

simply

ROMANS

the best news you will ever hear, period

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

simply ROMANS

Outline

The WORD Among Us
How to Use This Leaders' Guide

Accepted by God

1. Called & Chosen, 1:1-7
2. The Big Idea, 1:8-17
3. God Has Feelings Too, 1:18-32
4. The Milky Way and Beyond, DVD
5. Gaining God's Approval, 1:28 – 2:16
6. How to Get Right with God, 2:17-29
7. Stinkin' Thinkin', 3:1-8
8. Utterly Hopeless, 3:9-20
9. A Different Way, 3:21-31
10. Saved by Faith, NOT Works, 4:1-25
11. Forever Friends, 5:1-11
12. Two Destinies, 5:12-21

Set Free from the Power & Penalty of Sin

1. How to Die Right and Live to Tell About It—part 1, 6:1-14
2. How to Die Right and Live to Tell About It—part 2, 6:15-23
3. Set Free to Do Good, 7:1-7
4. The Purpose of God's Law, 7:7-13
5. Back to God's Basics, 7:14-25

Renewing My Mind

1. No Condemnation! 8:1-17
2. Ultimate Freedom, 8:18-30
3. God's Most Valuable Possession, 8:31-39
4. God Will Be God, 9:1-15
5. Mercy Came Running, 9:16-33
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16. Changed, 16:1-27

Extra Resources

What Is the Sinner's Prayer?

Relational Bible Studies

The WORD Among Us

The [Simply Series](#) is a different kind of Bible study. It is not doctrine or life application. It is relational, which means there are no right or wrong answers to the questions in this facilitator's guide.

Relational Bible studies focus on building relationships with God and each other. They create a space for the WORD among us to wash over us, plant seeds in our lives, and change us by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit.

Relational Bible studies give everyone, no matter what their perspective or depth of Bible knowledge, space to share and contribute to the dialogue as we journey together. They help us discover how our personal story intersects with the Bible story.

These guides are designed to facilitate real and authentic dialogue in such a way that secular and unchurched Truth seekers come away saying, "This is different! This is real."

People need the Everlasting Gospel. Simple Church is about creating a space for Truth seekers to journey together.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to "spend" with Truth seekers from all walks of life.

How to Use This Leader's Guide

This leader's guide assumes you have:

1. Read through the www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com web page.
2. Completed the online Simple Church training.

Title

outline

Bible story reference will be listed here.

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.

Helpful Tip: These tips show up here and there.

The Basic 8: These are covered in the [free online training](#).

1. Collection Box (explained in PhaseONE training videos)
2. Connection Card Envelopes
3. Business Cards
4. Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet
5. a variety of extra Bible translations.
6. Child Safety Poster
7. Blessing Board
8. Email link to online Simple Church Weekly Summary Form (When officially launched this is emailed to your Details Coordinator every Sunday.)

Welcome: We are glad everyone is here. 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.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's Remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of Truth seekers. 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?

2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions:

Week 1: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 2: How would you like to re-prioritize your life?

Week 3: How would you like to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

Week 4: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 5: etc.

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

For example:

1. What was his (pointing to the person) high-light for the week?
2. What was her name (pointing to the person)?
3. How did she want to simplify her life?

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

This is what page 2 of a typical leader's guide for a given week actually looks like.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first)

Bridge: This transitions the group from the Kick-off Question into the Bible story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Bible story reference will be listed here. (Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers for digging questions:

- Remember: there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions. Help people contribute their perspective to the dialogue.

- You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the questions listed. Use them as a resource from which to select during your discussion.
- Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on these questions.
- 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".
- Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
- If someone gets off-focus, simply say (after they have stopped talking), "What was the question? Let's read it again."

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers:

- Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on these questions.
- These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it interacts with the Bible study.
- At appropriate times affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Group Prayer:

1. We are blessed by being a part of this group, yet it exists for those who are not yet here.
2. Put an [Empty Chair](#) in the middle of your prayer circle. Pray for the people who are not yet here.
3. Close by saying the [Blessing Board](#) blessing together.

