



**A LETTER  
THAT  
CHANGES** US  
ROMANS 12-16

ev/youth

## TERM 4 – 2026

| WEEK    | PASSAGE            | TITLE                          |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Week 1  | Evangelism         | Reality of Heaven & Hell       |
| Week 2  | Evangelism         | God's big vision for the world |
| Week 3  | Evangelism         | Love and The great commission  |
| Week 4  | Romans 1-11        | Summary of Romans              |
| Week 5  | Romans 12:1-2      | Gospel Worship                 |
| Week 6  | Romans 12:3-8      | Gospel Gifts                   |
| Week 7  | Romans 12:9-21     | Gospel Relationships           |
| Week 8  | Romans 13          | Gospel Obedience               |
| Week 9  | Romans 14:1-15:13  | Gospel Unity                   |
| Week 10 | Romans 15:14-16:27 | Gospel Ambition                |

# INTRODUCTION: ROMANS 12-16

What a treat it's been to dig into this world-changing letter over the last 18 months! We've covered a lot of ground and taken in some beautiful views as of the justice and mercy, power and goodness of our God. We left Romans 11 earlier this year on the high note:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom  
and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable his judgments,  
and his paths beyond tracing out!...  
...from him and through him and for him are all things.  
To him be the glory forever! Amen. Romans 11:33-36

Paul exults in the incredible wisdom and mercy of God, and would have us do the same. To stand in awe of his majesty. Yet this marvelling doesn't leave us standing still. Paul shifts gears in Romans 12 to channel our awe and wonder into a radically different approach to life. We declare his praise with our lips along with Paul, but we also offer our lives in worship.

### In view of God's mercy...

This final section of Romans begins with the phrase: "Therefore, in view of God's mercy...". God's mercy has been a theme in chapters 9-11 as Paul laid out God's plan to save Jews and Gentiles in Jesus. But really, this phrase (the mercy of God) serves to sum up everything Paul has been explaining over the past eleven chapters of the letter. God's patience to bear with those under his judgement (1:18-3:20); his provision of a gift of righteousness to be received by faith in Jesus (3:21-4:25); the assurance we have as those justified in Christ (Romans 5-8); and the comfort of his gracious sovereignty in salvation to Jews and Gentiles (Romans 9-11). All these things are expressions of the mercy of God.

As we've seen already in Romans, these things are immensely practical in themselves. They have huge implications for our lives; our view of God, ourselves,

# INTRODUCTION: ROMANS 12-16

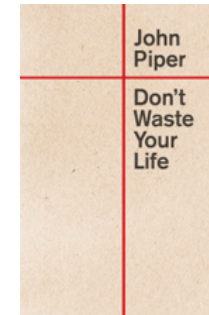
sin; our commitment to put sin to death; and the confidence we can have in God's ability to use all things for good in our lives. But there are particular things Paul now wants us to grasp.

He begins with enlarging our conception of worship such that we understand our whole lives to be offered up to God – not so that we secure his mercy, but as a response to his mercy (12:1-2). This orientation is then borne out in myriad expressions in the Christian life including how we conceive of our place in his church (12:3-8) and the way we live in relationship with others (12:9-21). It also changes how we relate to secular authorities (13), how we relate to believers who are different to us (14-15), and how we engage in the work of the Lord to make Christ known among the nations (15-16).

As Paul wrote this letter nearly 2,000 years ago, from Corinth, and headed to persecution in Jerusalem, he wrote in hope that the Roman church might be united in gospel conviction and sacrificial gospel action. Let's pray that just as this letter has changed so many lives down through the centuries, that it would continue to be powerfully at work in us to this same end, for God's glory.



## Book Recommendations



### Don't Waste your Life by John Piper

Paul urges us in Romans to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice in view of God's mercy. This Christian classic helps us unpack what this could look like as we step back and see how God's priorities ought to shape the way we use our lives.



### Guidance and the Voice of God by Phillip D. Jensen and Tony Payne

Paul tells us in Romans 12 that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we might be able to test and approve what the will of God is. Being able to discern God's will for our lives ought to be a deep concern for Christians, yet the topic is readily misunderstood. Jensen explores what it means to hear God's guiding voice in the scriptures and discern his will for our lives.

# WEEK 1: EVANGELISM

# REALITY OF HEAVEN & HELL

## Day 1: Jesus warns of the coming day of Judgement

Read Luke 13:22-30

1. What warning is Jesus trying to give to the disciples?

2. What reason will some be turned away at the door?

3. If the door is narrow into the Kingdom of Heaven, how should we be prepared for the day the Kingdom comes?

READINGWIDER: If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 1.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, we thank you for the gospel of Luke and that through the word we can see how Jesus is the Messiah and that through His journey to Jerusalem we are forewarned of the coming day of Judgement and we can be prepared by putting our trust in Jesus today. Amen

## DAY2: Jesus came to bring the Kingdom

Read Luke 16:19-31

1. Why would receiving good things in the rich man's lifetime mean he is now in agony? (vs 25)

2. The chasm in verse 26 means once judgement day has come there is no changing the outcome. How do you want to be on a mission to family and friends knowing there are only two outcomes?

3. Lazarus experiences trials and suffering during his life, however receives comfort in heaven. How should that determine how we as Christians ought to live our lives in the now?

READINGWIDER: If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 2.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, please help us live our lives with the knowledge that this world we may face trials and suffering but that we have the hope of eternal life through your Son Jesus. Please help us to not be tempted by earthly desires but to live for you. Amen

## DAY3: Jesus predicts his death

Read Luke 9:21-27

1. Jesus set his face for Jerusalem to face a humiliating and agonising death, what does Jesus ask us to do in return for his sacrifice?

