

R &amp; R BIBLE STUDY 2019-20



# *breath-taking grace*

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

## LESSON 5

Paul spent the last few chapters showing us that salvation is a work of faith, not of works, religion, or the Law. God reached out to us and provided a way to receive the gift of His own righteousness. Paul also knew the tendency of man to try to earn his own way and make himself “right” before God. I think Paul may have had his own struggles with that (Philippians 3:4-6). Paul was a great communicator and he knew the best way to teach was with illustrations. He also apparently believed that his Jewish readers would wonder about Abraham, the Father of their faith, since Jewish tradition would boast that Abraham was made righteous by his works. Paul masterfully uses both Abraham and David in this chapter as illustrations of how and why they were justified. This example is exciting to you and me because it reminds us that this doctrine is timeless and universal. God justified men who believed in Him before Christ, as well as after!

I hope that Romans 4 brings joy to your soul as you are reminded once more that you can't earn His salvation, and if you can't earn it, you can't lose it. You can rest in Him rather than live in an endless pursuit of being “good enough.” There is so much more power in grace than in the Law. I am grateful that we live in this “Age of Grace,” as it's called by some. Have a great week, ladies, as you learn a little more about Father Abraham, but remember, we study him in light of the bigger story, God's redemptive story!

### First Day

1. Read Romans 4:1-25. Observe the text and write what facts you find. What's the main point of this chapter? Are there any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts? Are there any words that seem to be very important?

2. Bottom line, what does Paul say Abraham was justified by?

Before we go any further, we should refresh our memories about who Abraham was, what he did, why he is considered the “Father of all nations” and the place that faith had in his life.

3. Please read Genesis 11:27-32. Explain Abraham’s journey to Haran. Who came with him?
4. Read Genesis 12:1-5. Also read Acts 7:2-8. Explain God’s call on Abraham’s life.
5. Read Genesis 15:1-6. What happened when he “believed”? What did he believe?
6. Read Genesis 17:1-27. Briefly summarize the chapter. According to verse 11, what was the purpose of circumcision?
7. Now read Hebrews 11:8-19. What do you learn about Abraham? What word is repeated numerous times?

8. Ok, last question. Hopefully you noticed that Abraham “believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness” BEFORE he was circumcised. Why do you think this is so significant?

Ok, I think we’re ready to jump into our chapter! Have fun, ladies! Don’t forget to pray before you begin your study, asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes of understanding!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “... Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Romans 4:3

### **Second Day**

**Work on your verse. Ponder the impact of what it means.**

1. Read Romans 4:1-25 again. We know the common theme shown in Abraham’s life is that justification comes by faith. Let’s break down the chapter into 4 sections, beginning with verses 1-8. What was he “not” justified by?
2. What do you think the phrase “accounted for” means in verse 3?
3. What argument or illustration does he use in verses 4-5? Can you explain it in your own words?

If Abraham was made right by his own works, of which he had many, he certainly would be able to boast about it. But his life story proves that he was a sinner like us (Genesis 12:10-20). God alone is holy and none of us can stand before Him on our own goodness, not even good ol’ Abe! Referring to verses 4-5, Chris Ash wrote, “Paul uses a simple analogy from everyday life. A worker does not write to his employer when he gets his pay to say, ‘Thank you for your generous grace in paying me.’ That would be absurd, for He has earned it. His wages are counted to him ‘not according to grace’ (undeserved) but as ‘an obligation’ (earned). What

happened to Abraham is that ‘to the man who does not work,’ who trusts God who justifies the wicked (4:5), his faith is counted for righteousness.”

I love this quote: “‘Not to work’ here (4:5) means to abandon all hope that anything I do or possess can contribute anything at all to my status before God.”

4. Have you ever gotten something you didn’t earn? How did you receive it? Is it difficult just to “accept” something without earning it, working for it, or giving something back in return? How graciously do you receive? (If the answer is yes, it’s difficult, why?)

Paul uses the word “accounted” or “counted” in Romans 4 ten times. John Stott said, “The word in the Greek is ‘logizomai’ and is often used in a financial or commercial context. It signifies to put something to somebody’s account, as when Paul wrote to Philemon about Onesimus, ‘If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.’ (Philemon 18).” He goes on to say, “By using both Abraham and David’s example in verses 6-8, Paul is showing that justification involves a double counting, crediting, or reckoning. On the one hand, negatively, God will never count our sins against us. On the other hand, positively, God credits our account with righteousness, as a free gift, by faith, altogether apart from our works.”