At the end of prayer, ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate the questions for next week. Anyone can facilitate the questions. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Lunch:

1. Keep it simple. Keep it easily reproducible.
2. Hostess (one of the CORE4) provides the beans.
3. During lunch have the [Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet](#) available.

Called & Chosen

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 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translation, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

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3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What was the best news you ever received?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 1:1-7

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) 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?
✂-----
- 2) Based on these seven verses, how do you think you would summarize Paul's good news?
✂-----
- 3) Why do you think Paul considers this news more important than any other news?
✂-----
- 4) Why do you think Paul emphasizes that God would raise Jesus from the dead?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when you run across a "good deal," how do you go about getting the news out?
✂-----
- B) 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?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

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: Did you get the Journey to the Edge of Creation two-part series ordered?

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Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Do you tend to be a big-picture, detail-oriented, or somewhere-in-between person?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 1:8-17

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In these nine verses Paul uses one key word four times. What is this word, and why do you think Paul uses it to lay a foundation when he could have chosen any other word?
✂-----
- 2) A quick review: this letter is written to the Gentiles. Who do you think would be considered Gentiles in Paul's day, and who are the Gentiles in our day?
✂-----
- 3) What do think is Paul's *big idea*, or his *big picture*, in this story?
✂-----
- 4) In today's world how do you think people try to make themselves right with God?

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, over the coming months, what are your hopes and dreams for this group? What reputation do you hope this group will become known for?
✂-----
- B) If you were to connect with those living close by, who would it be, and why would you want to visit them?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

God Has Feelings Too

outline

Romans 1:18-32

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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Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What boils your blood? Or breaks your heart?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 1:18-32

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) This question has two parts: what do you think Paul would say boils God's blood? And, what is it that breaks His heart?
✂-----
- 2) In a practical sense, how do you think God makes it possible for every person to have an equal opportunity to learn about Him?
✂-----
- 3) If everyone has an equal opportunity, then why do you think we still tell others about God's love?
✂-----
- 4) Let's read verses 21-25. How would you summarize what happens to a person's heart and mind as they continually push God away?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if everyone has the same opportunity, why does it seem that so many people never find and follow God?
✂-----
- B) As you reflect on your life, how have you seen God trying to pull you closer to Him?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

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.

***Perspective:** 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 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, of extra Bible translation, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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1. What is your first name?
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Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is the largest thing you have tried to comprehend or wrap your mind around?

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What part of this presentation made an impression on you?
✂-----
- 2) Read Romans 1:20. So now, after watching this presentation, 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 presentation, how would you try to describe God to someone who has no knowledge or understanding of God?
✂-----
- 4) How has this presentation changed your thinking about God?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, who was someone early on in your life who helped you to understand God?
✂-----
- B) How has this presentation changed your heart response to God?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Gaining God's Approval

outline

Romans 1:28 – 2:16

Message of Hope: We are saved by grace, not by works.

Perspective: 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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Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

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Kick-off Question (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Have you ever 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"?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 1:28 – 2:16
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What verse in this story 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. Why do you think everyone will be judged by God even if they did not know Him?
✂-----
- 4) If good works do not save us, then why do you think God judges our works?

Perspective: *Our works are for our benefit. They help us know what direction we are pointed. Are we headed towards God or away from Him? 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 reveal our direction.*

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how has God been patient with you?
✂-----
- B) If you were to take a step towards God, what would it be?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **we are saved by grace, not works.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

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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3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

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Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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. How have you been discriminated against?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 2:17-29
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Paul was so hard on the Jews?
✂-----
- 2) If you were a Jew, how would you have felt about, or responded to, what Paul was saying?
✂-----
- 3) For Gentiles, how do you think Paul's message was such good news?
✂-----
- 4) Let's read verse 29 from our different translations. Why do you think Paul makes a significant distinction between what a "true Jew" is, and what "true circumcision" is?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, in today's world how do people try to make themselves look right with God on the outside?
✂-----
- B) If God was to change your heart, what do think He would start working on?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Stinkin' Thinkin'

outline

Romans 3:1-8

Message of Hope: God is always honest and faithful.