2. In what ways might we need to “lose our life” now to save it in eternity?

3. What areas of life are you not willing to take up your cross?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three- year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 3.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, we thank you for your Son, we thank you that he resolutely set His face towards Jerusalem to be the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Please change our will to be aligned with your will and to be willing to forego earthly comfort and pleasures to live a life bringing honour and glory to you. Amen

## DAY4: Jesus endures the wrath of God for our sake

Read Matthew 27:45-56

1. Jesus, who is God, knew what He would suffer on the cross, why would he cry out to God, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

2. What is the significance of the curtain in the temple being torn in two?

4. In Jesus’ death, those with Jesus (vs 54) seemingly saw Jesus for who He truly was, the Son of God. What would it mean if we mistook who Jesus truly is?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 4.

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for sending your Son Jesus to earth to go to the cross, to face the consequences of sin that we are meant to face. Thank you for Jesus’ sacrifice so that now we can now enter your presence and be reunited with you. Thank you for revealing who your Son is to us so that we may know you and be deemed righteous in your sight. Amen

## DAY5: We need reconciliation

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

1. What has Jesus' sacrifice on the cross given us?
2. We have been entrusted with message of reconciliation (vs 19), what does that mean?
3. Who in your life do you want to tell the message of reconciliation to, the gospel, and what it means for us?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 5-7

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for what Christ has done for us on the cross and that through faith in Him we are reconciled to you through His righteousness. Thank you that you have entrusted us with the mission of telling the good news of Jesus and that through us many more may also be reconciled to you. Amen

## PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

## DAY1: Union under Christ

Read Ephesians 1:3-10

1. Vs 9 tells us that God has “made known the mystery of his will” (his big purpose), looking at the next few verses, what do you think it might be? (hint end of vs 10)

2. Looking back through the passage, how is God achieving that purpose in us?

3. How would knowing God’s great purpose for all things change the way that we think about mission?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 8

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing the mystery of your will to us, that you want to unite all things under Christ, and thank you that you have begun that work in us. Please grow in my heart, that same desire, help me to want all people to be saved by your grace. Amen

## DAY2: God’s people united

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

1. Who are those who are ‘far away’ in vs 13 and what has the blood of Christ achieved for them?

2. What do you think the ‘new humanity’ is in vs15?

3. Paul talks about God’s purpose in vs 15, how is the ‘new humanity’ working towards God’s purpose from chapter 1?

4. What kind of picture of God’s people is painted in vs 19-22?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 9.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus, thank you that in him we can be united together as your people. Help me to remember that Christ died to unite us and bring us under him, and please give me confidence in your grace to bring all those who are far back to draw near to you. Amen.

## WEEK2: EVANGELISM

### DAY3: The Body of Christ built up

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Why has God given the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers?

2. What might it mean for the body of Christ to be 'built up'?

3. Given God's purpose of all things united in Christ, why would God want the body of Christ to be built up?

4. How might knowing God's great purpose for all things and his united people, shape the way that we think about mission?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 10.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of you people and that you are glorified in the union of your people. Help me to glorify you by giving me strength to be on mission and build up your body. Amen

## GOD'S PURPOSE

### DAY4: The time is short

Read James 4:13-17

1. What does James liken our life to and what might he mean?

2. How does James say we should live if that is true?

3. Human life is short, how does that make you feel as you think about people that don't know Jesus? How should we use our time on earth?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 11.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, Help me to use the short amount of time you have given to me for your glory. Help me to feel the urgency of people's need for Jesus, and help me to act. Please help me to use my time here well. Amen

## DAY5: How we use our time matters

Read Matthew 6:19-21

1. What is the difference between treasures stored up on earth and treasures stored up in heaven?

2. How should we live now in order to 'store up treasures in heaven'?

2. Some things we do now have eternal consequences and some don't, how might knowing this change the way that we think about being on mission?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 12-14.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, help me to put my time and effort towards eternal things, to seeing people come to trust in you. Help me to see the things of this world as garbage in comparison to the joy of knowing you in eternity alongside others who put their trust in you. Amen

## PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

## DAY 1: God's Love for the World

Read John 3:16-18

1. What is the reason for God sending the son?
2. What is the result of God sending his son?
3. What would change, if God did not send his son out of Love?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 15.

**Prayer:** Lord, you could have sent your son into the world to judge the world, but because of your great Love you choose to send him to die for the world that many might have eternal life, please help our lives reflect this kind of love.

## DAY 2: God's love for guilty

Read Hosea 11:1-9

1. How is Israel's relationship with God described?
2. How does God respond to the way they treated him? What held back his anger?
2. How does this passage help us understand God's love?
2. How should this shape our hearts?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 16.

**Prayer:** Lord we are like Israel, those who are deserving of punishment for our guilt, but you showed compassion on us when you sent your son to die for us on the cross, may this love enable us to grow in our love for others.

### DAY3: God's love for his murderers

Read Luke 23:32-34

1. What is striking about the situation Jesus is in, and what he prays?
2. How does this unveil the Love of Jesus?
3. How could this inform our love for the lost?

READINGWIDER: If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 17

**Prayer:** God even while you were on the cross you pleaded for the forgiveness of those who put you there, may that incredible loving forgiveness help us grow a love for those who don't yet know your forgiveness.

### DAY4: The great mission

Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. What is the task Jesus gives to his disciples (hint: look for the verbs)?
2. How will they be supported in this task?
3. What does this say about the importance of mission?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 18.

