

KINGDOM.

LESSON 2

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] GENESIS 32, 37, 39 en 45
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Take turns and share (or read from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet time with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Genesis chapters 32, 37, 39 en 45). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) [THE KINGDOM OF GOD] (2) LUKE 18:16-17
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Review two by two.

(2) Welcome children into the kingdom. Luke 18:16-17. Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a child, will never enter it.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) [THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS] ROMANS 1:1-17
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The purpose of studying the Bible together as a group is to grow together in a relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another. It is to help one another to gain knowledge and understanding of the Bible and to practise its truths. For this reason it is important that the group members encourage one another to participate in the Bible study discussion. The input of every group member is important. Nobody should be put off if what he says turns out not to be completely correct (theologically). The group leader should rather encourage the group members to learn together by discovering and discussing the truths from the Bible. Every group member should feel that the other group members *listen* when he speaks, *take him seriously* and *accept* him. The group members are not competing with one another in Bible knowledge, but love one another by encouraging one another to grow and to share confidently.

The example of the Bible study below is well thought out in order to assist the group leader when he prepares the Bible study or to help the group when they discuss a difficult question. Your Bible study discussion may have different things that the group members discover and different questions that the group members ask.

Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study Romans 1:1-17 together.

Introduce. The letter to the Romans was written by the apostle Paul in 57 A.D. from Corinth to the Christians in Rome. Romans 1:1-7 contains the call and task of the writer, the apostle Paul. And Romans 1:8-17 contains the introduction of the subject of the letter to the Romans. Romans 1:16 says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." Paul's letter to the Romans teaches the power of the gospel! It teaches that the gospel is God's power to justify people and it is God's power to sanctify people. The gospel is God's message about how people may be saved and transformed to become new people!

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
<i>Read.</i> LET US READ Romans 1:1-17 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

1:1-7

Discovery 1. How the apostle Paul introduces himself.

The letter to the Romans was not an invention of any human being, but is an inspired revelation of the meaning of the gospel to a very special person, the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul introduces himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ”, called and appointed to be an apostle of Jesus Christ and set apart to preach the gospel (good news) of God. The message of the gospel is above all, not what people must do to be saved, but what God has done in Jesus Christ to save people (Romans 1:1). This gospel message of the New Testament was already in part promised and displayed in the Old Testament. What Christ revealed to Paul about the gospel, was in complete harmony with what the Old Testament prophets taught (Romans 1:2; Acts 24:14; 26:22). The subject of the gospel is Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection. His resurrection manifests his present state of exaltation in heaven (Romans 1:3-4). It is from this divine Person, Jesus Christ, that Paul received his task to be an apostle. The purpose of his task was to bring people to faith in Christ. His field of labour was not only his own town, but also the other nations (Romans 1:5) and this included the people living in Rome (Romans 1:6). Paul often began his letters by wishing the Christians God’s grace and God’s peace (Romans 1:7).

1:8-17

Discovery 2. How the apostle Paul introduces the subject of his letter to the Romans.

The subject of the letter to the Romans is “salvation by faith for both the Jew and the Gentile (non-Jew).” Paul introduces the greatest subject in preaching in a very respectable way. He expresses his respect and affection to the Christians in Rome. He thanks God for their faith and that their faith has influence everywhere in the world (Romans 1:8). He expresses his concern for them by constantly praying for them (Romans 1:9) and by making known his longing to come to visit them (Romans 1:10) in order to strengthen them (Romans 1:11), to encourage one another (Romans 1:12) and to have a harvest among them (Romans 1:13). Paul is obligated to preach the gospel to all people and therefore eager to preach it also to the Romans (Romans 1:14-15). His eagerness to preach the gospel arose from his clear understanding of the gospel. He realises that the Jews have not understood the gospel and that the non-Jews have not yet heard the gospel. The gospel is not simply a message, but a powerful means by which God saves (justifies) all the people who believe, without distinction of race and culture (Romans 1:16). The gospel is powerful and very effective, because it teaches the true method of justification, that is, the true way of salvation. The only way of salvation (justification) is by faith (in the Lord Jesus Christ) (Romans 1:17).

Thus, Paul introduces the two great subjects of his letter to the Romans. The first is the method of salvation and the second is the people to whom salvation should be offered. Salvation is by faith only and salvation should be offered to all people in the world, both Gentiles and Jews.

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 1:1-17 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

1:3-4

Question 1. What is the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Notes. Paul says that “the gospel of God is regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.” The death of Jesus Christ would have had no meaning without the resurrection.

(1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves

God’s acceptance of Christ’s completed work of salvation.

No other prophet who ever lived in history or made a claim to be a prophet has been *resurrected* from the dead (cf. Mark 8:31)! All the prophets in the history of the world (including the prophets of other religions) still lie in their graves. Jesus Christ is the only human being who has ever been resurrected from the dead and still lives today! This fact proves that Jesus Christ was the Greatest Prophet of all times and that he was more than just a prophet! His resurrection proves that God accepted his substitution death (in our place) to save us.

(2) The resurrection of Jesus Christ manifests the present exalted state of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ claimed to be the Saviour of the world and the Lord of the universe. His resurrection from the dead is the conclusive evidence of the validity of all his claims. And it is the most powerful demonstration of the truth of all his teachings.

In Romans 1:3-4 we read that by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ was “appointed (decreed, declared) to be the Son of God with power”. The contrast between verse 3 and 4 is not between the human and divine nature of Christ, but between two elements within the human nature of Christ. Verse 3 says what Christ *was* before his resurrection and verse 4 says what he *became* by virtue of his resurrection. The contrast is between Christ’s human state of humiliation and his human state of exaltation! Jesus Christ was always “the Son of God”, that is, he always possessed *the divine nature (the Divine state)*. But before his resurrection, his human nature is described as “flesh”, that is, “weak” due to sin and death. His *human nature* was weak due to the sin of the world which he took on himself and due to the fact that he was still had to die for these sins. But in his death, he laid aside the weakness of his human nature and severed every connection with sin and death. At the resurrection of his human nature (his body), his human body was changed (transformed) and is described as “Spirit of holiness” in Romans 1:4 or as “life-giving Spirit” in 1 Corinthians 15:45. His resurrected human nature is powerful and so completely endowed with the Holy Spirit and so fully in control of the Holy Spirit, that he is identified with the Holy Spirit and is called “the Lord, who is the Spirit” or “the Spirit of the Lord” in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18. The resurrection of Jesus Christ set him in “a position of lordship which is totally conditioned by the Holy Spirit”!

1:5

Question 2. What is the meaning of the expression “apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith”?

Notes. The original text says that Paul received grace and apostleship with a view to bring about obedience of faith among all the (Gentile) nations. How should we understand the words “obedience of faith”? Although it is possible to interpret this as an objective genitive: “obedience to the (Christian) faith” it is better to interpret this as a subjective genitive: “obedience that consists in (personal) faith”. Genuine Christian obedience is characterised by believing in Jesus Christ (John 6:28-29) and genuine Christian faith is characterised by obedience to Jesus Christ (John 14:21,23). The implications are enormous. The “faith” that Paul preached was not simply a one-time act of accepting Christ as Saviour. The kind of faith that Paul intended to promote was a lifetime commitment of trust and of obedience to Christ as Saviour and Lord. By preaching the gospel, the apostle Paul called people to a life of wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ and his teachings.

1:6-7

Question 3. What is the meaning of the words “called to belong to Jesus Christ”, “called to be saints”?

Notes. The word “call” may have two different meanings.

(1) The outward call.

John the Baptist said that he was “the voice of one *calling* in the desert”. John meant that by his preaching, he called the people of Israel to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (John 1:23). In this sense, the word “call” refers to *the outward call* of God, in which he invites people through the preaching of the gospel to believe in Jesus Christ. However, often this outward call is disregarded (1 Corinthians 1:23).

(2) The inward call.

