



# Hymn of the Month

## AUGUST

### *Close to Thee*

Thou my everlasting portion,  
 More than friend or life to me,  
 All along my pilgrim journey,  
 Savior, let me walk with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 All along my pilgrim journey,  
 Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Not for ease or worldly pleasure,  
 Nor for fame my prayer shall be;  
 Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
 Only let me walk with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
 Only let me walk with Thee.

Lead me through the vale of shadows,  
 Bear me o'er life's fitful sea;  
 Then the gate of life eternal  
 May I enter, Lord, with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 Then the gate of life eternal  
 May I enter, Lord, with Thee.

*Words by Fanny Crosby;  
 Music by Silas J. Vail, 1874*

## SEPTEMBER

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
 An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
 Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
 For me, who Him to death pursued?  
 Amazing love! how can it be  
 That Thou, my God,  
 should die for me?

*(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
 That Thou, my God,  
 Should die for me!*

He left His Father's throne above,  
 So free, so infinite His grace;  
 Emptied Himself of all but love,  
 And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
 O praise my God, it reaches me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
 Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
 I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
 Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
 Alive in Him, my living Head,  
 And clothed in righteousness divine;  
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
 And claim the crown,  
 Through Christ, my own.

*Words by Charles Wesley, 1738;  
 Music by Thomas Campbell*

## OCTOBER

### *Before the Throne of God Above*

Before the throne of God above,  
 I have a strong and perfect plea,  
 A great High Priest  
 Whose name is Love,  
 Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
 My name is graven on His hands,  
 My name is written on His heart.  
 I know that while in heaven He stands  
 No tongue can bid me thence depart,  
 No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
 And tells me of the guilt within,  
 Upward I look and see Him there  
 Who made an end of all my sin.  
 Because the sinless Savior died,  
 My sinful soul is counted free;  
 For God the just is satisfied  
 To look on Him and pardon me,  
 To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,  
 My perfect spotless righteousness,  
 The great unchangeable I AM,  
 The King of glory and of grace.  
 One with Himself I cannot die;  
 My soul is purchased by His blood;  
 My life is hid with Christ on high,  
 With Christ, my Savior and my God,  
 With Christ, my Savior and my God!

*Words by Charitie Lees Bancroft, 1863;  
 Music by Vikki Cook*







# FEELING WORDS



## MAD

bothered  
ruffled  
irritated  
displeased  
annoyed  
steamed  
irked  
perturbed  
frustrated  
angry  
fed up  
disgusted  
indignant  
ticked off  
bristling  
fuming  
explosive  
enraged  
irate  
incensed  
burned up  
livid  
outraged  
furious



## SAD

down  
blue  
somber  
low  
glum  
lonely  
disappointed  
worn out  
melancholy  
downhearted  
unhappy  
dissatisfied  
gloomy  
mournful  
grieved  
depressed  
lousy  
crushed  
defeated  
dejected  
empty  
wretched  
despairing  
devastated



## GLAD

at ease  
secure  
comfortable  
optimistic  
satisfied  
refreshed  
stimulated  
pleased  
warm  
snug  
happy  
encouraged  
tickled  
proud  
cheerful  
thrilled  
delighted  
joyful  
elated  
exhilarated  
overjoyed  
ecstatic  
relaxed  
content



## AFRAID

uneasy  
apprehensive  
careful  
cautious  
hesitant  
tense  
anxious  
nervous  
edgy  
distressed  
scared  
frightened  
repulsed  
agitated  
shocked  
alarmed  
overwhelmed  
frantic  
panicked  
stricken  
horrified  
petrified  
terrified  
numb



## CONFUSED

curious  
uncertain  
ambivalent  
doubtful  
unsettled  
hesitant  
perplexed  
puzzled  
muddled  
distracted  
flustered  
jumbled  
unfocused  
fragmented  
dismayed  
insecure  
dazed  
bewildered  
lost  
stunned  
chaotic  
torn  
baffled  
dumbfounded



## ASHAMED

guilty  
uncomfortable  
awkward  
self-conscious  
disconcerted  
chagrined  
abashed  
humiliated  
embarrassed  
flustered  
sorry  
apologetic  
sheepish  
regretful  
remorseful  
belittled  
violated  
mortified  
defiled  
degraded  
clumsy  
jumbled



## LONELY

out of place  
left out  
unheeded  
lonesome  
disconnected  
remote  
invisible  
unwelcome  
cut-off  
excluded  
insignificant  
ignored  
neglected  
separated  
removed  
detached  
isolated  
unwanted  
rejected  
deserted  
outcast  
abandoned  
desolate  
forsaken



## BAD

burdened  
heavy-hearted  
stressed  
weighed down  
upset  
disturbed  
worried  
apathetic  
avoidant  
self-pitying  
dumb  
lame  
bitter  
resentful  
down  
lousy  
awkward  
envious  
diminished  
restless  
bored  
bitter

a guide to

# SELF-REFLECTION



From *C201, Holiness of God: Habits to Form*

Self-reflection is one of the habits we need to form as a way to locate ourselves accurately against the backdrop of God's holiness.

But a Christian is a man who has **seen himself and seen what he has done**. He has seen his transgression, his iniquity, his sin. He realizes **the meaning of his actions**. He realizes he has **sinned against God**; and he has seen that his actual nature is itself sinful. I would call that "the sinner awakening," facing himself and realizing the initial truths about himself. <sup>1</sup>

- Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Out of the Depths* (emphasis added)

As soon as we are alone, ...inner chaos opens up in us. This chaos can be so disturbing and so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again. Entering a private room and shutting the door, therefore, does not mean that we immediately shut out all our inner doubts, anxieties, fears, bad memories, unresolved conflicts, angry feelings and impulsive desires. On the contrary, when we have removed our outer distractions, we often find that our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force. We often use the outer distractions to shield ourselves from the interior noises...

This makes the discipline of solitude all the more important. <sup>2</sup>

- Henri Nouwen, *Making All Things New*

Self-reflection should be a written record of a period of disciplined thinking about some incident, or even a passing moment, that seems significant.

## SOME TIPS TO HELP OBSERVE AND REFLECT UPON THE SELF

### STEP #1 – LIST THE FACTS

Go through facts utilizing the 5W's - Who, What, When, Where, Why

This is where you want to review what happened with as much accuracy as possible. You can list out basic facts of the situation in chronological order. Focusing on facts halts rationalizing and self-justifying emotions. For example, rather than saying, "I felt like he was attacking me with his words so I responded in this way," just state the objective facts: "I yelled at my roommate."

### STEP #2 – EXPLORE

Based on some facts, you can begin to explore some questions to help you think, such as:

- Why did I say that? Why did I do that?
- What was I feeling when I did that?
- What was going through my mind?
- What were some events leading up to this incident?

### STEP #3 – ASK, WHAT DOES THIS REVEAL ABOUT ME?

After reviewing the facts and exploring why you reacted or felt as you did, now you can ask yourself the question, "What does this reveal about me?" Here are some questions that might be helpful:

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd-Jones, David Martin. *Out of the Depths: Restoring Fellowship with God*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books. 1995. p.49.

<sup>2</sup> Nouwen, Henri. *Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*. New York, New York: HarperSanFrancisco. 1981. pp. 70-71.

- What does this show about what drives me?
- What does this show about what's going on inside of me?
- What does this show about my view towards... (others, God, myself)?
- What does this reveal about what is important to me?

Don't use a lot of jargon and try not to be overly dramatic in language (e.g., "I feel like I don't deserve the cross of Jesus!"). Try to use plain speech as much as possible.

#### STEP #4 – WORD OF GOD

- What about the gospel addresses me at this point?
- What is true and real according to God's word?
- How does the word of God bring reproof and correction (2 Timothy 3:16) to you regarding this situation?

Often, people either go into a downward spiral of self-flagellation, or they might be satisfied with merely identifying what they did wrong and end there. If you don't go through this step, you can leave God entirely out of your struggle. Sometimes in people's reflections and repentance, they commit to never doing something again in a very self-driven way, without going through the full process of seeing themselves and their own sinfulness in light of who God is. They end up missing out on God's grace and his forgiveness pronounced through his words.