**Prayer:** Lord we see the importance of reaching the nations with your gospel in the final words of Jesus to his disciples, and we ask that this would shape the priorities of our own lives.

## DAY5: Our great mission

Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. How is the word “all” used in this passage?
2. What does this imply about who this mission is for?
3. How can we be living out this mission?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 19-21.

**Prayer:** Lord, we need desperate help when it comes to sharing the good news of Jesus, for there are many fears that come with this task, but we know that you are with us and we ask that you would push us to share your news every opportunity we get.

## PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

## WEEK4: Romans 1-11 Recap

### DAY1: The Importance of the Gospel

Read Romans 1:8-17

Chapter 12 represents a “hinge” in the book of Romans. Paul shifts from describing the “mercies of God” (chapters 1-11) to how we respond to the mercies of God. This week, we’ll spend some time each day looking back on the mercies of God in chapters 1-11.

1. What does Paul hope for from his visit to Rome? Try and find at least two things.
2. What seems to be a key method Paul will use to see these things occur? How is it connected to God’s own work (verse 16)?
3. What are some ways you are tempted to be ashamed of, or silent about the gospel today? How are today’s two passages an encouragement to speak with, or invite non-Christians to hear the gospel?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 22

**Prayer:** Praise God for choosing to bring about salvation through the weak activity of sharing the gospel. Pray that our church and you might be emboldened to share the gospel, that He’d grow our convictions of the urgent mission of the gospel, and that it is God’s power to save.

## ROMANS RECAP

### DAY2: The Current State of the World

Read Romans 1:18-23

1. What is happening in these verses and why?
2. What does this show about the world that we are living in?
3. How can you see this happening to the world today?
4. How does this make you feel knowing that this is where your heart would be without Jesus?

READING WIDER: If you’d like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today’s reading is Genesis 23.

**Prayer:** Help us to see the condition of our fallen nature without Christ and help us to turn away from the world and give you the glory that you deserve.

# WEEK4: ROMANS 1-11 RECAP

## DAY3: Justification

Read Romans 3:20-26

But if God justifies the ungodly, how can he be just? That's the question we will look at in our passage today.

1. Where can you see Paul trying to defend God's justice in these verses?
2. People have spoken of God as "the just, justifier" or as "the righteous, righteous-er". Can you see how they get that from this passage?
3. How is God both just and able to justify sinners? (The notes on Day 5 might be helpful).
4. Why would Martin Luther call this "possibly the most important single paragraph ever written"? How might this good news bring joy to you today?

READINGWIDER: If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 24.

**Prayer:** Father, I praise you for your incredible character that is so clearly revealed in the cross. You are at the same time perfect in justice and love. I don't deserve your mercy, I deserve your justice, but you have made a way to satisfy your justice and show me, a sinner, unfathomable mercy – thank you for Jesus, who died to satisfy your anger and open the path for your love to come to sinners like me.

# ROMANS RECAP

## DAY4: Assurance

Read Romans 8:31-39

1. What is the evidence that God is for us? (See verse 32.)
2. If God has sent Jesus, when we were his enemies, what can we expect of the future now that we are adopted as his children? (See verse 32.)
3. In verse 33, who are the ones that are justified? Why is this a comfort?
4. Highlight vs 38-39 in your Bible, how can you meditate on these verses, holding to its truth throughout the rest of your life?

READINGWIDER: If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 25.

**Prayer:** Thank God for the assurance He brings through His love in Christ Jesus. Pray that you can hold to this assurance each day.

### DAY5: The Sovereignty of God

Read Romans Romans 9:6-13, Romans 9:14-24, Romans 10:9-13, Romans 11:1-7, Romans 11:25-32

As Romans 12 calls us to respond to God's mercy, today, we'll continue to look back on what Paul has been saying about God and his mercy.

1. What do the passages you have just read tell us about God's mercy?

READINGWIDER: If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 26-28

**Prayer:** Give thanks for God's mercy. Give thanks for his plan to gather a people chosen by grace from all nations. Ask that he would bring his mercy to more and more people on the Central Coast.

### PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

## DAY1:The Mercies of God

### Read Romans 12:1-2

This passage represents a “hinge” in the book of Romans. Paul shifts from describing the “mercies of God” (chapters 1-11) to how we respond to the mercies of God. This week, we’ll spend some time each day in these verses, and some time looking back on the mercies of God in chapters 1-11.

1. Do you think of God as merciful? Do you see him as being merciful to you in particular?
2. If you understand that God is merciful, how does that impact...
  - a. Your posture towards him?
  - b. Your view of things you’ve done in the past?
  - c. Your view of ongoing sin in your life?
3. Read Romans 1. What do you learn about “the mercies of God”?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 29.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for God’s mercy. For his mercy to you in particular in Christ. Ask that he might give you a right view of his wrath against sin, as well as his kindness to bear that wrath in Christ and choose you as an object of his mercy (9:23).

## DAY2:An Offering

### Read Romans 12:1-2

1. Look at the language used in verse 1 to describe worship. Given the background of the Old Testament sacrificial system, what images is Paul playing on here? How does that change the way we think of worship?<sup>1</sup>
2. What does it mean for you to offer your body to God today...this week...this year?
3. How does this idea of worship compare with the way the word “worship” gets used in different Christian contexts today?
4. Read Romans 2:1-3:20. What does this passage show you about God’s mercy?

<sup>1</sup>There are at least five words here that relate to the Old Testament priesthood – can you find them? The New Testament uses two main Greek words for worship: *proskuneo*, which means to bow down, and *latreuo* which means to serve as a priest. The latter is used here.

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 30.

