

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY TWO

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13

Every time you see the word gospel, you can substitute the words good news. This is the good news of God, given to humanity regarding His Son, Christ. God's love impelled Him to come and to reach down to us in grace and to win us. It took someone to pay the price for sin, and that is Christ.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IN our age of digital messages and automated responses, it's exciting to receive a hand-written letter from a close friend. We sense his or her care and affection in the strokes of ink. We feel the warmth of his or her touch as we hold in our hands this piece of living history that cannot be deleted with a single click. Hand-written letters from loved ones are treasured possessions.

In Paul's day, hand-writing was all a person could do. There were no screens or word processors, and writing was a costly and laborious task. You either hired a scribe or wrote it yourself, and few knew how to write. It entailed dipping a dry reed stalk into black ink and inscribing letters on a sheet of papyrus, a grass-like plant material, or on dried sheep skin called vellum.

That was the method Tertius used as Paul dictated to him one of the most important pieces of writing in human history. Despite not having the original document, the book of Romans still offers us the experience of having a personal, hand-written letter from God Himself—communicating to us the grandeur of His majesty and the warmth of His affection because of the good news that salvation is available through Jesus, the Messiah, God's Son.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we direct our attention to the opening verses that preview the theme of the book—the gospel, as well as its source, content, purpose, and some practical ways it transforms our lives.



Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Imagine how you'd feel if you discovered a hundred pounds of gold buried in your backyard—and it's yours to keep. That's the feeling the psalmist expressed from his joy in the Word of God. Reflect on Psalm 119:162:

*I rejoice in your word
like one who discovers a great treasure.*

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you search out eternal gems in Romans.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Let's begin by reviewing the doctrines of *revelation*, *inspiration*, and *illumination*.

Revelation came when God gave His Word. Inspiration took place when writers recorded God's Word (2 *Timothy* 3:16–17). *Second Peter* 1:20–21 tells us that as the winds, waves, and currents of the sea move a ship, people who spoke from God were moved by the Holy Spirit.¹ Though revelation and inspiration have ended, the joy of illumination goes on and on.

Illumination describes the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives where we experience Christ's personal touch as we open this ancient first-century letter written by a man we have never met to a group of people we have never known. He flips on the light of our understanding, reveals our blind spots, spotlights tangible ways for us to live out its truths, and beckons us into a deeper relationship with God.

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13



Observation: The Gospel—Eternal Treasure

Discovering a biblical treasure begins with careful observation, which corresponds to the first step in our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method. Observing a letter like Romans begins with noting who wrote it, what subjects he talks about, the significance of the subjects he addressed, and how he connected those subjects together. Do that now with *Romans 1:1–15*.² Record at least five key observations you make.

The Gospel—Its Source

Now examine *Romans 1:1, 9, 15–16*. Write down the word that is repeated in all four verses. Repetition is God's way of telling us to pay attention. Who originated the gospel? How did Paul describe himself in relation to the gospel?

Reread *1:1–2*. How did we get the gospel?

The Gospel—Its Content

Reread *Romans 1:3–4*. What is the substance of the gospel? Note all the terms that Paul used to describe Jesus.

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13

Carefully read [Romans 1:5](#). What did Paul receive from Jesus?

The Gospel—Its Purpose

According to [Romans 1:5](#), what is the purpose of the gospel?

Read [1:8–13](#). How did Paul describe his desire to visit the Romans? Why did he long to see them?

Let's take a closer look at the gems we've picked up to understand how precious they are!



Interpretation: The Gospel—Display of God's Grace

Now, we'll consult our Bible-study tools to get the meaning of the text as the author intended for the original readers. Interpretation will deepen our understanding of the gospel. If you don't have Pastor Chuck's commentary, *Insights on Romans*, now would be a great time to grab your copy at the start of this series. Do so at insight.org/store.

In [Romans 1:1](#), Paul mentioned that he was chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach the gospel. Explore the term [apostle](#) in a Bible dictionary like the free *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at studylight.org. Explain the meaning and significance of this term.

