



WEEKLY SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

WHEN IN ROMANS

First Impressions

Romans 1:1-7

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

VERSES FOR MEDITATION AND REFLECTION

*“Paul, a servant^[a] of Jesus Christ, 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 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit^[b] of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” **Romans 1:1-7***

Romans is different from all the other books authored by Paul in that he had not yet founded a church in Rome. The congregation to hear his message are both Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity, likely many of whom are slaves and illiterate. In these very powerful first seven verses, he outlines the basic structure of Christianity as an accessible model for their everyday lives, despite the current political and hierarchical structure.

It was important for Paul to make a strong first impression on the Romans. Read the first seven verses out loud.

- *Think about a time you were trying to make a good first impression. What version of yourself did you want people to see, or not see?*
- *Our desire to make a good first impression stems from our natural tendency to want to be part of something larger than ourselves. How can submitting our independence help us to find greater meaning as a servant of Jesus Christ, as we become less self-centered?*

As we journey through Romans, Thomas encourages us to look for Paul’s themes. Consider and discuss these:

1. *The supremacy of Jesus Christ calls to follow Him, not adhere to rules. He anchors our living.*
2. *We are all saved by God’s grace and God loves us just as we are.*
3. *Our purpose in Christ is to bear witness to Him, living lives of meaning and purpose.*
4. *All are equally welcome and desired by God - regardless of background or identity.*
5. *Grace and apostleship are for all Christians - we are all called to be apostles.*

Heavenly Father, empower us to live lives of meaning as servants of Jesus Christ. Help us submit ourselves to be part of something greater. Grant us clarity as we journey forward, encouraging each other through love, service, and prayer. **Amen.**