

SESSION

1

THE MOST
POWERFUL
LENS

ROMANS

Opening Group Activity (10-15 MINUTES)

What you'll need:

- ▶ Sheet of blank paper for each person
- ▶ Pens, markers, and/or watercolors

1. Use the paper and drawing/writing tools to draw a line down the center of the page. Then create a picture on each side using words or images. On one side portray an area of life where you feel you have the most clarity and on the other an area where you feel you have the least clarity. Consider professionally, emotionally, relationally, spiritually, etc.
2. Share your images with each other as you discuss the following questions:
 - Where in life do you feel like you have the most clarity? What helped in providing clarity to this area?
 - Where in life do you feel like you have the least clarity? What has hindered finding clarity in this area?
 - Reflecting on the two images, which is harder to trust God with? Why?

Session One Video (24:30 MINUTES)

NOTES: As you watch, take notes on anything that stands out to you.

» Romans walks us through four big categories: the righteousness God required, the righteousness God provided, the righteousness God planned, and the righteousness God expects from us every day.

» Paul uses many arguments to address the tension that he knows is happening between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles.

What caught your attention? What surprised you? What made you reflect? Why?

» Throughout this letter, Paul points us back to the Old Testament, because it's going to be important for the Jews to see that their God is consistent.

» The gospel was planned and promised beforehand through the prophets and Holy Scriptures.

» Paul says that even with our wrestling and struggles, and though we haven't figured it all out, our faith *is* changing the world.

» We all need gospel clarity to stay encouraged, live well, love others, and serve God.

SCRIPTURE COVERED IN THIS SESSION:

ROMANS 1:1-15

Group Discussion Questions [30-45 MINUTES]

1. Reflecting on your culture, country, and world, what has contributed to the confusion and lack of clarity in our world? When have you unintentionally contributed to the confusion and lack of clarity?
2. Read Romans 1:1. Where does Paul find his identity? What tempts you to find your identity in things other than Christ? Reflecting on today's culture and world, where does your personal or political identity battle with your Christian identity? What do you need to strip away to make Christ your number one identity?
3. Read Romans 1:2-6. What is the gospel according to Paul? What are the benefits of the gospel (v. 5)? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high, how bold are you in sharing the gospel? What makes you hesitant to share the gospel with others? Who is one person you can share the gospel with this week?
4. Jada teaches,

"The gospel is the perfect lens we need for everything. The danger is that sometimes we treat the gospel like I treat my glasses. We take it off when it's inconvenient; we put it on when it seems to serve our purpose."

What helps you see life through the lens of the gospel? When do you forget to look at situations and people through the lens of the gospel? What can you do to remind yourself?

5. Jada says,

“When we first fell in the garden, God knew right then that there would be a time where man would be reconciled and redeemed completely. Our God is not moment to moment trying to figure out what to do. God is watching his plan unfold. That gives us a blessed assurance.”

When do you have the most confidence in God’s redeeming plan? Where are you struggling to trust in God’s redeeming plan right now? What practices help you rest in the blessed assurance of God’s redemptive plan for yourself and those you love?

6. Read Romans 1:8–12. How does Paul express his affection and encouragement? What does it mean to be mutually encouraged by others’ faith? When have you been most encouraged by someone’s faith recently? What was the result? On a scale of 1 to 10, how intentional are you at building relationships where you can mutually encourage each other in the faith? How can you increase your investment in these relationships in the upcoming weeks?

Close in Prayer

Consider the following prompts as you pray together for:

- ▶ Clarity in every area of your life
- ▶ Gospel opportunities to share about Jesus
- ▶ New friendships to encourage each other in faith

If you don't
understand
the

grace

you've been

given,

you'll be

stingy

in giving

grace.

Preparation

To prepare for the next group session:

1. Read Romans 1:1–15.
2. Tackle the three days of the Session 1 Personal Study.
3. Memorize this week's passage using the Beautiful Word Scripture memory coloring page. As a bonus, look up the Scripture memory passage in different translations and take note of the variations.
4. If you've agreed to bring something for the next session's Opening Group Activity, get it ready.

