



Real Food

Daily Bible Reading Notes

April 2023 – Romans 5-8

How to use these Bible Reading Notes:

These Bible reading notes are a resource to help you feed on God's word a little and often and allow it to change your life. If you miss a day (or several!), don't feel guilty or try to catch up; just pick up wherever you left off – it doesn't matter if it's the wrong date.

Here are some tips on how to get the most out of this:

1. Find a time and place where you can be quiet but awake. Maybe set an alarm on your phone to remind you each day.
2. Pray. Ask God to help you understand what he says.
3. Use the notes to help you think about the Bible passage (use a good translation of the Bible like the NIV).
 - **'Read'** tells you which verses to read.
 - **'Apply'** shows how it affects you.
 - **'Pray'** suggests ways to talk to God about it.
4. Pray about what you have read.
5. Look for a chance to share with someone what God has been saying to you.

*These notes are easy to install on most phones or tablets.
Install the 'PrayerMate' App and you'll find it under 'Add Subject →
Biblical prayers & devotions → Real Food.'
If you have any problems, email info@prayermate.net.*

1st April

Justification is just the beginning

This month we're carrying on in Romans. In Romans chapters 5-8 Paul explains why, deep down, Christians *want* to do what God says. In any relationship it's one thing to be motivated by fear and guilt - but quite another to be motivated by love, joy and gratitude.

Read Romans 5:1-2

Faith is another word for trust.

Justified means God sees me 'just-as-if-I' were Jesus.

- Make a list of all the things someone already has if they trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. (v1,2)
- What does the future hold for someone with faith in Christ? (v2)

Apply

Paul says that we have all these things simply by faith. It doesn't matter how good our day/week has been. The moment we trust in Jesus we are as close to God as we will ever be.

- When I next feel guilty and that God cannot want me any more – what must I remind myself? (v1)
- When I next feel like God is against me – what must I remind myself? (v1)
- When I next feel like God doesn't hear my prayers – what must I remind myself? (v2)
- When I next feel sorry for myself or jealous of others – what must I remind myself? (v2)

2nd April

Better not bitter

Often people think that suffering is a sign that God is angry with them. But, as we saw yesterday, Christians are at peace with God. So when they suffer it cannot be because God is punishing them. He must have other reasons for allowing Christians to suffer...

Read Romans 5:3-5

- What things does suffering produce in believers? (v3-4)
- Even in the midst of pain, what can believers experience? (v5)

Apply

Paul isn't telling us to enjoy suffering(!), but rather to rejoice (or 'glory') because of how God will use it for good. God will take even the worst things in my life and make them turn out to be for my good. He is not punishing me. He wants to make me a bigger and deeper and more Christ-like person.

- Why not write out a prayer to God now that I could use next time I'm really suffering
- How could I use this passage to help a fellow believer who is suffering?

Pray

Ask God for a brother or sister in Christ who is suffering at the moment.

3rd April

First things first

Many people think that they must 'scrub up' before Jesus will accept them. They think that, before they can come to God, they must get their life together and deal with their sins.

Read Romans 5:6-11

- What were we like when Christ died for us? (v6)
- We find it incredibly moving in films/books when someone gives their life for a friend or family member (v7). But why is God's love far more amazing? (v8)

Verses 9-11 are basically saying, 'If this is how God treats his enemies (giving his own Son for them), how do we think he'll treat his friends?!'

Apply

- What starts to go wrong in our Christian lives when we think that God loves us because we 'scrubbed up' first?
- How does it make you feel about God to know that he loved you when you were un-lovely?
- How will this passage change the way you look at other people?

4th April

The fall

Paul wants to convince us that the Law cannot help us. Only faith in Christ can break the power of sin and death. To explain it, he's going to take us back to the very beginning and the first human – Adam.

Read Romans 5:12-14

- Verse 12: The 'one man' here is Adam. What two things entered the world because of his actions?
- What has everyone since Adam also done? (v12)

God is fair and won't punish people for what they couldn't have known (v13). But everyone knows something of God from the world around them and their consciences within.

- So what has been true of everyone who's lived since Adam?

Apply

Death is not 'natural'. It was never meant to be part of God's world. It entered the world because of human sin. Now it reigns over us. We're right to mourn and grieve when we encounter death.

Pray

Thank God that death is not part of how it was meant to be. Confess that it's our sin that has brought it upon the world. Thank God that one day death itself will be destroyed. 'Death will be swallowed up in victory' (1 Corinthians 15:54).