***Tip:** Sometimes it can be hard to put hands and feet on faith. So often faith seems Theoretical, and 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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Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Now let's be honest, when was a time when you talked yourself into doing something you suspected was not the right thing to do?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 3:1-8

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

✂-----

Digging 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) Let's read verse 5-8 again. What do you think motivates people to come up with this *stinkin' thinkin'* kind of thought pattern?
✂-----
- 4) There are people who say, "God is not faithful." What do you think made them come to that conclusion?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how has your faithfulness been tested these past months?
✂-----
- B) How have you discovered that God is faithful and can be trusted?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **God is always honest and faithful.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Utterly Hopeless

outline

Romans 3:9-20

Message of Hope: Hopelessness leads us to hope.

***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 utter hopelessness of our lives. Until people realize and emotionally feel their hopelessness, they have no need for Jesus.*

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you were asked to do a task that you felt you were not strong enough, smart enough, experienced enough, fast enough, or tall enough to do?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 3:9-20

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Verse 9 basically says that you, like the rest of us, are a sinner. Why do you think Paul is so blunt about this?
✂-----
- 2) It gets worse. Listen to verse 10-18 from the Message Bible: What 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.”

✂-----

- 3) 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 do you think this would help us; how do you think we would be better off?

✂-----

- 4) If you were to choose one word to describe our condition before God, what would you choose?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, 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?

✂-----

- B) What is something that God has done for you just because He loves you?

✂-----

C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **Hopelessness leads us to hope**. How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

***Tip:** 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's 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's name, amen!" Welcome to the family of God!

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

A Different Way

outline

Romans 3:21-31

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

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is the best news you ever received?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 3:21-31

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Let's locate the verses that include the word *right*. Depending on your translation, the word *right* is often used with one of three words: trust, believe, or faith. What do think are the similarities and differences between these three words?

✂-----

- 2) 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?”

✂-----

- 3) How would you summarize Paul's big ideas in this story?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 31 again. This verse seems to be out of place. What do you think Paul is getting at?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, as you were growing up, what picture of God did you learn from your parents, school, church, or TV?

✂-----

- B) Where do think your next spiritual growth step might be?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Saved by Faith, NOT Works

outline

Romans 4:1-25

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

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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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What would you say if someone gave you thirty seconds to answer this question: What makes Christianity different than all the other world religions?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 4:1-25

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What verse catches your attention? Why?
✂-----
- 2) Someone read verse 11 again. Which do you think comes first—Abraham's works (circumcision) or his faith in God? And why do you think it matters 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?
✂-----
- 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?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, in what ways have you have tried to earn your own salvation?
✂-----
- B) What part of today's discussion inspires you and gives you hope?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **We are saved by faith alone, period.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Forever Friends

outline

Romans 5:1-11

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

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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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who is one of your best friends, and why have they become a good friend?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 5:1-11

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What qualities do you think makes a friend a true friend?
✂-----
- 2) If Paul were here today, how do you think he would try to explain how Jesus makes us friends of God?
✂-----
- 3) Reread verses 1 and 9. There is a "new perspective" that Paul repeats twice in these eleven verses. What is the phrase he uses?
✂-----
- 4) 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 with God. Read this story again, one verse at a time, and highlight how a person thinks and acts differently.
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how is God using difficulties in your life to strengthen you?
✂-----
- B) If someone were to ask you how they could become a friend of God, how would you explain it to them?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Two Destinies

outline

Romans 5:12-21

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

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.

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you benefited because of another person's good decision?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 5:12-21

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Verse 13 says that God's law had not been given. What do you think the difference is between "God's law had not been given" and "God's law did not exist"?

✂-----

- 2) How do you think Paul would respond to the question "Why did God give his law?"

