

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY ONE

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans

If you will allow the truth of the letter to the Romans to find its way deeply into your soul, you will never be the same. It will equip you for whatever you have before you. It will help you know how to live. It will give you courage in knowing how to die. It will assist you in heartaches. It will keep you stabilized when things go well for you and you prosper. It is the absolute bedrock of Christian truth. Ignited by the Spirit of God, it will transform you.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHAT the Constitution is to the United States citizen, the letter to the Romans is to the Christian.

We put time and effort into learning our country's constitution because it secures our rights, specifies our values, and structures our government. From the young mother teaching her child how to behave as a good citizen to the high schooler learning history to the soldier protecting our liberty . . . everyone must understand the supreme law of our land.

The same relationship proves true between Christians and Romans. So let your heart brim with excitement as we begin an in-depth study of this most valuable of all letters!

More than any other biblical work, it explains the saving accomplishments of Christ, so Romans is often called "The Christian's Constitution." It supplies truth for our heads, tools for our hands, and treasure for our hearts—the essential doctrines of our faith. Its teaching anchors us to our God and situates us in His eternal plan.

This *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study is the initial step in our journey, but it is actually no step at all. First, we need to unfold Romans as though it were a map so we can get the big picture of the whole trip.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING

The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll
Study 1 • Page 1

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans



PREPARE YOUR HEART

The Holy Spirit is our crucial guide in studying God's Word. So, at the beginning, throughout, and then after your study, ask Him to help you understand it and apply it to your life.

Thank You for preserving the message that You revealed in Romans through the miracle of inspiration. May the truth that appears in this letter emerge. May it make its flight through my mind, deep within my heart so that my actions are transformed, just as my mind. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Your adventure through Romans awaits!



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Roman Christian congregation likely got its start when Roman Jews went back home after Pentecost ([Acts 2](#)) and spread the fire of the gospel that had ignited the church movement.

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from the prominent Greek city of Corinth around AD 57, just three years after the 16-year-old Nero became emperor of Rome. Although Paul had never been to Rome and longed to visit the church there, we can sense his deep familiarity and pastoral connection with the community by the twenty-eight individuals he greeted by name at the end of his letter ([Romans 16](#)).

During New Testament times, writers with physical limitations such as poor eyesight would use an *amanuensis*, which is a technical term for secretary, to write what they dictate. Tertius was Paul's amanuensis for this epistle ([16:22](#)). Imagine being Tertius with Paul in an ornate room at Gaius' fancy Greco-Roman estate home as Paul paced back and forth unfolding the most profound truth anyone can know!



Observation: A Tour of Romans

Getting a bird's-eye view of a biblical book's context is a great way to begin a study. That's where we'll start in observation. Observation is nothing more than a very careful reading to find out what the text says. Find a checklist for Pastor Chuck's method of Bible-study in the online article "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)" at insight.org.¹

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans

Tour Post Number 1—Authorship

Carefully read [Romans 1:1](#). How did Paul describe himself? What description stands out to you?

Tour Post Number 2—Audience

Read [Romans 1:7–13](#); [15:22–25](#). To whom did Paul address this letter? How did he describe the recipients?

Tour Post Number 3—Purpose

Pastor Chuck identifies two purposes for Paul's letter: a personal purpose to prepare them for his visit and a doctrinal purpose to ensure they have the truth to stand against the infection of error. What statements from the verses above confirm these purposes?

The best protection against the infection of false teaching is the antiseptic of doctrinal truths. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Tour Post Number 4—Message

Read [Romans 1:16–17](#) several times. Restate the message of the letter in your own words.

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans

Tour Post Number 5—Outline

Look at Pastor Chuck's book chart below and record key observations that stand out to you.

ROMANS OVERVIEW BIBLE CHART

	THE GOSPEL				Conclusion Relational (Rom. 15:14–16:27)
	Romans 1:18–8:39	Romans 9–11		Romans 12:1–15:13	
Introduction Personal (Rom. 1:1–17)	Saving Sinners Depravity of humanity Grace of God Justification by faith Sanctification through the Spirit Security of the saved	Concerning Israel Divine sovereignty and human will Past, present, and future of the nation		Concerning Christian Conduct Social Civil Personal	
EMPHASIS	Doctrinal	National		Practical	
RESPONSE	Faith	Hope		Love	
DOCTRINE OF GOD	Wrath	Righteousness	Glory	Grace	
DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY	Fallen	Dead	Saved	Struggling	
DOCTRINE OF SIN	Exposed	Conquered	Explained	Forgiven	
STATUS	Dead in sin	Dead to sin	Peace with God	Love for others	
THEME	God’s righteousness is given to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.				
KEY VERSES	Romans 1:16–17				
CHRIST IN ROMANS	Jesus is the focus of the gospel and the means of salvation by God’s grace apart from works.				

