would choose teams. Were you chosen near the beginning, the middle, or near the end? How did it make you feel?
3. No matter what your past life, Jesus has chosen and called you. If you were to take one step closer to Jesus, what would your next step look like?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning--that you needed to hear.
5. Remember, **God has chosen you and called you. You belong to Jesus Christ.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

the big idea

[outline](#)

Romans 1:8-17

Message of Hope: There is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God. God does it all.

Planning Ahead #1: Complete the online [Growth Groups video training](#) as soon as possible.

Planning Ahead #2: Did you get the [Journey to the Edge of Creation](#) two-part series ordered?

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Breakfast

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- Safe place to grow spiritually.
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- Or try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) Do you tend to be a "big picture," "detail oriented," or "somewhere in-between" person?

Message of Hope: There is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God. God does it all.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 1:8-17
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. In these nine verses Paul used one key word four times—at the beginning, in the middle, and twice at the end. What is this word, and why does Paul use it to lay a foundation when he could have chosen any other word?
3. A quick review. This letter is written to the Gentiles. Who were the Gentiles in Paul's day and who are the Gentiles in our day?
4. What is Paul's "big idea," his "big picture," and where is it found in this story?
5. Why is this good news such a big deal, and what does Paul mean by it?
6. In today's world how do people try to make themselves right with God?

Heart & Healing Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Would someone read verse 8 again? Paul tells us the Roman Gentiles had a reputation of being a faithful group of people, and their reputation was becoming known throughout the world. Over the coming months, what are your hopes and dreams for this group? What reputation do you hope this group will become known for?
Leader's Tip: This is a good time to conceptually introduce the Group Agreement so that next week you can start the process. Review the process by downloading the Start-Up Guidelines found on the Simple Church Training web page, under Common Downloads
2. Paul really wanted to connect with his friends in Rome to help them grow spiritually. If you were to choose someone to connect with who lives close by, who would it be, and why would you want to visit them?
3. Would someone read verse 11 again? If Paul were here with us now, what spiritual blessing would you like him to share with you to help you grow stronger in the Lord?
4. Tell us one thing from this story—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear.
5. Remember, **There is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God. God does it all.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

God has feelings too

[outline](#)

Romans 1:18-32

Extra – [Who Are God's Children?](#)

Message of Hope: God's love is like a magnet. It will naturally draw you to Him unless you persistently resist His love.

Planning Ahead: Did you get the [Journey to the Edge of Creation](#) two-part series ordered?

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or, they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* What boils your blood? Or breaks your heart?

Message of Hope: God's love for you is so powerful it will naturally draw you to Him unless you persistently resist His love.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 1:18-32

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. This question has two parts: What does Paul say boils God's heart? And, what is it that breaks His heart?
3. How did Paul say God made sure that every person has an equal opportunity to learn about God?
4. If every one has an equal opportunity, then why do we tell others about God's love?
5. In verses 21-25, Paul makes it very plain what happens to one who continually pushes God away. What happens to their heart and mind?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. If everyone has the same opportunity, why is it that so many people never find and follow God?
2. As you reflect on your life, how has God tried to get your attention?
3. Obviously, God is a very courteous God. He does not force a person to follow Him. Read at verses 28-32 in a modern version. If you were God, how would you feel?
4. How is God trying to pull you closer to Him?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **God's love is like a magnet. It will naturally draw you to Him unless you persistently resist His love.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

the milky way and beyond - DVD

outline

DVD: Show part II which is called, *The Milky Way and Beyond*.

Message of Hope: God is so big and we are so very small, yet God knows all about you and loves you.

Leader's Tip: There is one goal for this week – for people to get a glimpse of how big God is, and how little we are. This video helps us put ourselves in perspective.

Needed for Today: DVD, and video projector or big screen TV

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. This is a safe place for people to share and grow spiritually. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) What is the largest thing you have tried to comprehend or wrap your mind around?

Message of Hope: God is so big and we are so very small, yet God knows all about you and loves you.

Show DVD: part II which is called, “The Milky Way and Beyond.”

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What part of this DVD made an impression?
2. Read Romans 1:20. So now after watching this DVD, what do you think Paul was saying when he said that no one has any excuse whatsoever for not knowing God?
3. After watching this DVD, how would you try to describe God to some who no knowledge or understand what-so-ever?
4. How has this DVD changed your thinking about God?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. How has this DVD changed your heart-response to God?
2. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story.
3. Remember, **God is so big and we are so very small, yet God knows all about you and loves you.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

gaining God's approval

[outline](#)

Romans 1:28 – 2:16

extra – [The Savage](#); *If Grace, Why Works?* By Elder Bob Folkenberg Sr. [Video](#)

Message of Hope: Saved by Grace, not by works.

Leader's Tip: Our "good works" are like a windsock. They only indicate what direction our heart is heading. "Good works" do not ever save us or guarantee we will be saved, for it is possible to do "good works" for the wrong motives.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* Have you every been "under judgment"? It may have been in an actual city or county courtroom, or maybe someone criticized you for something you did. When were you "under judgment"?

Message of Hope: Saved by Grace, not by works.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 1:28 – 2:16

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Paul begins this story with a lot of doom, gloom, and judgment. What do you think he is trying to teach us about God's judgment?
3. Take another look at Romans 2:6 & 16. These two verses make it very clear that every person will be judged by God, whether or not they knew God. What does Paul say that everyone will be judged by?
4. If good works do not save me, then why does God judge our works? Leaders Tip: Our works are for our benefit. They are like a windsock. They help us know what direction we are headed. Are we headed towards God or away from Him? 1 John 2:3 says, "And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments." In other words, our works allow us to judge ourselves to see if we really belong to God. Our works don't save us. They are a windsock.

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Everyone one has sinned. Verse 4 says, "Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you?" How has God been patient with you?
2. God is a very patient and courteous God. He never forces a person. What was one of the very first steps you took toward God?
3. If you were to take another step toward God, what would it be?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story.
5. Remember, **you are saved by grace, not works.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

how to get right with God

[outline](#)

Romans 2:17-29

Message of Hope: God loves you and accepts you, no matter what, period.

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Welcome: We focuses on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. This is a safe place for people to share and grow spiritually. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.

Setting the Context:

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- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) Have you ever been discriminated against? Maybe you were too old or too young, had the wrong color of skin, made too much or too little money. The list goes on and on. Have you ever been discriminated against?

Message of Hope: God loves you and accepts you, no matter what, period.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 2:17-29

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Why do you think Paul was so hard on the Jews?
3. If you were a Jew, how would you have felt about, or responded to, what Paul was saying?
4. For Gentiles, how is Paul's message such good news?
5. Here is a two-part question: (1) How does Paul describe what a "true Jew" is? (2) How does Paul describe what "true circumcision" is? (Leaders Tip: After some group discussion, reread verse 29 from the included translation. Now summarize what Paul just said.)

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. How do people try to make themselves look right with God on the outside?
2. When was one of the earlier times you remember inviting God into your life?
3. Giving our life to God is something we have to do every day. It is as easy as saying each morning, "God I give you my life today." If God was to change your heart, what do think he would start working on?
4. What are the kinds of things that keep people from letting God change their heart?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story.
6. There may be someone here today that has not given his life to God, or maybe that person has walked away from God and wants to give his life to God again. I will pray a simple pray that you can repeat silently.
Leaders Tip: Let's bow our heads: "Forgive me of my sins; Live in my heart; Protect me from Satan."
7. Remember, **God loves you and accepts you, no matter what, period.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

stinken thinken

[outline](#)

Romans 3:1-8

Message of Hope: God is always honest and faithful.

