

ABOUT THIS READING PLAN

This reading plan walks you through the book of Romans.

Each day's reading includes: a passage from the Book of Romans, a commentary, devotional, or reflection thought to process the biblical reading more intentionally, and space for you to write thoughts or questions from that day's corresponding scripture or reflection.

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The study material in this guide was adapted from Romans 1-7 For You & Romans 8-16 For You by Timothy Keller, The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World by John Stott, Romans: Verse by Verse by Grant Osborne, Paul for Everyone: Romans, Part 2: Chapters 9-16 by N.T Wright, Romans New Covenant Commentary by Craig Keener, In View of God's Mercies by Courtney Doctor, Enduring Word Commentary by David Guzik and Romans: The Gospel-Centered Life by Jeremy and Kristin Schmucker.

WATCH ROMANS OVERVIEW PART 1



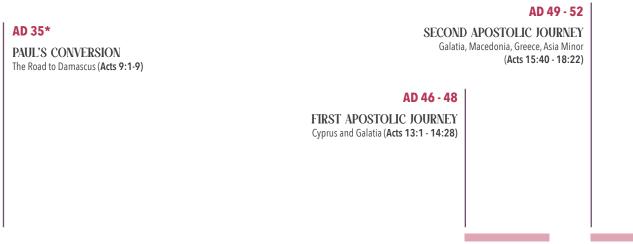
WATCH ROMANS OVERVIEW PART 2



IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Paul's letter to the Romans gives us a rich and comprehensive picture of several foundational aspects of the Christian faith. Paul's hope for this letter is to provide Christians who have already believed and trusted in Jesus an important reminder to keep their eyes on the message of the gospel. It is easy to accept the gospel when you say yes to Jesus and then forget how the gospel should shape our everyday lives. In this six-week study, we will focus on the truth of the gospel and how this message should inform every aspect of our lives.



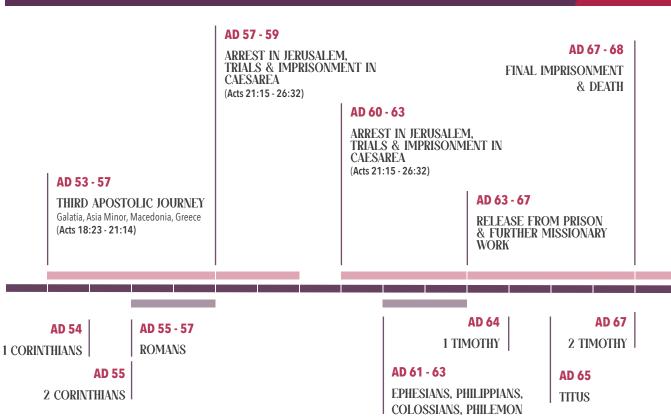


Paul wrote many epistles (letter) during his missionary journeys. These letters form a large part of the New Testament and offer pastoral care and theological guidance to the early church and for us today.

GALATIANS | AD 51
1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

AD 49





A ROMANS GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following are terms or ideas prevalent throughout Paul's letter to the church in Rome that are important to understand to fully grasp the message Paul is conveying.

General Revelation- "The knowledge of God's existence, character, and moral law that comes through creation to all humanity." -Wayne Grudem *Systematic Theology*

Circumcision- The physical and spiritual marking of a male follower of God. This practice began through God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17) to mark Abraham and his descendants as God's chosen people. The act of circumcision was a physical sign to show that these people were the people of God. The act of circumcision was, and remains, a common practice of the Jewish people to show faith in God. Paul, also a Jewish man, later referred to circumcision as not a physical act but a spiritual act (Romans 2:28-29) that all believers of Jesus go through within their hearts.

