

ROMANS SEASON 4 PEOPLE OF THE GOSPEL

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- Describe one memorable (good) experience with a childhood friend.
 - What's the tastiest meal you've had in the past week?
 - Have you ever had a friend come to your defense? Describe what that was like.
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

We've come to the final chapter in Romans. As Paul wraps up this great letter about the greatest story ever told, he displays his care for his fellow believers in Rome. He also leaves them with a sense of true north for their faith. His message to them is a burning message for us today—that spiritual family strives faithfully for believing obedience and enjoyment of the glory of God.

The Make-Up of Spiritual Family

READ: Romans 16:1-16 (All the unfamiliar names should make this fun.)

DISCUSS: Why do you think it's significant that Paul can identify many of the Roman Christians by name?

At first glance, this long list of unfamiliar names doesn't feel exciting. But there are some important things to pay attention to. First, notice Paul's choice of the words "brother," "sister," and "mother" numerous times. He may be the great church-planting apostle, but he knows he could never do it alone. He needs spiritual family, and so do we. Next, we see that there's major diversity of gender and nationality. And all these people are dear fellow servants of Paul. If there's ever a thought that you can't fit in with spiritual family, it's a lie. God's family is diverse, dearly loved, and on mission together.

What Spiritual Family Strives For

READ: Romans 16:17-23

DISCUSS: What does Paul tell his spiritual family to be on guard against?

Spiritual family can only thrive when believers strive together. You can think about it like defense and offense. There are things we must strive to defend against. Whatever causes division, whatever undermines good doctrine, people who warp the gospel with smooth talk—we must strive to defend our spiritual family against these threats. The offense is what Jesus is doing and will do to God's enemy, Satan, when he crushes him. Peace isn't a mushy, muddled, gray middle. It's the victory of King Jesus over God's great enemy.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

Where It's All Headed

READ: Romans 16:25-27

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from these verses and why?

Paul ends where he began—his desire and intention to bring about believing obedience throughout the nations. Yet we also glimpse the “forevermore” to which believing obedience leads. God’s glory is his collective excellencies, and his glory is so immense, that we’ll enjoy him forever. Believing obedience to Jesus Christ opens the door for his people to experience and enjoy God’s glory forever. Praise be to God through Jesus Christ!

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- Is your experience of church one of spiritual family? How can you prioritize relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Can you say that you have embraced believing obedience to Jesus? What does it look like for you to embrace it for yourself and help others to do it too?
- In what ways does the thought of enjoying God’s glory forever impact you?

PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Pray for the defense and offense of our church to remain strong.
- Pray for a revelation of what it means to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?