5th April

The redemption

Sin and death were brought into the world by one man, but they will also be banished from the world by one man.

Read Romans 5:15-17

- List the results of the Adam's actions. (v15, 16,17)
- List the results of Christ's actions. (v15,16,17)

Apply

I rely totally on the obedience of the one man. All the blessings I have from God only came because another won them for me. All our confidence rests on him.

Pray

Thank God for the 'second Adam' who won where the first Adam failed. Confess the times where you've trusted in your own efforts and goodness. Pray that you would rely only on what Christ has won for you.

6th April

Sinai cannot save

Paul has been emphasising that only Christ can break the power of sin and death. Left to ourselves we are powerless and enslaved. Even the holy laws that God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai couldn't change that.

Read Romans 5:18-21

- How does Paul compare Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience? (18, 19)
- The Law God gave couldn't save us. But what does it make clear to us? (20,21)

Apply

Once again, Paul is emphasising that the Law cannot save us. We cannot 'scrub ourselves up'. Religious people who know God's laws are often tempted to boast and look down on other people.

- What should having God's law make us realise about ourselves? (v20)
- What should it cause us to cry out to God for? (21)

Pray

Pray that knowing God's commands in the Bible would make you more humble and grateful to him, rather than proud and self-reliant.

7th April

Why bother being good?

Does the gospel give us an excuse to go on sinning? If it doesn't depend on how good I am – why bother being good? That's what Paul will talk about for the next few days.

He starts by distinguishing between the 'old me' which hated God and loved sin and the 'new me' which loves God and hates sin.

Read Romans 6:1-7

- What has happened to the 'old me'? (v3,4)

One of the things that baptism symbolises is death! As someone is taken down underwater it symbolises the 'old me' being drowned!

- What else has happened to the 'old me'? (v6)

Violent stuff! The 'old me' that hates God and loves sin is being drowned and crucified!

Apply

Both drowning and crucifixion are relatively slow ways to go!

- What does that teach us? Should we expect to be free from the attraction of sin overnight?

Pray

Pray that more and more God will drown and crucify the 'old me' that hates Him and loves sin.

8th April

The future is bright

We saw yesterday that, if I am in Christ, God is killing off the 'old me' (that hates Him and loves sin). Today Paul teaches us that a 'new me' (which loves God and hates sin) is gradually being brought to life more and more.

Read Romans 6:8-14

- What two things (you may remember these from chapter 5) no longer have any power over Jesus now, after his resurrection? (v9,10)

Paul says that Christians are so closely joined to Jesus, that whatever has happened to him will also happen to us. One day sin and death will no longer have any power at all over us either! That process is not yet fully complete. But it has started and Paul wants us to 'keep in step' with what God is doing.

- What does Paul tell believers to not do? (11,12, 13)
- What does Paul tell believers to do? (v13)

Apply

- What sins are still reigning in you?
- How could you be an instrument of righteousness today?

Pray

Thank God that one day, in heaven, sin will no longer be your master.

9th April

Same old question

Here Paul again tackles essentially the same question as at the beginning of the chapter 6. If we're not saved by obeying God's laws, then why bother obeying them? Why not just carry on sinning?

Read Romans 6:15-18

- What did his readers used to be? And what are they now? (v18)
- How did they come to be freed from slavery to sin? (v17)
- What does slavery to sin ultimately lead to? What does slavery to obedience lead to? (v16)

Apply

Becoming a Christian means voluntarily offering ourselves to God as an obedient servant. Unlike sin, he is a generous and kind master who wants us to flourish. But a Christian does not think of themselves anymore as free to live however they want. We have a new master.

- What areas of your life do you need to surrender to God?
- Some people say they don't want to become a Christian because it would mean giving up their freedom. But just how free are we without Christ?

10th April

Two roads

Yesterday we saw that everyone is on one of two roads. Either we are slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. Paul realises (v19) that the idea of 'slavery to God' could give the wrong impression (perhaps of misery and drudgery), but he wants to help us understand how stark the choice is.

Read Romans 6:19-23

- Make a list of the things that will happen to someone who serves sin. (v19,20,21,22,23)
- Make a list of the things that will happen to someone who serves God in righteousness. (v19,20,21,22,23)

Apply

- When it's very tempting to serve sin, what things do I need to remind myself?
- When God's ways seem boring and difficult, what things do I need to remind myself?