Truth may hurt, but it is always best to face the truth. God's word will be relevant and powerful when there is proper admission of and discovery of truth. By default, we have layers of self-deception, denial, rationalization, justification, etc. Writing self-reflections can slice through all of that and help you get to the truth of who you are. And of course what we want is the truth about ourselves! It's something many people do not have; nor do they treasure it.

Above all, be honest. God wants to dialogue with us.

#### **ISAIAH 1:18 (ESV)**

**"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:  
though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red like crimson,  
they shall become like wool."**

Ultimately God wants to dialogue in truth so that we can be healed and so we can be as white as snow.

There is freedom when you know you have properly acknowledged, repented of and fully processed the junk inside. There is self-knowledge and, with it, a growing appreciation of the holy love and grace of God.

Let me ask a simple question at this point: "Have you faced yourself?" Forget everybody else. Hold up a mirror before yourself, look back across your life, look at the things you have thought and done and said, look at the kind of life you are living...The first call to man by God is to be honest, to stop arguing and to face himself. Let him examine himself...There is no hope for a man who does not do that, and the truth about the modern world is that people are running away from just this...[doing] anything to fill up their lives and keep them from thinking. **I say that you have to fight for your life and you have to fight for your soul.** The world will do everything to prevent you facing yourself. My dear friend, let me appeal to you. Look at yourself. Forget everybody and everything else. It is the first step in the knowledge of God and in the experience of His glorious salvation.<sup>3</sup>

- Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Out of the Depths* (emphasis added)

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd-Jones, David Martin. *Out of the Depths: Restoring Fellowship with God*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books. 1995. pp.24-25.

“

Beware in your prayers, above everything else, of limiting God,  
not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what He can do.  
Expect unexpected things 'above all that we ask or think.'

”

- Andrew Murray -



## Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.





# Prayer of Supplication



# Hymn of August

## *Close to Thee*

Thou my everlasting portion,  
 More than friend or life to me,  
 All along my pilgrim journey,  
 Savior, let me walk with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 All along my pilgrim journey,  
 Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Not for ease or worldly pleasure,  
 Nor for fame my prayer shall be;  
 Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
 Only let me walk with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
 Only let me walk with Thee.

Lead me through the vale of shadows,  
 Bear me o'er life's fitful sea;  
 Then the gate of life eternal  
 May I enter, Lord, with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 Then the gate of life eternal  
 May I enter, Lord, with Thee.



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

*study through the book of*

# ROMANS



As the opening words of the letter indicate, the apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans. Only a few scholars in history have doubted his authorship, and their doubts have been shown to be groundless. The title of the book indicates that the letter was written to the Christian churches in Rome.

Paul probably wrote Romans from Corinth, on his third missionary journey, in A.D. 57 (Acts 20:2–3). Having completed his work in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, he hoped to travel to Rome and then on to Spain; but first he needed to go to Jerusalem to deliver the money he had collected for the church there (Rom. 15:19–32; see Acts 19:21). Paul commends Phoebe (Rom. 16:1–2), and she was likely the person who brought the letter to Rome. She resided in Cenchreae, which was near Corinth and was one of its port cities. Furthermore, Gaius was Paul's host (16:23), and this is likely the same Gaius who lived in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). Finally, two fairly early manuscripts of Romans have subscriptions (brief notes that a copyist added to the end of a document) which say that the letter was written from Corinth.<sup>5</sup>

This letter is arguably the most influential book in Christian history, perhaps in the history of Western civilization. But that doesn't necessarily make it easy to read! While theologically minded people love it, others steer away from it (except for a few favorite passages), thinking it is too deep for them. But the overall argument and reason for it can be uncovered with a little spadework.

At issue is tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, who probably meet in separate house churches and who appear to be at odds regarding Gentile adherence to the Jewish law--especially over the three basic means of Jewish identity in the Diaspora: circumcision (2:25-3:1; 4:9-12), Sabbath observance, and food laws (14:1-23). What is at stake practically is whether Gentiles must observe the Jewish law on these points. What is at stake theologically is the gospel itself--

whether God's "righteousness" (= his righteous salvation that issues in the right standing with God) comes by way of "doing" the law or by faith in Christ Jesus and the gift of the Spirit.

What drives the argument from beginning (1:16) to end (15:13) is expressed in the conclusion--that God might give Jews and Gentiles "the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had," so that together "with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:5-6). The focus of the argument is on what makes such unity possible: God's righteousness given to Jew and Gentile alike on the basis of faith in Christ Jesus and effected through the gift of the Spirit. This primary issue is surrounded by matters having to do with Paul's hoped-for relationship with this church at the strategic center of the empire (1:1-15; 15:14-33), followed by a commendation of Phoebe (16:1-2) and greetings to friends (16:3-16), concluding with a final exhortation, greetings, and doxology (16:17-27).

The argument itself is in four major parts (1:16-4:25; 5:12-8:30; 9:1-11:32; 12:1-15:12), each of which concludes on a confessional note that also serves as a transition to the next part (5:1-11; 8:31-39; 11:33-36; 15:13). In turn the parts take up (1) the issue of human sinfulness, showing first its universality (Gentile and Jew alike, with the law offering no advantage to the Jew) and then the effectiveness of Christ in dealing with sin, so that right standing with God is based on faith alone--for which Abraham, the "father of us all" (4:16), serves as exhibit A; (2) how faith in Christ and the gift of the Spirit effect the kind of righteousness that the law intended but could not pull off, since it lacked the power to deal with human sinfulness; (3) how God is faithful despite Jewish unbelief, having a place for both Gentiles and Jews in the new "olive tree" (11:24); (4) what the righteousness effected by Christ and the Spirit (thus apart from the law) looks like in terms of relationships within the believing community and beyond.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *ESV: Study Bible : English Standard Version. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Bibles, 2008. 2151.*

<sup>6</sup> *Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas K. Stuart. How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2002. 317-319.*

## Commentary

### ROMANS 1 COMMENTARY

v.2 “The gospel comes in fulfillment of a promise. In Genesis, God spoke of the heel of the woman’s offspring crushing the serpent (Gen 3:15). Messianic psalms portray the coming deliverer (Pss 45; 72). Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34). The Old Testament continually points beyond itself to a time of fulfillment, the age to come. God made his promise ‘through his prophets’ in the Old Testament. He entrusted his message to men chosen to speak for him. Beyond that, he allowed his message to be written down. What the prophets wrote became ‘Holy Scriptures.’”<sup>1</sup>

vv.16-17 “Verses 16–17 are pivotal verses in the New Testament. They state concisely and with unusual clarity a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith. The heart of v.16 is that the gospel is the saving power of God. Salvation is not only initiated by God but is carried through by his power. To say that the gospel is ‘power’ is to acknowledge the dynamic quality of the message. In the proclamation of the gospel God is actively at work in reaching out to the hearts of people. The gospel is God telling of his love to wayward people. It is not a lifeless message but a vibrant encounter for everyone who responds in faith. [...] To really hear the gospel is to experience the presence of God.

“The gospel is not simply a display of power but the effective operation of God’s power leading to salvation. It has purpose and direction. The salvation Paul spoke of is more than forgiveness of sin. It includes the full scope of deliverance from the results of Adam’s sin. It involves justification (being set right with God), sanctification (growth in holiness), and glorification (the ultimate transformation into the likeness of Christ; cf. 1 John 3:2). [...] Becoming a child of God requires deliverance from what we are as children of Adam. It is not something we can do for ourselves. It requires the power of God himself working through the gospel.