✂-----

- 3) Paul compares Adam and Jesus. Make a list of all the differences you can find.

Tip: Let the group come up with their own list. But are some to help with the discussion:

Adam's Sin Brought

brought death, v15

brought condemnation, v16

brought death that rules over us, v17

brought disobedience, v19

ultimate result = death

default destiny = death

automatically inherited by every person, v12

Jesus's Death Brought

brought forgiveness, v15

brought acceptance by, v16

brought triumph over sin and death, v17

brought obedience, v19

ultimate result = eternal life

destiny choice = eternal life

accepted by some people, vs 17, 21

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 20 in our different translations. How do you think people are tempted to abuse this verse?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, 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?

✂-----

- B) If someone asked you, "How can I receive this free gift," how would you answer them?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) 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.

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

How to Die Right and Live to Tell About It— part 1

outline

Romans 6:1-14

Message of Hope: Baptism by immersion is how we die and live to tell about it.

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *slave*, what are the first two words that come to your mind?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 5:17; 6:1-14

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think it means to be a slave in today's world?
✂-----
- 2) Let's read verses 3-4 again. How would you summarize what Paul says about what it means to die to sin and yet live to tell others about it?
✂-----
- 3) In verses 7-8, what is so important about baptism, and what does it symbolize?
✂-----
- 4) 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 your 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 "how was Jesus baptized?" Let's read Matthew 3:16-17. Based on this description, how would you describe real Bible baptism?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, there are probably some in this group who have been baptized by going under the water. What was it like, and what was special about it?
✂-----
- B) What is an area in your life where Satan still tries to tempt you?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **baptism by immersion is how we die and live to tell about it.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

How to Die Right and Live to Tell About It— part 2

outline

Romans 6:15-23

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

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 anymore, 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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The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just

answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When were you forced to do something, even if it was good, that you did not want to do?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 6:15-23

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 15 Paul answers his own question. What do you think his question was, and how would you explain it to someone who asked you?

✂-----

- 2) 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)

✂-----

- 3) 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 question is rather obvious, but let's give it some deeper thought. Why do you think God is so patient with people?

✂-----

- 4) 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?" How do you think Paul would answer this?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, this past week where did you see Satan showing up in your life?

✂-----

- B) In what ways do you feel like you are the rope in a tug-of-war between God and Satan?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) 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 Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Set Free to Do Good

outline

Romans 7:1-6

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

***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 slave to God? **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. **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 protects 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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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you did something good for someone with no strings attached?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 7:1-6

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Rules are all around us. We all have to live by them, or this place would be a mess. So, why do you think that when we are told we cannot do something, we want to do it all the more?

✂-----

- 2) What things do you see in these verses that tell us about the law?

✂-----

- 3) In verses 4 and 5, what do you think is the "power of the law" that we died to? (verses 4 and 5)

✂-----

- 4) If outward appearances look the same, why do you think it really matters if one follows Christ?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you discern what your motives are for doing good?

✂-----

- B) What are some good deeds, with pure motives, that bring you the most joy and happiness in life?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **We are set free to do good.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

The Purpose of God's Law

outline

Romans 7:7-13

Message of Hope: God is fighting on your side.

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.*

Tip #2: *Satan has done a masterful job in getting the Christian world to believe that the problem is God's law. But 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 Ten 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" anything.*

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Visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com for more study guides.

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When did someone take advantage of you?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 7:7-13

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What verse catches your attention? Why?

✂-----

- 2) What does Paul say is the purpose of God's law?

✂-----

- 3) How do you think one can know from this story which law Paul is talking about?

Tip: Explore the quote in verse 7.

✂-----

- 4) What do you think is the *big idea* that Paul hopes we will understand from these verses?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how does Satan try to get you to turn away from God?

✂-----

- B) Where do you sense God is encouraging you to take your next step of faith?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God is fighting on your side.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

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.

