

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY FORTY-THREE

Putting Down Evil, Lifting Up Friends

Romans 16:20–24

Pray that the Lord will build you into a person of grace—and when He does, you will be a rarity.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE friend who affirmed us and pointed us to Christ when we felt discouraged and wanted to give up, the young lady who made a guest feel welcome in the Sunday school class, or the elder who prayed for the new pastor and provided him with time and support, expecting nothing in return—many of us have been touched by *people of grace*.

Though the apostle Paul was an astute theological mind in the first century, he was a person of grace. The first eleven chapters of Romans—Paul's constitution of Christian truth—expound the great doctrines of the faith. We learn of a God who justifies by grace through faith in Christ and grants us His power through the Holy Spirit to think and live differently.

In the remaining chapters of his magnum opus, Paul explained that all the power of the vertical is for transforming our lives in the horizontal. Magnificent truth! *Grace received becomes grace given*. And so, with one practical subject after another, his teachings communicate how we can become people of grace.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll closely examine Paul's final instructions to the Roman congregation and greetings to his close aides in ministry in order to learn how to put down evil and encourage others—*how to live lives characterized by grace*.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Think of the many ways God has been transforming your life with the biblical principles you learned from the book of Romans. Express your gratitude for the privilege to come close to God's heart to understand how to give the grace you've received.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In the verses prior to our passage, Paul issued an urgent warning for believers to “watch out for” those “who cause divisions and upset people’s faith” and to “stay away from them” (Romans 16:17). Paul also commended the believers’ obedience, encouraging them to be “wise in what is good” and “innocent in what is evil” (16:19 NASB). Now, as he wrapped up his letter with final greetings on behalf of his companions in Corinth, Paul emphasized the theme that saturates his letter and his life . . . **GRACE!**



Observation: Paul’s Instructions and Greetings to His Friends

Observation entails reading carefully *Romans 16:20–24* to find out what it says.¹ Take a moment to read these verses.

Putting an End to Evil—Romans 16:20

Right away, you’ll notice the connection with the previous verse. In *Romans 16:20*, Paul states the reason we should aim at doing good and steer clear of anything evil. Using the same reference to “the God of peace” as in Romans 15:33, Paul foretold the end of evil. What did he promise? Note the strong verb Paul used. We’ll come back to this important word later in our study.

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Bringing Encouragement to Others—Romans 16:20–24

To stand against the attacks of the enemy and fix their bearings on doing good, believers need grace. What blessing did Paul give to the Roman congregation in *Romans 16:20b*?

Speaking of grace, look carefully at Paul’s list of friends and greetings. Previously in chapter 16, Paul named 27 people in Rome, greeting them and commending their deeds. In *16:21–24*, he mentioned believers in Corinth, the town in which Paul was staying when he wrote Romans. Name each person and specify how he described them.

Paul’s Friends Romans 16:21–24 (NASB)		
Verse	Name	Description
16:21		
16:21		
16:21		
16:21		
16:22		
16:23		
16:23		
16:23		

I shudder when I realize how rarely I find a person of grace. We talk of grace, but we live under guilt and shame. We think we embrace grace, and we seem to prefer works. We encourage grace in others, and then we judge them when they fail. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Interpretation: Putting Down Evil, Lifting Up Friends

Paul declared a promise in [Romans 16:20](#) that “the God of peace will soon crush Satan” under their feet. The word means break, destroy, or dash to pieces, like what happens to a clay pot when it is smashed (Revelation 2:27). It is useless. Why is this truth so important to us as believers? How will this action bring God’s peace to His creation?

How good is that? Literally the word means “to shatter, to smash, to annihilate, to subdue completely.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Read [16:20](#) in the NET, MSG, J. B. Phillips, and NIV to see the ways the word *soon* is translated. Based on these translations, what is the meaning of this word? What was Paul saying about the timing of Satan’s crushing?

Never underestimate the authority or the power of God’s inspired Word. It sets people free. It puts people on a rock in the midst of these sandy cultural times in which we live. It gives us hope, not just in life but beyond life. And it holds us close to the heart of God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In [16:20](#), Paul told the Roman believers, “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.” To discover more about grace, read the section titled, “The grace of Christ,” in the article “[Grace](#)” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at biblegateway.com. Explain the role that grace plays in the life of every believer.