***Leader's Tip:** Sometimes it can be hard to put hands and feet on faith. So often faith seems so theoretical we have a hard time applying it to everyday life. The questions today are designed to talk about faithfulness (as a verb), as opposed to faith (as a noun). We want people to discover what faithfulness looks like, tastes like, smells like, and feels like.*

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Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to share and contribute.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* Now be honest, when was a time when you talked yourself into doing something you suspected was not the right thing to do?

Message of Hope: God is always honest and faithful.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 3:1-8

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. When people hear the word, "faithfulness," all kinds of ideas come to mind. In today's world, what do you think real faithfulness looks like?
3. For all kinds of reasons people do what they do, say what they say, and think what they think. What do you think motivates people to come up with this "stinking thinking" kind of thought pattern, as found in verses 5-8?
4. There are people who say, "God is not faithful." What do you think made them come to that conclusion?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. How has your faithfulness been tested these past months?
2. How did you discover that God is faithful and can be trusted?
3. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story.
4. Remember, **God is always honest and faithful.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

utterly hopeless

[outline](#)

Romans 3:9-20

Message of Hope: Hopelessness leads us to Hope.

***Leader's Tip:** Advertisers know they must first create a need. Believe it or not, you find the same idea in the Bible. Paul knows he is going to be sharing the best news one could ever hope to hear, period. But before he does, he creates the need by showing the utterly hopelessness of our lives. Until people realize, and emotionally feel, their hopelessness, they have no need for Jesus.*

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- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When was a time when you were asked to do something that you knew—or at least you thought—you could not do; or you felt you were not strong enough, smart enough, experienced enough, fast enough, or tall enough for the task?

Message of Hope: Hopelessness leads us to Hope.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 3:9-20

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Verse 9 basically says that it does not matter who you are. You, like the rest of us, are a sinner. Why do you think Paul is so blunt about this?
3. It gets worse. Listen 10-18 from the Message Bible: Now, why do you think Paul wants us to understand about us and our relationship with God?

“There's nobody living right, not even one,
nobody who knows the score,
nobody alert for God.
They've all taken the wrong turn;
they've all wandered down blind alleys.
No one's living right;
I can't find a single one.
Their throats are gaping graves,

their tongues slick as mudslides.
Every word they speak is tinged with poison.
They open their mouths and pollute the air.
They race for the honor of sinner-of-the-year,
litter the land with heartbreak and ruin,
Don't know the first thing about living with others.
They never give God the time of day.”

4. Let's take an honest look at the opposite side of the argument. Sometimes people say that God's law was done away with when Jesus died on the cross. If God's law did not exist, how would that help us, how would we be better off?
5. If you were to choose one word to describe our condition before God, what would you choose?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. As you think about your life, what unique, interesting, or unexplainable thing has happened to you where God might have been trying to get your attention?
2. Why do people continue to avoid God, even when He does incredible—and sometimes miraculous—things for them?
3. What is something that God has done for you just because He loves you?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **Hopelessness leads us to Hope**. How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Leader's Tips: Saying the Sinner's Prayer is simply a way of declaring to God that you are relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior. There are no "magical" words that result in salvation. It is only faith in Jesus' death and resurrection that can save us. If you understand you are a sinner and in need of salvation through Jesus Christ, here is a Sinner's Prayer we can pray to God:

You can repeat after me: "God, I know I am a sinner. I know I deserve the consequences of my sin. However, I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness. I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Lord, for saving me and forgiving me! I trust you with my life. Please come into my life today and start to change me to be like you. In Jesus name, Amen!" Welcome to the family of God!

different way

[outline](#)

Romans 3:21-31

Message of Hope: You are made right with God by placing your faith in Jesus.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. This is a safe place for people to share and grow spiritually. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.

Setting the Context:

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- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) What is some of the best news you ever received?

Message of Hope: You are made right with God by placing your faith in Jesus.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 3:21-31

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Let's read the verses where we found the word "right"? (for starters, see verses 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30).
3. Depending on your translation, the word "right" is often used with one of three words: trust, believe, or faith. What are the similarities and differences between these three words?
4. How would you describe the difference between "the old way of being made right with God," and "the new way of being made right with God?"
5. How would you summarize Paul's big ideas in this story?
6. Let's read verse 31 again. This verse seems to be out of place. What do you think Paul is getting at?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. As you were growing up, what picture of God did you learn from your parents, school, church, or TV?
2. As people begin to understand that God is on their side, that God loves them and wants to make them right with Him, what are the next steps that happens in their lives?
3. In our Spiritual growth, we never "arrive." There is always room to grow closer to Jesus. Take a few moments to reflect on your life. Where do think your next spiritual growth step might be?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **You are made right with God by placing your faith in Jesus.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

saved by faith, NOT works

[outline](#)

Romans 4:1-25

Message of Hope: We are saved by faith alone, period.

***Leader's Tip:** Leader's Tip: Resist the temptation to "balance" the gospel. Paul will do that in the next few weeks (chapter 6). Let people bask in the Good News that God makes us right with Him through faith – not by our works. Circumcision was the sign of being part of God's people. Unfortunately, circumcision (what I do to make myself right with God) replaced faith (what God does to make me right with Himself). People started pointing to Abraham's circumcision as proof that we can save our self by our works (circumcision). So Paul sets out to show that even Abraham was saved by faith – NOT by works.*

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* What would you say if someone gave you thirty seconds to answer this question: "What makes Christianity different than all the other world religions?"

Message of Hope: We are saved by faith alone, period.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 4:1-25

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Let's go back to verse 11. (1) Which comes first - Abraham's works (circumcision) or his faith in God? (2) Why does it matter which one comes first?
3. There are at least seven verses which make it clear that we are saved by faith in God, NOT works. Which verses are they?

***Leader's Tip:** Make sure people see verse 24 where Paul changes his focus and talks about how we can also be declared righteous just like Abraham.*

4. Paul says it over and over and over, we are saved by faith in God, NOT by our works. Why do people want to do something to earn their own salvation?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. In what ways have you have tried to earn your own salvation?
2. Personal stories which tell how people accepted Jesus as the ultimate boss in their lives are always inspiring. If you are willing, share a short summary of your story.
3. What part of today's discussion inspires you and gives you hope?
4. Let's ask the "so what" questions. If you believed 100% that you were saved by faith alone in Jesus, how would you live your life differently?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **we are saved by faith alone, period.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

forever friends

[outline](#)

Romans 5:1-11

Message of Hope: Your salvation is secure when you are a friend of God.

***Leader's Tip:** Once again, let people bask in the discovery of how much God loves them. The deeper a person intellectually and emotionally understands this, the greater will be their desire to follow God out of pure gratitude for what His Son, Jesus, did for them. Starting in chapter 6 Paul will shift gears and begin to address "cheap grace" thinking.*

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- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) Who is one of your best friends and why have they become a good friend?

Message of Hope: Your salvation is secure when you are a friend of God.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 5:1-11

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. What makes a friend, a true friend?
3. How does Paul explain that Jesus makes us friends of God?
4. People talk about new houses, new cars, new clothes, new furniture, and getting a new job, but what does it mean to get a "new perspective?" And, how does a "new perspective" change our thinking (self-talk) and our actions?
5. Re-read verses 1 and 9. There is a "new perspective" that Paul repeats twice in these eleven verses. What is the phrase he uses?

