



LC STUDY GUIDE “True Belonging”

The Passage: Romans 16
November 26 – December 9

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

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. ² I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. ⁴ They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

⁵ Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

⁶ Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

⁹ Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

¹⁰ Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test.

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

¹¹ Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

¹² Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them.

¹⁵ Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord's people who are with them.

¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send greetings.

¹⁷ I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. ¹⁸ Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. ¹⁹ Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

²² I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³ Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Romans 16

Passage Context

It may feel similar to watching the credits at the end of a long movie. These are all the people that made the film happen. Paul might have a similar thing in mind. Not so much in creating the letter to the Romans but more so in this community being ambassadors of the gospel of Jesus to the Roman world. *These* are the people making this community happen, *these* are the people living out the hope of Jesus and sharing it with others. Seen in that light, we understand why Paul would take the time to give shout-outs to these unheralded heroes. As a result, there's much for us to glean from this text as well. Among them being that everyone matters and everyone has a role in Jesus' Kingdom – praise God!

O – Take a moment to look at the passage. There are a lot of names! For fun, what names pop out to your eyes and share why. (Bonus points for less spiritual answers :)

O – Priscilla and Aquila are familiar names to us. We meet them back in Acts 18, where we are told they and all Jews were ordered by Emperor Claudius to leave Rome. As a result they moved to Corinth, found Paul, became Christ-followers and led a house church. Later they followed Paul to Ephesus and joined his ministry and tentmaking work and continued it after he left. Emperor Claudius dies, the order has been lifted, and Priscilla and Aquila have returned to Rome to help start a new church. What do you think it must have been like for them? You may not know the details and backstories but in general, what do you think they learned from their experiences planting churches throughout Corinth and Ephesus? Why do you think they continue to serve in this way?

I/A – Paul greets 28 people in this chapter and 10 of them are women. To be clear, they are not greeted merely because they are the “wife of someone” but because of their labor of the gospel. What does this say about Paul's perspective on women in ministry and what ought we to remember for today?

I – Some New Testament historians tell us that not everyone on the list was actually a Christ-follower. Narcissus was a friend of Emperor Claudius and despite the Emperor's order, harbored Christ-followers to live on his estate, including Jewish believers (who would have been under order to leave Rome). Narcissus committed suicide after the Emperor's death (either because of his affection for Claudius or because he was entangled in scandal). Why do you think Paul makes a point of highlighting the Christians living there?

(It's a remarkable story! A underground church living in the mansion of a powerful Roman influencer despite the order for Jews to vacate Rome given by his close friend! It tells the power of the gospel in the midst of complicated and uncertain times and it also might point to God being at work in unseen and mysterious ways.)

A – There are two practices to apply in these greetings: One is to acknowledge and express gratitude for the Kingdom work around, and second is to steward the calling and mission we have been entrusted with. In what practical ways can we imitate Paul's example in encouraging others? Who are those often forgotten

in the gratitude and how can we make sure they are acknowledged?

A – Romans 16 reminds us that everyone matters and everyone belongs in community, from pagans turned Christian apostles to former slaves now liberated and serving Christ. What does this remind you of or teach you in your current role and in your gifting as it pertains to your calling and mission in Christ?

- 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.