Jew - "Jew" primarily refers to a person of Jewish ethnicity belonging to the people of Israel, descendants of the ancient Hebrews. A Jew was identified by their adherence to the Mosaic Law (Torah), including practices like circumcision, observing the Sabbath, and following dietary laws. Religiously, a Jew worshiped the God of Israel and was part of the covenant community of people chosen by God. In the book of Romans, Paul redefines "Jew" to include those faithful to God not just by external observance but by an inner transformation of the heart, emphasizing faith and the work of the Holy Spirit. This theological perspective was crucial to Paul's mission, as he preached to both Jews and Gentiles about the inclusion of all people in God's covenant through faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 2)

Gentile - "Gentile" refers to anyone not of Jewish descent. It describes all the peoples and nations outside of the Jewish community, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. At the time, Gentiles were those who did not follow the Mosaic Law, were not circumcised, and did not worship the God of Israel. They were often associated with pagan practices and polytheistic religions. Paul's teaching in Romans broke down the traditional barriers between Jews and Gentiles, stating that salvation was available to all people.

The Law of God - God's commandments, statutes, and instructions to His people, the Jews. The Law of God can be found in the Torah (also referred to as the Pentateuch), which consists of the first five books of the Old Testament. These laws consist of moral laws, ceremonial laws, and civil laws. "The Law" is seen as a vital part of God's revelation but one that ultimately points beyond itself to the need for faith in Christ, who fulfills the Law and brings about the possibility of true righteousness and life through the Spirit.

Justification by Faith - The legal standing of a Christian—that through faith in Christ, we have been justified and declared righteous by God, once and for all. Christ's righteousness covers us and is what God sees when He looks at us. (Is. 61:10). This is not based on anything we have done but is a gift from God, made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, where He atoned for our sins. Justification is a one-time work of God on our behalf that happens when we admit our sin and need for a Savior and put our faith in the saving work of Jesus. This puts us back in right relationship with God. (Romans 5)

Sanctification - Sanctification is an ongoing process that requires daily surrender to obey and submit to the Holy Spirit's conviction in our hearts. As believers die daily to their flesh and walk in step with the Spirit, their lives will begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. (Romans 6:6)



WHEN:

The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans as a letter to the Christian community in Rome that he hoped to visit soon. This book is one of Paul's most robust and significant theological works. Romans was most likely written around A.D. 55 - 57 while he was in Corinth, preparing to visit Rome on his way to Spain during his third missionary journey.

WHO:

This letter addresses the Christian church in Rome, which included both Jewish and Gentile (non-Jewish) believers. This diverse audience is significant, as it influences Paul's themes regarding the law and grace. Romans is also the first of Paul's recorded letters to a church, which he did not personally start. He hoped the church at Rome would be a launching point for his mission to the west like the church in Antioch was for his three missionary journeys to the east.

WHY:

Paul writes to introduce himself to the Roman Christians and Jewish people to establish a relationship with them for his future visit. Romans is considered a foundational theological text for understanding Christian doctrine, particularly regarding salvation, grace, and faith. Its influence has been profound throughout Christian history, shaping theological thought and prompting significant movements.

Here are the primary purposes behind Paul's writing of Romans:

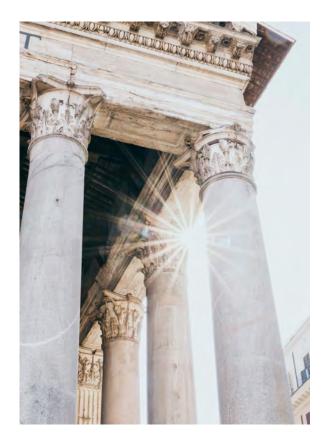
- 1. Clarification of the Gospel: Romans tackles key doctrines such as justification by faith, the role of the law, and the nature of sin and salvation. Paul wanted the Roman believers to understand these foundational truths clearly.
- 2. Unity among Believers based on Justification by Faith: The Roman church was composed of both Jew and Gentile Christians who were fighting over the place of the law in the Christian life. Gentiles believed that Christ had fulfilled the place of the law and that they were, therefore, free from its demands. Jewish Christians thought the food and ceremonial traditions mandated by the law were still binding. Paul wants them to seek unity under the banner of Jesus' work on the cross, where they are saved by grace through faith alone, not by their adherence to the law.
- 3. Walking in the Spirit: Paul stresses living in the Spirit rather than living by the flesh. He provides practical advice and encouragement for living out the Christian faith. He also addresses ethical issues, the importance of love and humility, and the responsibilities of Christians in society.
- **4. Hope for Continued Spread of the Gospel:** Paul expressed his desire to visit Rome and use it as a base for further missionary work in Spain. He sought the support and prayers of the Roman Christians for his mission, hoping to involve them in the broader work of spreading the gospel.

