

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted
Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Zoom Meeting ID:

 **828 7580 6094** ▶ **Thursday February 19, 2026**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Romans 16: 19 (NASB95) 19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore, I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.

Love for the Saints

POINT 3- PAUL'S CAUTION

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. 19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore, I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. 20 And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. (16:17–20)

Paul demonstrates his love for the church at Rome as much by giving this caution as he does by expressing his commendations and his greetings. **Now I urge you, brethren**, he implores, **keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.**

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The mature Christian is to keep his **eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances**. Paul is not talking about hair splitting over minor interpretations, or about immature believers who are divisive because of personal preferences, as disruptive and damaging as those things can be. We are to “shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless” (**Titus 3:9**). We are to “refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels” (**2 Tim. 2:23**). Paul is here talking about something immeasurably more serious. He is warning about those who challenge and undermine **the teaching which you learned**, that is, the divinely-revealed apostolic **teaching** they had received.

Keep your eye on such men, Paul says. Mark them out as false teachers who are to be opposed and avoided. **Keep your eye on** carries the idea of looking at or observing with intensity. It is from the noun form of that word that we get the *scope* in telescope and microscope. It means more than simply to look at, but to examine and scrutinize carefully.

Paul is not talking about what today is often referred to as a “witch hunt,” an effort that is determined to find fault whether it is there or not. Nor is he talking about being legalistic and often mean-spirited and unloving. God’s true church is bonded by His Word and the power of His indwelling Spirit, who applies and builds the church on and through that Word. The ones who truly cause destructive division and disharmony, the ungodly **dissensions and hindrances** about which Paul speaks here, are those who promote and practice falsehood and unrighteousness. No institution or movement can rightly claim unity in Christ if they are not unified in and by *His Word*. Whatever spiritual unity they may have is based on the spirit of this age, which is satanic, not godly.

The right response of believers to false teachers, especially those who teach their heresy under the guise of Christianity, is not debate or dialogue. We are to **turn away from them**, to reject what they teach and to protect fellow believers, especially new converts and the immature, from being deceived, confused, and misled.

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Paul gives two negative reasons for turning away from false teachers. The first is that their motives are wrong. **Such men are slaves**, he explains, **not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites**. No matter how seemingly sincere and caring false teachers or preachers may appear to be, they are never genuinely concerned for the cause of Christ or for His church. They are driven by self-interest and self-gratification—sometimes for fame, sometimes for power over their followers, for financial gain, and frequently for all of those reasons. Many of them enjoy pretentious and luxurious lifestyles, and sexual immorality is the rule more than the exception. Such people “are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things” **(Phil. 3:18–19)**.

Second, false teachers should be rejected because the results of their teaching are always destructive. **By their smooth and flattering speech, they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.**

Many popular and sentimentalized gospels proclaimed today reflect such **smooth and flattering speech**, which disguises itself as loving and beneficent, while denying the central truths of the gospel. In the name of strengthening and unifying Christ’s church, they undermine its very foundation. In the name of bringing men closer to God, they drive them further from Him. Just as in Paul’s day, **they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.**

Paul also gives a positive reason for avoiding false teachers. **For the report of your obedience has reached to all.** The best protection against falsehood is adhering to God’s truth, just as the best protection against sin is holding on to His righteousness.

Believers in Rome were protected against false teachers by their **obedience** to Christ and the truth of His gospel. Not only did their **obedience** protect themselves, but it also helped believers elsewhere who knew of and were encouraged by the Roman church’s reputation for godliness. Early in this letter, Paul commended them for their faithfulness. “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted *Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver*

throughout the whole world” (**Rom. 1:8**). He therefore had good cause for **rejoicing** over them. The godliness of that church brought encouragement and joy to Paul, although he had never visited Rome and did not know most of the believers there.

Yet, knowing that even the most faithful believers can fall prey to Satan’s traps, the apostle added, **but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil**. He echoed Jesus’ similar caution to His followers: “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore, be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves” (**Matt. 10:16**). We will not be free from the allures of sin until Christ takes us to be with Himself. It is therefore necessary for Christians constantly to “abhor what is evil [and] cling to what is good” (**Rom. 12:9**). “Finally, brethren,” Paul admonished believers at Philippi, “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything, worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things” (**Phil. 4:8; cf. Col. 3:16**).

Many Christians rationalize watching degrading movies and TV programs by claiming they need to be familiar with the ways of the world in order to better analyze secular culture and be better prepared to witness to those who are worldly. But it is not necessary to sift through garbage to recognize it for what it is, and the more we are around it the more we pick up its stench. The more willingly we associate with evil, the more it will drag us down to its level.

To be **innocent in what** is evil is not to be ignorant of it or to disregard it. We cannot abhor evil unless we have some idea of what it is. But, to use a popular analogy, the only reliable way to recognize a counterfeit bill is to be completely familiar with the genuine bill. The only reliable way to recognize evil is to be thoroughly familiar with the **good**, and the only reliable way to learn what is **good** is to learn God’s Word.

