

**Reading Together**  
**New Testament Bible Reading Schedule**  
**October 3 to 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Monday, October 3 – Romans 11: 25 – 12:8**

Verses 25-32 are tricky to understand, specifically verse 26 where Paul says “All Israel will be saved.” Some take that verse to mean that a day is coming when all of the Jews who are alive will turn to Jesus and recognize him as their Messiah. That is one possible view of what Paul means, but there is another possible interpretation for these verses that is equally valid to consider. Notice in verse 25, Paul talks about the full number of Gentiles coming into the Kingdom. Surely Paul does not mean that all Gentiles will be saved, but rather what Paul means is that all of the elect (chosen by God) Gentiles will be saved. In the same way, Paul’s words in verse 26 could be to convey the idea that all of the Jews who are elect (chosen by God) will be saved. Either way, most Bible commentators believe that a day is coming in the future when many Jews will turn to Jesus as their savior and become part of the church along with the Gentiles.

Pay attention to the last few verses of chapter 11. The bottom line is this: what God is doing is a great mystery that we really can’t begin to understand, that is why He alone deserves all of the glory, and it is also why we don’t understand everything as clearly and completely as we might like to.

We can’t earn our salvation, because our salvation is completely a work of God’s mercy in our lives. All we can do is offer our lives as living sacrifices (12:1). To do that we must learn to do two things. First, we must learn to think differently than the world thinks, so we know how to live lives that please God (12:2), and then we must learn to use the gifts God has given us no matter what those gifts are.

**Tuesday, October 4 – Romans 12: 9 – 21**

In 12:2 Paul told us we need to learn to think differently than the way the world thinks, and in these verses Paul begins to show us specific ways of thinking that differ from the world’s thinking. Rather than having a phony or manipulative love we must learn how to love each other in

deep and meaningful ways, just as brothers would love each other. Next, Paul tells us that we must maintain our zeal and devotion to the Lord. Just a note, but the way we do that is by remembering all that Christ has done for us. Remember how Paul starts this chapter, “In view of God’s mercy.” Keeping God’s mercy in view is the only way we can truly love each other well and maintain our zeal for the Lord. Verses 12-16 give us very practical advice for how we should live and the words speak for themselves. We must always live in the hope of all that we have in Christ because that hope is what keeps us going through difficult times in our lives. It is that hope that helps us to be patient in time of affliction, and helps us to remain faithful in prayer. But perhaps verses 17-21 are the very essence of what it means for a Christian to think differently from the way the rest of the world thinks—to love your enemies, to pray and bless those who persecute you, to feed your enemy, to overcome evil with good.

### **Wednesday, October 5 – Romans 13: 1 – 14**

In chapter 13, Paul continues his exhortation for how Christians are to live in a fallen world. Paul begins by making the case that Christians must submit to those who are in positions of authority over them, because God is the one who has placed them in those positions. Notice in verse 6, that Paul refers to the authorities as God’s servants. We don’t often think of our governmental leaders that way, do we?

Next, Paul sums up the second half of the 10 commandments with these words in verses 9 and 10, “Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” That is why Jesus made a point of telling us to love each other as he has loved us. Christ’s death on the cross is what should motivate us to love others in this way. We don’t manufacture the love we share with others, we are just the distributors of the love Christ has poured into our lives. Finally, Paul encourages us to live each day as if it were the day Christ will return.

### **Thursday, October 6 – Romans 14: 1 – 23**

In chapter 14, Paul begins his last great teaching in the book of Romans. This teaching deals with how Christians are to get along with one another when it comes to matters that are not clearly spelled out in

the Bible. In those days, the main argument was over whether it was okay to eat certain foods and whether certain special religious festivals should be celebrated. But, in these verses, Paul doesn't just deal with these specific controversies, he also lays out broad principals that we can follow as we deal with our controversies in the church. Here are the principals that we should keep in mind as we deal with our own controversies (remember that these are for areas where scripture does not speak definitively). First, none of us lives just to ourselves (verses 7-8). We all belong to Christ and therefore we all belong to each other. What we do affects others. Do we really want to be responsible for someone else faltering in their faith just so we can do what we want to do or what we think is important? Next, we must not judge each other (verses 12-16) or put stumbling blocks or obstacles in each others way. We must remember that one day each of us will have to give an account not just for our lives, but how our lives affected others (verse 12). In verse 19, Paul encourages us to do whatever we need to do to build each other up and have peace in the church (again, remember this is for areas where scripture does not give us clear guidance). Finally, Paul's advice, in verse 22, would be good for us all to remember and that is to keep debatable matters between us and the Lord!

### **Friday, October 7 – Romans 15: 1 – 33**

The beginning of chapter 15 is really the conclusion of what Paul was talking about at the end of chapter 14, involving how we get along with each other in debatable matters (those matters not clearly defined in Scripture). Remember, Paul is writing both to Jews and Gentiles whose differences were probably much greater than any difference we may have with other believers in our own churches. Paul's encouragement is for us to bear with one another and build each other up even if it comes at the expense of our own liberty. In verses 5 and 6, Paul stresses the importance of Christian unity, so that it is as if we are glorifying God with one heart and one voice. Christ accepted us in our weakness and in the same way we must learn to accept one another.

In verses 14-22, Paul reminds his readers of his special ministry to the Gentiles. This mission has taken Paul all the way from Jerusalem to the edges of what we now call the continent of Europe. Notice in verse 23, Paul says there is nowhere left for me to work in these regions. What

Paul means is that he has established churches throughout this entire region and he is now longing to increase his reach into Italy.

At this time Paul has not yet visited Rome, but he hopes to soon. In fact, Paul has great plans to go and visit Spain (verse 24). However, because of his trial before Caesar he soon will be imprisoned in Rome, which will give him an opportunity to share the Gospel with all of Caesar's palace. Many New Testament scholars believe that Paul did eventually get to Spain.

### **Saturday, October 8 – Romans 16: 1 – 27**

In chapter 16 Paul gives a long list of personal greetings. Some are familiar, like Priscilla and Aquilla from the book of Acts, and others we know little, if anything, about. Apparently, all of these believers were known to the church in Rome and had probably taken up residence in Rome at this time. Paul ends his greetings with a warning in verses 17-19 to watch out for those who would cause divisions amongst them and teach false doctrines. Paul reminds them that God will soon crush Satan (when Jesus comes again), but, in the meantime, they need to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil.

### **Sunday, October 9 – 1 Tim 1: 1 – 11**

1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy are called pastoral letters because Paul wrote them to instruct Timothy about how to conduct his ministry. Timothy had taken over the new church that Paul had planted in Ephesus. Timothy was young and Paul's letters to him give him practical wisdom for how to deal with ministry in the church. There was a problem in Ephesus with false teachers that had come into the church (verses 3-4). These false teachers were probably teaching an early form of Gnosticism, which depending on its form, either denied that Jesus was God, or denied that Jesus was fully human. Part of what the Gnostics claimed was that they had secret knowledge from the disciples of Jesus, which is probably why Paul makes a reference to endless genealogies in verse 4. Clearly, based on verses 6 and 7, Paul had a very low opinion of these false teachers and he wanted Timothy to be bold in confronting them with the truth. In verses 8-11, Paul makes the point that the law was written for those who need to be shown the error of their ways. The law was not written to make us righteous, but to convict us of our sin and our need for a savior.