By writing Romans, Paul sought to strengthen the faith of the Roman believers, unify the church, and prepare for his future missionary endeavors. The letter reflects his deep commitment to spreading the gospel and fostering strong, vibrant Christian communities.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT & CURRENT APPLICATION

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

With this book, Paul is, in essence, announcing a transition in his ministry from spreading the gospel to churches in Greek-speaking areas to the western, more Latin-speaking half of the empire. At this time, however, he is targeting Rome as a strategic location to continue the spread of the gospel to all the world. Paul is writing this book hoping to visit Rome soon but does not know that he will be arrested in Jerusalem and arrive in Rome in chains. On his way to Rome, he suffers a shipwreck in the Mediterranean and ends up under house arrest for another two years. (see Acts 27-28) An important historical event in the history of the Roman church that set the stage for the Book of Romans is the expulsion of Jews from Rome under the emperor Claudius in A.D. 49 (Acts 18:2). Five years later, after Claudius' death, Jews would have begun to return to Rome to churches that would have been almost exclusively Gentile. When they did, they found a church that had become non-Jewish in its customs and practices. This cultural clash created a lot of tension, and by Paul's day, the Roman church was divided. They disagreed about how to follow Jesus and debated if non-Jewish Christians should observe the laws set out in the Old Testament, Since the Jewish believers had come to faith earlier than the Gentiles, the Jews returned and possibly wanted to take back leadership of the churches. Paul writes to clarify that there is one people of God-all who are justified by faith in Christ (both Jews and Gentiles, since all have sinned) and



who walk by the Spirit. Paul appeals to them to open their arms and welcome one another so that they can worship God together as one. Paul's letter tried to resolve some of these differences and unite these churches, emphasizing the unity in faith that binds them together.

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Romans is a treatise—a study on the doctrine of salvation and an in-depth presentation of the gospel. The Jew-Gentile troubles in Rome reflected such differences throughout the Christian world, and Paul wanted this letter read everywhere, not just in Rome. He wished churches everywhere to know he was not opposed to the law and believed it was valid for Jewish Christians to live as they did as an expression of the level of their faith. God honored their conscience so long as their trust for salvation was anchored in the cross, not the law. Observance of food laws, holy days, and so on was viable so long as their true faith was in Christ, and such observances were an expression of their worship of him. Romans provides an important model for Christians today, who may differ in their theological underpinnings and worship style but not in their adherence to the cardinal doctrines of the faith. Unity and understanding are needed as much in the church today as in Paul's day. - Grant Osborne, *Romans: Verse by Verse*

PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS =

BEFORE YOU READ GOD'S WORD TODAY, SEEK HIS HELP WITH THESE 5 PRAYERS

- 1. God, give me wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
- 2. God, let any knowledge I gain help me love You and others more and not puff me up.
- 3. God, help me see something new about You I've never seen before.
- 4. God, correct any lies I believe about You or anything I misunderstand.
- 5. God, direct my steps according to Your Word.

TIPS FOR APPROACHING SCRIPTURE

- Pray before you read (use the prayers above)
- Read the words in proper context, taking into consideration when it was written, to whom it was written, and what was happening when it was written (a good study bible is helpful; we recommend the ESV Study Bible)
- Look for God's character and faithfulness to His people
- Look for themes that point to Jesus
- Look for anything repetitive, unusual, confusing, hopeful, comforting, challenging
- Once you are finished reading, take a few minutes to meditate on what you have read:
 - Narrow down what you've read to just one or two main thoughts.
 - What did I learn about God in these passages?
 - How can I praise God for what this says about him?
 - What did I learn about the human heart in these passages?
 - What behavior/emotions come when I forget these things about God?
 - What is God revealing to me today that I need to listen to?
 - What sins do I need to confess in light of what God revealed today?
 - What next step can I take in light of what I have read today?