So then, as Swindoll so eloquently puts it, “How can God do this? Through Christ, who lived a perfectly righteous life under the Law, who paid the price for our sins with His death, taking them away and nailing them to the cross, and who raised us to a new, righteous life through His resurrection and triumph over death. In short, by God’s grace and mercy alone, we got what we did not deserve, righteousness; and we didn’t get what we did deserve, punishment for our sins.”

5. All through the Old Testament, God didn’t “impute” the believer’s sin against him, but rather “covered” it and forgave it. (This is called the doctrine of “imputed righteousness”: because of the cross, God counts or credits (imputes) the righteousness of Jesus to the believer, because the sin of the believer was counted (Imputed) to Jesus on the cross. Also called the Great Exchange!) **A little bit of a random thought, but when you are sinned against, do you “hold it against them forever” or try to “forgive” and allow His blood to “cover” it? How does this example of giving us something we don’t deserve speak to your heart on the topic of forgiveness, extending mercy, or showing grace?**

6. Along the lines of forgiving someone who perhaps doesn’t “deserve” it, read the following verses and then answer this question ... When do you “overlook” a

transgression; when do you confront the person; how often do you forgive; and what if they're not sorry? (1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Matthew 5:43-46, Matthew 18:15-17, Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 6:9-15, 1 Peter 4:8)

7. Is there a family member, friend, or co-worker that the Holy Spirit is nudging you to forgive? Ask the Holy Spirit for the power, grace, strength, and love to do it.

Tomorrow we'll look at our next section. For now, ponder the beautiful grace and forgiveness that God has offered us through His Son, Jesus. Can we offer that to others?

### **Third Day**

#### **What's your memory verse?**

Paul now answers another argument regarding justification ... does it come from particular religious practices, such as circumcision?

1. Let's jump into our next section, shall we? Read Romans 4, focusing on verses 9-12. What's the main idea of this section?
  
2. Why do you think it matters so much "when" Abraham was justified, before or after circumcision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Abraham was the Father of "who," according to verse 11 (and 16-18)? Why does Paul keep repeating this?

4. What phrase does Paul use in verse 12 to describe a “sign of faith”? (Remember that circumcision was simply a “sign” of their faith, not “proof” of their faith.) What do you think it means?

Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised, according to Genesis 17:23-27, more than 14 years after the events of Genesis 15. Abraham was actually justified as a Gentile! That’s exciting news for us! Again, we see how God used Abraham in “His” story to show us His plan for one church, united in faith, including all those who believe in Jesus. Both believing Jew and Gentile, justified entirely by grace, and by no merit of their own. Such a beautiful amazing plan, all humbled together under grace. This free gift makes all believers equal. Believers are a community that should “live together in harmony and reach out with the barrier-breaking message of grace to a needy world.” (Ash)

5. Let’s talk a little more about walking the “steps of faith.” What does 1 John 2:6 say about it? Also, how does Galatians 5:16 tie in? How do we practically “walk as He walked”?

Remember that Paul said our faith should be an “obedient faith.” Abraham believed God’s Word regardless of the seemingly impossible. He didn’t know where he was going, exactly why he was going, and how God would fulfill His promise. He did not require explanations from God, nor did he ask for proof before he would believe His Word. God said it and that was enough.

It’s important to remember that he was not justified because he was circumcised, but he was circumcised because he was justified. So now, a man is not justified because he joins a church or gets baptized, but he later does these things BECAUSE he has been justified and made God’s child!

6. Do you ever desire explanations from God before you’ll obey? Do you get frustrated or discouraged if you don’t get one? Can you share an example?

7. Why do you think we tend to think God “owes” us an explanation or a preview of His plans?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. We often look at “external markers” to prove someone is a believer. Why can this be so deceiving?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Abraham believed in the promises of God and trusted in Him. Do you have trouble trusting God in some area? How does knowing God’s promises found in His Word help build our trust?

Like we discussed before, it’s easy to get caught up in our ministries or in “doing good,” while attempting to validate our own worth in God’s eyes. This can cause us to get stuck in the old system of legalism, trying to prove something to God or to ourselves. Even though we know we are saved by grace, we sometimes refuse to live by grace. God loves us for simply being us, not because of our role or job or title. He calls us His daughters and He calls us free. He loves us for who we are in Him, regardless of what we do. This lesson is a life-changing truth to believe, understand, and live out.

10. Do you believe God loves you for who you are, or do you feel you have to prove your worth in some way? Have you ever felt your identity slipping away into something besides Christ? Spend time asking the Spirit to search your heart ...

#### **Fourth Day**

**Work on your memory verse.**

1. Read Romans 4:1-25, focusing on verses 13-15. Paul again points out the futility of the Law to bring about personal justification. Summarize in your own words.