“The gospel does not negate a person’s free will but is God’s power for ‘everyone who believes.’ God does not force himself upon people against their will. For the power of the gospel to effect salvation, the hearer must respond in faith. Our faith is in no way meritorious, but without

1 Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (60). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

faith there can be no individual salvation. Paul noted the universal nature of salvation by faith when he added ‘first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.’”<sup>2</sup>

v.17 “By nature we view righteousness as something we can achieve by our own meritorious action, the result of what we do. The righteousness of God is totally different. It is a right standing before God that has nothing to do with human merit. It is received by faith. [...] This radical departure from conventional wisdom had to be ‘revealed.’ It runs contrary to all the basic instincts of fallen human nature. Virtue has, since the beginning of time, been thought of as an achievement by human endeavor. But God’s righteousness is a right standing he freely gives to those who trust in him.”<sup>3</sup>

v.18 “In v.17 Paul wrote that in the gospel ‘a righteousness of God’ is being revealed. Then he added that from heaven the ‘wrath of God’ is being revealed. There is an essential relationship between God’s righteousness and his wrath. If God responded to wickedness with no more than a benign tolerance, his righteousness could be called into question. That which is right necessarily stands over against and defines by contrast that which is wrong. We recognize that divine wrath is not the same as human wrath, which normally is self-centered, vindictive, and intent on harming another. God’s wrath is his divine displeasure with sin.

“Although the wrath of God is primarily eschatological, it is at the same time a present reality. [...] Furthermore, vv.24–32 describe divine wrath as currently operative in the lives of the ungodly. That God’s wrath is present does not mean that it will not also be eschatological. God’s present wrath anticipates his final withdrawal from those who do not respond to his love.

“The wrath of God is being revealed against every sort of ‘godlessness and wickedness.’ C. Hodge takes these two terms to mean impiety toward God and unjustness toward humanity. Lack of respect for God leads to a lack of justice for people. [...]

“The people of whom Paul spoke were those who by their wicked and sinful lives ‘suppress the truth.’ Truth cannot be changed, but it can be held down or stifled. Wickedness ‘denies ... truth its full scope.’ We will learn in the verses that

2 Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (70). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

3 Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (73). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

follow that God has revealed to all humans something of his eternal power and nature. Yet people refuse to believe, and as a result their understanding is darkened. To turn willfully against God is to move from light into darkness. The blindness that follows is self-imposed.”<sup>4</sup>

v.20 “Verse 20 explains that certain invisible attributes of God have been clearly perceived since the world began, specifically, his ‘eternal power and divine nature.’ They are understood from what has been made. [...] God has revealed himself in nature in such a way as to hold all people responsible. They are ‘without excuse.’ Seeing the beauty and complexity of creation carries with it the responsibility of acknowledging the Creator both as powerful and as living above the natural order. Disbelief requires an act of rebellion against common sense. It displays fallen humanity’s fatal bias against God. Although the created order cannot force a person to believe, it does leave the recipient responsible for not believing.”<sup>5</sup>

vv.24-25 “The word translated *desires* (*epithumia*) is the key to this passage. [...] It is the desire which makes men do nameless and shameless things. It is the way of life of a man who has become so completely immersed in the world that he has ceased to be aware of God at all.

“It is a terrible thing to talk of God *abandoning* anyone. And yet there are two reasons for that.

“(i) God gave man free-will, and he respects that free-will. In the last analysis not even he can interfere with it. In Ephesians 4:19 Paul speaks of men who have abandoned themselves to lasciviousness; they have surrendered their whole will to it. *Hosea* (4:17) has the terrible sentence: ‘Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.’ Before man there stands an open choice; and it has to be so. Without choice there can be no goodness and without choice there can be no love. A coerced goodness is not real goodness; and a coerced love is not love at all. If men deliberately choose to turn their backs on God after he has sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world, not even he can do anything about it.

“When Paul speaks of God *abandoning* men to uncleanness, the word *abandon* has no angry irritation in it. Indeed, its main note is not even condemnation and judgment, but wistful, sorrowful regret, as of a lover who

has done all that he can and can do no more. It describes exactly the feeling of the father when he saw his son turn back on his home and go out to the far country.

“(ii) And yet in this word *abandon* there is more than that—there is judgment. It is one of the grim facts of life that the more a man sins the easier it is to sin. He may begin with a kind of shuddering awareness of what he is doing, and end by sinning without a second thought. It is not that God is punishing him; he is bringing punishment upon himself and steadily making himself the slave of sin. The Jews knew this, and they had certain great saying upon this idea. ‘Every fulfillment of duty is rewarded by another; and every transgression is punished by another.’ ‘Whosoever strives to keep himself pure receives the power to do so; and whosoever is impure, to him is the door of vice thrown open.’

“The most terrible thing about sin is just this power to beget sin. It is the awful responsibility of free-will that it can be used in such a way that in the end it is obliterated and a man becomes the slave of sin, self-abandoned to the wrong way. And sin is always a lie, because the sinner thinks that it will make him happy, whereas in the end it ruins life, both for himself and for others, in this world and in the world to come.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (76). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (78). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed. (Ro 1:26)*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.











# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



## Bible Text

### Romans 1:18-23 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 1:21-23

- According to these verses, what happens when people know who God is, yet fail to respond to him appropriately? Why are these natural consequences to not responding to our knowledge of God?
- Note the “exchanges” described in the text. What is so tragic and absurd about these exchanges?
- Are there areas of my life in which I have “exchanged” a God-given blessing with something that is inferior? What consequences have I reaped from these “exchanges”?

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Wednesday, August 24, 2022



Prayer



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## Bible Text

### Romans 1:24-32 (ESV)

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 1:24-32

- What does the recurring statement "God gave them up" say about the nature of God's judgment?
- Reflect on the state of this world as described in these verses. How much does this heighten my sense of mission in this world?









# Prayer of Supplication



# Hymn of August

## *Close to Thee*

Thou my everlasting portion,  
 More than friend or life to me,  
 All along my pilgrim journey,  
 Savior, let me walk with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 All along my pilgrim journey,  
 Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Not for ease or worldly pleasure,  
 Nor for fame my prayer shall be;  
 Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
 Only let me walk with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
 Only let me walk with Thee.

Lead me through the vale of shadows,  
 Bear me o'er life's fitful sea;  
 Then the gate of life eternal  
 May I enter, Lord, with Thee.  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
 Close to Thee, close to Thee;  
 Then the gate of life eternal  
 May I enter, Lord, with Thee.







# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.

## Commentary

### ROMANS 2 COMMENTARY

v.1-3 “In this passage Paul is directly addressing the Jews. The connection of thought is this: in the foregoing passage Paul had painted a grim and terrible picture of the heathen world, a world which was under the condemnation of God. With every word of that condemnation the Jew thoroughly agreed. But he never for a moment dreamed that he was under a like condemnation. He thought that he occupied a privileged position. God might be the judge of the heathen, but he was the special protector of the Jews. Here Paul is pointing out forcibly to the Jew that he is just as much a sinner as the Gentile is and that when he is condemning the Gentile he is condemning himself. He will be judged, not on his racial heritage, but by the kind of life that he lives.”<sup>1</sup>

v.4 “Paul told the Jews that they were taking the mercy of God as an invitation to sin rather than as an incentive to repentance. [...] Let us think of it in human terms. There are two attitudes to human forgiveness. [...] It is one of the most shameful things in the world to use love’s forgiveness as an excuse to go on sinning. That is what the Jews were doing. That is what so many people still do. The mercy and love of God are not meant to make us feel that we can sin and get away with it; they are meant so to break our hearts that we will seek never to sin again.”<sup>2</sup>

v.5-11 “Although God does not usually punish us immediately for sin, his eventual judgment is certain. We don’t know exactly when it will happen, but we know that no one will escape that final encounter with the Creator.”<sup>3</sup>

v.12-15 “People are condemned not for what they don’t know, but for what they do with what they know. Those who know God’s written Word and his law will be judged by them. Those who have never seen a Bible still know right from wrong, and they will be judged because they did not keep even those standards that their own consciences dictated.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev.ed. (Ro 2:12). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>2</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev.ed. (Ro 2:12). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>3</sup> *Life Application Study Bible, Study Note on Romans 2:5-11*

<sup>4</sup> *Life Application Study Bible, Study Note on Romans 2:12-15*

v.25-27 “If the law was the major distinctive of the Jews, a close second was circumcision. As with the law, so with circumcision, the nation was guilty of placing unwarranted confidence in the rite. [...] Paul’s contention is that circumcision and observance of the law cannot be separated. If one has the symbol of Judaism and lacks the substance, of what value is the symbol? Society has laws that demand that the labeling of a can or bottle match the contents. How much more should there be correspondence in the spiritual realm! If a Gentile should manifest success in observing the law, the lack of circumcision is surely not so important as to discount his spiritual attainment (cf. the line of thought in 2:14).”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Gaebeléin, Frank E. Gen. Ed. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary CD* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) notes for Romans 2.







