

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
(Romans 5:1-11)

*God of Righteousness, in Jesus you took upon yourself our sin and weakness, that we may be made right in your eyes. May we seek not to justify ourselves, but look to Christ as the source of all that is good about us. Give us the faith to trust in what you have done for us, giving credit to you alone for our life and salvation, which you have bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Introduction

Throughout his travels, Paul wrote letters to the churches that he had founded to keep in touch with believers and encourage them in their faith. He also wrote letters to places where he intended to go. One letter he wrote to was to the capital city of Rome.

## Read: Romans 3:10-28

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

## The Biblical Context

The first Apostles sent letters to believers in various towns and regions. The majority of these letters were written by the Apostle Paul to congregations he helped get started. Eventually, these writings were collected and became part of the New Testament.

Paul's letter to the Romans has an emphasis on theological instruction. Since Paul himself had not been to Rome, he wanted to be sure that the Roman Christians had a solid understanding of who Jesus was and what Jesus has done for us.

Paul described the problem of human sin, of which we are all guilty. Paul knew that none of us is without sin, and that we are all accountable to God. But Paul also knew that God has given us the promise of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. God makes us right by giving us faith in Jesus!

## Discussion Questions

1. Many of Paul's letters were written to places he had already visited. Given the fact that Paul had not yet been to Rome, how do you think this affected his tone and the subject matter he wrote about?
2. Read Paul's opening words in this letter from Romans 1:1-7. Who is at the center of Paul's message? What are the main things Paul wanted to say about him?
3. In Romans 3:10-18, Paul is quoting the Old Testament, including Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-4. From these verses, do you get the impression that people come into the world in a "neutral" state? What is true of all human beings?
4. Paul is speaking to a common assumption that if we just try hard, do good, and follow the rules, we can make ourselves right in the eyes of God. What did God really want to teach us by giving us the law?
5. Martin Luther said he had always thought "the righteousness of God" was a quality that God possessed — something God is. He later came to understand God's righteousness as something God does — something he gives to us. How are these two concepts different?
6. To be justified means to be "made right" before God. So what does it mean to say that we are "justified by his grace as a gift"? How did God make this happen? What did Jesus do for us?
7. As Christians, does our faith allow to brag about how much better we are than other people? Why or why not?
8. Read Romans 5:1-11. According to these verses, what is the result or consequence of being made right with God by faith? How does this make a genuine and meaningful difference in our life?