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Nothing motivates like grace. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Deepen your knowledge of some of Paul’s top aides and closest friends by reading more about them. Record what you learn about them.

More Information on Some of Paul’s Closest Friends Romans 16:21–24 (NASB)		
Timothy	<i>Acts 16:1–3</i>	
Lucius	<i>Acts 13:1–3</i>	
Jason	<i>Acts 17:5–9</i>	
Sosipater (Sopater)	<i>Acts 20:4–6</i>	
Gaius	<i>Acts 19:21–29</i>	

How does this list demonstrate that Paul was a person of grace, a minister who loved the people who labored with him in God’s field?

We all need a Paul. And we all need a Timothy, whom Paul called his “fellow worker.” I hope you have some fellow workers in your life.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: Becoming People of Grace

We can trace evil to the first pages of Scripture, where we find Satan slipping into the garden of Eden in the form of a serpent to tempt Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam took a bite too, and the beautiful harmony between them and their God shattered to pieces. When God confronted them about their sin, Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent (*Genesis 3:1–19*), and we've been casting blame and rationalizing our sin ever since.

Immediately, however, God put into action a plan to repair humankind . . . by redeeming sinners and breaking evil at its source. What do *Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:13–15; and Revelation 20:1–10* teach about the crushing of Satan?

When you read of the ultimate crushing of Satan and the removal of him from this planet or from time and eternity, you don't read of any wrestling. There's no lengthy struggle. There's no fight. I mean the Lord doesn't have to roll up His sleeves and take him on and spend the next 30 years defeating him. It's just, "You're through. Exit. Out." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Compare *Romans 12:19–21; 16:20; Ephesians 6:10–19; James 4:7–8; 1 Peter 5:8–10*. How do these passages emphasize the presence of evil and the need for believers not to fear? What strategies does Scripture provide to overcome evil or resist the evil one?

If Satan will soon be crushed under our feet, he hasn't yet been crushed. There will always be people and circumstances and influences from the world system, our own flesh working in concert, and let me tell you: spiritual warfare is the real deal. It isn't the figment of some fanatic's imagination.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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See in *1 Corinthians 15:56–57*; *2 Corinthians 12:1–10*; and *Titus 2:11–14* how victory can only be appropriated through grace. Why is grace essential for believers to experience Christ and freedom from sin's power?

If you find yourself a demon fighter, locating evil in every turn, you will not be a person of grace. But when you operate in the realm of grace with a grace mind-set, it is remarkable what that will do to you. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Become a Person of Grace!

How can you apply the biblical principles that you've learned? Here are three truths to live by.

1. *You cannot ignore or deny the presence of evil.* Satan, though a conquered enemy, still lashes out to inflict damage every day. “Stay alert!” (1 Peter 5:8).
2. *You need not fear or be intimidated by evil.* Christ's presence and the Spirit's power in us “is greater than the spirit who lives in the world” (1 John 4:4).
3. *You will not experience victory until you appropriate grace personally.* By God's grace alone, He defeats the enemy of our soul and grants us peace.

Which of these lessons has the Holy Spirit highlighted in your heart? How can you claim this truth in a particular circumstance you're facing today?

Just as Paul needed his companions to help him, you also need people of grace to help you in your walk. As you ask God each day to make you more of a person of grace, who can you encourage in their walk with Christ?

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Never get so intellectually caught up in the Scriptures that you begin to lose touch with people and so heavenly minded you're of little earthly good to folks around you. And never let your knowledge be a source of pride but a reminder that God has graciously opened your mind to His truth—to change your life and for you to share the Scriptures with others. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Until Christ returns to render the final blow to Satan and rid His creation of evil, we need God's grace, and we need to show God's grace to each other. Remember, you're not alone in the battle against evil! Extend to others the grace you've received from the Lord and find the strength you need to walk God's way.



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your grace. Make me a person of grace. In Jesus' name, I pray. 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 © 2008, 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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