Pray

Pray that God will help you to see the ways of sin for what they really are – and to see the way of righteousness for what it really is.

11th April

A wonderful marriage

Throughout Romans chapter 5-8 Paul emphasises that the Law cannot really change us deep down. Only God's grace can really change someone on the inside so that they start to actually love God and hate sin. Here he uses marriage as an illustration.

Read Romans 7:1-6

Paul says that a marriage is only binding whilst both partners are alive. When one dies the other is free to re-marry. (v1-4)

- What did Paul's readers use to be married to (that they've now died to)? (v4)
- What was it like to be 'married to the law'? (5)
- Who are they married to now? (v4)
- What is it like to be married to God? (6)

Apply

Before someone comes to Christ, the Law is constantly hanging over them, judging and condemning them. None of us can live up to the Law's demands. We can't escape it. The only way out would be death. But Jesus died, so we could be freed from that bad marriage. Now we're married to God. We serve God out of joy, gratitude and love ('in the new way of the Spirit'), not out of fear and guilt ('the old way of the written code').

Pray

Thank God for this change.

12th April

God's law is good, the problem is with us

The law cannot change us deep down. We can never live up to it, so it only makes us more guilty and afraid of God. So does that mean we should ignore most of the Old Testament and rip the 10 Commandments out of our Bible??

Read Romans 7:7-13

- How does Paul describe the law? What good purpose does Paul say God's law fulfils? (7)
- But because I'm sinful, what effect does God's Law have on me? (8,9,10,11)?

It's like when we see a sign saying 'don't walk on the grass'. The first thing we want to do is walk on the grass! The sign is good; the problem is with me.

Apply

- Often people say they don't believe in Jesus, but they think people should follow the rules he gave. What do you think Paul would say to that?

Pray

Admit to God that the problem is with me. I managed to so twist 'the commandment that was meant to bring life' that it 'actually brought death'.

13th April

Struggling with sin

Paul is showing us that Christians are pulled in two directions. There is an 'old me' (that hates God and loves sin) and the 'new me' (that loves God and hates sin). If God is at work in us, the 'old me' is gradually dying and being replaced by the 'new me'. But what will it feel like to be in the middle of that process?

Read Romans 7:14-20

- How does Paul describe his experience of following Jesus? (15,19)
- How do you think that felt for him? (17,20)

Paul isn't trying to excuse himself. He's saying that 'I myself' (the real me) no longer wants to sin, but that the 'old sinful me' is still alive and kicking.

Apply

- Often we can feel that we can't be real Christians, because we still struggle so much with sin. What do you think Paul would say?

You realise how strong a current is when you try to swim against it. You probably never realised how strong sin is in your life until you became a Christian.

- How do you think that understanding this passage would help me to be more patient and forgiving towards other Christians?
- Do you think that we can use this passage as an excuse to not bother struggling against sin?

14th April

Who will rescue me?

Paul is very honest about his experience of following Jesus. Even the great apostle struggled with sin every day.

Read Romans 7:21-25

- What was Paul's experience of following Jesus? (21)
- How does he describe the 'new Paul'? (22)
- What is the 'old Paul' still doing? (23)
- When he feels almost ready to give up in despair, what does Paul remind himself? (24-25)

Apply

- How does this passage help you to be realistic about what following Jesus will be like?
- Can you think of times when you've wanted to do good, but found evil has been right there with you?
- When we feel like despairing, what do we need to remind ourselves?

15th April

No condemnation

Much of what Paul says in Romans 5-8 can be summarised in the 3 tenses of salvation.

I have been saved from the penalty of sin (past)

I am being saved from the power of sin (present)

I will be saved from the presence of sin (future)

Read Romans 8:1-4

- No matter how much I wrestle with sin in my life, if I trust Christ, what can I be sure of? (1)
- Why does the law bring only sin and death? (3)
- How does the Spirit bring life? (3)
- What does God think of me now if I trust in Jesus? (4)

Apply

If I live by the Spirit (i.e. trust Christ), then I have nothing to fear. I will never be condemned. Instead God is delighted with me. When he looks at me he sees someone who has perfectly obeyed every requirement of the law (4)!

- How does believing that make you feel about God?
- Many people think Christians try to be good so that God will accept them. Why is that a misunderstanding?

16th April

Two ways to live

The Bible is very clear that, spiritually speaking, we cannot sit on the fence. Either we are for God or we are against him.