**Prayer:** Give thanks that in Christ we are holy and pleasing to him. Ask that he gives you wisdom to see how your whole life can be an offering and how you can give yourself to him daily for his service.

## DAY3:Transformed

Read Romans 12:1-2

1. In verse 2, what does Paul call us to:
  - a. Not do?
  - b. Do?
2. Where do you most feel the pull of being conformed?
  - a. In what specific things?
  - b. Who could you tell about this? What measures could you put in place to manage this?
3. Read Romans 3:21-4:25. What does this passage show us about the mercies of God?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three- year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 31.

**Prayer:** Ask for God's help and protection to not be conformed to the pattern of this world. Ask for his help to actively grow you in godliness as he transforms you.

## DAY4:Test and Approve

Read Romans 12:1-2

1. How is it that God transforms us? How might this take place?
2. What does this enable? How does this compare to the person outside of Christ? (See Romans 1:21.)
3. What do you think it means to "test and approve" God's will?<sup>2</sup>
4. Read Romans 5:1-11 and 8:17— what do these verses show us about the mercies of God?

<sup>2</sup>Note, ESV translation: "that by testing you may discern what is the will of God"; CSB translation: "so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 32-33.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for God's plan to change and grow us to please him more and more in Christ. Ask for his strength and wisdom to discern his will in your life.

## DAY5: Mercy to All

### Read Romans 9:6-13

As Romans 12 calls us to respond to God's mercy, today, we'll continue to look back on what Paul has been saying about God and his mercy. What do the following passages tell us about God's mercy?

1. Romans 9:6-13
2. Romans 9:14-24
3. Romans 10:9-13
4. Romans 11:1-7
5. Romans 11:25-32

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 34-35.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for God's mercy. Give thanks for his plan to gather a people chosen by grace from all nations. Ask that he would bring his mercy to more and more people on the Central Coast.

## PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

## WEEK6: ROMANS 12:3-8

### DAY1:Thinking Soberly

Read Romans 12:1-4

1. What connection do you notice between verses 2 and 3?
2. Why might Paul feel the need to address people's opinion of themselves?
3. What is to shape our view of ourselves?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 36-37.

**Prayer:** Gracious Father, please put to death in us all kinds of pride and self-importance. Help us to think with sober judgement about ourselves in light of your love for us in Christ and his example of profound humility and other-centredness.

## GOSPEL GIFTS

### DAY2:Part of the Body

Read Romans 12:3-5

1. What significance does Paul give to the image of the "body" in these verses?
2. How does this differ from the way our culture tends to place value on people?
3. With this in mind, how might seeing yourself as part of the body of Christ change your view of:
  - a. Yourself?
  - b. Others?
4. Can you think of a Christian person whom you haven't valued as a part of your body? How might you show them that they belong?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 38-39.

**Prayer:** Ask for God's help to see yourself as part of the body and to help others feel they belong.

## DAY3: Gifts and the Body

Read Romans 12:4-8

1. List the different gifts that Paul names. What is to characterise their use?
2. Where do you see these gifts active in our church family?
3. What opportunities might there be for you to exercise your gifts at EV Church? What could you do to explore these opportunities?

### EXTRA READING

Regarding the nature of prophecy, read 1 Corinthians 14:3-4 and 26-33, and consider:

- a. What is the outcome or goal of prophetic speech?
- b. How authoritative is it?
- c. Where do you see this kind of speech expressed in our regular activities as a church together?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 40-41.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for the way God has made his church with all its diversity. Give thanks for the way he has made you as you are. Ask for him to help you have humility and wisdom to discern how you might best serve the body.

## DAY4: Gifts of the Son

Read Ephesians 4:4-16

1. What do you notice about Paul's use of the "body" image here? Is there anything different or distinct from Romans 12?
2. What is the purpose of the office-bearing roles listed in verse 11? (See verses 11 and 12.)
3. What is the goal of the "ministry" of all the members of the body? (See verses 13-16.)
4. How could you be more active in seeing the body growing up into maturity?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 42-43.

**Prayer:** Ask that God would grow his church in number and maturity. Ask for his help to do your part to see his body grow.

## DAY5: Gifts of the Spirit

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-30

1. Think about how Paul uses the metaphor of the “body” in this passage. What kind of concerns is he addressing? Summarise each section:
  - a. Verses 4-6
  - b. Verses 7-11
  - c. Verses 12-14
  - d. Verses 15-20
  - e. Verses 21-26
2. As you reflect on these verses, what do you think God is telling you about your convictions and attitudes towards his body? Where do you feel challenged in your view of:
  - a. Yourself?
  - b. Other members of the body?
  - c. The body as a whole?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 44-45.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for the way God has created us and gifted us diversely. Ask for God's help to value and honour those who are different to us, to neither envy nor look down on others. Ask for wisdom and strength to use the gifts he has given you for the common good and for his glory.

## PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

# WEEK 7: ROMANS 12:9-21

## DAY 1: Sincere Love

Read Romans 12:9-13

1. Read over the instructions Paul gives in verses 9-13. List them below:
2. For each instruction, consider, what is the motivation to do this? What does it reflect in God's character or the nature of the gospel?
3. Which of these instructions prompts you towards action, repentance, or change? What might that look like this week?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 46-47.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for the depth of God's love in the gospel: he who is opposed to evil, generously accepts and welcomes us in Christ at the cost of his sacrifice. Ask that we might persevere in faith and joyful obedience, sharing his character.