***Leader's Tip:** Imagine visiting a friend's home. During the night you wake up and need to use the restroom. It is pitch black. You get up and grope your way toward the restroom. New perspective is turning on the light. Your thinking and actions change. You walk confidently, faster, and directly to the restroom. You are not afraid of running into something, stubbing your toe, or breaking something. You have a new perspective.*

6. Starting in Romans chapter 5, Paul's language changes. He assumes you and I will think and act differently because we have been made right. Read this story again, one verse at a time, and highlight how person thinks and acts differently.

Heart & Healing Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. If you really believe you have been made right with God, how do you live life differently?
2. How is God using difficulties in your life to prepare you for Heaven?
3. If someone were to ask you how they could become a friend of God, how would you explain it to them?
4. What part of this discussion encouraged you?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning--that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **your salvation is secure when you are a friend of God.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

two destinies

[outline](#)

Romans 5:12-21

Message of Hope: Eternal death is NOT your only option.

***Leader's Tip:** This story will move beyond the typical "accept Jesus and be saved" story. It begins to introduce what it means to radically surrender and turn one's life over to Jesus as the new boss, or CEO. Yes, this starts with a choice, but goes way beyond.*

***Needed for Today:** Have a handout that looks like the chart in Listening & Learning Question #3 ready to give everyone. A half-sheet of paper should be adequate. Everyone will also need a pen.*

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When was a time when you benefited because of another person's good decision?

Message of Hope: Eternal death is NOT your only option.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 5:12-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention?
2. Verse 13 says that God's law had not been given. Does that mean it did not exist? Explain.
3. Paul tells us why God gave his law. Why did he give it and what verses tell us that?
4. Paul compares Adam and Jesus. Make a list of all the differences you can find.

Leader's Tip: Below is listed a few differences. Let the group come up with their own list. But remember you are part of the group, so humbly lead and fill in potential gaps. Be sure to write the list your group come up with so that everyone can see it. The contrast of the last line is the most important. For example:

Adams Sin Brought	Jesus Death Brought
brought death, v15	brought forgiveness, v15
brought condemnation, v16	brought acceptance by, v16
brought death that rules over us, v17	brought triumph over sin and death, v17
brought disobedience, v19	brought obedience, v19
ultimate result=death	ultimate result=eternal life
default destiny=death	destiny choice=eternal life
automatically inherited by every person, v12	accepted by some people, vs 17, 21

5. Read verse 20 again and notice the last part of the verse. How do you think people are tempted to abuse this verse?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. As you reflect on the differences between what Adam did and what Jesus did, what part seems unfair and what part seems too good to be true?
2. What would it be like if God forced people to accept Jesus?
3. Read verse 17 again. If someone asked you, "How can I receive this free gift," how would you answer them?
4. When did you begin to realize that God was doing everything he could possibly do, short of forcing you, to make sure you could have eternal life?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **eternal death is NOT your only option.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up: If there is someone here who feels that God is inviting them to either accept his gift of being made right with God for the first time, or feels the need to recommit his life to God, then repeat the sinners prayer with me. I'll say each sentence and then give you an opportunity to say it after me. "God, I know I am a sinner. I know I deserve the consequences of my sin. However, I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness. I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Lord, for saving me and forgiving me! Amen!" Welcome to the family of God! Do me a favor before you leave, if you said the sinner's prayer for the first time, come and let me know. I want to help you grown as a new Christian.

how to die right, and live to tell about it (1)

[outline](#)

Romans 6:1-14

Message of Hope: Water baptism is how we die and live to tell about it.

Needed for Today: Have a handout that looks like the chart in *Listening & Learning Question #2* ready to give everyone, except make the columns extend to the bottom of the 8 1/2 x 11 page of paper. Everyone will also need a pen.

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- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When you hear the word "slave," what are the first two words that come to your mind?

Message of Hope: Water baptism is how we die and live to tell about it.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 5:17; 6:1-14

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention?
2. Keep your place in Romans 6, but turn back to the very first verse in Romans. What is Paul hoping we will understand about slavery?
3. To put it bluntly, Paul is trying to help us understand that to be set free from sin-slavery means we become a slaves of Jesus. There is no other way to be set free from sin. Now let's be honest with ourselves, in our world today being a slave is not something we seriously consider, nor do we do not want to think about it. We want to be in control of ourselves. We proudly say, "We will be a slave to nobody!" But for this discussion, let's say that there are only two options: being a slave to sin, or being a slave to Jesus. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages that you think of.

Leader's Tip: *Do one column at a time, starting from the left. Ask the group to say their thoughts out loud so that everyone can write down the Advantages and Disadvantages.*

Slave to Sin	Slave to Jesus
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Advantages</i>
<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>

4. To divorce sin and become a slave of Jesus, we have to die. How does Paul say we actually die to sin, and yet live to tell others about it? (verses 3-4)
5. Why is baptism so important and what does it symbolizes? (verses 7-8)
6. Paul does not describe what baptism is like because many of his readers have already been baptized. But not all of us may know what Bible baptism is like. Keep you finger here in Romans and let's ask the Bible to tell us what real Bible baptism is like. The best place to figure this out would be to ask Jesus, "How was Jesus Baptized?" Let's read Matthew 3:16-17. Based on this description, how would you describe real Bible baptism?

"After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. There are probably some in this group who have been baptized by going under the water. What was your baptism like, and what was special about it?
2. What is an area in your life that Satan still tries to tempt you?

Leaders Tip: *As people share, ask some to volunteer to pray for that person when we have closing prayer.*

Wrap Up: *After leader's Invitation, immediately follow with closing prayer:*

Baptism is the only way to die to sin-slavery, to be set free from the power of sin in your life, and to follow Jesus all the way. If you have not yet been baptized like Jesus was, and want to follow Jesus all the way, let's talk before we head home.

how to die right, and live to tell about it (2)

outline

Romans 6:15-23

Message of Hope: God is stronger than Satan, but God will never force you to obey Him.

Leader's Tip: *Caution! There may be people who might want to spend group time arguing theology in today's story, especially the part about being "free from the law." Often they want to say that since I am free from the law, I don't have to obey the law of God. That is precisely what Paul argues against, "does this mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!" This is an age-old argument that even Paul had to address. Three pointers, from the book of Romans:*

1. *The purpose of God's law is to show me my sin. If I don't know how sinful my life is, then I would not need Jesus to set me free from my sin-slavery. See Romans 3:20; 7:7.*
2. *Sometimes it is helpful to ask if they really want everyone to act as if God's law does not exist any more, as in stealing, lying, taking someone's wife or husband, etc..*
3. *"The Savage" back in Romans 2:14-16, who never knew about the law of God, still had it written in his heart and was held responsible for his actions, even though he/she had never heard of God, Jesus, or did not own a Bible.*

Today's questions will help keep the group focused. Be careful not to chase theological and philosophical rabbit trails. This group is about relational Bible study where meaningful relationships, can be built.

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Check-In:

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first). When were you forced to do something, even if it was good, that you did not want to do?