^{**} Prayers from *The Bible Recap Reading Plan* by Tara-Leigh Cobble **

■ WEEKLY CHECKLIST ■

WEEK ONE | Romans 1-3

DAY 1	Romans 1:1-17
DAY 2	Romans 1:18-32
DAY 3	Romans 2:1-16
DAY 4	Romans 2:17-29
DAY 5	Romans 3:1-20
DAY 6	Romans 3:21-31
DAY 7	Rest & Reflection Day

WEEK TWO | Romans 4-6

DAY	1	Romans 4:1-12
DAY	2	Romans 4:13-25
DAY	3	Romans 5:1-11
DAY	4	Romans 5:12-21
DAY	5	Romans 6:1-14
DAY	6	Romans 6:15-23
DAY	7	Rest & Reflection Day

WEEK THREE | Romans 7-9

DAY 1	Romans 7:1-6
DAY 2	Romans 7:7-25
DAY 3	Romans 8:1-17
DAY 4	Romans 8:18-30
DAY 5	Romans 8:31-39
DAY 6	Romans 9
DAY 7	Rest & Reflection Day

WEEK FOUR | Romans 10-12

DAY 1	Romans 10:1-15
DAY 2	Romans 10:16-21, 11:1-10
DAY 3	Romans 11:11-36
DAY 4	Romans 12:1-2
DAY 5	Romans 12:3-8
DAY 6	Romans 12:9-21
DAY 7	Rest & Reflection Day

WEEK FIVE | Romans 13-14

DAY 1	Romans 13:1-5
DAY 2	Romans 13:6-7
DAY 3	Romans 13:8-10
DAY 4	Romans 13:11-14
DAY 5	Romans 14:1-9
DAY 6	Romans 14:5-23
DAY 7	Rest & Reflection Day

WEEK SIX | Romans 15-16

DAY 1	Romans 15:1-6
DAY 2	Romans 15:7-13
DAY 3	Romans 15:14-21
DAY 4	Romans 15:22-33
DAY 5	Romans 16
DAY 6	Romans 3:21-31
DAY 7	Rest & Reflection Da

FOLLOW ALONG ON OUR APP!





"Only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law."
- Romans 3:31

The Gospel and Justification through Faith - Salvation is available to everyone, including Jews and Gentiles, through faith in Jesus Christ. All have sinned and fall short of God's glory but are justified freely by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This justification is not based on works of the law but on faith.



THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel is an announcement—a declaration. The gospel is not advice to be followed; it is news, good news about what has been done. The apostle Paul is the herald of this announcement. It is a good reminder that the gospel is not Paul's; it did not originate with him and he did not claim the authority to craft it. Rather, it is "of God".

He (Paul) is not ashamed of the gospel because "it is the power of God" (v 16). Paul is often fond of contrasting "mere" words with power (see, for instance, 1 Corinthians 4:20). Paul is saying that the gospel is not merely a concept or a philosophy. In the gospel, words and power come together. The message of the gospel is what God has done and will do for us. Paul says that the gospel is therefore a power. He doesn't say it brings power or has power, but that it actually is power. The gospel message is actually the power of God in verbal, cognitive form. It lifts people up; it transforms and changes things. When it is outlined and explained, or reflected upon, its power is released.

Timothy Keller - Romans 1-7 For You



REFLECTION

Have you ever thought of the gospel as announcing the good news of God's power? Take a moment to think about the good news you have heard in your life. How does good news transform how you think about yourself and your life? How does good news transform the way you see the world around you? Ask yourself: has the gospel announcement transformed your life? How are you different today than before you heard the announcement of Jesus' saving grace?

As you wrap up your time of study and reflection today, ask the Lord to help you to see your life differently. Ask Him to help you throughout the next six weeks to hear the announcement of the good news of His Son and what His grace and sacrifice should mean for you today and every day. Ask Him to be filled with an unashamed awe of His power and goodness.



