

5. Of the three broad styles of literature in the Bible—Narrative, Poetic, Prose Discourse—which do you prefer?

6. When has someone with a different experience than yours helped you get a deeper, better understanding of something like mental health, race, poverty, bullying, disability, or any other subject matter?

7. What kinds of things might we miss if we read Scripture mostly alone or exclusively with people who are just like us (i.e., economically, ethnically, racially, etc.)?

#### Going Deeper:

- Listen to Romans in one sitting.
- Join a small group for the duration of this study (contact [JHagge@fiveoakschurch.org](mailto:JHagge@fiveoakschurch.org))
- Watch two Bible Project videos: “New Testament Letters: Historical Context” (<https://bit.ly/3vr1bfH>) and “New Testament Letters: Literary Context” (<https://bit.ly/3bOQMmv>).

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## SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

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### **The Gospel Journey Back to God (A Series on Romans 1–4)**

“How to Read the Greatest Letter of All Time”

Romans 1:1,7-15; 15:14-16; 16:1-28

The Bible isn't easy to read, but it can be \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Peter 3: 16 ...[Our dear brother Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Peter and Paul refer to Paul's writings as “\_\_\_\_\_.” (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27)

**The Bible is written for us, not \_\_\_\_\_.**

Even first-century people found Paul's letters hard to \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes.

Peter assumes that while Paul's letters might be difficult to understand, they are still \_\_\_\_\_.

Romans - The GOAT of all letters

### **How to Read the Greatest Letter of All Time**

1. Read it slowly, carefully, reflectively, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Romans is, by any historical and literary standard, an ancient literary and philosophical \_\_\_\_\_.

Bible Project “Ancient Jewish Meditation Literature” Video (<https://bit.ly/30OVJ8g>)

2. Read it as a \_\_\_\_\_.

Since you don't have the whole picture, you have to try to piece together as much of the \_\_\_\_\_ as you can.

Romans 1:1,7-8

Romans 1:10b-15

Romans 15:14-15

Romans 15:20,23-29

Romans 16:1-2

Romans 16:3-4

Romans 16:5a

Romans 16:5b

Romans 16:21-22

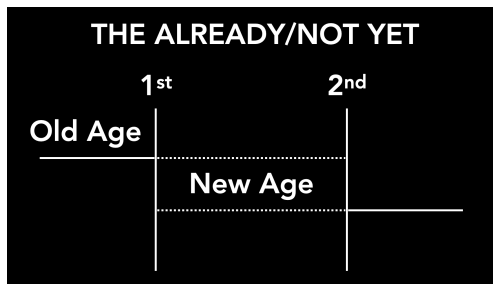
Romans 16:23

#### 4 Contexts:

- L \_\_\_\_\_
- C \_\_\_\_\_ (including language itself)
- H \_\_\_\_\_
- O \_\_\_\_\_

Bible Project: "Overview: Romans Part 1" (<https://bit.ly/3vrSe61>)

3. Read it as within context of the story of \_\_\_\_\_ (the fifth context).



4. Read it with the \_\_\_\_\_, God's people.

It's the church (God's people) that preserved the Bible and passed it on to you, translated/interpreted the Bible from the original languages for you, provided guardrails for you, and more. You are indebted to Christians who went before you.

Read it with the church globally and the church in all its social, economic, and ethnic diversity.

### Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

2. What are some of the challenges when reading an ancient letter in Scripture?

3. Why do you think God included letters in his Word?

4. Romans 1:1, 1:7-15; 15:14-16; 16:1-28. What are some of the helpful insights you received from these passages that reveal the occasion and purpose of Paul's letter to the Roman Christians?