Message of Hope: God is stronger than Satan, but God will never force you to obey Him.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 6:15-23

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention?
2. In verse 15 Paul answers his own question. What is his question, and how would you explain it to someone who asked you?
3. Based on the verses we have read, what is Paul's definition of slavery? (verse 16)
4. This is a quiz question from last week: In verse 18 Paul said, "Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living." According to Paul, what is it that moved them from one side of the fence to the other side of the fence. (Romans 6:2-4)
5. Verses 21-22 teach us that everything we do is leading us either to "eternal death" or "eternal life." The end result is very serious. You might think the answer to this questions is rather obvious, but let's give it some deeper thought. Why do you think God is so patient with people?
6. People often ask, Once I'm baptized, does that mean I will not sin anymore since I'm free from sin and the power of sin? What does verse 19 & 22 teach us?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Satan knows our strengths and weaknesses. This past week where did you see Satan showing up in your life?
2. Verse 19 says, "Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy." Let's get real practical. How do I go about giving myself to righteous living?
3. Ask any Christian and they will honestly tell you that just because you become a Christian does not mean your life will be smooth sailing. Satan is alive and well, and he will do everything he can to discourage you. He is angry that you have been baptized, and he is going to try get you back on his side. In what ways do you feel like you are "the rope" in a tug-of-war between God and Satan?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **God is stronger than Satan, but God will never force you to obey Him.** We have talked about how Satan does everything he can to prevent you from become a God-slave. The good news is, God is stronger than Satan, but God will never force you to obey Him. How would you like this group to pray and encourage you?

Group Closure:

1. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle.
2. Blessing List
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week. Distribute the Connection Card envelope and the invitation cards.

Lunch

set free to do good

[outline](#)

Romans 7:1-6

Message of Hope: We are set free to do good.

Leader's Tip #1: *Since it is possible for both Christians and non-Christians to do good deeds, what are the differences between the two? Keep in mind two questions as you lead people through this study: 1) What role do one's motives play in their good deeds? And, 2) What other blessings beyond motives come from being a God-slave.* **Leader's Tip #2:** *Have you ever heard of the law of gravity? If I jump out of a plane without a parachute, what lives and what dies? The law of gravity lives, and I die. Once I am dead, does the law of gravity still live? Of course, but in this example I am literally dead to the law. So it is with God's law. When I am baptized, I die to God's law, but is God's law dead? No. In fact, God's law is still written on my heart. But now I am alive to the Law Giver, and I am alive to the Spirit of God.* **Leader's Tip #3:** *Think of it another way: God's law is like a fence. Prior to knowing the Law Giver, the fence is in a circle. It corrals me so I don't self-destruct. It is a set of rules that protect me, even though I don't understand why. Once I accept Jesus as my life-boss and I am baptized, the fence gate opens and I start walking down life's highway behind Jesus. Now the fence is on both sides of the highway, but since my eyes are focused on Jesus, I don't even notice the fence. But if I take my eyes off Jesus, I see the fence.*

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Check-In:

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurer:

God Moments:

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When was a time when you did something good for someone with no strings attached?

Message of Hope: We are set free to do good.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 7:1-6

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention?
2. Rules are all around us. We all have to live by them, or this place would be a mess. So, why is it that when we are told we cannot do something, we want to do it all the more?
3. What are all the things these verses tell us about the law?
4. What do you think is the "power of the law" that we died to? (verses 4 and 5)
5. I know people who do not claim to follow Christ, but they also do good deeds. So if outward appearances look the same, how can we tell the difference between Christians and non-Christians?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. How do we know what our own true motives are for doing what we do?
2. As you think back over the past few weeks, when was a recent time when you did good deeds with pure motives?
3. How about the flip side of the coin, in what way did Satan tempt you to do a good deed for selfish reasons?
4. What are some good deeds, with pure motives, that bring you the most joy and happiness in life?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **We are set free to do good.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Closure:

1. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle.
2. Blessing List
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week. Distribute the Connection Card envelope and the invitation cards.

Lunch

the purpose of God's law

[outline](#)

Romans 7:7-13

Message of Hope: God is fighting on your side.

Leader's Tip #1: *You will notice this Leader's Guide begins to change. As leaders, we have been asking God how we can move from being the leaders, to God/Jesus being the leader of Simple Church. Leader's Tip #2:* Satan has done a masterful job in getting the Christian world to believe that the problem is God's law. The real problem is Satan and sin-slavery! This story prepares people for next week's story in which they will be introduced to God's law. Paul's readers knew what he was talking about when he said, "Do not commit adultery" (Romans 7:3) and "Do not covet" (Romans 7:7). These are two of the 10 Commandments that Paul quotes from Exodus 20. Next week we will turn to God's law and read it together so people can see for themselves what Paul is talking about. For some this will be the first introduction or exposure. It is NOT the time to "prove or proof text" the Sabbath.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* When did someone take advantage of you?

Message of Hope: God is fighting on your side.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 7:7-13

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention?
2. What verse catches your attention? Why?
3. What does Paul say is the purpose of God's Law?
4. How do we know from this story which law Paul is talking about? (verse 7, explore the quote)
5. This is amazing. Satan was created by God and received his life from God, then he turns around and goes to war against God. But Satan does something else. He tries to get you and me (to whom God also gave life) to join Him in his fight against God. What is the BIG IDEA that Paul hoping we will understand from these verses?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Satan has one goal – to turn you and me away from God in whatever way he can. Let's answer honestly, how does Satan try to get us to turn away from God?
2. God is very patient with us. He does not force us, but gives us the freedom of choice. That means, God will never force you to accept and follow Him. We have to make that choice. Where do you sense God is encouraging you to take your next step of faith?
3. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
4. Remember, **God is fighting on your side.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Closure:

1. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle.
2. Blessing List
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week. Distribute the Connection Card envelope and the invitation cards.

Lunch

back to God's basics

[outline](#)

Romans 7:14-25

Message of Hope: Jesus is the only person who can free you from sin and death.

Leader's Tip: *In Romans 7 twice Paul quoted from the 10 commandments. That is the best argument to show that Paul, the greatest New Testament missionary who wrote the majority of our New Testament, believed in God's law. It was not done away with or nailed to the cross. Today's study will take people to the 10 commandments. The questions are designed to draw attention to the Sabbath, but this is not a time to "prove" that Saturday is the Sabbath. It is a time to introduce and establish God's law as foundational for New Testament believers. Remember, pray that questions about the Sabbath will come up in group, BUT DO NOT answer those questions in the group. Stay on track with your relational Bible study, and set up a time next week AFTER the regular group session around the kitchen table, for those who want to explore what the Bible teaches about the Sabbath. Your opinion does not count. This study will take 30 minutes longer than the average study. So start the Kick-Off Questions 10 minutes earlier and plan on having a short closing prayer.*

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) There is a book called, All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten. What is one of life's basic lessons you learned as a child?

Message of Hope: Jesus is the only person who can free you from sin and death.

Read Bible Story from modern translation: Romans 7:14-25

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention?
2. What verse catches your attention? Why?
3. One trivia question: When did Paul write Romans—before or after Jesus died and rose from the grave?
4. After Jesus had died and risen, Paul wrote to the Romans and said, “the law is good. The trouble is not with the law, but with me, Romans 7:14. So what is it that really motivates people to say that God's law was done away with and was nailed to the cross?
5. Did any of you notice? For the past two weeks Paul has been quoting from God's law. Look at these verses again. Romans 7:3 talked about not committing adultery, and Romans 7:7 said “Do not covet.” I don't know about you but it is really hard to find a believer that would say, “Go ahead. I do not mind if you sleep with my husband tonight. Just this one time will not hurt anything.” Does anyone remember where God's law is found in the Bible?
6. Before we read the 10 Commandments, let's read Exodus 31:18 . Why do you think this is the only part of the Bible that God wrote with his own finger and he wrote it in stone?
7. Now read Exodus 20:2-17.