# Journal

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- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.





## Bible Text

### Romans 2:6-16 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For God shows no partiality.

<sup>12</sup> For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. <sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 2:6-16

- How does this passage demonstrate that there is no one who is exempt from God's judgment?
- What implication does this have for me, living in a pluralistic culture in which the violation of God's innate "natural law" is accepted as a norm, and in some instances even approved and celebrated?
- What is my only hope "on that day when...God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus"?

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

Wednesday, August 31, 2022



Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.



Thursday, September 1, 2022

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.









## Prayer of Supplication



## September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
O praise my God, it reaches me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine;  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
And claim the crown,  
Through Christ, my own.

“

We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties.

- Oswald Chambers -

”



# Prayer of Gratitude

Area with horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



# Prayer of Supplication



# September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
 An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
 Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
 For me, who Him to death pursued?  
 Amazing love! how can it be  
 That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

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 That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

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 Emptied Himself of all but love,  
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 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
 Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
 I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
 Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
 Alive in Him, my living Head,  
 And clothed in righteousness divine;  
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
 And claim the crown,  
 Through Christ, my own.



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what’s behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.

## Commentary

### ROMANS 3 COMMENTARY

v.1 “In this chapter Paul contends that everyone stands guilty before God. Paul has dismantled [in chapters 1 and 2] the common excuses of people who refuse to admit they are sinners: (1) ‘There is no god’ or ‘I follow my conscience’ –1:18-32; (2) ‘I’m not as bad as other people’ –2:1-16; (3) ‘I’m a church member’ or ‘I’m a religious person’ –2:17-29. No one will be exempt from God’s judgment on sin. Every person must accept that he or she is sinful and condemned before God. Only then can we understand and receive God’s wonderful gift of salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

vv.13-18 “The latter half of the catena [series of text beginning with v.10 and ending with v.18], beginning with v.13, reflects the second emphasis, namely, the ramifications of sin in human life. So far as relationship with God is concerned, the rupturing power of sin has been noted (vv.11, 12). But what effect does sin have on the sinner? The effect is total, because his entire being is vitiated. Observe at this point the various members of the body referred to: the throat, the tongue, and the lips (v.13); the mouth (v.14); the feet (v.15); and the eyes (v.18). This list serves to affirm what theologians speak of as total depravity, i.e., not that man in his natural state is as bad as he can possibly be, but rather that his entire being is adversely affected by sin. His whole nature is permeated with it. Human relations also suffer, because society can be no better than those who constitute it. Some of the obvious effects—conflict and bloodshed—are specified (vv.15-17).”<sup>2</sup>

vv.20-25 “The supreme problem of life is, How can a man get into a right relationship with God? How can he feel at peace with God? How can he escape the feeling of estrangement and fear in the presence of God? The religion of Judaism answered: ‘A man can attain to a right relationship with God by keeping meticulously all that the law lays down.’ But to say that is simply to say that there is no possibility of any man ever attaining to a right relationship with God, for no man ever can keep every commandment of the law.

“What then is the use of the law? It is that it makes a man aware of sin. It is only when a man knows the law and tries

<sup>1</sup> Life Application Study Bible, Study Note on Romans 3:1ff  
<sup>2</sup> Gaebelstein, Frank E. Gen. Ed. Expositor’s Bible Commentary CD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) notes for Romans 3.

to satisfy it that he realizes he can never satisfy it. The law is designed to show a man his own weakness and his own sinfulness. Is a man then shut out from God? Far from it, because the way to God is not the way of law, but the way of grace; not the way of works, but the way of faith.

“To show what he means Paul uses three metaphors.

“(i) He uses a metaphor from the *law courts* which we call *justification*. This metaphor thinks of man on trial before God. [...] If an innocent man appears before a judge then to treat him as innocent is to *acquit* him. But the point about a man’s relationship to God is that he is utterly guilty, and yet God, in his amazing mercy, treats him, reckons him, accounts him as if he were innocent. That is what justification means.

“When Paul says that ‘God justifies the ungodly,’ he means that God treats the ungodly as if he had been a good man. That is what shocked the Jews to the core of their being. To them to treat the bad man as if he was good was the sign of a wicked judge. ‘He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord’ (Prov 17:15). ‘I will not acquit the wicked’ (Exod 23:7). But Paul says that is precisely what God does.

“How can I know that God is like that? I know because *Jesus said so*. He came to tell us that God loves us, bad as we are. He came to tell us that, although we are sinners, we are still dear to God. When we discover that and believe it, *it changes our whole relationship to God*. We are conscious of our sin, but we are no longer in terror and no longer estranged. Penitent and brokenhearted we come to God, like a sorry child coming to his mother, and we know that the God we come to is Love.

“That is what *justification by faith in Jesus Christ* means. It means that we are in a right relationship with God because we believe with all our hearts that what Jesus told us about God is true. We are no longer terrorized strangers from an angry God. We are children, erring children, trusting in their Father’s love for forgiveness. *And we could never have found that right relationship with God, if Jesus had not come to live and to die to tell us how wonderfully he loves us*.

“(ii) Paul uses a metaphor from sacrifice. He says of Jesus that God put him forward as one who can win forgiveness for our sins. Under the old system, when a man broke the law, he brought to God a sacrifice. His aim was that the

sacrifice should turn aside the punishment that should fall upon him. To put it in another way—a man sinned; that sin put him at once in a wrong relationship with God; to get back into the right relationship he offered his sacrifice.

“*But* it was human experience that an animal sacrifice failed entirely to do that. ‘Thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased’ (Ps 51:16). ‘With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’ (Micah 6:6, 7.) Instinctively men felt that, once they had sinned, the paraphernalia of earthly sacrifice could not put matters right.

“So Paul says, ‘Jesus Christ, by his life of obedience and his death of love, made the one sacrifice to God which really and truly atones for sin.’ He insists that what happened on the Cross opens the door back to a right relationship with God, a door which every other sacrifice is powerless to open.

“(iii) Paul uses a metaphor from *slavery*. He speaks of the *deliverance* wrought through Jesus Christ. The word [used] means a ransoming, a redeeming, a liberating. It means that man was in the power of sin, and that Jesus Christ alone could free him from it.

“Finally, Paul says of God that he did all this because he is just, and accepts as just all who believe in Jesus. Paul never said a more startling thing than this. Bengel called it ‘the supreme paradox of the gospel.’ Think what it means. It means that God is just and accepts the sinner as a just man. The natural thing to say would be, ‘God is just, and, therefore, condemns the sinner as a criminal.’ But here we have the great paradox—God is just, and somehow, in that incredible, miraculous grace that Jesus came to bring to men, he accepts the sinner, not as a criminal, but as a son whom he still loves.

“What is the essence of all this? Where is the difference between it and the old way of the law? The basic difference is this—the way of obedience to the law is concerned with what a man can do for himself; the way of grace is concerned with what God has done; nothing we can ever do can win for us the forgiveness of God; only what God

has done for us can win that; therefore the way to a right relationship with God lies, not in a frenzied, desperate, doomed attempt to win acquittal by our performance; it lies in the humble, penitent acceptance of the love and the grace which God offers us in Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

v.25 “In the Old Testament period, God did not punish sins with the full severity he should have. People who sinned should have suffered spiritual death, because they did not yet have an adequate sacrifice to atone for their sins. But in his mercy God ‘passed over’ their sins. In doing so, however, he acted against his character, which requires that he respond to sin with wrath. So the coming of Christ ‘satisfied’ God’s justice. In giving himself as a ‘sacrifice of atonement,’ Christ paid the price for the sins of all people — both before his time (v.25b) and after (v.26a). Consequently, Paul summarizes, we can see how God can be ‘just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus’ (v.26b). He accepts as righteous before him sinful people who have faith, and he accepts sinners as righteous without violating his own just character because Christ has fully satisfied God’s demand that all who commit sin must die. By faith in Christ, we are joined to him. He becomes our representative, and his death is accredited to us.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series*. Rev.ed. (Ro 3:27). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Moo, “Romans” n.p. on *The NIV Application Commentary on CD-ROM Version 6.3.6*. 2006



# Bible Text

## Romans 3:1-8 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup> What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? <sup>4</sup> By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written,

“That you may be justified in your words,  
and prevail when you are judged.”