Read Romans 8:5-8

By 'flesh' Paul means what the 'old me' did (hating God and loving sin). By 'Spirit' here Paul means what the 'new me' does (loving God and hating sin).

- What did the old way of the flesh lead to? What does the new way of the Spirit lead to? (6)
- What did the 'old me' think of God? What could it not do? (7,8)

In the realm of the flesh it was impossible to please God (as we saw in v8). But now we have the Spirit and so we can please God.

- Is it possible to be a Christian and not have the Spirit? (9)

Apply

- Can you think of times when v6 is hard to believe, when the way of the Spirit feels like death and the way of the flesh feels like life and peace?

Pray

Thank God that he loved you and sent his Son for you whilst you were still hostile to him. Thank him that you can now bring pleasure to him by how you live.

17th April

Hope for the future

In chapter 8 Paul helps us understand what it will be like to experience the power of God's Spirit in our lives. It's easy to either expect too much or too little...

Read Romans 8:10-11

- Since Christians have the Spirit of God living in them, does that mean that they will not get old and die? (10)
- Even though Christians will still die like anyone else, what hope do they have beyond death? (11)

Apply

- Some people claim that if Christians have enough faith they will not get sick. What do you think Paul would say to that?
- What is the greatest miracle of all that all Christians can look forward to?

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. (Job 19:25-26)

18th April

The Christian's obligation

God is the one who is changing Christians, by his Spirit, but that does not mean they should be passive and do nothing. We have a role to play.

Read Romans 8:12-13

- What do believers have no obligation to anymore? (12)
- What are believers to do? (13)

Apply

Christians don't live God's way to make him love them. We live God's way because he already does. That is actually a far stronger motivation.

- 'Put to death' is quite drastic language. Can you think of times when you have been unwilling to take such decisive action against sin?
- What misdeeds of the body do you realise that you need to put to death?

Pray

Ask God for help to 'keep in step with the Spirit' by being ruthless with the sin in your life.

19th April

God's children

The reason that God calls his people to take decisive and drastic action against sin in their lives is because he loves them and wants the best for them.

Read Romans 8:14-18

- What relationship do Christians have now with God? (14, 15,16)
- What can they look forward to? (17,18)
- What are they not anymore? (15)
- Like their older brother, Jesus, Christians will face suffering in this life. But when they do, what can they remind themselves? (17,18)

Apply

We don't have to live in fear anymore that we will not meet God's standards. God has already adopted us as his children and promised us a glorious future. Everything we do in the Christian life comes from a place of confidence and security.

- Can you think of times when you have felt God as your Father in a special way? (16)

Pray

Thank God for verse 18.

20th April

Creation groans in expectation

The glory that Christians look forward to is cosmic in scale. One day all of the effects of sin and death will finally be undone.

Read Romans 8:19-22

- What words does Paul use to describe the current state of creation? (20,21,22)
- What words does Paul use to describe the future state of creation? (20, 21)

Apply

If this is what a world under God's curse is like, spend some time imagining what the new heavens and earth will be like! It's OK if I don't get to see everything and experience everything I want to in this life. I've got all eternity to go travelling...

Pray

Thank God that one day we will worship him in a new heaven and earth.

21st April

We groan in expectation

The pain and suffering of this world are not death throes but birth pains. But all will not be right with the world until there is a perfect humanity to look after it (19). We will never be able to heal all the ecological and environment problems in the world until we ourselves are healed.

Read Romans 8:23-25

- What does Paul say Christians have already? (23)
- What are they still waiting for? (23, 24)

If we are believers, it is true that we are *already* God's children – but it will not be until heaven that we will *experience* that in all its fullness.

Apply

- A Christians can always say to themselves, “the best is yet to come”. How does that help us wait patiently now?
- What do you think will go wrong in our Christian walk if we expect to be blessed in every way in this life?

Pray

Ask God to help you to wait patiently for all that he has in store for you.

22nd April

The Spirit groans in expectation

Whilst we await the glorious future God has for us, God has not left his children on their own. As Paul has said before, God comes to live in us by his Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 8:26-27

- What do we not know? (26)
- What does the Spirit do for us? (26,27)

God's plans for his children are so glorious that we can hardly begin to imagine what we have in store for us – which means we barely know what to pray for! But God's Spirit helps us in our weakness.