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What is God trying to say when He included verse 2?
2. Which of the 10 commandments is the most popular and which is least popular?
3. Only one of the commandments begins with the word, “Remember.” That seems odd. Why do you think He did that?
4. Which of these 10 commandment do you sense God is inviting you to obey as you next step as you trust and follow God?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **Jesus is the only person who can free you from sin and death.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Closure:

1. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle.
2. Blessing List
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week. Distribute The Connection Card and the invitation cards.

Lunch

no condemnation!

[outline](#)

Romans 8:1-17

Message of Hope: When you belong to Jesus there is no condemnation!

Leader's Tip: Provide hope. Today will give Christians an opportunity to explain what it was like when they accepted Christ, and there will be an opportunity for people to accept Christ for the first time, or, some may "come home." You may have the opportunity of leading some of your group to Christ for the first time. Be sensitive to those who have walked away from Christ and want to rededicate their lives to Him.

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Breakfast

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- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When was a time you felt condemned?

Message of Hope: When you belong to Jesus there is no condemnation!

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 8:1-17

(Encourage people to stick to this story as we discuss it instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. If you think back over the past weeks that we have been studying Romans, and if you were asked, "How does a person know if they belong to Jesus?", what would you say?
3. Now let's read verses 12-13 from different Bible translations. If you were asked, "How do I stay connected to Jesus?" How would you explain it?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. If there is no condemnation for those who belong to Jesus, why do so many people feel that God is against them and out to condemn them?
2. When did you begin to realize that God loves you, that He is on your side, and that He does not condemn you, but wants to save you?
3. Most likely there are some here who have accepted Jesus as Boss and chief CEO of their life. In other words, they belong to Jesus. Would you be willing to briefly share with us why you accepted Jesus? Explain what it was like, so that others have a better idea what it means to belong to Jesus.
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **when you belong to Jesus there is no condemnation!** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

After being here today, there may be someone who would like to give his life to Christ for the first time, or maybe someone feels he has wandered and just wants to "come home". Silently repeat this surrender prayer with me.

"God, I know I am a sinner. I know that I deserve the consequences of my sin. However, I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness. I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Lord, for saving me and forgiving me! I trust you with my life. Please come into my life today and start to change me to be like you. In Jesus name, Amen!" Welcome to the family of God!

Wrap Up:

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

ultimate freedom

[outline](#)

Romans 8:18-30

Message of Hope: Heaven is when we will ultimately be set free.

***Leader's Tip:** Heaven, when we will ultimately be set free, is Paul's BIG IDEA in this story. But Paul touches on a number of other "big" topics that could derail the group's focus on the hope that Heaven gives us. So be careful and keep the main thing the main thing. You will notice that the questions do touch in on these other items. They are in the story.*

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Check-In:

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Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) If you could be set free from anything here in this world, what would you choose?

Message of Hope: Heaven is when we will ultimately be set free.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 8:18-30

(Encourage people to stick to this story as we discuss it instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. What part of Heaven are you looking forward too?
3. If Heaven will be so wonderful, why is it that so many people act like it is not a big deal?
4. What do we learn about prayer from this story?
5. People sometimes say, “I don't know how to pray.” What does the Holy Spirit do with people who don't know how to pray.
6. In this sinful world everybody experiences suffering. If there is any good that can come from suffering, how does suffering help us prepare for heaven?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What present-day sufferings are you struggling with?
2. When was the last time you felt like you did not know how to pray?
3. How have you seen God bring something good out of a bad situation?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **Heaven is when we will ultimately be set free.** What is one thing that you struggle with and would like to be set free from? We will pray for you right now.

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

God's most valuable possession

[outline](#)

Romans 8:31-39

Message of Hope: You are God's most valuable possession.

Leader's Tip: *Satan has done a masterful job. Many believe that God sits at a distance watching this world as if it provides entertainment. Today, people need to walk out of group knowing five things:*

1. *They are God's most valuable possession, verse 32.*
2. *That God does not condemn them, verses 33-34.*
3. *That there is nothing that can separate them from God's love, verses 35-39.*
4. *They need to know that victory is guaranteed through Christ.*

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* In this world we have possessions that we have worked hard for, that have been handed down, or that carry a lot of meaning. What would you say is one of your most prized or meaningful possessions?

Message of Hope: You are God's most valuable possession.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 8:31-39

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Why do you think some songs describe God as distant and uninvolved in our lives?
3. Why do people think God is against them and out to condemn them?
4. Verse 35 asks a question that is answered in verse 37. What does the word “separated” imply and what can we learn?
5. Let's identify all the verses that give us a promise. Where are they?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Verses 35-39 lists difficulties. Which ones does Satan use to try to discourage you and make you feel that God has separated Himself from you?
2. When you are feeling overwhelmed, what are some Bible promises that you can hold onto for hope and remind you that you are God's most important possession?
3. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
4. Remember:
 - Verse 32 tells us, you are God's most valuable possession, so valuable that He did not even spare giving His Son for you.
 - Verse 33-34 tells us, God does not condemn you, verses 33-34.
 - Verse 35-39 tells us, there is nothing that can separate you from God's love, verses 35-39.
 - Verse 37 tells us, victory is guaranteed through Jesus Christ.
5. How can this group pray for you?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

God will be God

[outline](#)

Romans 9:1-16

Message of Hope: God has chosen you to be one of His children.

Leader's Tip: Two goals for this study – to help people see how God pours blessings and mercy into their life and 2) to help people see how God uses them to pour blessings and mercy into other people's lives.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Breakfast

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) When was a time when you received an unexpected gift from someone?

Message of Hope: God has chosen you to be one of His children.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 9:1-16

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. In verses 3 and 4 Paul is grieving the fact that the people God chose are not saved. He says, “I would be willing to be forever cursed – cut off from Christ! -- if that would save them [the people of Israel].” How is it possible for God to choose people, but yet they are still lost?
3. Sometimes—no, many times—we have a hard time letting God be God. Why do we want God to fit into our box and play by the rules we think are fair?
4. According to this story, who are God's children?
5. If a Jew had been listening to this letter, especially verses 6-8, what thoughts and feelings would have been going through their mind?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Verse 16 says, “So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it, nor work for it.” Have you ever stopped to notice how God goes about showing mercy to people. Let's go around the circle and share one way which you think God has shown you mercy.
2. Where do you see God using you to bring His mercy to other people's lives?
3. God will be God, and many times we don't understand what he is doing. What is an area in your life that has not made sense to you, an area where you questioned (or maybe are currently questioning) what God is doing?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **God has chosen you to be one of this Children.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

mercy came running

[outline](#)

Romans 9:16-33

Message of Hope: When I could not reach mercy, mercy came running to me.

Leader's Tip: "Mercy Came Running" is the name of a song inspired by Romans 9. [Listen to song and read lyrics](#) or [Watch music video](#).

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* When has someone done something for you that you did not deserve?

