



It's important that kids know what's true about God and themselves . . . to know what God *has* done and *is doing* for them. Focusing on Romans 8—one of the most studied and beloved chapters of the Bible—this study cements kids in God's most precious, life-changing promises.

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CONTENTS

About This Study (Read Me, Please) 7

Bible Study Basics (Kind of the ABCs) 9

WEEK 1

Day 1: Start Here: No Greater Message 15

Day 2: Understanding the Great Message 18

Day 3: Romans 5: A Lot of Good News 24

Day 4: Romans 6: The Power to Say No! 27

Day 5: Romans 7: Where You Belong 30

WEEK 2

Day 1: Start Here: Life in the Spirit 35

Day 2: No Condemnation 37

Day 3: Freedom in the Spirit 43

Day 4: Setting Our Minds on the Spirit 46

Day 5: The Spirit in You 49

WEEK 3

Day 1: Start Here: Heirs with Christ—God’s Children 55

Day 2: Obligated to the Spirit 56

Day 3: Children of God, Led by the Spirit 59

Day 4: We Can Cry Out to Our Abba Father 63

Day 5: The Spirit Provides Assurance 65

WEEK 4

Day 1: Start Here: Future Glory 69

Day 2: Incomparable Glory 70

Day 3: Hope for What We Do Not See 74

Day 4: Our Help in Weakness 77

Day 5: Interceding According to His Will 80

WEEK 5

Day 1: Start Here: Our Assurance 85

Day 1 continued: All Things for Our Good 86

Day 2: God Knows Us 89

Day 3: Becoming Like Jesus 92

Day 4: You Were Called to Salvation 95

Day 5: Just as If You've Always Obeyed 97

WEEK 6

Day 1: Start Here: Everlasting Love 103

Day 1 continued: If God Is For Us . . . 104

Day 2: Will He Not Graciously Give Us All Things? 108

Day 3: Who Shall Bring a Charge Against God's Elect? 111

Day 4: Who Is to Condemn? 116

Day 5: The Last Great Lesson: Who Shall Separate Us? 120

What Will You Discover Next About God? 125

START HERE: NO GREATER MESSAGE

Romans 8 is the chapter we're studying, but it's in the middle of a big book of the Bible. So, before we can really understand what we read in chapter 8, we will need to know what the *whole* book is about. Before we dive into Romans 8, let's get to know the book of Romans. Romans is a cherished book, and Romans 8 is a favorite chapter!

The book of Romans was written by Paul to the churches in Rome. Most people agree that he likely wrote the letter while spending three months in the city of Corinth (see Acts 20:2–3). Although Paul was a Jew, he wrote the letter in Greek, a language understood in those days by Jews and Gentiles alike. Like most of his letters to churches, this letter addresses issues that would concern the particular church it was addressed to.

Most Bible teachers agree that the gospel and the glory of God are central themes. Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). And he had a desire to "preach the gospel" to those in Rome (Rom. 1:15).

Do you know the meaning of the word *gospel*? We are about to explore the message of the gospel to help us understand Romans 8.

The gospel can be seen throughout the book of Romans—so much so that Christians have often used the book as a tool for sharing the gospel with others.

READ ROMANS 3:23; 3:10–18; 5:8; 6:23; 10:8

Do you see how they explain the gospel?

Write what you think the gospel is in your own words.

We should pause here to recognize something important. Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome, which means he was not speaking of preaching the gospel to non-Christians. He was writing to Christians. The gospel applies to all of the Christian life. In other words, you and I need to hear the gospel too—daily.

Also, keep in mind that the Christians at this time would have experienced punishment from others because they believed and talked about Jesus. This is called persecution. You will see how this context—that Christians were persecuted—applies to what we read in Romans 8. Verses like Romans 8:36—which speaks of being killed for Jesus' sake—would not only have been meaningful, but literally true! To be unashamed of the gospel could have been a death sentence. But as Paul reminded the Christians in Rome—and you and me as well—our suffering doesn't compare to the glory that will eventually be revealed to us (Rom. 8:18). More about that soon!

The book of Romans has been special to Christians throughout the centuries and has changed many lives. Even today, if you ask Christians what their favorite book of the Bible is, many would place Romans at the top of the list. And if you ask what specific chapter in the Bible

has had the most impact on their lives, many would say Romans 8—and for good reason.

PRAY

Praise God for who He is and thank Him that He is your heavenly Father. Ask God to do good things (whatever you wish to ask). Ask the Lord to help you understand what you are reading. Tell Jesus how you would like to grow (example: *Help me to be kind and forgive me for when I'm unkind*). Thank Jesus for all that He has done.

Since this is your first prayer of our study, here's an example of what you could pray:

You are an awesome God. Thank You that because of Jesus, I can know You and call You my heavenly Father. I pray You would help my friends feel better today. Lord, please help me to know You better. Help me believe in You. When I am afraid to tell people about You, help me trust You and tell others all that You have done. Thank You for coming to earth and living perfectly. Thank You for dying on the cross, taking the sins of anyone who would believe in You, and defeating death. You are risen indeed. Amen.

Remember you can turn back to the “What This Study Offers You” section and pray the Lord’s Prayer.

UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT MESSAGE

Although our study focuses on Romans 8, it is good to have a general understanding of what comes before it. This study focuses on chapter 7 and chapter 8 of Romans begins with the word *therefore*, which means that everything that comes before it is important and connected. We won't be reading Romans 1–7 together so it's important that we understand the big theme: the gospel! This lesson helps us understand the context for the rest of our time in the study.