# GOSPEL RELATIONSHIPS

## DAY 2: Bless and do Not Curse

Read Romans 12:14-16

1. Re-read over the instructions Paul gives in verses 14-16 and list them below. What connections do you notice between them?
2. Choose 2-3 instructions you feel convicted by, and consider:
  - a. When do you find it most difficult? Why is it hard? (Think about both the external circumstance as well as what's going on in your heart at the time.)
  - b. What is the motivation to do this? (What does it reflect in God's character or the nature of the gospel?)
  - c. What might that look like to put this into practice this week?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Genesis 48-50.

**Prayer:** Pray over your responses to question 2. Give thanks for the gospel of peace and ask for God's help to put these things into practice this week.

## DAY 3: Live at Peace

Read Romans 12:17-21

3. Re-read over the instructions Paul gives in verses 17-21, and list them below. What connections do you notice between them?
4. Choose 2-3 instructions you feel convicted by and consider:
  - a. When do you find it most difficult? Why is it hard? (Think about both the external circumstance as well as what's going on in your heart at the time.)
  - b. What is the motivation to do this? (What does it reflect in God's character or the nature of the gospel?)
  - c. What might that look like to put this into practice this week?

READING WIDER: Take some time to skim over the chapters you've read in Genesis and consider:

- i) How have you seen God's gracious sovereignty working out through Jacob's family?
- ii) How do you see these stories pointing forward to Jesus?

**Prayer:** Pray over your responses to question 2. Give thanks for the gospel of peace and ask for God's help to put these things into practice this week.

## DAY 4: Vengeance is Mine!

Read Romans 12:17-21

1. Read the following passages and consider how they shape the Christian's attitude to vengeance:
  - a. Leviticus 19:18
  - b. Deuteronomy 32:35-36
  - c. Proverbs 20:22
  - d. 1 Peter 2:23
2. When are you tempted to take justice into your own hands? What might it look like to trust God in these moments?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Note, this is not all the Bible says about justice. For instance, God's people are consistently instructed to uphold justice for the oppressed and the vulnerable (e.g. Jeremiah 7:5-7, 22:3). There are also times where Paul and Jesus stand up for their "rights" before the law (e.g. John 18:23, Acts 16:35-37). This passage in Romans doesn't negate the need for upholding justice, but rather pushes back against the heart's natural inclination towards anger and entitlement.

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 5 and 7.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for God's perfect justice and the hope of all things being set right. Praise him for his mercy and that Christ would bear the just penalty of our sin. Ask for his help to refrain from anger and vengeance, and for wisdom to walk wisely.

## DAY 5: Being Transformed

Read Romans 12:9-21

Think back over the steps you wanted to take this week to put these verses into practice.

1. How did you go? What do you want to celebrate and give thanks to God for?

2. What do you want to confess to God and ask for his help with?

3. What do you want to try to do differently next week?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 8-10.

**Prayer:** Give thanks to God for his grace and patience with us, praise him for his kindness to answer our prayers. Ask for his help to continue to grow in Christ.

## PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

## DAY1: Submit to Governing Authorities

Read Romans 13:1-5

1. What are the different reasons Paul gives to be subject to civil authorities? (There are at least three reasons.)
2. What does Paul see as the role of government in society?
3. What tends to be your attitude to government? How does this passage critique your heart and mind?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 11, 12 and 17.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for the way God has created order in his world. Ask for humility to live under the various authorities he has instituted. Pray for our different levels of government for wisdom to rule well.

## DAY2: What do You Owe?

Read Romans 13:1-7

1. How does God describe the government in verse 5? Why is this surprising (especially given Paul's context in the Roman empire)?
2. In verses 6-7, what does Paul call his readers to do?
3. Which of these do you see as most counter-cultural in our Australian context? What do you find hardest to do?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 21 and 22.

**Prayer:** Ask for God's help to grow in a heart of humility. Ask for wisdom for our governments and the willingness to be different to our culture.

## DAY3:Authority GoneWrong

Read Acts 4:5-13

This passage has Peter and John appearing before the Jewish ruling body, the Sanhedrin.<sup>4</sup>

1. What are the key moments or stages of the narrative?
2. How do Peter and John relate to the Jewish authorities?
3. What can you learn from their example? What might be different to our circumstances, and what would be similar?

<sup>4</sup>While the Sanhedrin was made up of religious leaders (priests, officials and scribes), its authority extended beyond matters of faith and doctrine. It also functioned as a law court and a governing body in matters of civil law – though subservient to the Roman provincial authority. This is due in large part to the nature of the theocratic state that the Old Covenant established.

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 24, 29 and 30.

**Prayer:** Pray for our governments and particularly for the provision of freedoms to continue to proclaim Christ. Pray for the persecuted church around the world and for their courage to affirm faith in Christ in the midst of opposition.

## DAY4:Authority DoneRight

Read Mark 10:35-45

1. What wrong approaches to authority does Jesus critique here?
2. What does he show is a rightful kind of authority?
3. What are some of the contexts in your life where you have a degree of authority? What might it look like to use this authority in a Christ-like way?
4. Where do you have opportunities to honour and submit to rightful authority? What could that look like for you this week?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalm 31.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for Jesus' example of rightful authority exercised at cost to himself for the good of others. Give thanks for what this reveals about the beauty of the heart of our God. Ask for his help to exercise leadership like this and to honour such leadership.

## DAY5:The Law of Love

Read Romans 13:8-14

1. What is the relationship between love and the law?
2. What reasons does Paul give for this relationship?
3. How is the command to love different to the commands to not commit adultery, or not murder?
4. How do verses 11-14 motivate us to love?
5. What are some ways you feel prompted to show love this week?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 33 and 34.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for God's love revealed in Christ, and for his grace to cover over our failure to love rightly. Ask for strength and conviction to love others sincerely, proactively and sacrificially in light of Jesus' love for us.

## PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

## DAY1:The Weak and the Strong

### Read Romans 14:1-10

This passage is part of a longer section (14:1-15:13) in which Paul refers to those among the Roman Christians who are “weak” and those who are “strong”. He is particularly concerned with addressing the “strong” and how they regard the “weak”.

1. What do the following verses show us about who the “weak” are?
  - a. 14:1-2
  - b. 14:5
  - c. 14:14
  - d. 15:7-9
  - e. (See also, Colossians 2:16-17)
2. How does Paul urge his readers to treat the weak?
  - a. 14:3-4
  - b. 14:10
3. Are there believers who are different to you whom you are prone to look down on, or think less of? How does this passage help correct you?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 35 and 36.

Prayer: Pray in light of your answer to question 3.

## DAY2:We Live for the Lord

### Read Romans 14:5-18

1. What guiding principles does Paul offer for both the weak and the strong in these verses? What should they have in common?
  - a. 14:5b
  - b. 15:6
  - c. 15:7-9
  - d. 14:10-12
2. Do these concerns shape your life? What might it look like for you to live not “for ourselves alone but for Christ”?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 43 and 45.

Prayer: Pray in light of your response to question 2.

## DAY3:The Law of Love

Read Romans 14:13-15:2

1. What ought to rule Christians' behaviour towards one another?
  - a. 14:13-17
  - b. 14:19-21
  - c. 15:1-2
2. Think of a few groups of Christians in our church who are different to you. What are some ways you can seek their good and show them love?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 46, 48 and 49.

**Prayer:** Give thanks that God bears with our failures. Ask for his help, and for patience to love those who are different to us and to seek their good. Pray in light of your answer to question 2.

## DAY4:Acceptance in Christ

Read Romans 15:1-7

1. How is Christ's conduct in verse 3 an example of the behaviour called for in verses 1-2?
2. Christ becomes both the means of our acceptance before God, and the model of one who sacrificially seeks to serve others for their good. What motivation does this passage give to love others?
3. Verses 6 and 7 give a beautiful picture of unity. How does our love of others bring praise to God (verse 7)?

READINGWIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 50, 52 and 54.

**Prayer:** Give thanks to God that he has accepted us in Christ as we are, with all our sin, failure, and shortcomings. Ask for his help to be made more and more like Jesus who selflessly served others and sought their good.

## DAY5:Doubt and Discernment

Read Romans 14:22-23

These verses present some challenges.

1. Verse 22 seems at odds with much of the New Testament's instruction to speak of Christ (e.g. Luke 9:26, 1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 28:20). What might it mean in this particular context to keep what you believe between you and God? (See also, verses 19-21.)
2. Verse 23 is also confronting. What kind of doubt might be in view in this verse in its context? (See also 14:5b, 14:14. A similar principle is expressed in James 4:17.)<sup>5</sup>
3. Verses 22 and 23 seem to contain both an encouragement and a warning for both the "strong" and the "weak". What might they be?
4. There are various ways we can go against our conscience as believers. We can fail to do something which we are convicted is right, (even though we know it isn't something required for salvation). We can do something we know is wrong even though it is not explicitly condemned. Where do you need God's help to walk in step with your conscience?

<sup>5</sup>Note, "faith" here, as in 14:1 and 14:22 ("believe" = same Greek word, "pistis") seems to be used in a slightly different way to the earlier sections of the letter. The one who is "weak in faith" is regarded as a brother for whom Christ died (14:15), so it is not that they are unstable in their faith in general. Rather it seems they are weak in that they have not yet grasped the fullness of the freedoms they have by faith in Christ.

**Prayer:** Bring these things to your gracious Heavenly Father.

## PRAYERPOINTS AND NOTES

## DAY 1: Making Christ Known

Read Romans 15:14-24

1. How does Paul describe his ministry (verses 15-22)?
  - a. What is his role?
  - b. What is unique about it?
  - c. What are his goals?
2. Where has he been so far, and where is he hoping to go?
3. Look up on a map the locations of Jerusalem, Illyricum (modern “North Macedonia”), Rome and Spain. What makes Paul’s next journey a particularly ambitious one?
4. What might it look like for us as a church to share a similar vision and ambition to make Christ known?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 55 and 56.

**Prayer:** Give thanks that the gospel has come to us in Australia. Ask that God would fill our hearts with a humble hunger to see many, many people saved across the coast, Australia and beyond.

## DAY 2: Paul’s Bold Plan

Read Romans 15:19-29

Yesterday we saw that, having preached Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum (all along the north-eastern coastline of the Mediterranean), Paul has set his sights west – towards Rome and, from there, Spain.

1. Re-read verses 23-24 – what does Paul hope to achieve when he goes to Rome?
2. What role does he hope the Roman church will play in his trip to Rome?
3. What do these verses show us about Paul’s relationship with the Romans?
4. Given the partnership Paul hopes to share with the Romans, why is it so important that they understand the gospel of grace that he’s been explaining through this letter?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 57-59.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for the gospel ambition of those who have brought the gospel to us. Ask that God would give us deep convictions about the urgency of the gospel and grow among us a sacrificial partnership to make Christ known together.

## DAY 3: Prayer and the Plans of God

Read Romans 15:24-32

1. Where is Paul heading next, and why?

2. Why does Paul ask the Romans to pray?

Acts 21-28 shows us that Paul's fears were warranted. After his arrival in Jerusalem, he is almost immediately attacked and imprisoned. He is put on trial in various courts, endures multiple attempts on his life, and eventually arrives in Rome as a prisoner. The prayers of the Roman church don't seem to have been answered in the way they expected. Paul's plans for Spain weren't God's plans. Yet, various other opportunities arise to introduce people to Jesus.