Message of Hope: When I could not reach mercy, mercy came running to me.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 9:16-33

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. How do you make sense of verses 14 & 18?
3. How would you explain mercy to someone?
4. In what ways do people try to earn God's mercy by their works?
5. There must be a reason why Paul quotes from all the Old Testament verses. What is the message he is trying to get across to us?
6. Beginning in verse 30, Paul talks about two ways people try to get right with God. What are the obvious, and not-so-obvious, differences between the groups?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Paul makes it clear that God searches for us before we search for Him. No matter how you look at it, we can only respond to God's mercy. God goes looking for us first. In your life, how has God been looking for you?
2. When God gets your attention, what do you think your next step will be?
3. Where are you growing in your understanding of God's will for your life?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **when you could not reach God, He cam running to you.**

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

salvation is for everyone

[outline](#)

Romans 10:1-21

Message of Hope: Salvation is offered to everyone.

Leader's Tip: In chapter 12 Paul is going to shift gears. Chapters 10 & 11 are a summary of the first half of Romans.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) What were a few of the hard-and-fast rules you grew up with?

Message of Hope: Salvation is offered to everyone.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 10:1-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. What would you say is the general view in the world today about how a person can get to heaven?
3. Let's find the verses and understand what Paul says about how a person is saved.
4. What part do you think obedience plays into all this?
5. Let's read verse 2 again. In today's world, how are we at risk for misdirected zeal?
6. How do the questions found in verses 14-15 challenge you?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Let's read verse 17 from several versions again. How do you go about strengthening your faith?
2. What do you see as some of the bigger distractions that weaken your faith?
3. Verse 20 give us hope. How did God search for you before you were searching for Him?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **Salvation is offered to everyone; we must accept it by believing and confessing that Jesus is Lord of our life.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

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3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

God wants you back!

[outline](#)

Romans 11:1-36

Message of Hope: No matter how far you think you have fallen, God wants you back!

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* When was a time when you felt rejected?

Message of Hope: No matter how far you think you have fallen, God wants you back!

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 11:1-36

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. Why do you think Paul includes the Elijah example in this story?
3. I thought God wanted everyone to choose to follow Him. So, how do you make sense of verses 7-11?
4. The Olive Tree teaches lessons about being cut off from God, being grafted into God, about God's character, and about my freedom of choice. What lessons do you see?
5. According to this Bible story, on what basis are people saved? (verses 5-6)
6. How is it possible for someone to try so hard to please God that they actually reject his love for them?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Do you see yourself as a Jew who fell away and is now coming back, or do you see yourself as a Gentile who is coming to God for the first time? Explain?
2. Be honest with yourself, if God had not been merciful to you while you went your own way and did your own thing, describe where your life might be now?
3. If you were to take a significant next step toward God, what would that step be like?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **no matter how far you think you have fallen, God wants you back!** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
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3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

living God's will today

[outline](#)

Romans 12:1-8

Message of Hope: God has a wonderful plan for you life, but he will not force you to live it.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* When you hear the word sacrifice what thoughts and feelings come to your mind?

Message of Hope: God has a wonderful plan for you life, but he will not force you to live it.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 12:1-8

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention
2. What connections do you see in verse one between “God mercy” and “offering our bodies as living sacrifice?”
3. Let's be honest with ourselves, Satan is a master at getting people to subtly conform to the patterns of this world. How do you think Satan goes about this? What are his most successful tools?
4. Let's really explore this next question, How does a person go about offering his body as a living sacrifice 24/7?
5. Verse 5 says, “And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.” What does it mean to belong to each other? What does it mean to need each other?
6. How can we do a better job of this in this group?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. If you could know God's will in one area, of your life, what would that be?
2. What is a “pattern of this world” that is making it difficult for God to transform your mind so you can live out God's will in your life?
3. If you gave it your best guess, what “abilities” has God given you that He is depending on you to share with, and contribute to, this group?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **God has a wonderful plan for you life but he will not force you to live it.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
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3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

where rubber meets the road

[outline](#)

Romans 12:9-21

Message of Hope: You can love your enemies.

Leader's Tip: Remember the context of this story is a continuation of 12:1, which discusses God's mercy and how we should offer our bodies as living sacrifices. Today's story gets real practical on how to do this.

Needed for Today: Everyone will need a pen/pencil and a sheet of paper.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)* When you hear the word “enemy,” what thoughts or feelings come to your mind?

Message of Hope: You can love your enemies.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 12:9-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. If you were to sum up this story with one word, what word would you choose?
3. The first part of this story gives us instruction on how to love, and live with, each other. The second part teaches us how to love, and live with, enemies. In what verse does this shift take place?

Directions: For this next exercise everyone will need a pen/pencil and a piece of paper. We also need one person to slowly read this story so the group members can write down the list of commands.

4. Let's make a list of all the commands found in this story. Then draw a line between the first part and the second part.
5. Honest evaluation is a good thing. Let's take a few minutes to openly discuss among ourselves how we see ourselves relative to these commands. Which commands do you see as our strengths? Which commands do you see as our weaknesses?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Directions: During the next 60 seconds, draw a circle around two commands that are easy for you, then underline two commands that are difficult for you

1. What are the “easy commands” that you circled?
2. What two commands are difficult for you, and what makes them difficult?
3. In every day practical life, how do you not let evil get the best of you? How do you conquer it by doing good?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **you can love our enemies**. How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
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3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

respect for authority

[outline](#)

Romans 13:1-7

Message of Hope: Believe it or not, authority is a good thing.

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Check-In:

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2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

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God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
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- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When you hear the word “authority,” what thoughts and feelings come to mind? When was the last time you got a traffic ticket? How did you feel about the police officer?

Message of Hope: Believe it or not, authority is a good thing.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 13:1-7
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. In what ways do people typically disobey the laws of the land?
3. What “excuses” do people use to justify their disobedience?
4. Why do you think Paul is giving this instruction?
5. How does a person decide which laws of the land go against God's laws?
6. What is our “conscience” that verse five talks about, and what role does it play in our decision-making?

Heart & Healing Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Someone read verse one again. Let's be honest, what authority do you find yourselves having a hard time obeying? Why?
2. In a very practical way, how can you do a better job of submitting to, and obeying, authorities?
3. What are some authorities in your life that have provided you protection or have been a blessing to you?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **believe it or not, authority is a good thing.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

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Lunch

getting dressed

[outline](#)

Romans 13:8-14

Message of Hope: Jesus is coming soon. Get ready!

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Check-In:

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2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
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- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
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Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) What was the first debt or loan you took?

Message of Hope: Jesus is coming soon. Get ready!

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 13:8-14

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. What makes a neighbor “your neighbor”? Who is our neighbor?
3. This is the second time Paul is quoting from God moral law. Let's read it together. (Tell me, where in the Bible is it found?)
4. How do people love themselves in today's world?
5. What does it mean to “love your neighbor as yourself”?
6. How would you use verses 11-14 to explain why holy living is important and what it looks like?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. If we are saved by grace, then why does Paul spend time talking about the importance of our behavior in verse 13?
2. Verse 12 says, “The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So don't live in darkness. Get rid of your evil deeds. Shed them like dirty clothes. Clothe yourselves with the armor of right living, as those who live in the light.” How would your life be different if you were to shed some dirty clothes and put on some of Jesus' clothes?
3. Paul is writing to people who are Christians, and he tells them in verse 11 to “wake up.” Let's be honest with ourselves, if Paul was writing to you, what would he tell you to “wake up” from?
4. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **Jesus is coming soon. Get ready!** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
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3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

culture shock

[outline](#)

Romans 14:1-13

Message of Hope: God is the best judge we can possibly have.

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Check-In:

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) What other cultures have you encountered, either locally or in another country? Share in 30 seconds a cultural blooper you experienced.

Leader's Tip: To help this story make sense, let me give you some New Testament background.

