

WEEK ONE



Hook

Personal Story: Awkward First Impressions

Share with the class a time when you introduced yourself to someone. Make sure to spotlight the awkward anxiety of having to make a good first impression, much like Paul did when introducing himself to the church in Rome.

Discussion Questions: Romans 1:1–7 Intro

While making a first impression is very important, what is it about how we represent Christ in our interactions that matters most?

What recent circumstance or meeting has pushed you out of your comfort zone?

What feelings did you initially have when introducing yourself?

What did you say about yourself as a Christian? How has God used that circumstance to teach you humility?



Book

Romans 1:1–7

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*¹ (English Standard Version)

This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News.² God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures.³ The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line,⁴ and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.⁵ Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.⁶ And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ.⁷ I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.² (New Living Translation)

¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.*, Ro 1:1–7 (Wheaton, IL: Standard Bible Society, 2001).

² Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.*, 2nd ed., Ro 1:1–7 (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004).

MAIN POINT: The Gospel sets us apart as servants of Jesus Christ our Lord to all nations.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Romans 1:1

Paul announces himself to the Romans and shows his credentials as someone who can speak with authority. He is a servant of Christ and a called apostle strictly set apart for the Gospel of God (cf. [Matthew 10:1–7, 12](#): apostles chosen; [Acts 9, 22, 26](#): Paul chosen to be the new 12th apostle).

Since Paul never visited Rome, why was it so important that he clarify who he was and his purpose?

Romans 1:2–3

This Gospel was promised to Israel and the Gentiles by earlier prophets such as David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These prophets associated the Gospel with God's son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was a descendent of David and rightful heir to the throne through the bloodline (cf. [Isaiah 11:1–5](#): prophecy of offshoot of David).

Why is it important for us to know Old Testament prophecies in regard to the New Testament Gospel?

Romans 1:4

Jesus was also declared the Son of God by the Spirit through power and concurring death at the Resurrection thus making him Lord over all (cf. [2 Corinthians 13:4](#): Christ lives by the power of God the Father).

As Paul is introducing his credentials, to whom does he continue to point instead of himself?

Romans 1:5–6

It is through Jesus and this act that we have received grace

and Paul was made an apostle. Our charge then is to teach and model obedience to all nations and the universal Church (cf. [Romans 6:16](#): You will obey either sin or Christ depending on which is your master).

Based on this verse, what should be our natural response to receiving grace and to whom do we model it?

Romans 1:7

Paul finishes his greeting to the Romans by reminding them they are loved by God and the saints of the church. He specifically asks for grace and peace from God their heavenly Father and their king, Jesus (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:3](#): A similar greeting is made to the worst of all the churches).

What is it about Paul's greeting to both churches (Rome and Corinth) that shows his view of what the Church needs as a whole?

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

FROM WARREN WIERSBE

"In ancient days, the writer of a letter always opened with his name. But there would be many men named Paul in that day, so the writer had to further identify himself and convince the readers that he had a right to send the letter.

"Note the repetition of the word *called*: Paul was called to be an apostle; the believers were the called of Jesus Christ; and they were also called saints. (Not "to be" saints; they already were saints! A saint is a "set-apart one," and the person who trusts Jesus Christ is set apart and is a saint.) Salvation is not something that we do for God; it is God who calls us in His grace ([2 Thessalonians 2:13–14](#)). When you trust Christ, you are saved by His grace and you experience His peace.³

For more from Wiersbe, continue reading on page 17 of *Be Right*.

FROM THE HOLMAN NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

Three things characterized Paul: He was a *servant*; he was **called to be an apostle**; and he was **set apart for the Gospel**. **Servant** here is the familiar *doulos*, the word in the vernacular for “slave.” Its background is in the Old Testament provision for a servant voluntarily choosing to remain with a master after a required period of servitude was completed ([Exodus 21:5–6](#); [Deuteronomy 15:12–17](#); see [Psalm 40:6–8](#) and the NIV’s rendering of “pierced” in verse 6 as a possible reference to King David’s self-positioning as himself as God’s bondservant.) The owner pierced the ear of his voluntary servant with an awl; such a mark identified him forever as belonging to the master.⁴

For more from the Holman continue reading on page 15 of your *Holman New Testament Commentary*.

FROM THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY

Paul’s ministry from Jesus was **among all the Gentiles**, which included the Romans, whom Paul addressed not as a church but as individual believers. Paul was the human agent (from and **for** Christ he **received grace and apostleship**, i.e., “the grace of apostleship”; cf. [12:3](#); [15:15](#)) but the calling (God’s summons to salvation; cf. [8:28, 30](#)) came from the Lord and set his readers apart as “saints.” **Obedience** and **faith** are often linked (cf. [15:18](#); [16:26](#); also cf. [1 Peter 1:2](#)). Just as Paul was a “called” apostle, so the believers **in Rome** were **called to belong to Jesus Christ** (lit., “called of Jesus Christ”) and **called to be saints** (lit., “called saints”).⁵

For more from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* see www.davidccook.com.

⁴Max Anders, *Holman New Testament Commentary Romans*, 20–21 (Nashville, TN.: Holman, 2000).

⁵John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, Ro 1:5–7 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983–).



“Faith is a living, bold trust in God’s grace, so certain of God’s favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God’s grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace.”

—Martin Luther, from his *Introduction to St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans*

Took

Discussion Questions: Romans 1:1–7 Wrap-Up

What confidence do these verses give you when God presents an opportunity for you to meet an unbeliever or new member at church?

What will you say when asked about who you are and what you do?

How do we remind ourselves that we represent Christ first and foremost?

Personal Story: Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone

Share with the class how you plan to step out of your comfort zone and form new relationships for the purpose of evangelism or discipleship. Ask others in the class how they plan to meet those whom God has placed around them for His glory.

Churchwide Challenge: Honor Our Heroes

This week our church is remembering those who lost loved ones in the 9/11 tragedy and praying for the safety of the brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way each day. Make it a point today to pray for their safety and thank them for their service, and invite them to join us for "Hope Remembered" on all campuses.