READ ROMANS 1:16–17

Write out Romans 1:16–17.

Have you ever been afraid to talk to someone? Maybe you felt shy or bashful. Maybe you wanted to be included in a game, but you didn't want to ask. There are so many reasons why we don't speak up when we want something.

What word stands out to you in Romans 1:16?

Can you define ashamed?

The apostle Paul was not ashamed (or bashful) of the gospel. Do you remember what the gospel is? Paul was happy to tell everyone about the good news of Jesus. When we are not ashamed of the gospel, we will share it with other people.

The book of Romans has a lot to say about the gospel! Paul wrote, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). God is perfect, but we sin, and our sin separates us from God. But God's love is so amazing, He sent His Son, Jesus, so that we would no longer be separated from God. Jesus lived a perfect life, but when the time came, He died on the cross and rose from the grave.

Jesus paid for our sins—He took all the consequences. Because of what He did, we can now have a relationship with God—our sins are forgiven. When you accept Jesus' free gift of forgiveness, you join His family. The Bible says, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). The gospel is good news!

Did you know that someone shared the good news with me? That is how I became a Christian.

A young girl listened to me as I told her all the wrong things I had done. She was kind, and when I was done talking, she knew what I needed. What I needed was a Person—Jesus. My sin separated me from God, and the only remedy for that was the saving work of Jesus on the cross.

My friend had many reasons why she could have been afraid to tell me about Jesus. I was older than she was and came from a different background. We hadn't known each other for long, so she could have been afraid. But none of these reasons mattered to her. Why? Because she was not ashamed of the gospel or afraid to share it.

Paul had even greater reason to worry about sharing the gospel than my friend did. He was well aware of the violent persecution that happened to people who shared the gospel in those days—after all, he had once been a persecutor (Acts 9:1–4)! But Paul, too, was neither ashamed of the gospel nor afraid to share it. Perhaps this is because both my friend and Paul knew the power of the gospel to change lives—their own lives first.

How do you think that the gospel changes someone?

Why is this important?

Do you think that if we know Jesus and have trusted Him to be our Lord and Savior that we should tell other people?

There will come a time—if the time hasn't already come—when we will have the choice to either tell people about Jesus or shrink back in fear and say nothing. We might feel like we don't know enough to tell other people about Him. Or we might believe that someone may make fun of us. But if we believe the gospel is true . . .

- ✦ that God sent His only Son, Jesus, who was fully God and fully man;
- ✦ that Jesus lived a perfect life on earth, died on the cross, and then rose and defeated death;
- ✦ that Jesus is the way (the only way), the truth, and the life

... then isn't it selfish for us to keep this incredibly good, life-changing news to ourselves?

You and I can ask the Lord for strength and bravery to share the good news. Maybe you don't share because you aren't sure if you have placed your faith in Jesus. If you have not, you can pray right now to know Jesus. Grab an adult and ask them to pray with you. Ask the Lord to give you faith.

LET'S GO DEEPER

1. Who wrote the book of Romans? When was it written, and to whom was it written?

2. Can you write out Romans 1:16–17 in your own words?

3. Why does the apostle Paul say he is not ashamed of the gospel, and what might that mean for the rest of the book?

4. What is the gospel or good news? (We are going to write out this definition a few times throughout the study. If we understand the gospel, we will understand the theme of the book of Romans!)

5. What do you think it means to be ashamed of the gospel?

6. In verses 16–17, what words describe how the gospel works and what it does? (Hint: salvation, believes, righteousness, faith.)

7. Take a moment to think about your relationship with Jesus. When and how did you become a Christian?

8. Can you say with confidence, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel"? If so, why? If not, what's making you ashamed, uncertain, or afraid to talk about it?

PRAY

Praise God for who He is and thank Him that He is your heavenly Father. Ask God to do good things (whatever you wish to ask). Ask the Lord to help you understand what you are reading. Tell Jesus how you would like to grow (example: *Help me to be kind and forgive me for when I'm unkind*). Thank Jesus for all that He has done.

Prepare for Romans 8

The fun part of just studying one chapter of the Bible is that you get to focus on a few lines at a time for a whole week at a time! You are really going to understand and get to know Romans 8. But over the next few days, I want you to get used to reading larger sections of the Bible. If you want to grow in understanding one part, you must understand all the parts around it. So, for the rest of *this* week, you are going to read a chapter of Romans that leads up to our study of Romans 8.

ROMANS 5: A LOT OF GOOD NEWS

READ ROMANS 5

Here are some basic Bible study questions you can use to better understand what you just read.

Observe

Who is the author writing to? **What** is happening during that time or in the passage? **When** was it written? **Where** was it written, and **where** was the letter sent? **Why** was the letter written?

Write out your answers.

Interpret

What does the text mean? Summarize it in your own words. Look for repeated words, and then look up the meaning of any words you may not know. What's the context? Is there anything about the book of Romans that you've learned that will help you understand the meaning of the chapter? What did you learn in Day 1 or 2 that might help you understand why Paul wrote this chapter? How does it relate to the rest of Scripture? Is there anything that you've read in your Bible that reminds you of this chapter? What does the text say about God or about Jesus?

PRAY

Praise God for who He is and thank Him that He is your heavenly Father. Ask God to do good things (whatever you wish to ask). Ask the Lord to help you understand what you are reading. Tell Jesus how you would like to grow (example: *Help me to be kind and forgive me for when I'm unkind*). Thank Jesus for all that He has done.

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