Step back into New Testament culture. What was the root of the problem in this story? Over what were they judging each other? The Gentiles who had come into the church from paganism were offended because the Jewish Christians ate food that had been sacrificially offered to idols. And the Jewish Christians judged the Gentile church members because they had no respect for the ceremonial days that they still observed from Judaism.

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Message of Hope: God is the best judge we can possibly have.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 14:1-13

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. If you were to summarize the main problem Paul is addressing in this story, what would it be?
3. What verses show us what real problem Paul was addressing? (4, 10, 13)
4. People often ignore the real issues Paul is addressing and use this story to justify the food they eat (meat or vegetarian), and the day they worship on (Sabbath or any other day). Let's be honest with this Bible story and put these two topics in their proper context. We need to step back in New Testament culture. Christianity is spreading from the Jews to the Gentiles. Verse one sets the context. What was “disputable” about food? What was “disputable” about sacred days?

Leaders Tip on the food question: *There are two areas that need clarification: **First**, Paul does not tell us in this story what was being disputed. So, we have to look at other Bible stories from the same time period to find out what was being disputed. 1 Corinthians 8:1, 9-11 (a book in the Bible also written by Paul) tells us about the dispute the Jewish and Gentile Christians had over eating food that had been sacrificed to idols. This did not bother the Jewish Christians, because they did not worship idols. So, they did not care if the meat had been offered to idols. But this really bothered the Gentile Christians who had come from a culture of pagan idol worship. This might also explain why some Gentile Christians opted for vegetables (verse 2) which they knew had not been sacrificed to idols. **Second**, in New Testament culture the Jews already knew that anything that was called “food” referred to clean food as described in Leviticus 11. In other words, if it was not clean meat, it was not even called, or considered, “food.” Given this background, unclean meats were considered unfit for food. (We will into this clean or unclean meat question next week.)*

Leaders Tip on special worship days: *We have holidays like Thanksgiving that fall on the same day (different date) each year, and other holidays like Christmas that fall on the same date (different day) each year. The Jews celebrated a number of sacred day which they called “sacred assemblies,” (See all of Leviticus 23, but especially note Leviticus 23:3-4, 38.) Most of these sacred assemblies are identified in relation to the creation seventh-day Sabbath. That means, they are like our Thanksgiving. The day is the same but the date changes each month. But the important question is, which sacred days are disputed in the New Testament? The NIV Study Bible commentary summarizes this by saying, “it is probably a reference to all the special days of the OT ceremonial laws.” The Gentile Christians were disputing if they needed to keep all the additional Jewish sacred assemblies. One thing that is clear in the New Testament is that the creation seventh-day Sabbath, the Sabbath which was put in place long before the Jewish nation existed, was not a disputed item. In fact, Paul, who was a Sabbath-keeper, also wrote the book of Hebrews where he upholds the creation seventh-day Sabbath, Hebrews 4:7, 9-11.*

5. Now that we have explored these two hot topics, let's get back to real issue. How would you summarize the real problem Paul was addressing; what are the pertinent Bible verses? (verses 4, 10, 13)
6. If you were to read between the lines, what is Paul's message to us in verse 12?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. In today's world, what “disputable” items do Christians argue over?
Leaders Tip: Don't try to set people straight. This question might give you Biblical insight into the beliefs that people in your group may be confused about. This is not a time to set them straight. Just take mental notes.
2. What kinds of things do you find yourself critical about?
3. Knowing you will sometime have to give an account before God, how does this change the way you live your life and the way you treat other people?
4. Where do you draw the line in trying to please everyone from different cultures?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **God is the best judge we can possibly have.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

build each other up

[outline](#)

Romans 14:12-23

Message of Hope: When you build someone else up, the blessing comes back to you.

Leader's Tip: Yes, verses 12 and 13 are overlap from last week.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. This is a safe place for people to share and grow spiritually. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) Who are people in your life that make you feel good about yourself because when you are around them, they show that they like you, they believe in you, and they build you up? **Message of Hope:** When you build someone else up, the blessing comes back to you.

A quick review from last week:

1. What Paul's main point?
2. What were the Jewish Christians criticizing the Gentile Christians for doing? (Not keeping the ceremonial sacred assemblies.)
3. What were the Gentile Christians criticizing the Jewish Christians for doing? (Eating clean meat that had been offered to idols.)

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 14:12-23

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. What is Paul's main point in this story?
3. Step back into the New Testament culture. When Paul uses the word “food” in verse 14 what is his definition of food? (Read each verse in the different translations available: Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 7:2, 8; Genesis 9:2-4; Leviticus 11:2)

***Leaders Tip:** Some people suggest a “food progression,” which means they want to show that as time goes by God slowly gave more and more animals as food, so that today they can eat any kind of meat. In chapter 7:2, 8 God gives “clean” meat as food. In chapter 9:3-4 God gives “all” meat, clean and unclean, to eat. But Leviticus 11 clarifies this “food progression” by showing us that God still distinguishes between clean and unclean meats. Also, it is good to note that if Noah was able to eat all the animals, then the animals that went on the ark as one pair (only two of them) would immediately have become extinct when either the male or female was eaten.*

4. Considering the cultural background we studied, what is Paul trying to tell us in verse 17?
5. Based on what Paul has said, when it came to food, which culture had the greater responsibility when it comes to offending a Christian brother or sister? Why?

Heart & Healing Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. How do we apply this principle in our culture?
2. Let's read verse 15 again. Instead of using the word “eating,” you fill in the blank with another word. In what area of your life do you need to start acting in love?
3. As time has passed, how has your sensitivity to the consciences of other Christians changed?
4. What active steps can you take to build up others in this group?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **when you build someone else up, the blessing comes back to you.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

secrets of happiness

[outline](#)

Romans 15:1-13

Message of Hope: Living for others brings happiness.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) When was one of the more peaceful times of your life?

Message of Hope: Living for others brings happiness.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 15:1-13

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. What verses do you think summarize the big idea of this story?
3. What does the “spirit of unity” and “complete harmony” look like in verse five?
4. How is it possible for people to take advantage of you when you adopt of this way of living?
5. When Paul tells us to accept each other just as Christ has accepted you, what does that mean? And, what does it *not* mean?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Let's be honest, what are some things that keep you from living in harmony with one another?
2. God is very patient with us. How have you seen God patiently working in your life?
3. What are some specific ways that you want to be more patient with others?
4. What give you hope when life seems hopeless?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **Living for others brings happiness.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
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3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

living a life that counts

[outline](#)

Romans 15:14-33

Message of Hope: Kingdom ambitions last forever.

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) What is one of your life goals?

Message of Hope: Kingdom ambitions last forever.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 15:14-33

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. As you think about the entire book of Romans, what are some of the main points Paul has emphasized?
3. Read verse 14 from several different translations. What do you think Paul has in mind when he talks about the Gentiles teaching and instructing others?
4. Did you notice this story talked about money? What is going on in this story? What does it teach us about money?
5. Let's think of all the words that summarize Paul's ambitions in life. What words come to your mind?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Who has been “a Paul” in your life? How has that person given you hope and courage, and how has he helped you grow spiritually?
2. To whom can you be “a Paul”? How do you think you can help them grow spiritually?
3. Let's take a few minutes for some honest reflection. Think about your schedule this past month. If someone who did not know you looked at how you spent your time and money last month, how would they describe your ambitions in life?
4. Since the future has not been written yet, what Kingdom ambitions do you sense God calling you to work on?
5. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **Kingdom ambitions last forever**. How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

changed

[outline](#)

Romans 16:1-27

Message of Hope: God's grace continually changes us.

