

ROMANS

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

WEEK 1 | DAVE D'ANGELO

KEY POINTS

- The book of Romans is Paul's longest and most focused articulation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and it is described as dense and rich, like cheesecake, requiring repeated engagement to fully absorb.
- Paul wrote to the Roman church without having visited it, yet understood their needs because he had witnessed the same tensions in Corinth and elsewhere, including struggles with sexual immorality, materialism, insider versus outsider focus, and ethnic division.
- A woman named Phoebe, mentioned in Romans 16, is believed to have physically transported the letter to Rome and was likely the first person to read and proclaim it to the congregation there.
- Paul's statement in Romans 1:16-17 functions as the thesis of the entire letter, declaring that the gospel is the power of God for salvation and that in it the righteousness of God is revealed.
- Shame toward the gospel is not only expressed through silence but also through actions and patterns of living that contradict what the gospel declares about identity, acceptance, and righteousness.
- Believers are prone to self-righteousness, living as though their obedience earns God's acceptance rather than understanding that acceptance is already secured through Christ.
- The gospel speaks directly to how we handle criticism, prayer, and the desire for approval, and subtle contradictions in these areas reveal ongoing need for the gospel's transforming work.
- Tim Keller is quoted as saying the gospel message is the power of God in verbal cognitive form, and that when it is explained or reflected upon, its power is released.
- The church's need for the gospel today mirrors the Roman church's need: more people to be saved, believers to be liberated, ongoing transformation, and activation for mission.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Romans 1:1-17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Even believers who are already saved still need the gospel for ongoing liberation and transformation. In what area of your life do you sense you most need the gospel's power to bring freedom or change right now?
2. Paul's decision to write to the Roman church before arriving there suggests he believed the gospel itself could prepare and unite people he had never met. How does the idea that the gospel transcends personal relationship challenge or encourage the way you think about sharing your faith?
3. Phoebe, a woman, is believed by many scholars to have been the first to publicly read and proclaim Paul's letter to the church in Rome. What does her role in the delivery of this foundational gospel document say to you about how God uses unexpected people to carry His message?
4. Where in your daily life do you most often fall into the trap of believing that your obedience earns God's acceptance rather than responding to it?
5. Which season of your life has caused you to cling most tightly to a particular passage of Scripture, and why?

***TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION,** check out the additional Week One Discussion Guide under Small Group Materials in the North Way app under Romans.