God made His promise to Abraham four centuries before Moses received the Law, showing that Abraham's faith in God's promises took priority over the Law. He reminds us that the Law doesn't bring righteousness, but wrath. No one can keep it completely and perfectly, which is what it demands. But if there were no Law, there would be no rules to break!

2. Read Romans 4:16-25. What is the main point or thought in our last section?
3. Read verse 17. What examples does Paul give of this in verses 18-25?
4. How was Abraham's faith an example of a faith that believed God would bring "life from the dead"?

We've talked briefly about Abraham's faith. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that true faith is trusting that God will bring about what we don't yet see. But we often think having faith is "easy" or it's just having a positive attitude, etc. Having faith doesn't mean there's not a struggle or that you won't feel pain. I love what [The Harper Religious and Inspirational Quotation Companion](#) said, "Great faith is not the faith that walks always in the light and knows no darkness, but the faith that perseveres in spite of God's seeming silences, and that faith will most certainly and surely get its reward."

5. How does true faith require patience and perseverance?



6. How does true faith often require sacrifice? What sacrifices did Abraham have to make?
  
7. Is God testing your faith in some way that requires patience, perseverance, or sacrifice? Are you trusting Him or struggling? Ask for prayer if you need it!
  
8. Verse 20 tells us that Abraham's faith didn't waver through unbelief. (Notice he didn't say a "perfect" faith.) Is your faith wavering for some reason? What should you do?
  
9. Our text tells us that Abraham's faith brought glory to God. (vs 20) How does true faith bring Him glory? How is it a testament to an unbelieving world, as well as to weak believers?
  
10. I love verse 21. The fact that Abraham believed that God "was able" to perform what He promised" gives me chills. What else is "God able" to do?
  - a. Hebrews 2:18
  - b. 2 Timothy 1:12
  - c. Jude 24
  - d. 2 Corinthians 9:8
  - e. Daniel 3:16-18
  - f. Ephesians 3:20

11. Are you currently facing a situation that God seems “unable” to fix? How do these verses encourage you?

These verses are such great reminders that NOTHING is impossible for God. Nothing. What God says, He does. He is the God who keeps His Word. Always. Completely.

### **Fifth Day**

**Write your verse out from memory.**

Yesterday’s verses were such a good reminder that what the Lord wants from us is belief, trust, and obedience which equals FAITH. He sums it up with verse 22 again, reminding us that it was his faith that saved him. Paul’s really trying to drive this point home. Now let’s wrap it up!

1. Read Romans 4:1-25, focusing on verses 16-25 again. Paul reminds his readers, and us, that this truth has meaning for us as well. The Living Bible phrases verse 24 like this: “God will accept us in the same way He accepted Abraham, when we believe the promises of God who brought back Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Christ’s Resurrection is the basis for our justification. He’s alive!!! How does that FACT impact your life today? What difference should it make?
  
2. How does His life, death, and resurrection give you assurance that God keeps His promises?

We can be confident that we will inherit the earth because God raised Christ for our justification. Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins as the propitiatory sacrifice on

whom the wrath was poured out. And He was raised to life for our justification. The resurrection proves that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted and therefore assures us of our justification. God is able to do what He promised ... give us new life in Christ! 😊

3. "It's important to notice that the central focus in our text is not on Abraham and his heroic faith, but on God and His life-giving promises. It is God, not Abraham, who gives life to the dead; it is God who makes the promise; it is God who had power to do what He promised. The passage is bracketed by the strength of God and at its center is the utter helplessness of Abraham and Sarah." (Chris Ash) **Why is remembering this fact so important and crucial to our faith?**
4. There seems to be a trend these days to focus on our "faith" instead of focusing on the One whom our faith is placed. Why is this dangerous? How does it breed pride, rather than humility? Why can it also bring about despair and devastation, while damaging our faith?
5. Read Psalm 34:1-3. What does the word "magnify" mean? How do these verses relate to our chapter?
6. Are you "magnifying" the Lord? Does your speech magnify Christ? Does your thought life? Does your behavior? Are you seeking to "make Him known"?
7. To sum up this section, John Stott wrote, "Abraham glorified God by letting God be God, and by trusting Him to be true to Himself as the God of creation and resurrection." What does it mean to "allow God to be God"?

8. Are you “allowing God to be God”? In what areas do you like to take back some of the control?

9. What’s the biggest take-away from our lesson this week?

10. What amazed, impressed, or excited you about God this week? 😊

See you next week! Romans 5 promises to be a good one. One of my favorite verses is Romans 5:20, “Moreover the Law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more!” Woop woop!