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Chart taken from *The Swindoll Study Bible*. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers.

You in your faith will find the necessity to have piers in your life. They are never easy to put in. It is always messy. It is always expensive. But if you don't have them in a place where your foundation is shaking, you will not recover from foundation problems. The same is true for the letter to the Romans. You need the piers of this letter to cement you and to anchor you into its full truth.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Romans—Our Doctrinal Constitution

When we visit a new country, we often check a translation dictionary or seek out a native speaker to make sure we understand the language and culture as we tour the territory. Interpreting the Bible is just like that. We use resources to gain an in-depth understanding of

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans

the author's meaning and what it means to follow Jesus.¹ Now would be a great time to add to your library Pastor Chuck's commentary *Insights on Romans* found at insight.org/store if you don't already have it.

In [Romans 1:1](#), Paul identified himself as a slave of Christ Jesus and an apostle. Read the definition of the Greek word [doulos](#), “slave,” at billmounce.com. You can also access excellent articles on slavery and *doulos* at studylight.org for free in the *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* ([slavery](#): bottom paragraph) and *Holman's Bible Dictionary* ([slave](#): bottom paragraph). Summarize how Paul viewed himself and the significance of Paul's view for Christ-followers today.

Paul does not strut his stuff and come across as an arrogant, well-known preacher, though he certainly was well-known by the time he wrote it. He identifies himself first in relation to his Master, Christ, as a bond-slave. A bond-slave in the first century was the lowest form of animal life. You had no will of your own; you were owned by your master. You were chattel in his ownership, a piece of property, a human tool. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In 1:7, Paul called the Roman Christians saints. Literally, the Greek reads, “called saints.” Find the meaning of the term [saints](#) in the *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Because Rome was the most powerful city in the empire—Caesar ruled from there—explain the significance of Paul mentioning that the Roman believers were set apart for God.

Compare [1:16–17](#) to [16:17–19](#). How important is sound doctrine to Paul, the Romans, and modern-day readers?

Those believers in the central city of the world needed to know where they stood, what they believed, and how to defend against theological error, which I often refer to as “theological infection.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans



Correlation: Our Firm Foundation

Correlation enables us to have a panoramic view of the biblical landscape by comparing our specific passage to other passages in Scripture.

In the early pages of Scripture, God spoke His Word to Adam and Eve ([Genesis 2:15–17](#)). Satan tempted Eve to doubt the truthfulness of God’s Word. Instead of trusting God, she believed his lies, ate the forbidden fruit, and gave some to Adam who ate it too ([3:1–6](#)). Adam’s disobedience brought sin and death into the world ([3:17–19](#)).

Read [Romans 1:16–18](#); [3:21–24](#); and [5:12–21](#). Reread [3:21–22](#) in the NET and the NIV translations. How are we made right with God?

Justification is the sovereign act of God whereby, at the moment of your salvation, the righteousness of God is placed into your life. God declares you righteous. It doesn’t mean you always act righteous. That’s another subject. That’s sanctification. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Compare [1 Corinthians 3:10–11](#); [John 14:6](#); and [Ephesians 2:1–10](#). What are the benefits of anchoring our lives in these truths?

A depraved sinner has nothing in his or her flesh that can impress or favor God. God looks down and sees us all as equally undeserving, and by His grace in Christ through faith in the Savior, the Lord God reaches down into humanity and pulls us from the ranks and then sets us free to serve Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Christ, the Solid Rock, is our firm foundation! His power in us is greater than sin and greater than Satan! We can now be transformed in our hearts and minds to bring God glory!

Romans: Our Doctrinal Constitution

Selections from Romans



Application: True Transformation Begins Here!

Do something uncommon in our day: reflect on your own soul. Is the Savior there? If so, give thanks to Him for taking up residence in you. If not, tell Him you would like to receive God's free gift of eternal life, to embrace Christ as your Lord and Savior, and to live your life as His servant.

Today I have the privilege of telling you that this Savior is still alive. His work at the cross is still effective, and the invitation is still open. Thankfully you're still alive. You don't know that you will be tomorrow. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The transformation begins here! How does it feel to know that you can live above the drag of sin?

My hope is that God will use this letter to transform you so that as you begin to live out its truth, you will find yourself really understanding who you are and where you're going. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank You for this letter that contains truths where I can anchor my life. Help me grasp what Your heart is saying so that it will begin to make a real difference in how I see myself, how I understand You, how I relate to Your Son, how I deal with sin, and how I lean on the power of the Holy Spirit. May the strength that comes from these times that I spend in Your Word enable me to stand firm on the rock, Jesus Christ. In His name, I pray these things. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2006, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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Insight for Living
Study 1 • Page 7

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