Apply

- Do you think this gives us an excuse not to bother praying?
- How is it encouraging to know that the Spirit uses our weak prayers?

23rd April

All things for good

God's plans are so much bigger than we imagined. His purposes for his children started in eternity past and stretch to eternity future!

Read Romans 8:28-30

- What does Paul want us to be sure of? (28)
- What does Paul mean by 'for the good' of believers? (29)
- How many 'links in the chain' does Paul list? (29,30)

Apply

God doesn't promise that everything will always work out for our happiness. He does promise that he will work everything out for our holiness – which is actually our highest good. He can't make us truly happy without making us truly holy first.

- When do you think you will next need to remember this?
- Can you look back on a time in your life when God used a painful experience for your good?

Pray

Father, thank you for your plans for me which you set in motion so long ago. Thank you that nothing can stop you and nothing can happen to me, which is not totally under your control.

24th April

Who can be against us?

In the rest of the chapter Paul dwells on the implications of God's unstoppable plans for his people.

Read Romans 8:31-32

- What is Paul's response to the truths that he's been explaining up to this point? (v31)
- What makes Christians so confident in their relationship with God? (v32)

Apply

God withholds no good thing from his people. Therefore, anything he does withhold would not be for our good.

- How do you think it would change your life if were more convinced that God is for you?
- What/who often looms larger in our minds than God and makes us anxious or afraid?
- When you doubt that God really wants the best for you, what can you remind yourself of from v32?

25th April

No condemnation

Paul returns to the theme of justification with which he started chapter 5. Many people live their lives under crippling burdens of guilt.

Read Romans 8:33-34

- Who is it that justifies? (v33) Who is it that condemns? (v34)
- What has Christ done for us? What is Christ doing for us now? (v34)

Apply

- What things do I need to preach to myself when I feel guilty and condemned?
- Do I, deep down, imagine that God is angry or disappointed with me?

Pray

Thank God that no charge can be brought against the one whom God has chosen.

26th April

No separation

We know that life could throw anything at us. One of the things we long for most is the security of knowing there is someone who will always love us and always be there for us...

Read Romans 8:35-36

- What things does Paul list? (v35, 36)
- Why do you think he picks such extreme things? What point is he trying to make? (v35)

Apply

In his life Paul experienced all of the things he mentions in these verses. But he had also experienced Christ's love in the midst of all of them.

- Looking forward, what things do you fear most? What prospects worry you most?
- How would that change if you were more convinced of v35?

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

27th April

More than conquerors

Through [our Lord Jesus Christ] we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2

In chapter 8 Paul has shown us what it means to 'stand in grace' and to have the 'hope of the glory of God'.

Read Romans 8:37-39

- Can you think of anything that Paul missed out in his list?!
What does he want us to believe?
- Paul doesn't just say that we are conquerors. Why do you think he says we are "more than conquerors"? (v37)

Not only can nothing that happens to us ultimately hurt us (it can't separate us from Christ), in fact everything that happens to us ultimately only helps us (God works all things for our good). That's what Paul means by saying we are more than conquerors.

Apply

- What one thing has particularly struck you from Romans 5-8?

Pray

Thank God for the grace in which you stand and the hope of glory you have.

28th April

Two ways to live

Read Psalm 1

- What does the blessed person not do? (v1)
- What does the blessed person do? (v2)

(‘law’ is another word for scripture)

- What is the result? (v3)
- What about the wicked? (v4)

Apply

- What steps can you take this week to not be taken in by the world’s lies?
- What steps can you take this week to listen more carefully to God’s word?

Pray

Dear LORD please help me delight in your Word more and so be more like the tree of verse 3.

29th April

God's king

Read Psalm 2

- What is the natural attitude of every human to God and his King? (v1-3)
- How does God react to that? (v4-9)
- What is the wise thing to do? (v10-12)

Apply

Humans naturally think that serving God would be slavery. It would be like chains and shackles.

- How do you see something of that in your own heart?
- Is it actually slavery to serve King Jesus and take refuge in him? (v12)
- We don't like to think of God's anger and judgement. But why will the gospel not make sense to people unless they understand God's anger and judgement?

30th April

How to sleep well

Read Psalm 3

- How does David describe the situation he was in? (v1, 2, 6)
- What things does David find God does for him? (v3, 4, 5, 7, 8)

Apply

- When you are in danger what/who do you turn to first? What did David do?
- How does this Psalm help us to know how to pray in hard times?