<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) <sup>6</sup> By no means! For then how could God judge the world? <sup>7</sup> But if through my lie God’s truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 3:1-8

- Apostle Paul calls being “entrusted with the oracles of God” an “advantage” and something of “value.” What are some things God has entrusted to me? How faithful have I been to the entrustment?

Tuesday, September 6, 2022



## Prayer







Wednesday, September 7, 2022

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Wednesday, September 7, 2022



Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.



Thursday, September 8, 2022



Prayer







## Prayer of Supplication



## September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
O praise my God, it reaches me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine;  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
And claim the crown,  
Through Christ, my own.

“

God is the only person from whom you can hide nothing.  
Before him you will unavoidably come to see yourself in a new, unique light.  
Prayer, therefore, leads to a self-knowledge that is impossible to achieve any other way.

”

- *Tim Keller* -



## Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



## Prayer of Supplication



## September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

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Through Christ, my own.



# Journal

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- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.

## Commentary

### ROMANS 4 COMMENTARY

Background “In 3:27–31, Paul briefly mentions two implications of the truth that we are justified by faith and not by ‘observing the law’ (v.28): We cannot boast in our own religious accomplishments (v.27), and Jews and Gentiles have equal access to justification (vv.29–30). In chapter 4 he develops both these points with reference to Abraham. In 4:1–8, Paul shows that Abraham himself had nothing to boast about before God because he, also, was justified by faith. Then, in 4:9–17, he argues that Abraham’s justification by faith means that he is qualified to be the spiritual father of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. Verses 18–22 expand on the nature of Abraham’s faith before Paul wraps up his exposition with a final application to Christians (vv.23–25). Throughout the chapter, Paul grounds his exposition in the key verse, cited in 4:3, of Genesis 15:6: ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ The focus is especially on the nature and meaning of Abraham’s believing. Another way to look at the chapter, then, is in terms of a series of antitheses by which Paul unfolds the significance of Abraham’s faith—and of ours:

1. Faith is something completely different from ‘works’ (vv.3–8).
2. Faith does not depend on any religious ceremony (e.g., circumcision) (vv.9–12).
3. Faith is not related to the law (vv.13–17).
4. Faith often rests in a promise that flies in the face of what is natural and normal (vv.18–22).<sup>1</sup>

vv.4-8 “[These] verses constitute a general statement that compares believing with working as the basis for justification. When people work, their wages come not as gifts but because they have earned them. The spiritual realm, however, is different. In this case those who do not work but believe are regarded by God as righteous. Rather than attempting to earn God’s favor by meritorious deeds, they simply trust. They are accepted by God as righteous because of their faith. God is under no obligation to pronounce righteous those who would earn his favor by working. Righteousness is a gift. God freely gives it to those who believe. The disparity between legalism and grace is

seen most clearly in the way God grants a right standing to people of faith. Paul’s designation of God as one who ‘justifies the wicked’ would come as a shock to his Jewish readers. In Exod 23:7 God says, ‘I will not acquit the guilty;’ and in Prov 17:15 we learn that he ‘detests’ the practice of acquitting the guilty when carried out by others (cf. Prov 24:24; Isa 5:23). The paradoxical phrase, however, is in keeping with the remarkable fact that a holy God accepts as righteous unholy people on the basis of absolutely nothing but faith. F. F. Bruce comments that God, who alone does great wonders, created the universe from nothing (1:19–20), calls the dead to life (4:17), and justifies the ungodly, ‘the greatest of all his wonders.’

“To reinforce his point, Paul turned to David. Moule sees in the linking of Abraham and David an illustration of the truth that all stand unworthy before God. David was guilty of adultery and the death of a loyal follower while Abraham was known for his obedience. The conduct of neither merited God’s favor. David spoke of the blessedness of the person reckoned by God as righteous apart from works (vv.6–8). In Psalm 32 (a penitential psalm) David tells of the blessedness of those whose violations of the law are forgiven and whose sins have been put out of sight (vv.1–2). David wrote out of his own experience. His errant behavior with Bathsheba and Uriah resulted in sorrow and remorse (see Ps 51). The forgiveness that followed relieved an enormous burden of guilt. Although it is unnecessary to sin in order to grasp fully the wonder of God’s forgiveness, those who have been forgiven the most often love the most. To Simon the Pharisee, who complained about the woman who wept at Jesus’ feet, Jesus said: ‘I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little’ (Luke 7:47).

“The psalmist continued, ‘Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.’ Those who have put their faith in God are completely forgiven of their sin. Nothing can be brought up for which provision has not already been made. Believers are the most fortunate people imaginable because the question of their sin has been settled forever. ‘As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us’ (Ps 103:12). Guilt dogs the steps of the unbeliever, but forgiveness is the sweet reward of those who trust in God.”<sup>2</sup>

vv.9-12 “Circumcision was not the gateway to his right

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Moo, *Romans* n.p. on *The NIV Application Commentary on CD-ROM Version* 6.3.6. 2006

<sup>2</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (123). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

relationship with God; it was only the sign and the seal that he had already entered into it. His being accounted righteous had nothing to do with circumcision and everything to do with his act of faith. From this unanswerable fact Paul makes two great deductions.

“(i) Abraham is not the father of those who have been circumcised; he is the father of those who make the same act of faith in God as he made. He is the father of every man in every age who takes God at his word as he did. This means that the real Jew is the man who trusts God as Abraham did, no matter what his race is. All the great promises of God are made not to the Jewish nation, but to the man who is Abraham’s descendant because he trusts God as he did. *Jew* has ceased to be a word which describes a nationality and has come to describe a way of life and a reaction to God. The descendants of Abraham are not the members of any particular nation, but those in every nation who belong to the family of God.

“(ii) The converse is also true. A man may be a Jew of pure lineage and may be circumcised; and yet in the real sense may be no descendant of Abraham. He has no right to call Abraham his father or to claim the promises of God, unless he makes that venture of faith that Abraham made.”<sup>3</sup>

vv. 13-17 “To Abraham God made a very great and wonderful promise. He promised that he would become a great nation, and that in him all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:2, 3). In truth, the earth would be given to him as his inheritance. Now that promise came to Abraham because of the faith that he showed towards God. It did not come because he piled up merit by doing works of the law. It was the outgoing of God’s generous grace in answer to Abraham’s absolute faith. The promise, as Paul saw it, was dependent on two things and two things only—the free grace of God and the perfect faith of Abraham.

“The Jews were still asking, ‘How can a man enter into the right relationship with God so that he too may inherit this great promise?’ Their answer was, ‘He must do so by acquiring merit in the sight of God through doing works which the law prescribes.’ That is to say, he must do it by his own efforts. Paul saw with absolute clearness that this Jewish attitude had *completely destroyed the promise*. It had done so for this reason—no man can fully keep the law; therefore, if the promise depends on keeping the law, it can

never be fulfilled.”<sup>4</sup>

vv. 18-25 “What Scripture considers as faith is defined by the confidence of Abraham in the inviolability of divine promise. This becomes the theme of the final paragraph in chap. 4. The paradoxical quality of Abraham’s faith is seen in the contrasting prepositional phrases ‘against all hope’ and ‘in hope.’ From a human standpoint there was no hope that he would have descendants. Yet with God all things are possible (cf. Matt 19:26). Therefore he believed what God said. His hope was not the invincible human spirit rising to the occasion against all odds but a deep inner confidence that God was absolutely true to his word.”<sup>5</sup>

Faith is unreasonable only within a restricted worldview that denies God the right to intervene. His intervention is highly rational from the biblical perspective, which not only allows him to intervene but actually expects him to show concern for those he has created in his own image. Because Abraham believed, he became ‘the father of many nations.’ The opportunity to believe has not been assigned to any one nation or ethnic group. Belief is universally possible. The quotation from Gen 15:5 reinforces the remarkable number of those who believe and are therefore the offspring of Abraham.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *The letter to the Romans*, 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev.ed. (Ro 4:13). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>4</sup> *The letter to the Romans*, 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev.ed. (Ro 4:18). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>5</sup> Barrett writes, ‘It is when human hope is exhausted that God-given hope (cf. viii 24f.) comes into effect’ (*Romans*, 976). Calvin comments that ‘there is nothing more inimical to faith than to bind understanding to sight, so that we seek the substance of our hope from what we see’ (*The Epistle of Paul to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. R. Mackenzie [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961], 96). Nygren notes that it is only when ‘without hope’ and ‘yet with hope’ stand over against each other that real faith is found (*Romans*, 160).

<sup>6</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (128). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



Tuesday, September 13, 2022



## Prayer





# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



## Bible Text

### Romans 4:9-15 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. <sup>10</sup> How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup> He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, <sup>12</sup> and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 4:9-15

- Why is it significant that Abraham was counted as righteous before he was circumcised? Why might this be shocking for the Jewish readers of this letter to read?
- According to this passage, who can call Abraham their father and also be counted righteous as he was? Reviewing Abraham's life, what does it look like to walk in his footsteps of faith?

Wednesday, September 14, 2022



Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Thursday, September 15, 2022



“

Prayer - secret, fervent, believing prayer - lies at the root of all personal godliness.

- *William Carey* -

”



## Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page below the section header.





# Prayer of Supplication



# September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
 An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
 Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
 For me, who Him to death pursued?  
 Amazing love! how can it be  
 That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
 That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

He left His Father's throne above,  
 So free, so infinite His grace;  
 Emptied Himself of all but love,  
 And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
 O praise my God, it reaches me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
 Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
 I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
 Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
 Alive in Him, my living Head,  
 And clothed in righteousness divine;  
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
 And claim the crown,  
 Through Christ, my own.

“

When we don't pray, we quit the fight. Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright.  
And Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

”

- *William Cowper* -



## Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page below the section header.



## Prayer of Supplication



## September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
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### *(Chorus)*

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Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine;  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
And claim the crown,  
Through Christ, my own.



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.

## Commentary

### ROMANS 5 COMMENTARY

vv.3-4 “Not only do we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but we also rejoice in our sufferings (cf. Jas 1:2–4). The believers’ joy is not simply something they hope to experience in the future but a present reality even in times of trials and distress. Their joy is not a stoic determination to make the best out of a bad situation. Christian suffering is a source of joy because its purpose is to build character in the believer. Paul argued that suffering produces steadfastness, and steadfastness results in ‘strength of character.’ The Greek term in v.4 for ‘character’ denotes that which has been proven by trial. The NEB translates ‘endurance brings proof that we have stood the test.’ Thus it is the experience of coming through a time of testing that produces hope. Our confidence in God’s ability and willingness to bring us through difficult times leads to an ever-brighter hope for that which lies beyond. Hope is not superficial optimism but the confident assurance of that which will surely come to pass. It distinguishes those who have kept the faith in times of severe testing.”<sup>1</sup>

v.8 “The fact that Jesus Christ died for us is the final proof of God’s love. It would be difficult enough to get a man to die for a just man; it might be possible for a man to be persuaded to die for some great and good principle; a man might have the greater love that would make him lay down his life for his friend. But the wonder of Jesus Christ is that he died for us when we are sinners and in a state of hostility to God. Love can go no further than that.”<sup>2</sup>

vv.12-17 “Beginning at v.12 we enter Paul’s extended contrast between Adam (the first man) and the results of his sin and Jesus Christ (the ‘second man’) and the gracious provisions of his atoning life and death. The contrast runs through v.19. These two figures illustrate the central theme of the specifically theological portion of Paul’s letter. Adam typifies the sinful condition of all humans (1:18–3:20). Jesus stands for the justification received by faith (3:21–5:11). Redemption is the story of two men. The first man disobeyed God and led the entire human race in the wrong direction. The second man obeyed God and provides justification for all who will turn to him in faith. No matter how devastating the sin of the first, the redemptive work of the second

reverses the consequences of that sin and restores people to the favor of God. Only by grasping the seriousness of the first is one able to appreciate the remarkable magnanimity of the second.”<sup>3</sup>

vv.18-19 “Just as the one sin of Adam brought condemnation, so also did the one righteous act of Christ bring justification. Just as condemnation spread to all, so also is the divine acquittal offered to all. Paul did not intend to imply that the result of Christ’s atoning work automatically provided justification for all regardless of their willingness to accept it. Universal salvation is not taught in this text. Context indicates that Paul was comparing the fate of those who are in Adam (the position of all by virtue of their birth into the human race) and the blessings of those who are in Christ (the position of all who have responded in faith). Paul’s final contrast was between the disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ (v.19). By the disobedience of the first man the entire race was constituted sinners. But by the obedience of the second man ‘the many will be made righteous.’ As in v.15 we are to understand ‘the many’ in terms of all who are in Adam (everyone who is born into the human family) and all who are in Christ (everyone who has been born into the family of God by faith in Christ). The righteousness of which Paul spoke is a right standing before God (cf. 2 Cor 5:21). It is imputed by God as a result of faith. Righteousness as conduct (sanctification) is dealt with in chaps. 6–8. Growth in holiness is the proof that righteousness by faith has in fact been imputed. By definition, life is growth. Where there is no growth, there is no life.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (135). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>2</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed.* (Ro 5:12). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>3</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (139). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>4</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (145). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



Tuesday, September 20, 2022



## Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.





Wednesday, September 21, 2022



## Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.





Thursday, September 22, 2022



## Prayer





## Prayer of Supplication



## September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
O praise my God, it reaches me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine;  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
And claim the crown,  
Through Christ, my own.







## Prayer of Supplication



## September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

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O praise my God, it reaches me.

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I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine;  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
And claim the crown,  
Through Christ, my own.



## Commentary

### ROMANS 6 COMMENTARY

v.1 “Paul had just written (in Rom 5:20) that where there is an increase in sin there is an even greater increase in grace. So the question was bound to arise, Why not continue in sin so the greatness of God’s grace may be seen more fully? The question may have arisen from antinomian sources that purposively misconstrued the doctrine of justification by faith as providing an excuse for a sinful lifestyle. Against such a perverted inference W. Barclay writes, ‘How despicable it would be for a son to consider himself free to sin, because he knew that his father would forgive.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

vv.2-3 “The answer to the rhetorical question is a resounding ‘By no means!’ How could it be possible for those who have died to sin to continue to live in it? Death separates. Death to sin removes the believer from the control of sin. This truth finds expression throughout Paul’s writings (Rom 6:6, 11; Col 3:5; cf. 1 Pet 2:24). The text does not say that sin dies to the believer; it is the believer who has died to sin. Origen, the most influential theologian of the ante-Nicene period, described death to sin in this way: ‘To obey the cravings of sin is to be alive to sin; but not to obey the cravings of sin or succumb to its will, this is to die to sin.’ Sin continues in force in its attempt to dominate the life and conduct of the believer. But the believer has been baptized into Christ, and that means to have been baptized into Christ’s death as well. Christ’s death for sin becomes our death to sin.”<sup>2</sup>

vv.6-7 “Our confidence in a resurrected life rests upon the fact that our old self was nailed to the cross with Jesus. We were ‘crucified with him’ (v.6). Believers, by definition, are those who by their union with Christ died with him on the cross. That death had a definite purpose in the spiritual life history of the believer. We were crucified in order that our sinful nature might be stripped of its power. [...] Death fulfills the demands of sin. But death opens the way for resurrection. Resurrection lies beyond the control of death. It is the victor over death. With the old self rendered powerless, it is no longer necessary for a person to continue in bondage to sin. In Christ we are set free. Since sin exhausted itself in bringing about death, from that point