***Tip:** In Romans 7 twice Paul quoted from the Ten 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. Today's study will take people to the Ten Commandments. It is a time to introduce and establish God's law as foundational for New Testament believers.*

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 7:14-25

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) When do you think Paul wrote Romans—before or after Jesus died and rose from the grave?
✂-----
- 2) Let's read verse 14 in our different translations. Why do you think people are so insistent that God's law was done away with and was nailed to the cross?
✂-----
- 3) For the past two weeks Paul has been quoting from God's law. Look at these verses again. Romans 7:3 talks about not committing adultery, and Romans 7:7 says “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.” Before we read the Ten 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?
✂-----
- 4) Let's read the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:2-17. Which of the Ten Commandments is the most popular and which one do you think is the least popular?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, growing up, how were the Ten Commandments used in your home?
✂-----
- B) Which of these Ten Commandments do you sense God is inviting you to obey as your next step as you trust and follow God?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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 Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

No Condemnation!

outline

Romans 8:1-17

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

Tip: Provide hope. Today will give people 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 back 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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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you felt condemned?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 8:1-17

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

✂-----

Digging 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, what would you say if you were asked, "How does a person know if they belong to Jesus?"
✂-----
- 3) Now let's read verses 12-13 from different Bible translations. How would you explain it, if you were asked, "How do I stay connected to Jesus?"
✂-----
- 4) If there is no condemnation for those who belong to Jesus, why do you think so many people feel that God is against them and out to condemn them?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, 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?
✂-----
- B) There are some here who have accepted Jesus as Boss and CEO of their life. How did this happen for you?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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 their life to Christ for the first time, or maybe someone feels they have wandered and just want 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!

Ultimate Freedom

outline

Romans 8:18-30

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

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 on these other items. They are in the story.

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you could be set free from anything here in this world, what would you choose?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 8:18-30

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If heaven will be so wonderful, why do you think so many people act like it is not a big deal?
✂-----
- 2) What would you say are the key points in this story regarding prayer?
✂-----
- 3) People sometimes say, "I don't know how to pray." What do you think the Holy Spirit does with people who don't know how to pray?
✂-----
- 4) In this sinful world everybody experiences suffering. How does suffering help us prepare for heaven?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what present-day sufferings are you struggling with?
✂-----
- B) When was a time when you saw God bring something good out of a bad situation?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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.

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

God's Most Valuable Possession

outline

Romans 8:31-39

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

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 four 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. *That victory is guaranteed through Christ.*

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 8:31-39

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

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

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how does Satan try to discourage you and make you feel that God has separated Himself from you?
✂-----
- B) When you are feeling overwhelmed, what reminds you that you are God's most important possession?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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.
 - Verse 35-39 tells us there is nothing that can separate you from God's love.
 - Verse 37 tells us victory is guaranteed through Jesus Christ.

How can this group pray for you?

Group Prayer & Lunch

God Will Be God

outline

Romans 9:1-16

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

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

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you received an unexpected gift from someone?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 9:1-16

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 3 and 4 Paul is grieving the fact that the people God chose are not saved. How do you make sense of this?
✂-----
- 2) Sometimes—no, many times—we have a hard time letting God be God. Why do you think people want God to fit into our box and play by the rules we think are fair?
✂-----
- 3) According to this story, who are God's children?
✂-----
- 4) If a Jew had been listening to this letter, especially verses 6-8, what thoughts and feelings would have been going through their mind?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is one way you think God has shown you mercy?
✂-----
- B) Where do you see God using you to bring His mercy to other people's lives?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **God has chosen you to be one of His children.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Mercy Came Running

outline

Romans 9:16-33

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

Tip: “*Mercy Came Running*” is the name of a song inspired by Romans 9. [Listen to song and read lyrics.](#)

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translation, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When has someone done something for you that you did not deserve?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 9:16-33

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you make sense of verses 14 & 18?
✂-----
- 2) How would you explain authentic mercy to someone?
✂-----
- 3) In what ways do people try to earn God's mercy by their works?
✂-----
- 4) 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?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, in your life, how has God been looking for you?
✂-----
- B) What do you think your next step towards God could be?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **When you could not reach God, He came running to you.**

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Salvation Is for Everyone

outline

Romans 10:1-21

Message of Hope: Salvation is offered to everyone.