THE UNDENIABLE EVIDENCE OF GOD

Paul continues his thought on the power of God and the gospel by highlighting how man has always been invited to experience the power of God and, in return, glorify Him for it. He addresses the undeniable attributes of God that reign through in His creation. Biblical commentator David Guzik describes the evidence of God in creation this way:

His invisible attributes are clearly seen: God shows us something of His eternal power and divine nature through creation, by the things that are made. He has given a general revelation that is obvious both in creation and within the mind and heart of man...The problem is not that man did not know God, but that he did know Him - yet refused to glorify Him as God. Therefore, mankind is without excuse. Instead of glorifying God, we transformed our idea of Him into forms and images more comfortable to our corrupt and darkened hearts.

David Guzik - Enduring Word Bible Commentary

The point Paul is making in this part of his letter to the Romans is that we, people, are without excuse. We know God, even in the most basic sense, through creation. General revelation is the revelation of God that can be understood in the most basic and "general" sense through creation and the world around us. The evidence of God's character (His divinity, loving, good, powerful attributes) is found in creation. Paul points to the fact that people have not missed God but have abandoned God. He then lists all of the sins that run rampant in the history of mankind as a result of ignoring the power and authority of God. We are without excuse. There is a God who has made Himself known.

Refer to the Glossary of Terms on page 4 for more on general revelation.



REFLECTION

The problem is not our lack of knowledge of God but our inability to worship God because we have given our hearts towards worshipping something else. This is the point Paul is making in today's passage. Paul is making the point that our very world is meant to be a constant reminder of God's power, presence, goodness, wrath, love, foreknowledge, etc. The problem is that we miss it because we are walking blind. Today, take a moment, no matter the weather, go outside. Take a walk amongst God's creation. Draw near to the beauty that is His presence through His earthly creation. Use this time to reflect on God's goodness, power, strength, beauty, and love. Ask Him in this time to work on, in, and through your heart that it may become centered on worshipping Him above all else.



GOD THE JUDGE

Yesterday, we looked at Paul's address of the sin that has run rampant throughout history due to our abandonment of God and His power in our world and lives. Today, Paul continues this discussion by steering us from the temptation of judging the people of this world for their sinfulness. Why? Because we are all guilty of the sin of abandonment. "...you are just as bad." (Romans 2:1)

Paul is writing this for two reasons. One: to disarm us from our self-righteousness. We need more reminders like this, don't we? Paul is the equivalent of our GPS warning us of an accident ahead and to begin to slow down. He is telling us that before we give in to the desire to judge those around us for their sins and unrighteous lifestyle, look at ourselves and realize we have the root problem of sin in us, too. We ALL are guilty of abandoning God and His power for our own selfish, perverse, unhealthy desires. We are the idol-makers too. (Romans 2:23).

The second reason Paul reminds us that we are guilty of abandonment is to help us get back on track with God. The road towards God is not found through the highway of the self-righteous judgment of others but instead through humble awareness of our brokenness, our tendency toward abandonment of God, and through the conscious and hearty work of obedience. Paul reminds us that we are abandoners, not judges, but we can return through hearts set on the Savior, which demonstrates itself through obedience. Obedience to God flows out in our lives when judgment does not reign in our hearts.



REFLECTION

"the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life." -Romans 2:16

Today, as you reflect upon Paul's words, assess your secret life. Besides God, no one knows you better than you do. Assess the life (the thoughts, feelings, actions) you commit in secret. Ask yourself these questions: why is this part of my life secret? How does this secret part of my life point towards abandonment of God? How does this secret area of my life lack obedience to Him?

This is not an easy or fun task, but it is vital. It involves pruning the sinful work that corrupts our hearts. Don't stray from some serious, quiet time of reflection before God.

The final question in this reflection is the most important. How can I begin to let go of my secret life and walk in the light of my relationship with God? We pray for you today as you seek to unpack your heart and bring the secret life you keep away from Him to the purifying light of Jesus.



OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAW

Continuing off of yesterday's reading, Paul finishes his thoughts on the law. He explains that the Jewish people's birthright as God's children does not entitle them to blatantly break God's law. He highlights that Gentiles (a non-Jewish person) who follow the law are more like God's children than the Jewish people who know the law but don't follow it. At the very end of this thought, though, he writes something very interesting:

"...a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God... it is a change of heart produced by the spirit." - Romans 2:29

In other words, Paul is saying that a true child of God has a heart that is changed because of the work of the Holy Spirit. A child of God has given their lives to the Lord. The freedom in this means that when we fall short of God's law, the Lord judges but does not separate His spirit from us. When we work for the praise of our God, it is because our hearts desire the Lord, not our way. This is the working of the Lord within us. This is how obedience to God's law works itself through our lives, not for the sake of religious pride but for the sake of heart-changed obedience to God.

Refer to the Glossary of Terms on page 4 for more context on the law, Jews, and Gentiles.



REFLECTION

Whose praise matters to you? Is it a spouse? Your children? A friend? A boss? A sibling? A parent? Who are you working to make proud? Far too often, the answer is ourselves. We live for ourselves and miss the One who rules over us. Take time today to focus your every action on praising God. Whatever you do today, try to do it to make God proud. At the end of the day, assess the difference in how you felt versus a day of living/working for yourself.



HOW SINFUL WE ARE

The principal point ...of the law... is to make men not better but worse; that is to say, it sheweth unto them their sin, that by the knowledge thereof they may be humbled, terrified, bruised and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek grace, and so come to that blessed Seed (Christ).

Martin Luther Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

In conclusion, how should we respond to Paul's devastating exposure of universal sin and guilt, as we read it now? We should not try to evade it by changing the subject and talking instead of the need for self-esteem, or by blaming our behaviour on our genes, nurturing, education or society. It is an essential part of our dignity as human beings that, however much we may have been affected by negative influences, we are not their helpless victims, but rather responsible for our conduct. Our first response to Pauls charge, then, should be to make it as certain as we possibly can that we have ourselves accepted this divine diagnosis of our human condition as true, and that we have fled from the just judgment of God on our sins to the only refuge there is, namely Jesus Christ who died for our sins. For we have no merit to plead and no excuse to make. We too stand before God speechless and condemned. Only then shall we be ready to hear the great 'But now' of verse 21, as Paul begins to explain how God has intervened through Christ and his cross for our salvation.

John Stott - The Message of Romans



REFLECTION

"The law simply shows us how sinful we are." - Romans 3:20

How do you think our faith grows when the law exposes our sinfulness? Today, spend time with God, acknowledging where you fall short of the law. In doing this, try to steer yourself from clothing yourself in shame and instead filter this confession through the work of faith. Let each confession be a reminder that yes, you are sinful, but also, yes, you are chosen by God as His son or daughter. Let this practice of confession be an exercise of growing faith.



FULFILL THE LAW

This means that Paul can triumphantly conclude his argument: are we now singing a different hymn altogether? Are we abolishing the law? No, of course not! We are setting it to a far better tune, a tune that in fact God himself has written for it. It was never meant to be fulfilled 'by works' in the way that the Pharisees and others had attempted. It was always designed to be sung to the tune called 'faith'. Paul is often imagined to have had a negative view of the law, but one of the reasons he writes Romans is to make it clear that that is wrong. The law always was God's law, and it is not abolished. Instead, it is fulfilled in a way nobody ever imagined before: through faith. This is the tune that makes the best sense of the words.

N.T. Wright - Paul for Everyone: Romans, Part 1



REFLECTION

Reflect today on what you have read about the law of God and the role it plays in our faith. Look over the passages and see what you have highlighted. What have you learned that you hope to apply to your walk with God? Ask Him, in prayer, to help you to do this. Thank Him for His faithfulness, and ask Him to help you grow in your faithfulness to Him.



REST & REFLECTION DAY

Join us for worship today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.

Take notes on this week's sermon on page 57.



REFLECTION NOTES & QUESTIONS

This week, we looked at Romans 1-3 and specifically how God meets us, His people. God meets us through His word, work, creation, law, and grace. As we wrap up this week's study, read Romans 3:27-31. Let this be a reminder for your mind, your heart, and your soul that God fulfills the law in us through our faithfulness to Him.

Reflect on how these words shape our lives. Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you looked at this week that you want to receive from God in greater measure? Why?
- How can you begin to apply this truth about God to your walk with Him?