3. What does this show us about the place of our prayers and plans before God?

4. Paul knew the risks that his mission involved and committed everything to the cause. What might God be asking you to sacrifice to be on mission for God?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 60-62.

**Prayer:** Ask that God would help us pray and plan boldly for the cause of the gospel. Ask that God would use our plans and labours as a church to see people won for Christ. Ask for his help to hold our plans with an open hand, and to be willing to count any cost to serve Jesus.

## DAY 4: Gospel Partnership

Read Romans 16:1-16

1. In these verses we meet a range of different people.

a. How are they described?

b. What role have they played in the work of the Lord?

2. What do these verses reveal about the nature of gospel community and relationships?

3. How could you express gospel partnership more fully with:

a. Our church as a whole?

b. The brothers and sisters you are close to in church (friends, growth group members, team members etc.)?

c. Our mission partners?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalms 64 and 66.

**Prayer:** Give thanks for the privilege of serving Christ together. Ask him to give you a sacrificial heart to give back your time, talent and treasure to the generous God of the gospel in the work of the Lord.

## DAY 5: The Obedience of Faith

Read Romans 16:17-27

1. What do these verses show us about the Christian life?
2. What do these verses show us about the God of the gospel?
3. What does Paul want the Romans to know in these verses? Why?
4. How do these verses comfort and challenge you?

READING WIDER: To keep up with our three-year Bible reading plan, read Psalm 68.

**Prayer:** Pray in light of your answer to question 4.

## PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

# SUMMER READING

Over Summer we'll be sending out some brief reading notes via email. But you can use this space to keep track of the reading plan as well. These readings will keep you up to date with our three-year Bible reading plan.

READING WIDER: These holidays we'll be reading 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Corinthians. Our suggestion: aim to read 3 chapters each week day >>



## 1 and 2 Samuel

These books take their name from the prophet whose ministry dominates the period. They describe the transition from Israel being governed by judges, to a monarchy. Since the Exodus, God's people had wandered the wilderness for forty years as an act of God's judgement for doubting his ability to bring them into the land. Under the leadership of Joshua, the next generation began to take possession of the promised land. Judges recounts a problematic cycle of sin and repentance which rests on the faithfulness of the leader at the time. There is a need for the nation to be led. Enter Samuel, who is somewhere between prophet, priest and king! This book brings us the title of "Messiah" – God's anointed king – and lays the foundation on which the rest of the anticipation around this name will be built.

Look out for:

- God's ability to rule with or without a king
- The nation's motivation in asking for a king
- The life of the persecuted Messiah
- The need for a greater Messiah to come
- What faith and obedience look like under the Messiah
- How David's sin impacts his family and the nation

## Week 1: 1 Samuel 1-15 (beginning 21 December)

Read: Day 1 - 1 Samuel 1-2  
Day 2 - 1 Samuel 3-4  
Day 3 - 1 Samuel 6-7  
Day 4 - 1 Samuel 8-10  
Day 5 - 1 Samuel 11-13  
Day 6 - 1 Samuel 14-15

1. Each day consider: How does what I have read...
  - a. Help me appreciate the rule of Jesus?
  - b. Reveal God's character?
  - c. Expose sin in my life, or encourage me to obey Jesus?

**Suggested memory verse:** Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. 1 Samuel 15:22

# SUMMER READING

## Week 2: 1 Samuel 16-31 (beginning 28 December)

Read: Day 1 - 1 Samuel 16-17

Day 2 - 1 Samuel 18-20

Day 3 - 1 Samuel 21-23

Day 4 - 1 Samuel 24-26

Day 5 - 1 Samuel 27-29

Day 6 - 1 Samuel 30-31

1. Each day consider: How does what I have read...

a. Help me appreciate the rule of Jesus?

b. Reveal God's character?

c. Exposes sin in my life, or encourage me to obey Jesus?

**Suggested memory verse:** "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. 1 Samuel 15:22-23

## Week 3: 2 Samuel 1-12 (beginning 4 January)

Read: Day 1 - 2 Samuel 1-3

Day 2 - 2 Samuel 4-5

Day 3 - 2 Samuel 6-7

Day 4 - 2 Samuel 8-9

Day 5 - 1 Samuel 10-11

Day 6 - 2 Samuel 12

1. Each day consider: How does what I have read...

a. Help me appreciate the rule of Jesus?

b. Reveal God's character?

c. Exposes sin in my life, or encourage me to obey Jesus?

**Suggested memory verse:** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 2 Samuel 7:12-13

# SUMMER READING

## Week 4: 2 Samuel 13-24 (beginning 11 January)

Read: Day 1 - 2 Samuel 13-14

Day 2 - 2 Samuel 15-16

Day 3 - 2 Samuel 17-18

Day 4 - 2 Samuel 19-20

Day 5 - 1 Samuel 21-22

Day 6 - 2 Samuel 23-24

1. Each day consider: How does what I have read...

a. Help me appreciate the rule of Jesus?

b. Reveal God's character?

c. Exposes sin in my life, or encourage me to obey Jesus?

**Suggested memory verse:** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the

## 1 Corinthians

There's less to read in these weeks on 1 Corinthians. You may want to supplement your reading with some of the psalms written by David during the history recounted in 1-2 Samuel. You can find them here >>



1 Corinthians shows us the radically different worldview of the cross and its implications for life. Though the Corinthians initially received Paul's message joyfully there has been division and immorality damaging the life of the church since he left. The letter gives us some rich insights into the centrality of the cross, the work of the Spirit, the nature of church life and the hope of the resurrection.