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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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What were a few of the hard-and-fast rules you grew up with?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 10:1-21

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think most people in today's world would answer this question: How can a person get to heaven?
✂-----
- 2) What verses in this story help to clarify how a person is saved?
✂-----
- 3) What part do you think obedience plays in all this?
✂-----
- 4) Let's read verse 2 again. In today's world, how are we at risk for misdirected zeal?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you go about strengthening your own faith?
✂-----
- B) What do you see as some of the bigger distractions that weaken your faith?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

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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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you felt rejected?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 11:1-36

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Paul includes the Elijah example in this story?
✂-----
- 2) If God wants everyone to choose to follow Him, how do you make sense of verses 7-11?
✂-----
- 3) The olive tree teaches lessons about being cut off from God, being grafted into God, and about my freedom of choice. What do you think are the important lessons for us?
✂-----
- 4) How do you think it is possible for someone to try so hard to please God that they actually reject His love for them?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, would you describe yourself as a Jew who fell away and is now coming back or as a Gentile who is coming to God for the first time?
✂-----
- B) If God had not been merciful to you while you went your own way and did you own thing, describe where you think might have been by now?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) 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?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Living God's Will Today

outline

Romans 12:1-8

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

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *sacrifice*, what thoughts and feelings come to your mind?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 12:1-8

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think are some of Satan's more subtle ways of getting people to conform to the patterns of this world?

✂-----

- 2) How does a person practically go about offering their body as a living sacrifice 24/7?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 5 in our different translations. What does it mean to belong to each other and need each other?

✂-----

- 4) How do you think we could do a better job of this in this group?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, 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?

✂-----

- B) 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?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God has a wonderful plan for your life but He will not force you to live it.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

outline

Romans 12:9-21

Message of Hope: You can love your enemies.

***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 really practical on how to do this.*

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

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *enemy*, what thoughts or feelings come to your mind?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 12:9-21

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If you were to sum up this story with one word, what word do you think you would choose?
✂-----
- 2) 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 do you see this shift taking 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.

- 3) Let's each make a list of all the commands found in this story.
✂-----
- 4) Which commands do you see as strengths? Which commands do you see as weaknesses?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

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

- A) On a personal note, what are the easy commands that you circled?
✂-----
- B) What two commands are difficult for you, and what makes them difficult?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **you can love your enemies**. How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Respect for Authority

outline

Romans 13:1-7

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

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 13:1-7

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In what ways do you see people typically disobey the laws of the land?
✂-----
- 2) What excuses do people use to justify their disobedience?
✂-----
- 3) On what basis do you think a person should decide which laws of the land go against God's laws?
✂-----
- 4) In verse 5, what do you think our “conscience” is and what role do you see it playing in our decision-making?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how could you do a better job of submitting to and obeying authorities?
✂-----
- B) What are some authorities in your life that have provided you protection or have been a blessing to you?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **Believe it or not, authority is a good thing.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Getting Dressed

outline

Romans 13:8-14

Message of Hope: Jesus is coming soon. Let's get ready!

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What was the first debt or loan you took?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 13:8-14

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What would you say makes a neighbor “your neighbor”?
✂-----
- 2) In today's world what “you are *not* my neighbor” messages do you see people innocently sending to others?
✂-----
- 3) How do you think people love themselves in today's world?
✂-----
- 4) What would it practically look like for us to “love our neighbors as we love ourselves”?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how has a neighbor loved you “like they love themselves”?
✂-----
- B) Who is a neighbor in your life that could use some encouragement, love, and help?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is coming soon. Let's get ready!** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Culture Shock

outline

Romans 14:1-13

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

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

In sixty seconds or less, what is a cultural blooper you encountered either locally or in another country?