forward it is powerless to overcome new life.”<sup>3</sup>

v.11 “Christ is our example. By his death he ended once for all his relationship to sin. Now he lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God. ‘In the same way,’ wrote Paul, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (cf. 1 Pet 2:24). When Christ died for sin, he also died to sin. Now we are to take our place with him and regard sin as something to which we also have died. Paul was not suggesting that we imitate Christ. He was speaking of a reality that took place when we by faith were incorporated into Christ. Our responsibility is to take with all seriousness the fact that in Christ we have died to sin. Fitzmyer writes: ‘Ontologically united with Christ through faith and baptism, Christians must deepen their faith continually to become more and more psychologically aware of that union.’ We are to consider ourselves ‘dead to the appeal and power of sin’ and alive to God through our union with Christ Jesus.”<sup>4</sup>

v.12-14 “Christianity is not an emotional experience; it is a way of life. The Christian is not meant to luxuriate in an experience however wonderful; he is meant to go out and live a certain kind of life in the teeth of the world’s attacks and problems. It is common in the world of religious life to sit in church and feel a wave of feeling sweep over us. It is a not uncommon experience, when we sit alone, to feel Christ very near. But the Christianity which has stopped there, has stopped half-way. That emotion must be translated into action. Christianity can never be only an experience of the inner being; it must be a life in the marketplace.

“When a man goes out into the world, he is confronted with an awesome situation. As Paul thinks of it, both God and sin are looking for weapons to use. God cannot work without men. If he wants a word spoken, he has to get a man to speak it. If he wants a deed done, he has to get a man to do it. If he wants a person encouraged, he has to get a man to do the lifting up. It is the same with sin; every man has to be given the push into it. Sin is looking for men who will by their words or example seduce others into sinning. It is as if Paul was saying: ‘In this world there is an eternal battle between sin and God; choose your side.’ We are faced with the tremendous alternative of making ourselves weapons in the hand of God or weapons in the hand of sin.

“A man may well say: ‘Such a choice is too much for me. I

<sup>1</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans (electronic ed.)*. Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (148). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>2</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans (electronic ed.)*. Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (148). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans (electronic ed.)*. Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (151). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>4</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27; *Romans (electronic ed.)*. Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (152). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



Tuesday, September 27, 2022



## Prayer







Wednesday, September 28, 2022



Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A large area of the page filled with horizontal dotted lines, intended for writing a journal entry.



# Bible Text

## Romans 6:15-23 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

<sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

<sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 6:15-18

- Am I in agreement that I am a slave to whom I obey? Am I a slave to sin or to righteousness?
- Am I “obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which [I was] committed”? In what ways have I experienced being “set free from sin”?

### Romans 6:21-23

- Spend some time thanking God for setting me free from sin and for his gift of eternal life.

Thursday, September 29, 2022



“

...[The] Word supplies us with material for prayer and encourages us in expecting everything from God.

- Andrew Murray -

”



## Prayer of Gratitude

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing a prayer of gratitude.



# Prayer of Supplication



# September Hymn

### *And Can It Be*

And can it be that I should gain  
 An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
 Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
 For me, who Him to death pursued?  
 Amazing love! how can it be  
 That Thou, my God, should die for me?

### *(Chorus)*

*Amazing love! How can it be  
 That Thou, my God, should die for me!*

He left His Father's throne above,  
 So free, so infinite His grace;  
 Emptied Himself of all but love,  
 And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
 O praise my God, it reaches me.

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 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
 Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
 My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
 I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
 Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
 Alive in Him, my living Head,  
 And clothed in righteousness divine;  
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne  
 And claim the crown,  
 Through Christ, my own.







## Prayer of Supplication



## October Hymn

### *Before the Throne of God Above*

Before the throne of God above,  
I have a strong and perfect plea,  
A great High Priest  
Whose name is Love,

Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.

I know that while in heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart,  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me,  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace.  
One with Himself I cannot die;  
My soul is purchased by His blood;  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God!



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.

## Commentary

### ROMANS 7 COMMENTARY

v.4 “By baptism we share in the death of Christ. That means that, having died, we are discharged from all obligations to the law and become free to marry again. This time we marry, not the law, but Christ. When that happens, Christian obedience becomes not an externally imposed obedience to some written code of laws, but an inner allegiance of the spirit to Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

vv.8-13 “Set a thing in the category of forbidden things or put a place out of bounds, and immediately they become fascinating. In that sense the law produces sin. [...] Is, then, the law a bad thing because it actually produces sin? Paul is certain that there is wisdom in the whole sequence. (i) First he is convinced that, whatever the consequence, sin had to be defined as sin. (ii) The process shows the terrible nature of sin, because sin took a thing—the law—which was holy and just as good, and twisted it into something which served the ends of evil. The awfulness of sin is shown by the fact that it could take a fine thing and make it a weapon of evil. That is what sin does. It can take the loveliness of love and turn it into lust. It can take the honourable desire for independence and turn it into the obsession for money and for power. It can take the beauty of friendship and use it as a seduction to the wrong things. That is what Carlyle called ‘the infinite damnability of sin.’ The very fact that it took the law and made it a bridgehead to sin shows the supreme sinfulness of sin. The whole terrible process is not accidental; it is all designed to show us how awful a thing sin is, because it can take the loveliest things and defile them with a polluting touch.”<sup>2</sup>

vv.14-25 “Paul is baring his very soul; and he is telling us of an experience which is of the very essence of the human situation. He knew what was right and wanted to do it; and yet, somehow, he never could. He knew what was wrong and the last thing he wanted was to do it; and yet, somehow, he did. He felt himself to be a split personality. It was as if two men were inside the one skin, pulling in different directions. He was haunted by this feeling of frustration, his ability to see what was good and his inability to do it; his ability to recognize what was wrong and his inability to

refrain from doing it.”<sup>3</sup>

“When the evil impulse attacked, the Jew held that wisdom and reason could defeat it; to be occupied with the study of the word of the Lord was safety; the law was a prophylactic; at such a time the good impulse could be called up in defense.

“Paul knew all that; and knew, too, that, while it was all theoretically true, in practice it was not true. There were things in man’s human nature—that is what Paul meant by this *fatal* body—which answered to the seduction of sin. It is part of the human situation that we know the right and yet do the wrong, that we are never as good as we know we ought to be. At one and the same time we are haunted by goodness and haunted by sin.”<sup>4</sup>

vv.24-25 “Caught up in this spiritual warfare, Paul cried out: What a wretched man am I! Who is able to free me from the ‘clutches of my own sinful nature?’ (The ‘body of death’ was like a corpse that hung on him and from which he was unable to free himself. It constantly interfered with his desire to obey the higher impulses of his new nature. Who is able to rescue the believer crying out for deliverance? The answer is, Thanks be to God, there is deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord (v.25). Through the death and resurrection of Christ, God has provided the power to live in the freedom of the Spirit (cf. 8:2).”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed.* (Ro 7:7). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.  
<sup>2</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed.* (Ro 7:14). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>3</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed.* (Ro 8:1). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>4</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed.* (Ro 8:1). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>5</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (171). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



Tuesday, October 4, 2022



## Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.











# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.

## Commentary

### ROMANS 8 COMMENTARY

vv.5-11 “Paul is drawing a contrast between two kinds of life.

“(i) There is the life which is dominated by sinful human nature; whose focus and centre is self; whose only law is its own desires; which takes what it likes where it likes. In different people that life will be differently described. It may be passion-controlled, or lust-controlled, or pride-controlled, or ambition-controlled. Its characteristic is its absorption in the things that human nature without Christ sets its heart upon.

“(ii) There is the life that is dominated by the Spirit of God. As a man lives in the air, he lives in Christ, never separated from him. As he breathes in the air and the air fills him, so Christ fills him. He has no mind of his own; Christ is his mind. He has no desires of his own; the will of Christ is his only law. He is Spirit-controlled, Christ-controlled, God-focused.

“These two lives are going in diametrically opposite directions. The life that is dominated by the desires and activities of sinful human nature is on the way to death. In the most literal sense, there is no future in it—because it is getting further and further away from God. To allow the things of the world completely to dominate life is self-extinction; it is spiritual suicide. By living it, a man is making himself totally unfit ever to stand in the presence of God. He is hostile to him, resentful of his law and his control. God is not his friend but his enemy, and no man ever won the last battle against him. [...] No sooner has Paul said this than an inevitable objection strikes him. Someone may object: ‘You say that the Spirit-controlled man is on the way to life; but in point of fact every man must die. Just what do you mean?’ Paul’s answer is this. All men die because they are involved in the human situation. Sin came into this world and with sin came death, the consequence of sin. Inevitably, therefore, all men die; but the man who is Spirit-controlled and whose heart is Christ-occupied, dies only to rise again. Paul’s basic thought is that the Christian is indissolubly one with Christ. Now Christ died and rose again; and the man who is one with Christ is one with death’s conqueror and shares in that victory. The spirit-controlled, Christ-possessed man is on

the way to life; death is but an inevitable interlude that has to be passed through on the way.”<sup>1</sup>

vv.12-13 “The lower nature does not automatically fade away when a person comes to Christ. The need to put to death the evil practices of the body is ongoing. Note as well that the way to crucify the old self is to obey the promptings of the Spirit. When we walk in fellowship with the indwelling Spirit, the desires of the lower nature are not met. For all practical purposes they are put to death. It is only when we break fellowship with the Spirit that our sinful nature is able successfully to reassert its fraudulent claim on our lives. The key to freedom from what we were is constant reliance on the active presence of the Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

v.15 “Paul contrasted slavery and adoption as children. He reminded readers that in turning to Christ they were not enslaved once again to fear (cf. 2 Tim 1:7). On the contrary, the spirit they received was the consciousness that they had become adopted sons of God. Accordingly, they cried out ‘Abba, Father.’ The metaphor of adoption comes primarily, but not exclusively, from the Greco-Roman world. [...] Although adoption as a legal act was not practiced in Judaism, some Old Testament customs support the view that Paul had that background in mind as well. In adoption all previous relationships are severed. The new father exercises authority over the new son, and the new son enters into the privileges and responsibilities of the natural son. ‘Abba,’ the Aramaic word for ‘father,’ was used primarily within the family circle and in prayer (cf. Mark 14:36; Gal 4:6).”<sup>3</sup>

v.16 “By enabling us to cry out ‘Abba Father,’ the Spirit ‘endorses our inward conviction’ that we are children of God. What our own spirit assures us to be true is strengthened by the powerful inward testimony of God’s Spirit. In much the same way that the hymn writer knew that Jesus lives (‘He lives within my heart’), we rest assured that we are actually members of God’s family because the same Spirit witnesses to our spirit that it is so.”<sup>4</sup>

v.17 “We are co-heirs with Christ. ‘All that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well!’ How rich in significance

<sup>1</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev.ed. (Ro 8:12). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

<sup>2</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (180). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (182). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (182). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

is the fact that we are full members of an eternal family in which God is our Father and Jesus Christ is our elder brother (cf. Heb 2:11–12). What appears to be a condition on this promised inheritance ('if indeed') is actually a simple statement of fact. Sharing the sufferings of Christ leads to sharing his glory. Obviously we do not share the redemptive suffering of Christ, but we do share the consequences in terms of opposition from the world he came to save (cf. Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 4:13). As members of the same family we share in the trials of life as well as the benefits."<sup>5</sup>

v.19 "The creation itself is pictured as eagerly awaiting that time when the glorious future of the sons of God is realized. The personification of nature would not sound strange to those who were at home with rivers that 'clap their hands' and mountains that 'sing together for joy' (Ps 98:8; cf. Isa 55:12). Because Adam disobeyed by eating the forbidden fruit, God had cursed the ground (Gen 3:17–18; cf. 5:29). The full redemptive work of God includes the reversal of this curse."<sup>6</sup>

vv.20–21 "Paul spoke of the creation being 'subjected to frustration' (v.20). That was not because of some inherent fault in creation but because that is what God decided. In punishment for his disobedience, Adam was to garner his food from ground cursed with thorns and thistles. But the curse was not permanent. The physical universe was frustrated by Adam's sin, yet there is hope. Verse 21 states the content of that hope. The day is coming when the created order will be set free from its bondage to decay. Freed from corruption, it will share in 'the freedom of the glory of the children of God' (literal translation)."<sup>7</sup>

v.27 "When our lack of faith undermines certainty in prayer, the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf. So intense is his prayer that Paul described it as 'groans that words cannot express.'

"God understands what the Spirit desires even though it is inexpressible in human terms (v.27). God is the one who has complete access to the heart. His knowledge is direct, not dependent upon one's ability to articulate concerns. God is a searcher of hearts and knows the desires of the Spirit as the Spirit intercedes for us. He knows that the

Spirit is interceding for saints in harmony with his will. No passage of Scripture provides greater encouragement for prayer. The Spirit comes to the aid of believers baffled by the perplexity of prayer and takes their concerns to God with an intensity far greater than we could ever imagine. Our groans (v.23) become his (v.26) as he intercedes on our behalf."<sup>8</sup>

v.28 "He says that those who love God, and who are called according to his purpose, know well that God is intermingling all things for good to them. It is the experience of life for the Christian that all things do work together for good. We do not need to be very old to look back and see that things we thought were disasters worked out to our good; things that we thought were disappointments worked out to greater blessings."<sup>9</sup>



## Bible Text

### Romans 8:1–4 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.



## Reflection Questions

to help us go deeper

### Romans 8:1–4

- Reflect on God's grace, "that the righteous requirement of the law [is] fulfilled in [me]" because of Jesus. What is my response to this statement that "there is now no condemnation" for me?


<sup>5</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (182). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>6</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (184). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>7</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (184). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.


<sup>8</sup> Mounce, R. H. (2001, c1995). Vol. 27: *Romans* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; *The New American Commentary* (186). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.  
<sup>9</sup> *The letter to the Romans*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). *The Daily study Bible series, Rev.ed.* (Ro 8:31). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.







 Prayer of Supplication

 October Hymn

*Before the Throne of God Above*

Before the throne of God above,  
I have a strong and perfect plea,  
A great High Priest  
Whose name is Love,  
Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.  
I know that while in heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart,  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me,  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace.  
One with Himself I cannot die;  
My soul is purchased by His blood;  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God!



“

The best way to fight against sin is to fight it on our knees.

- Philip Henry -

”



## Prayer of Gratitude



## Prayer of Supplication



## October Hymn

### *Before the Throne of God Above*

Before the throne of God above,  
I have a strong and perfect plea,  
A great High Priest  
Whose name is Love,

Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.

I know that while in heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart,  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me,  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace.  
One with Himself I cannot die;  
My soul is purchased by His blood;  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God!



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing space for journaling.



Tuesday, October 11, 2022



Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.



Wednesday, October 12, 2022



## Prayer





# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.





“ In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God’s thoughts after him: to desire the things he desires, to love the things he loves, to will the things he wills. Progressively, we are taught to see thigs from his point of view. ”

- Richard Foster -



# Prayer of Gratitude

Series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



# Prayer of Supplication



# October Hymn

## *Before the Throne of God Above*

Before the throne of God above,  
I have a strong and perfect plea,  
A great High Priest  
Whose name is Love,

Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.

I know that while in heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart,  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me,  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace.  
One with Himself I cannot die;  
My soul is purchased by His blood;  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God!





# Prayer of Supplication



# October Hymn

## *Before the Throne of God Above*

Before the throne of God above,  
I have a strong and perfect plea,  
A great High Priest  
Whose name is Love,

Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.

I know that while in heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart,  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me,  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold him there, the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace.  
One with Himself I cannot die;  
My soul is purchased by His blood;  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God,  
With Christ, my Savior and my God!



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.





Tuesday, October 18, 2022



## Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Wednesday, October 19, 2022



## Prayer



# Journal

Please use one of the prompts below to get your journaling started.

- Explore your fears and what's behind them.
- Write about a relational conflict you are experiencing.
- List out all that you are grateful for.
- Recall a significant reaction, conversation or event.

A series of horizontal dotted lines providing a space for journaling.



Thursday, October 20, 2022



Prayer