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13

The word apostle means “one sent forth.” Never forget that within Paul beat the heart of a missionary. If you miss that, you’ll miss the thrust of his driving message again and again with the gospel. He longed to see his fellow Jews born again. He longed to see the gentiles that surrounded him, now in this case in Rome, born again. He had a missionary heart. He was sent forth to take the gospel. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Paul mentioned that Jesus is the substance of the gospel in [Romans 1:3–4](#). Look up these verses in a commentary, like [Constable’s Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#), and look up the meaning of each description Paul gave Jesus. Note them below.

“Born of a descendant of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3 NASB).

“Declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection” (1:4 NASB).

“According to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ” (1:4 NASB).

“Our Lord” (1:4 NASB).

Paul thinks chronologically, starts with Jesus’ humanity, works his way to deity, messiahship, and authority. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13

Reread [Romans 1:5](#). Paul noted that through Christ he received grace and apostleship. Look up the word *charis* in a Greek dictionary like the one at billmounce.com or *grace* in a Bible dictionary like the *Holman Bible Dictionary* at studylight.org and record the significance of this key term.

Paul remembered that he was one unworthy soul. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to [1:5](#), the purpose of the gospel is to bring about the “obedience of faith.” Explain the significance and relevance of this phrase for us today.

*God did not save us in order for us to have a theological set of principles in our heads. We are saved in order to surrender our lives to Christ.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



Correlation: The God of Grace

In correlation, we consult other biblical passages on the same topic to make sure that we are getting the whole picture of God’s truth.

From Genesis to Revelation, God seeks the lost and offers them grace. Consider Abraham’s background. Read [Genesis 15:6](#); [Joshua 24:2](#); and [Romans 4:1–5](#). How would you describe to a friend God’s grace in the life of Abraham?

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13

Imagine Zacchaeus' efforts to climb the sycamore tree to see Jesus and the grace that Jesus offered him in [Luke 19:1–10](#). Compare God's grace in the life of Zacchaeus to the way Paul described the Roman believers in [Romans 1:7](#) and the blessing that he pronounced on them.

You have the grace of God that has come to your rescue. You are objects of His grace, and you are recipients of His peace. That'll make all the difference in the world when you exist in a tough city or you work in a tough office.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Think about Paul. Compare [Romans 1:5](#) to [Acts 9:9–16](#) and [1 Timothy 1:13–15](#). What does Paul's life teach you about the God of grace?

Some of you are convincing yourself these days that you're just too far gone, that you have been a prodigal beyond anyone's belief. Your life is too soiled. Your past is too dirty. Your world is too impure for God to care that much about you. How wrong you are. Grace covers it all. Grace is greater than our sin.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Respond to God's Letter!

God's personal letter transforms only those who respond to its truths. You can respond to God's letter by accepting it, sharing it, and applying it. If you've already placed your faith in Jesus Christ, why not ask the Holy Spirit to bring someone to your mind and your path with whom you can share the gems you picked up in this Bible study? Write down his or her name and develop a plan.

Getting a Grasp of the Gospel

Romans 1:1–13

In an era where open-mindedness is praised and recommended, knowing the truth is essential. We read letters from our loved ones again and again to etch their words into our hearts. What are one or two key truths or principles you gleaned from today's study that you really want to etch into your heart?

Romans will build a boundary around your brain that you need. It'll help you know what to say no to. It will help you discern when you're hearing error. It'll help you discover why the cross and the death of Jesus Christ is the only way to God. The only way to God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank You for Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. I thank You that no one comes to You but through Him. Teach me not to be ashamed of Your gospel because it is Your power for the salvation of anyone who believes. I thank You for communicating Your heart to me in this letter. May its truths transform me and sustain me every day. May I continue to cherish this eternal treasure. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about the trustworthiness of God's Word, the Bible, read Pastor Chuck Swindoll's article, "[Why We Have Confidence in the Bible](#)."
2. 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.

insight.org

Insight for Living
Study 2 • Page 8