Read after Kick-Off Question: To help this story make more sense, some New Testament background is helpful:

The New Testament culture faced a major challenge. They were judging each other based upon their own background. 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. How could this be resolved? Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 14:1-13

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 4, 10, and 13 Paul summarizes the main problem. Why do you think judging others is such a common problem in Paul's day and in our day?

✂-----

- 2) As the secular Gentiles and the religious Jews were accepting Christ, why do you think there was such a dispute with the Jews over food and sacred days?

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 look into this clean or unclean meat question next week.)

***Tip on special worship days:** 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 days 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 the Thanksgiving holiday. 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.*

✂-----

3) If you were to read between the lines, how would you summarize Paul's message to us in verse 12?

✂-----

4) Let's read verse 13 in our different translations. Why do you think Paul emphasized that we need to change our life so that we are not a stumbling block to others?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A) On a personal note, what kinds of things do you find yourself critical about?

✂-----

B) To avoid being a stumbling block to others, what is something you would consider changing in your life?

✂-----

C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **God is the best judge we can possibly have.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Build Each Other Up

outline

Romans 14:12-23

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

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

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translation, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

Facilitator's Directions:

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2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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?

A quick review from last week:

1. What were the Jewish Christians criticizing the Gentile Christians for doing? (Hint—Not keeping the ceremonial sacred assemblies.)
2. What were the Gentile Christians criticizing the Jewish Christians for doing? (Hint—Eating clean meat that had been offered to idols.)

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 14:12-23

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) When Paul uses the word *food* in verse 14, what do you think is his definition of food? (Read the verses that shaped Paul's definition: Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 7:2, 8; Genesis 9:2-4; Leviticus 11:2)

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. Simply Remember: 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.

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 17-19 again. What do you think Paul is trying to say?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think are some of the better ways to build people up in today's world?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you try to apply these principles in your life?

✂-----

- B) As time has passed, how has your sensitivity to others changed?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) 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?

Secrets of Happiness

outline

Romans 15:1-13

Message of Hope: Living for others brings happiness.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translation, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was one of the more peaceful times of your life?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 15:1-13

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What verses do you think summarize the big idea of this story?
✂-----
- 2) In verse 5, what do you think the “spirit of unity” and “complete harmony” look like in our day?
✂-----
- 3) How do you think it is possible for people to take advantage of you when you adopt this way of living?
✂-----
- 4) What do you think Paul means when he says to accept each other just as Christ has accepted you? And, what does it *not* mean?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what are some things that keep you from living in harmony with one another?
✂-----
- B) How have you seen God patiently working in your life?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **Living for others brings happiness.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Living a Life That Counts

outline

Romans 15:14-33

Message of Hope: Kingdom ambitions last forever.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translation, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of your life goals?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 15:14-33

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) As you think about the entire book of Romans, what are some of the main points Paul has emphasized in past weeks?
✂-----
- 2) 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?
✂-----
- 3) What do you see this story saying about money?
✂-----
- 4) What kinds of other words do you think Paul would use to describe *ambitions* in life?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how would you describe some of your ambitions in life?
✂-----
- B) What kind of ambitions do you think God would like you to pursue?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **Kingdom ambitions last forever**. How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Changed

outline

Romans 16:1-27

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

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

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Kick-Off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Romans 16:1-27

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

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Paul begins by upholding Phoebe in this story?
✂-----
- 2) What do you see as some of the character strengths Paul affirms in people's lives?
✂-----
- 3) Beginning in verse 17, of all the different kinds of things to warn about, what does Paul pick, and why do you think he picks this one?
✂-----
- 4) What clues do you see in this story that gives us an idea of how close Paul got to other people?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is one thing that makes it hard for you to get close to other people?
✂-----
- B) As Paul closes this letter, he affirms people's character strengths. Let's go around the circle and take one person at a time, sharing the character strengths we see in that person.
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **God's grace continually changes us.** How can this group pray for God's protection and victory in your life?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

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, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 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's 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's name, Amen!"

Welcome to the family of God!