Planning Ahead: Give the group a couple choices for the next book of the Bible they want to study. It is recommended choose from among the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. [Download leader study guides.](#)

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Check-In:

1. What was your week like?
2. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: What did you enjoy this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing, share meaningful Bible verses, rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: (*short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first*) Think about some of your old friends that you still keep in contact with. Why do you think you tended to stay connected with them instead of others?

Message of Hope: God's grace continually changes us.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Romans 16:1-27

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What verse catches your attention? Why?
2. To how many people does Paul send greetings? How many are men, and how many are women?
3. What are the specific character strengths that Paul affirms in peoples' lives?
4. Paul warns us about a certain kind of person. What kind of person is it? Of all the different kind of things to warn about, why does he pick this one?
5. As you read this story, what clues do you see that gives us an idea of how close Paul got to people?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What things make it hard or easy for you to get close to people?
2. As Paul closes this letter, he affirms people's character strengths. Let's go around the circle and take one person at a time and share the character strengths we see in that person.

Leaders Tip: Encourage everyone to actively participate by thinking of one strength they see in each person. It does not have to be a new one that has not been mentioned. It is okay if someone else already mentioned it. The important part is that everyone is encouraged to be actively involved as much as possible. This is what it means to be “the church”.

3. Tell us one thing—a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning—that you needed to hear from this story?
4. Remember, **God's grace continually changes us.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Wrap Up:

1. “This group does not exist for us.” Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

who are God's children?

outline

“The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus.” Steps to Christ, 27.

“I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice; and there will be one flock with one shepherd.” John 10:16.

“Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.” 1 Kings 19:18.

“In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God. Christ's Object Lessons, 385.

“Today in every land there are those who are honest in heart, and upon these the light of heaven is shining. If they continue faithful in following that which they understand to be duty, they will be given increased light, until, like Naaman of old, they will be constrained to acknowledge that "there is no God in all the earth," save the living God, the Creator.” Prophets and Kings, 253.

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. Desire of Ages, 638.

the savage

outline

Romans 1:28 - 2:16 & Romans 6:15-23

The Savage - Saved by Grace

by John Witcombe

pastorjcw@msbx.net

“Does my righteous behavior have anything to do with whether I’ll go to heaven?” asked the Sabbath School teacher. I wanted an answer for this question, an answer that would nail the coffin shut once and for all on this damnable heterodoxy. Not sure if I believe in salvation by grace alone? Read on.

So just how does one receive the right to enter heaven? The answer must fit all men, in all ages, in all regions of the world. Whatever the answer, it must be the answer for the savage who lived 4000 years ago anywhere in the world.

If you answered, “accept Jesus as your personal Savior” or “believe that Jesus rose from the grave” or “believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” or “have a personal relationship with Jesus,” that would not have worked for the savage who never did have an opportunity to read a Bible or hear about Jesus.

Can the savage receive salvation without a knowledge of Jesus and the plan of salvation? The Bible and the writings of Ellen White say he can.

In fact the person who has a knowledge of Jesus and the Bible receives salvation in exactly the same way as the savage who has never heard of Christ. There has always only been one way to receive salvation and that is by grace alone.

COL 384 “Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The ‘Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.”

An important insight on the meaning of saved by grace is found in this quotation from Christ’s Object Lessons, page 385. “The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage.” Grace is an active principle that enters into the heart and changes the conduct. Grace is not simply an attitude of God that causes Him to overlook lawlessness.

Titus 2:11, 12 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,”

It is possible to have two savages, totally ignorant of Jesus and the plan of salvation, and one will be

saved and one will be lost. What is the difference between the two? The difference is one has accepted the grace of God that has spoken to his heart. He resists worldly lust and lives soberly, righteously and godly in his village. He treats his neighbor as he would want to be treated. He doesn't steal arrows because he loves his neighbor as himself. The other savage ignores God's grace that has also been speaking to his heart and goes ahead and steals, cheats, lies, etc.

Romans 2.13-15 "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, [savages] which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."

DA 638 "Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God."

According to Zechariah 13.6, the obedient savage will first learn of Christ's sacrifice for him when he gets to heaven. "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

James 2.24, 25 "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" [Likewise also was not the savage justified by works, when he treated others as he would like to be treated?]"

James 1.22, 27 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. . . Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." A savage who has never heard of God can practice pure religion.

The savage can no more live in harmony with the law of God than can a leopard change his spots. (Jer. 13:23) Righteous living does not originate in the heart of the good savage. Rather, he is simply cooperatively working out the grace that God implants in his receptive heart. "For it is God which worketh in [the savage] both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13 (bracketed words supplied)

Some Christians believe that if they claim the blood of Jesus to cover their sinning they have salvation whether or not they put away the evil of their doings. The Christian is in danger of doing as the Jew did – substituting the sacrifice for the covenant experience. In the end many Christians are going to say that they claimed the blood of Jesus, they had personal devotions every day – why then am I lost? "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7.21-23

The savage did not sidestep obedience to the Spirit's voice to his conscience by claiming he was vicariously covered by a substitutionary sacrifice whether by a lamb as the Jew did or by the cross of

Jesus as the superficial Christian does – he simply did the will of God – he ceased from sin by the power of an indwelling Savior now enthroned in his heart. For where sin did abound, grace doth now much more abound, not to the concealment or excusing of sin, but rather to its pardon and eradication. See Romans 5:20, 21.

what is the sinner's prayer?

outline

The sinner's prayer is a prayer a person prays to God when they understand that they are a sinner and in need of a Savior. Saying a sinner's prayer will not accomplish anything on its own. A sinner's prayer is only effective if it genuinely represents what a person knows, understands, and believes about their sinfulness and need for salvation.

The first aspect of a sinner's prayer is understanding that we are all sinners. Romans 3:10 proclaims, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." The Bible makes it clear that we have all sinned. We are all sinners in need of mercy and forgiveness from God (Titus 3:5-7). Because of our sin, we deserve death (Romans 3:23). The sinner's prayer is a plea for grace instead of judgment. It is a request for mercy instead of death.

The second aspect of a sinner's prayer is knowing what God has done to remedy our lost and sinful condition. God took on flesh and became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14). Jesus taught us the truth about God and lived a perfectly righteous and sinless life (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus then died on the cross in our place, taking the punishment that we deserve (Romans 5:8). Jesus rose from the dead to prove His victory over sin and death (Colossians 2:15; 1 Corinthians chapter 15). Because of all of this, we can have our sins forgiven and be promised an eternal home in Heaven - if we will just place our faith in Jesus Christ. All we have to do is believe that He died in our place and rose from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). We can be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. Grace does two things:

1. Grace Saves Us: Ephesians 2:8 declares, "God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God."
2. Grace Changes Us: Titus 2 11-14 says, "Tit 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."

Saying the sinner's prayer is simply a way of declaring to God that you are relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior. There are no "magical" words that result in salvation. It is only faith in Jesus' death and resurrection that can save us. If you understand that you are a sinner and in need of salvation through Jesus Christ, here is a sinner's prayer we can pray to God:

You can repeat after me: "God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I deserve the consequences of my sin. However, I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness. I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Lord, for saving me and forgiving me! I trust you with my life. Please come into my life today and start to change me to be like you. In Jesus name, Amen!" Welcome to the family of God!

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