### Structure

Chapters 1-4 The Cross and the Spirit create unity

Chapters 5-7 Sex – done wrong, done right

Chapters 8-14 Worship – done wrong, done right

Chapter 15 The hope of the resurrection

### Some suggested questions

Each day consider:

- How does each passage
- Help me appreciate Jesus and the gospel?
- Call me to love, hope and holiness?

stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”  
2 Samuel 7:12-16

# SUMMER READING

## Week5: 1Corinthians 1-7(beginning 18January)

Read: Day 1 - 1Corinthians 1  
Day 2 - 1Corinthians 2-3  
Day 3 - 1Corinthians 4  
Day 4 - 1Corinthians 5  
Day 5 - 1Corinthians 6  
Day 6 - 1Corinthians 7

1. Each day consider: How does each passage
  - a. Help me appreciate Jesus and the gospel?

b. Call me to love, hope and holiness?

**Suggested memory verse:** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.  
1Corinthians 1:18

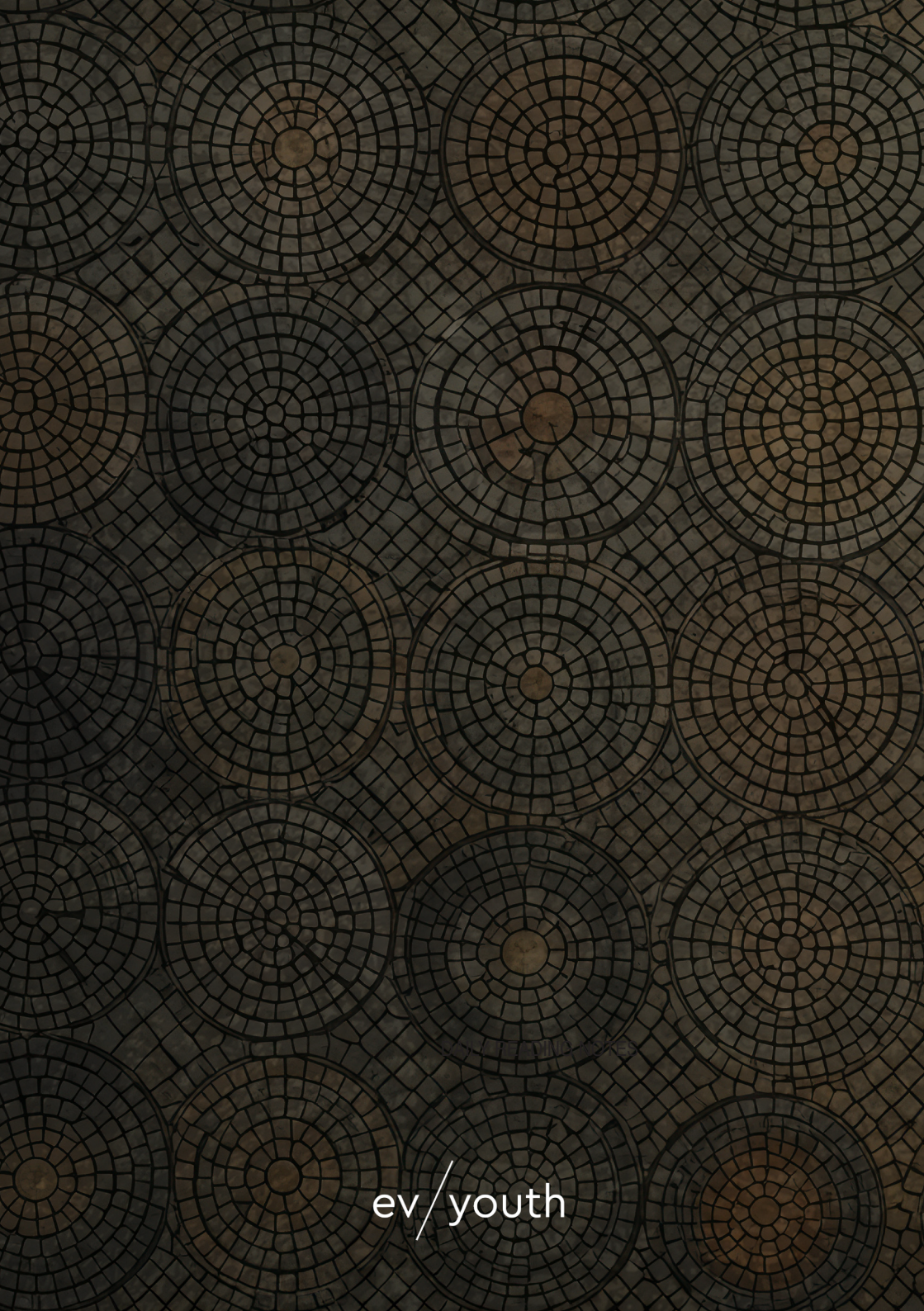
## Week6: 1Corinthians 8-16(beginning 25 January)

Read: Day 1 - 1Corinthians 8  
Day 2 - 1Corinthians 9-10  
Day 3 - 1Corinthians 11-12  
Day 4 - 1Corinthians 13-14  
Day 5 - 1Corinthians 15  
Day 6 - 1Corinthians 16

1. Each day consider: How does each passage
  - a. Help me appreciate Jesus and the gospel?

b. Call me to love, hope and holiness?

**Suggested memory verse:** Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. 1Corinthians 6:18-20



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