



## ROMANS LC STUDY GUIDE "True Belonging"

The Passage: Romans 12:1-8  
October 1 – October 14

### How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

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**This introduction with context for Romans was given in the previous study.  
It’s included here for groups that did not use that study or would appreciate a refresher.**

### Introduction

The book of Romans is Paul’s attempt to bring the gospel of Jesus to his largest audience possible. It would be like writing in the New York Times in terms of audience and distribution. Further, those reading Romans are largely a Gentile audience. So Paul, a Jewish rabbi, spends some time explaining how all have sinned, fallen short of God’s glory, and are in need of a Savior who is Jesus.

The first 11 chapters have been described as “creed” and the last five have been labeled as “conduct.” While Chapters 1-11 are written in a more theological voice and framework, Chapters 12-16 are written to reflect the application of a life marked by confessed sin and trust in Jesus. And so, we come to a key transition here in Chapter 12...

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. <sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

### **Romans 12:1-8**

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**O** – As you re-read the section, what words and phrases does your mind resonate with most?

**I/A** – Paul writes in v. 2 to “not conform to the pattern of this world” but instead “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” First, consider that Paul’s usage of “world” could be understood to mean “this age” implying both the cultural and personal sin/depravity of his time. In light of this, how would you describe “the pattern of this world” in Paul’s day? How about in our age? What’s different, and what’s the same? Why as a community and as an individual is it so important not to belong to our world and this age?

**O** – How would you describe Paul’s tone in verses 3-8? Why do you think he takes this approach?

**I** – Looking at v. 3 again, what wisdom can be found in these words?  
*“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.”*  
 How can we be hampered as individuals and as a community if we overestimate and also underestimate our respective giftings and the grace we all received?

*(The presence of arrogance is destructive to every fellowship, and just as often, the misconception of seeing ourselves too lowly can lead to our diminishment as well. Paul calls us to find our identity and our function in what God has given each of us.)*

**A** – Perhaps you have seen what a defeated team that hasn't actually lost the game yet looks like. How have you seen that at work in our life? How have you seen that on display in work environments, and in spiritual communities (i.e., the Church)?

**O** – Interestingly, verse 6 tells us the grace (*charis*) of God which brings salvation through faith also brings gifts (*charismata*) to the believer. What are these gifts to be used for? *(Using the body metaphor, Paul explains that our gifting exists to serve one another.)*

**A** – It ought to fascinate us that the Spirit does not create cookie-cutter Christians. Throughout Scripture, and very much so here in vs. 3-8, uniqueness of gifts and identity are celebrated and a vision of purpose is given.

Remembering Paul's body metaphor, what gifts have been given to you? How can you use them more? But when it comes to Christian community, it's not enough to utilize your own gifts, we must also utilize the gifts of one another. What are some of the gifts and skills and passions that you see here in your group? Take some time and encourage each other. Take time to empower and commission each other in fulfilling the gifting and calling the Lord has placed on your individual lives and on us as a Christian community.

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
  - b. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?)
  - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
  - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
  - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching" rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.