

The Apostle Paul's
Letter to the

Romans

Living in the Kingdom of
Our Lord Jesus Christ

Chapter 1

Fellowship with Jesus Christ

¹ This letter is from Paul, a loyal and obedient servant of Jesus Christ, called as a special messenger to deliver the wonderful news. ² Long ago, prophets promised in Scripture ³ the arrival of God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, of the lineage of King David, ⁴ whose relationship was proven by his sinless behavior, his powerful miracles, and his resurrection from the dead.

⁵ Because of Jesus, we have received God's undeserved kindness. In our gratitude and excitement, we have an obligation to deliver his message to people around the world.

⁶ Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a wonderful privilege. ⁷ You know, everyone in Rome is loved by God and has the opportunity to join his righteous family.

May his kindness and peace be found in you through Jesus Christ.

⁸ Let me begin by thanking God for your unwavering trust in Jesus, an abounding faith that is admired by Christians everywhere.

⁹ As I serve God in delivering the message of his Son, I am always praying for you, ¹⁰ asking him to clear the way for me to visit you. ¹¹ I long to bring spiritual blessings and strengthen your relationship with God. ¹² I would comfort and encourage you, and seek to increase your faith. And you would do the same for me.

¹³ My friends, many times I have planned to come, because I want you to have the same benefits that other communities have received from me. ¹⁴ I am committed to helping people everywhere, the cultured and the crude, the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵ So I'm passionate about bringing the message to Rome as well.

¹⁶ With great pride, I declare the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, for it has the power to restore our fellowship with God, beginning with the Jews and then reaching out to everyone else.

¹⁷ His righteousness is revealed in us as we trust God in one difficult situation after another. As the prophet Habakkuk wrote: *The righteous boast of God's greatness and put their trust in him.* We should all be boasting of how God has

changed our lives, and show what Jesus means to us.

¹⁸ God's wrath falls upon self-serving people, who manipulate and distort the truth in their pursuit of pleasures. ¹⁹ They are judged because God has shown them the good they should be doing for others, but they resist. ²⁰ They have no excuse for not believing and doing the good they know to do, since the power and nature of our invisible God can be clearly observed in his creation.

²¹ No matter what they say, they actually have an awareness of God. They just refuse to acknowledge what they know. They give themselves to false imaginations, plunging themselves into darkness to escape the light of truth. ²² While earning their masters degrees and doctoral credentials, making themselves appear wise, they become fools, ²³ replacing the glory of our eternal God with natural, corruptible things to admire, elevating mortal men and animals to god-like status.

²⁴ God has given them free will to go their own way so they can enjoy their sinful pleasures, so they can do shameful acts with one another. ²⁵ In this process, they exchange the truth of God for the lies they want to believe, worshipping the creature instead of the Creator,

who alone is worthy of eternal adoration. Yes, this is true.

²⁶ God lets people be driven by their vile passions, leading women to unnatural, degrading relationships with one another. ²⁷ Likewise, men abandon their natural relationship with a woman. Preferring intimacy with another man, they will receive due consequences for their errors.

²⁸ Since they don't want to admit God's existence, they develop perverted beliefs so they can do whatever indecency feels good to them.

²⁹ They love pornography, prostitution, and erotic acts. They become greedy cheaters with murderous thoughts, engaging in strife, deception, and gossip. ³⁰ Despising God, disobedient to parents, they speak evil of others while bragging about themselves.

³¹ Unloving and unmerciful promise-breakers, they don't want to understand. ³² They know what is right and pleasing to God, and they know wrongdoing has severe consequences. Yet not only do they persist in their behavior, but they also encourage and enjoy fellowship with others who do the same things.

Discussion Questions 1

Fellowship with Jesus Christ

¹ Why do you think it was important for Paul to write to Christians he had never met?

² If you were to write an email or text message to a friend, how would you describe the value of knowing Jesus Christ?

³ How would you define the role of a servant?

⁴ Why do Christians need encouragement?

⁵ Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a wonderful privilege (1:6). What example can you give to support that statement?

⁶ Paul says we show God's righteousness in difficult situations (1:17). Why do the hard times make the better examples?

⁷ The righteous boast of God's greatness (1:17). What is your biggest boast about God?

⁸ Why aren't our excuses a good defense for not hearing and following God?

⁹ Can you give an example when you knew better but did wrong anyway? Why did you do it?

¹⁰ Believed lies appear to be the truth, so how can we know if we're lying to ourselves?

¹¹ What attachments are most likely to hinder a Christian's commitment to God?

¹² How would you respond to people who excuse their sin by saying it doesn't hurt anyone else?

¹³ What does it mean to be *in* the world but not *of* the world?

¹⁴ What kind of behavior makes us most like Christ?

⁷ What benefit might come from praising our enemies when they have done well?

⁸ What kind of debt is always good to have? Why is it good?

⁹ What single commandment can we do to fulfill the intent of our laws?

¹⁰ What might be the negative consequences for wishing harm upon someone?

¹¹ How can saying we believe become an excuse for taking no action?

¹² Should we take an objective look at our behavior and make ourselves accountable? How might that help us?

¹³ Why is it a problem to mingle with the wrong crowd?

¹⁴ How can working with other committed Christians strengthen our faith?