For those who turn away from false teachers and who are wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil, **the God of peace will soon crush Satan under their feet**. Paul assures faithful believers that they can look forward to the day when their spiritual warfare

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted *Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver*

will be over. Teachers of deceit and falsehood are instruments of the devil, and they will be destroyed when **the God of peace** crushes **Satan**. In **Romans 15:33**, Paul refers to “the God of peace” in relation to His divine provision for His children. Here **the God of peace** is spoken of in relation to His permanent victory over **Satan** and his minions on behalf of His children. Paul uses the figure of Genesis 3:15, where, after the Fall, God declares to the serpent (**Satan**) that “He [the Messiah] shall bruise you on the head,” that is, inflict a mortal wound.

The phrase **soon**, has the meaning of speedily, or quickly, as it is rendered in Acts 12:7 and 22:18, and often carried the secondary connotation of unexpectedly. The closely related adverb is used three times in Revelation 22 in relation to Christ’s “coming quickly” (vv. 7, 12, 20). We know from the New Testament itself that Satan was not soon crushed from the perspective of believers living at that time. He is still not yet subdued.

It is encouraging that the Lord will **crush Satan under your feet**, the feet of God’s people, as they join Christ in His triumph over Satan.

Paul now gives a second short benediction (see 15:33). **The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.** “I know,” the apostle says in effect, “that, even with your faithful obedience (v. 19), you need God’s continuing *grace* to *direct* and *strengthen* you. You need His *wisdom* to give you wisdom to recognize false teachers. You need His grace to give you *comfort* and *patience* when you are attacked by Satan’s agents while he is still in power over the world.”

Discussion Questions

- 1. What kind of people are we to be careful about?**

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

2. In verse 18, how does Paul describe these people? How do they affect others?

3. In verse 19, what is Paul rejoicing about? What does he desire of them? How can you apply this to your own life?

POINT 4 - PAUL'S COMPANIONS

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. 22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother. 24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.] (16:21–24)

Paul next sends greetings to the church at Rome in behalf of his companions, presumably men who were known by some of the believers in that city.

The first is **Timothy**, a choice **fellow worker** and protégé. Paul reminded the church at Philippi, “You know of his [Timothy’s] proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father” (**Phil. 2:22**). He commends, praises, and gives thanks for Timothy twice in 1 Corinthians (4:17; 16:10–11), once in 1 Thessalonians (3:2), and numerous times in his two letters to that beloved **fellow worker**.

Lucius may be the native of Cyrene who was one of the prophets and teachers in Antioch who, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, first commissioned Paul and

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

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Barnabas (Acts 13:1–3). Judging from the name alone, he could have been either Jewish or Gentile. Paul may have been using another form of Luke, who wrote the gospel that carries his name and was the only Gentile to write any part of Scripture. Paul refers to Luke as “the beloved physician” (**Col. 4:14**) and mentions him in two other letters (2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24). Luke and Paul were frequent companions, as indicated in the book of Acts when Luke uses “we” in regard to groups that included Paul (see, e.g., 16:11; 21:1–8).

Paul refers to **Jason and Sosipater** as **my kinsmen**, probably indicating simply that they were fellow Jews, not necessarily relatives. If the **Lucius** just mentioned was a Jew, he also would have been one of Paul’s **kinsmen**. One of the first converts in Thessalonica was named Jason and apparently hosted Paul in his home for a short while before the believers there sent Paul and Silas to Berea for their safety (Acts 17:5–10). We learn from Acts 20:4–6 that a man from Berea named Sopater (a shortened form of **Sosipater**) was among the companions of Paul who met him at Troas after he left Ephesus. Sopater doubtless was among the Jews in Berea who “were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things [that Paul preached] were so,” and was among the “many of them [who] therefore believed” (**Acts 17:10–12**).

The fact that the Jason and Sopater mentioned in Acts were from neighboring towns that Paul visited in succession gives strong support to the view that they are the **Jason and Sosipater** mentioned here, and that they not only were close friends of Paul but of each other.

Tertius, was Paul’s secretary, who penned **this letter** that Paul dictated to him, and who here inserts his own greeting. The fact that Paul states that “the greeting

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

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is in my own hand—Paul,” indicates that the main body of 1 Corinthians also was written for him (see 16:19–21). His saying, “See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand,” may mean that he personally penned only the closing verses of Galatians (see 6:11). Just as Phoebe had the great privilege of delivering the book of Romans, **Tertius** had the great privilege of writing it for Paul.

Gaius was a **host to** Paul as well as **to the whole church**, probably referring to a congregation that met in his house. Because the book of Romans was written from Corinth, this **Gaius** almost certainly was among the many believers in Corinth who came to faith in Christ through the ministry of Paul and was one of the two men in that church whom Paul had baptized personally (1 Cor. 1:14). He is generally thought to be “Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue” in Corinth (Acts 18:7) and whose full name would have been **Gaius Titius Justus**.

Erastus was **the city treasurer** of Corinth and therefore a man of prominence and high political office. Because his was such a common name, and because there is no clear New Testament evidence to suggest otherwise, this **Erastus** probably was not the man mentioned in Acts 19:22 or in 2 Timothy 4:20.

Quartus was the last of Paul’s companions in whose behalf he sent greetings. He is identified only as **the brother**, which could mean he was the biological brother of Erastus, who has just been mentioned, or, more probably, simply that he was a **brother** in Christ.

As indicated by brackets in the *New American Standard Bible*, Paul’s third short benediction (cf. 15:33; 16:20b) is not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts of the book of Romans. That is understandable, because these closing three verses