The word “call” is used almost exclusively in one sense in the Bible, namely, *the inner call* of God, in which he draws the people he chose before the creation of the world irresistibly to Jesus Christ. “From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He *called* you to this through our gospel” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

There are always people who receive the outward call through the preaching of the gospel, but disregard it and remain unbelievers (Matthew 22:14). But everyone who receives the inner call through the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, will irresistibly come to Jesus Christ (John 6:44,37). It is in the sense of God’s inner call that Paul uses the word in Romans 1:6-7. The Christians in Rome belong to Jesus Christ and are saints by virtue of having been irresistibly and effectively called by God through the work of his Holy Spirit in their hearts. They have become Christians, not because of anything in themselves, but only because of God’s irresistible and effective call. The people “who bear my name” (literally: “over whom the name of the Lord has been called”) (perfect tense)(Acts 15:17) designates the people God elected. They consequently belong to him. Thus, the people whom God called are the people whom God chose (1 Corinthians 1:24-30). The people whom God *called* are the people whom God *predestined* to be saved and conformed to the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:28-34). “The called” has virtually the same meaning as “the elected”. It is the designation of genuine believers (Revelation 17:14; Jude 1:1). By virtue of this effective call, the Christians at Rome were made to belong to Christ and were made “saints” (people *set apart from* the world in order to live *dedicated to* God and serve him). Note: the word “church” in Greek is “*ekklésia*” and means “God’s called out people”.

1:14-16

Question 4. In what way is the gospel the power of God?

Notes. Paul regards himself as a debtor to Greek speaking people and all the other foreigners living in the world. He directs his ministry to the learned and unlearned. And that is why he desires to also minister at Rome.

In Romans 1:16, Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." The gospel is powerful, because God works through it and because it results in the salvation of people from every nation.

(1) The gospel is the power of God.

The gospel is the power of God, because it is that message through which God works and through which he saves (justifies) people. God saves people not through human wisdom or human power, but through the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:20-25). The power of God in the gospel is not manifested through a message about "one God" (the pure monotheism of Jewish religion) or a message about "a perfect moral code" (the ethical life of Greek religion), but rather through a message about "a crucified Redeemer" and "justification by faith in him alone". The power of God justifies (saves) people who believe in this crucified Jesus Christ. "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). He is the beginning (Alpha) and the end (Omega) of the gospel message (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:2; Galatians 5:11; 6:14).

(2) The gospel has a powerful effect on individual believers.

Every believer in Jesus Christ is saved out of a certain state into another state. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ is saved from certain evils and is saved to enjoy certain blessings. Every believer in Jesus Christ is saved from the following evils:

- He is saved from the *guilt* of sin, because his sins are forgiven.
- He is saved from the *shame* of sin, because his name and honour is restored.
- He is saved from the *pollution* of sin, because the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross cleansed him.
- He is saved from the *slavery* to sin, because Christ set him free from the power of sin.
- He is saved from the eternal *punishment* of sin, which consists of separation from God, the wrath of God and everlasting death, because Jesus Christ took that punishment in his place onto himself!

Every believer in Christ is saved to enjoy the following blessings.

- He receives a perfect righteous *state* in the eyes of God.
- He receives *the ability to grow* in holiness.
- And he receives *the ability to live a transformed and fruitful life*.
- He is saved to *enjoy God's blessings*, which consists of personal fellowship with God, the love of God and everlasting life.

(3) The gospel has a powerful effect on nations.

The gospel saves people from every nation in the world! No matter what a person's previous nationality or religion was, when he believes in Jesus Christ he will certainly be saved! The Bible says, "First for the Jew, then for the Greek (the non-Jew)". The word "first" does not mean "especially", because the gospel was not specially designed for the Jews (Romans 3:9,22,29; 10:12). It means "first in time", because the gospel was first preached to the Jews (Matthew 10:5-6; Acts 13:46-47) and then preached by them to the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19).

"The Greeks" were the Greek speaking Gentiles with whom the Jews were most familiar at that time. They represent all the non-Jewish nations on earth.

1:17a

Question 5. What is the righteousness from God that is revealed in the gospel?

Notes. Paul says, "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last (literally: from faith to faith), just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'." The righteousness from God cannot here be understood as an attribute or characteristic of God, because it is attained by faith. The word "righteousness" has been interpreted differently by different people.

(1) Righteousness is not something that is earned or established by man.

The religious Jews were zealously seeking to establish their own righteousness by keeping the law. They regarded "righteousness" as the religious and moral righteousness of a person who keeps the law.

But the Jews (and other religions like them) do not know that righteousness is not something that could be earned or brought about by people. Righteousness comes only from God: it earned and brought about by (the death and resurrection of) Jesus Christ and is given (free of charge) by God to people who believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:3-4; Philippians 3:9). People must "know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16).

One group of Christians in the world today think that God justifies people first by baptising the child with water and afterwards through the good works of the person. They believe that at baptism with water, God's grace is poured into

them so that they become inherently righteous and are able to do righteous or good works afterwards. Therefore they also regard “righteousness” as the religious and moral righteousness of a person who is baptised by the church and does good works.

Another group of Christians in the world today also think that God justifies people by their own act of believing in the gospel and by their own acts of obedience to the law and the teachings of Jesus Christ afterwards. They view faith and evangelical obedience as the personal acts of the free will of man. Also they regard “righteousness” as the religious and moral righteousness of a person who with his free will believes in Jesus and obeys his teachings.

However, righteousness is not something that is earned or established by man.

(2) Righteousness is something that is attained (earned and brought about) by Jesus Christ for the believer.

No human being can establish his own righteousness, because righteousness comes from God (Romans 3:21; cf. Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9)! In the whole letter to the Romans, righteousness is not something that is attained by the believer himself! Righteousness is not brought about by anything that is done by the Church and also not by anything that is done by the believer himself.

Righteousness comes from God and is brought about only by what Jesus Christ did two thousand years ago for the believer (he obtained the required righteousness) and by what he does in present time in the believer (he gives this righteousness by grace to the believer in him). Jesus Christ *merited (earned)* the required righteousness for the believer and in the place of the believer by his perfect life, death and resurrection. By his complete and perfect life on earth and his atonement sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ took the holy and righteous indignation (wrath) of God against sin on himself (and thereby away from the believer) (cf. 1 Peter 2:24). Thereby he also earned the necessary righteousness on behalf of the believer and donated it to the believer. The completely and perfect righteous Jesus Christ died for the sins of the unrighteous man, not only to make propitiation for his sins¹ (to make atonement, to bring the necessary sacrifice of atonement), but also to reconcile the believer with God² (to restore the broken relationship) (1 Peter 3:18a; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21). He paid the complete penalty for sin in the place of the sinner and for all sinners who believe in him (Mark 10:45; John 10:11).

Righteousness is:

- The perfect satisfaction of God’s holy and just indignation against all sin
- God’s judicial declaration with respect to the perfect forgiveness of all sins
- God’s perfect acceptance of all believers into his family.

Righteousness is therefore *the judicial righteousness* of God.

(3) Righteousness is something given (granted) by God to the believer.

God *gives* the righteousness of Jesus Christ (that is, what Jesus Christ attained) to every person who believes in Jesus Christ. God as Judge *declares* him completely (100%) righteous and from then on *regards and treats* him as perfectly (100%) righteous in his eyes! Righteousness is therefore not the religious and moral righteousness of a religious person, but the judicial righteousness of God!

Jesus Christ does for the believer what the believer cannot do for himself: he merits God’s required righteousness by:

- living completely holy and righteous for the believer in his place
- dying (paying the penalty) for the believer in his place
- being resurrected for the believer in his place!

In this way the righteousness which Jesus Christ obtained is imputed (permanently ascribed, reckoned, credited after it has been given) to the believer’s account. God declares the believer completely and perfectly righteous and then on and forever regards and treats him as completely and perfectly righteous!

God no longer regards or treats a believer in Jesus Christ as “a guilty person”, but always as “a righteous person”, even when he still has a sinful nature and sometimes commits sin. The sacrifice of atonement for his sins has *once and for all time* been made on the cross for him and in his place. It is unrepeatable! Thereafter God will never bring their sins or lawless acts into remembrance anymore (Hebrews 10:17-18)!

(4) Righteousness is something received by the believer.

The believer *receives* this righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith! Only the righteousness of Jesus Christ can justify (save) the believer. The believer can only receive this righteousness by faith.

¹ To atone, Christ brought himself as the sacrifice of atonement for their sins. He took the penalty for their sins on himself and thereby satisfied and removed God’s holy and righteous indignation (wrath) against the sinner. He removed the problem.

² To reconcile, Christ removed the consequences of the problem (separation from God) and thus restored the broken relationship with God.

1:17b

Question 6. By what kind of faith is man made righteous?

Notes. Faith, by which God justifies or saves a person (that is, which makes this person righteous in God's eyes), has three aspects:

(1) The first aspect of faith is knowledge.

In order to believe in something, we must *know* what to believe. Thus, faith is knowing and understanding the truth as it is has been revealed in the Bible. Romans 10:14-17 says that "faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ". Faith is therefore based on knowledge of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ. The knowledge consists of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This knowledge is *given* to us through the preaching of others and through the Words (Greek: *rémata*) Jesus Christ speaks to their mind, conscience and heart (Romans 10:17). Thus, it is clear that faith as knowledge of the truth is based on God's Word and God's grace.

(2) The second aspect of faith is trust.

After we heard and understand the truth, we still have to *believe or trust* that this truth is also the truth for us personally. With our mind and heart we believe that God imputes (credits) the righteousness of Christ to our account, so that when God looks at us, he only sees the righteousness of Christ! We *rely or depend* on the fact that God declares us completely righteous (forgiven), because of what Jesus Christ has done for us in our place. Acts 16:14 says that it is God who opens our hearts to respond by faith to the gospel message. God *gives* this faith to us (Acts 13:48; 18:27; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; 2 Peter 1:1). The kind of faith which saves is the intelligent perception, sincere reception and trusts (reliance) on the truth that is revealed in the message of the gospel. Thus, even faith as a personal persuasion, conviction and trust is based on God's grace.

(3) The third aspect of faith is action.

When we genuinely believe the truth of the gospel, we respond to it with our mind, heart, behaviour and action. If we really believe the gospel, we *will respond actively: we receive (accept) and confess the truth.* The faith in our mind and heart that Jesus Christ is indeed the Saviour and that he promises us complete and perfect salvation we express by *receiving* Jesus Christ together with his completed work of salvation into our mind, heart and life (John 1:12) and by *confessing* him openly with our mouths. There is complete agreement between what we believe in our hearts and what we confess with our mouths. Romans 10:9-10 says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

The faith that saves or justifies can be compared with *the sinner's empty hand* that is stretched out to God, the Giver, in order to receive God's gracious gift of salvation. The faith that saves or justifies is like *the coupling* that connects man's train (life) with God's engine (grace). The faith that saves or justifies is symbolised by *the trunk of a tree*, whose roots represent God's grace and whose fruit symbolises a life of gratitude and good works.

1:17c

Question 7. What is the meaning of the words "a righteousness from faith to faith" is revealed in the gospel?

Notes. Translation. "A righteousness from God is being revealed in the gospel, (a righteousness) that is *from* faith (Greek: *ek pisteós*) *to* faith" (Greek: *eis pistin*). This phrase has been interpreted as a progressive phrase: "from a weak faith to a continuous stronger and more perfect faith" or as an intensive phrase: "by faith alone", or "by faith from beginning to end."

However, a similar phrase is used in Romans 3:21-22. A righteousness from God has been manifested in the Old Testament (Law and Prophets), a righteousness that is "*through* faith in Jesus Christ (Greek: *dia pisteós*) (the means) *to* all who believe" (Greek: *eis pantas tous pisteuontas*) (the recipients).

Another similar phrase is used in Galatians 3:22-23. After faith has been revealed, the promise (consisting of righteousness) is given "*through* faith (Greek: *ek pisteós*) (the means) *to all those who believe*" (Greek: *tois pisteuousin*) (the recipients).

Likewise Romans 1:17 emphasises both *the means* (by or through faith) and *the recipients* (the believers) of God's righteousness.

Thus, the best translation of Romans 1:17 is: "The gospel reveals a righteousness that comes from God. This righteousness is (comes about) only *by faith* (and not by works of the law) (the means). And this righteousness is given *to everyone who believes* (without distinction of his race, culture or degree of faith) (the recipients)!"

The righteousness is obtained by Christ in his death and resurrection (*the ground* of righteousness). The righteousness is given by God in his unimaginable mercy and grace (love) (*the Source* of righteousness) to people who believe (*the recipients* of this righteousness). The righteousness is received by the believers by faith (and not by their religious works of the law) (*the means* of receiving this righteousness).

1:17d

Question 8. What is the meaning of the words: “the righteous will live by faith”?

Notes. Translation. “Just as is written: ‘The righteous (person) by faith (Greek: ek pisteós) shall live’.” This phrase does not speak about “righteousness”, but about “the righteous person”. Some people interpret this to mean: “the righteous (person) shall live (that is, shall have/gain eternal life) by (means of his own act of) faith”. Then his “faith” is regarded as *the ground* for eternal life. But faith is never the ground for salvation; only the means of receiving salvation.

The quotation in Romans 1:17 is from Habakkuk 2:4 and can only be translated as: “the righteous person will live (for God or in the presence of God) by faith”.

Romans 1:16 emphasises faith as *the means* by which a person is *justified*. Romans 1:17 emphasises first faith as *the means* by which the righteousness of Christ is received by the believer and then (by quoting Habakkuk 2:4) as *the means* by which such a *justified person lives his life* (on earth) (he expresses the received righteousness of Christ as his lifestyle).

Thus, in both the Old Testament period and the New Testament period the emphasis is on the fact that believers in the LORD are justified (saved) only by faith and then continue to live their lives (as justified people) also only by faith.

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 1:1-17.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 1:1-17.

- 1:1. When God calls you to the office of elder (either as a shepherd, a preacher or a teacher) you should still be *a servant* and not become a master (an authoritarian leader).
- 1:1. God sets some people apart to serve him in some special task.
- 1:2. The gospel is already proclaimed in the Old Testament. You must treat the Bible as a unity.
- 1:5. Be open towards God to give you grace and a task to call non-Christians to obedience that consists of faith.
- 1:7. All Christians are called by God to be “saints”, that is, to be people set apart from evil and dedicated to God.
- 1:8. A true Christian greeting wishes God’s grace and peace to others.
- 1:8. Thank God for what he is doing in the lives of believers you know.
- 1:9-10. Pray for other people.
- 1:11. Spiritual gifts that make other Christians strong are for example healthy teaching, wisdom, leadership, etc.
- 1:12. Do not be afraid to encourage your leaders.
- 1:13. Consider the following as a goal for your life: to have lasting influence in the lives of other people.
- 1:14. Christians have a responsibility to all races and classes of people.
- 1:15. Plan to preach the gospel to other cities.
- 1:16. Do not feel ashamed of being a Christian, because your message is the most powerful message in the world!
- 1:17. Never rely on religious works, good works or obedience to the law for winning God’s approval.

2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 1:1-17.

I want to make sure that my faith is not simply *a one-time act of accepting* Christ as Saviour, but *a life-time commitment of trust and obedience* to Christ as Saviour and Lord. I realise now that ‘faith’ in the Bible is a life of wholehearted devotion to Christ and his teachings.

When I preach the gospel of salvation, I want to emphasise both the *evils, from which* believers in Christ are saved, and the *blessings, to which* they are being saved. I want to preach that every believer in Christ is saved out of the state of guilt and shame into a state of complete righteousness: complete forgiveness and complete acceptance in honour. Every believer in Christ is saved from the *guilt, slavery (power), pollution* and *final penalty (punishment)* of sin. He is completely forgiven, he is set free from the tyranny of sin, he is enabled to live a holy life and he will never be punished in hell.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 1:1-17.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. Preach, teach or study Romans 1:1-17 with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Exodus 1,2,3,4.**
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. (3) Preach the gospel of the kingdom: **Matthew 24:14.**
Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Teaching. Prepare the parable of **the sower** contained in Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20 and Luke 8:1-15.
Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. Update your notebook on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.