

Small Group Discussion Guide

Romans 1:16-17

“The Journey Begins”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 6/21/2026

Background

“Although every true believer knows it is a serious sin to be ashamed of his Savior and Lord, he also knows the difficulty of avoiding that sin. When we have opportunity to speak for Christ, we often do not. We know the gospel is unattractive, intimidating, and repulsive to the natural, unsaved person and to the ungodly spiritual system that now dominates the world. The gospel exposes man's sin, wickedness, depravity, and lostness, and it declares pride to be despicable and works righteousness to be worthless in God's sight. To the sinful heart of unbelievers, the gospel does not appear to be good news but bad (cf. my comments in chapter 1), and when they first hear it they often react with disdain against the one presenting it or throw out arguments and theories against it. For that reason, fear of men and of not being able to handle their arguments is doubtlessly the single greatest snare in witnessing.

The Bible makes it clear that men cannot be spiritually changed or saved by good works, by the church, by ritual, or by any other human means. Men cannot be saved even by keeping God's own law, which was given to show men their helplessness to meet His standards in their own power. The law was not given to save men but to reveal their sin and thus to drive men to God's saving grace.¹”

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. A recent topic of discussion is “fake news.” Fake news is not a new phenomenon. What is some of the fake news that has been going around about the Gospel for centuries?

Observation

2. What are the reasons Paul gives for not being ashamed of the Gospel?
3. To understand what the Gospel is, read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. What are the facts of the Gospel?

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Romans*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 50-52.

4. Who is included in the phrase, “To everyone who believes?”

Interpretation

5. What is the connection between believing in the Gospel and living by faith? Relate this to evangelism and discipleship.
6. What does “from faith for faith” communicate about the beginning and ongoing nature of the Christian life?
7. What is the difference between advice and news? Why, then, is Christ’s death, burial and resurrection called the Gospel (good news) in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11?
8. Romans 1:16-17 is referred to as the theme of the book of Romans. Discuss how this verse fits Paul’s outline of Romans where he starts off talking about being saved, then he moves to living out our faith in his later chapters, from doctrinal to practical.

Application

9. What would it look like for you to live with Paul’s confidence in the Gospel this week?
10. Who in your life needs to hear the gospel’s power and hope, and what might a first step toward boldness look like?

Prayer List: