

# God's Reconciling Love

Bible Background • [ROMANS 5:1-11, 8:31-39](#)

Printed Text • [ROMANS 5:6-11, 8:31-39](#)

Devotional Reading • [ROMANS 1:1-15](#)

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLAIN the meaning of justification by faith; EXPERIENCE the joy of God's reconciling love; and LIVE OUT God's reconciling love in the world.



Dorothy scrolled through various video clips on her computer. For some unknown reason, her eyes landed on a message by a famous preacher titled "God's Love." Something about his facial expression made her want to listen. He began to describe the overwhelming love that God has for us. He went on to state that words failed to accurately describe the love that he experienced from God. Dorothy wanted that love. She had just been down in the dumps about her latest failed relationship. She had thought that Greg was the one. He was kind and smart and very handsome. The only thing was he wanted to move too fast sexually, and Dorothy was committed to abstinence before marriage. Greg didn't want any of that and broke up with her. Dorothy stopped the speech right there. She could already feel tears spilling over and her heart starting to race. God, when is the last time I felt that way about You? So overwhelmed by Your love, Your Son dying for me, Your concern over me, and Your presence with me now. God, I confess I've been distracted by so many things that I drifted away from the simple truth of how much You love me. Dorothy continued to let the tears fall and the prayers tumbling silently from her heart, crying, confessing—completely overwhelmed by God's great and marvelous love.

*What are the words that you would use to describe the love that God has for us?*

## Keep in Mind

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Romans 8:39](#)).

## **KJV**

**Romans 5:6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet adventure for a good man some would even dare to die?

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

**8:31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **NLT**

**Romans 5:6** When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

**8** But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

**9** And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.

**10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.

**11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

**8:31** What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

**32** Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

**33** Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.

**34** Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

**35** Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

**36** (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.")

**37** No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

**38** And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

**39** No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **The People, Places, and Times**

**Ungodly.** The beginning chapters of Romans point to the sinfulness of people. No one can merit any favor from God at all. The implication is that everyone is ungodly and suffers repulsion in God's eyes—morally weak, unable to figure spiritual things correctly or redeem ourselves. The ungodly are definitely not deserving of the Father's favor. In the context of the letter to the Roman church, which included both Jews and Gentiles, to suggest that everyone is ungodly reveals that we are all equal in God's eyes and is intended to break down divisions in the community.

**Due time.** Jesus came in a season that was declared and set by the Father. According to God's plan, this was the perfect time for Christ to come into the world ([Galatians 4:4](#)). Christians have a great assurance from the fact that God had planned for Christ's redemption and started the process at what He knew was the perfect time for it.

## Background

Through Christ, God reconciled the world to Himself. Once a person trusts Christ for their salvation, their sin is no longer counted against them and their relationship with God has new intimacy. Christ is the instrument God used to unite human beings back into a right relationship with Him ([Colossians 1:20–21](#)).

Reconciliation with God is needed because unbelievers' relationship with Him was broken through sin. God is never at fault. Unlike human relationships, where both parties must admit their sin before reconciliation can take place, God never has to admit His incorrect behavior. He is holy, perfect, and blameless. The sinner must admit their sin before God, confessing their inability to save themselves or fix this relationship on their own.

The relationship between God and humankind was so broken that humankind is called God's enemy ([Romans 5:10](#)). Humanity—encompassing everyone, because all have sinned ([Romans 3:23](#))—is hostile and angry and it totally does not understand God. In contrast, a person who pursues God and wants to make things right with Him recognizes the great sacrifice made through Christ's death as the way to make peace with God.

When Christ died on the Cross, the war ended. The unbeliever accepted God's terms of peace. The Christian no longer has judgment and wrath hanging over his or her head. Because of Christ, the relationship between God and His followers is no longer adversarial, but friendly ([John 15:15](#)).

## In Depth

### 1. Nothing Greater ([Romans 5:6–11](#))

Paul vividly describes the love of God. The holy, almighty God generously and freely gives His love to those who are ungodly, undeserving, unlovable, and unlovely. When God decided the time was right, He sent Jesus to die on behalf of the people just described—which is everyone ([Galatians 4:4](#)). To become a part of God's family, the sinner must admit, "I am all of the above, and Jesus died to save weak and helpless me."

God's love and sacrifice is uniquely different from any earthly compassion. A courageous person might give his or her life for a decent human being or a good cause. It's not uncommon to hear a story about a parent who wrapping themselves around his or her child to save his or her life at the cost of his or her own. But it's unbelievable to think anyone would die for an enemy. To give your own beloved child to die for people who hate and reject you—that's a crazy love. Yet this is exactly what God did to show His love for humankind. There is no greater love!

In addition to this amazing love, Christians are now justified. In other words, believers can be assured that God's planned wrath, anger, and punishment have been placed on Jesus at the Cross. While the ungodly turned their backs to God, Christ died shedding His own innocent blood. Through His own sacrifice Christ took the initiative to reconcile people back to Him.

This personal relationship with God does not begin with death but in the moment one trusts Christ for their salvation. Christ makes all this possible, a wellspring of continual joy in the lives of His followers.

## **2. Nothing Separating (8:31–39)**

In the first part of Romans, Paul recorded several cold, hard facts about the Christian's relationship to God, tackling serious doctrinal issues. In the later chapters, however, Paul reveals more of the softer, loving side of God. Paul begins by asking a question: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Most think God is in their corner, Christian or not. But one little word indicates some doubt—if. Just because a man thinks God is with him does not make it so. God is only for an individual if that person is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Paul ends this chapter by assuring believers that none of the world's troubles can keep them down for long. Paul listed every extreme he could name, declaring nothing in heaven or on earth can separate God's love from humankind. Many things—Satan, our conscience, and others—constantly accuse us and remind us of past sins and failures, but God won't allow it. He calls us conquerors, victors—secure in God's love.

## **Search the Scriptures**

1. God show His love for us through Christ dying for us ([Romans 5:8](#)). How does this inform or influence the way we show love to others?
2. Does the guarantee that God will freely give us all things (8:32) sound too good to be true? Explain why.

## **Discuss the Meaning**

When a person becomes a Christian, he or she now can experience the joy of God's love and reconciliation—making him or herself an example to the world.

The big question is how to live out this truth on a daily basis. How would our lives be different if we truly internalized God's love? Would we love all of our neighbors? Would we be confident in our gifts and abilities? Would we take a stand for biblical truths?

## **Lesson in Our Society**

All over the Internet are articles about how to have a better relationship with your spouse, children, friends, and co-workers. People desire to improve their interpersonal relationships. However, the foundation of that desire is easy to ignore; a good relationship with others starts with God. As His examples and spokespeople to the world, Christians must ensure that their

personal walk with God is loving and intimate. Then, with that overflow of love, we can teach the world how to love each other and improve all relationships.

## **Make It Happen**

Find a quiet place for a little personal retreat, just you and the Lord. Spend some time there to review the Scripture and insights in this lesson:

- God loves me!
- God proved His love for me by sending Jesus to die for my sin.
- God wants a close relationship with me; where am I?
- Do I need to confess? (Admit to God what He's showing you.)
- How can I repent? (Examine behaviors and ask God to empower you to go the opposite way you've been going.)

## **More Light on the Text**

### **Romans 5:6–11, 8:31–39**

#### **6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**

At the appointed time, Christ offered Himself as our eternal sacrifice “when we were yet without strength”—that is, when we were powerless to save ourselves and thus ready to die. Christ’s death reveals three properties of God’s love. First, He did this for the “ungodly,” those whose character and sinful nature are repulsive in God’s eyes. Second, He did this when they were “without strength”—nothing stood between humanity and damnation but divine compassion. Third, He did this “in due time,” when it was most appropriate that it should take place. Throughout, Paul uses the language of “we,” indicating that he considers himself also to have been without strength, ungodly and a sinner (v. 8).

#### **7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

The Apostle Paul now proceeds to illustrate God’s compassion. Few people would be willing to sacrifice their lives for a “righteous man” of exceptional character. A few more might be willing to die for a person who, besides being exceptional, was also distinguished as a benefactor to society. But God, in glorious contrast to what people might do for each other, displayed His love “while we were yet sinners”—that is, in a state of absolute rebellion. Although most people would not be willing to die to save a wicked or evil person, Christ died for us.

#### **9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**

Having been “justified by his blood,” we shall be saved from wrath through Christ’s sacrifice. Christ’s death restored our relationship with God while we were in open rebellion against Him. Since we are now reconciled, “we shall be saved by His life.” If Christ’s sacrifice was offered for

people incapable of the least appreciation for God’s love or Christ’s labors on their behalf, how much more will He do all that remains to be done? To be “saved from wrath through him” refers to the entire work of salvation—from the moment of justification to the great white throne of judgment ([Revelation 20:11–15](#)), when the wrath of God shall be revealed to all who ignore the Gospel of Jesus. The Apostle Jude best described Christ’s continuing work of salvation when he said that Christ “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (from [Jude 24](#)).

### **11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.**

“And not only so” refers to the blessing Paul mentioned previously. We not only find joy in our newfound peace, standing, and salvation, but we rejoice in God Himself. We find joy in our God for what He has done and who He is. Our joy comes from our union with Christ, who brought about our atonement.

“Atonement” (Gk. *katallage*, **kah-tah-lah-GAY**) is the noun form of the verb for “reconcile” in verse 10. It indicates a shift from a negative relationship to a positive one, or a broken relationship to a healthy one. Paul here focuses on the restored relationship provided by Christ’s atoning death. This restored relationship with God brings about joy, or more literally boasting (see v. 2, “rejoice”).

Atonement is the gracious act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and believers. The word contains parts that express this great truth in simple but profound terms: “at-one.” Through God’s atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of being “at one” with God.

### **8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

As a result of this knowledge of divine sovereignty, Paul exults in the comfort of knowing God is for His people. He asks and answers his own question: “If God be for us, who can be against us?” The concept of God being for His people runs throughout the Old Testament ([Psalm 56:9](#), [105:12–15](#); [Isaiah 54:17](#)). What makes Paul’s words unique is that now through the lens of Christ, we even see the hard times as under God’s control. We face trials and opposition to conform us to Christ’s image. God is for us in all things good or bad. With that in mind, Paul says no one is a formidable foe.

Not only that, but God did not spare (Gk. *phedomai*, **FAY-doh-meye**) His own Son when it came to our good. The word *spare* means to refrain or keep from harm. The sense in this verse is that God did not hold Him back as a treasure. The same word is used in the Septuagint, when Joseph tells his family to “regard not your stuff,” or not take their treasured belongings to Egypt ([Genesis 45:20](#)). God delivered (Gk. *paradidomi*, **pah-rah-DEE-doh-me**) Him, which means to hand over or give up. The word is often used for betrayal, as in Judas’ betrayal of Jesus ([Mark 14:10](#)), as well as for the Sanhedrin’s giving of Jesus over to Pilate ([Mark 15:1](#)), and Pilate’s giving of Jesus over to the crowd in Jerusalem ([Luke 23:25](#)) and the Roman soldiers for crucifixion. In this sense, Paul is showing that God was sovereignly guiding the entirety of Jesus’

death on the Cross. God had ordained that Jesus would be crucified for our good since before the creation of the world ([Revelation 13:8](#)).

This understanding of God's gracious act in giving Jesus "for us all" is the grounds by which Paul asks rhetorically, "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The two words "freely give" (Gk. *charizomai*, **khah-REED-zoh-meye**) are actually one word in Greek, meaning to give as a sign of one's goodwill toward another. Paul emphatically states that when we see what God has done in Christ, we can be assured that God has good will toward us.

**33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**

The argument continues as Paul explains the reasons someone could disbelieve God's good will toward His people. He proceeds with legal terminology and asks, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" The phrase "lay anything to the charge" (Gk. *egkaleo*, **eng-kah-LEH-oh**) means to accuse or file a formal legal complaint against someone. For Paul, the answer is obviously no one; God "justifieth" (Gk. *dikaioo*, **dee-kie-OH-oh**), or makes or pronounces one as righteous.

There is no one to condemn (Gk. *katakrino*, **kah-tah-KREE-no**) the believer. The word "condemn" means to pronounce guilt and punishment for a crime in a legal context. Paul's answer to the question of "Who is he that condemneth?" is the work of Christ. This work is not limited to Jesus' death and resurrection, but it also continues with Jesus at the right hand of God, making intercession (Gk. *entugchano*, **en-toon-KHAH-noh**) for us. To make intercession or intercede is to petition an authority on behalf of someone else. Christ speaks to God on behalf of the Christian. Believers' confidence that God hears us and no longer condemns us is assured by Christ's righteousness.

**35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**

Next Paul raises the question of possible separation from Christ's love. The different earthly woes of God's people are listed. Tribulation (Gk. *thlipsis*, **THLEEP-seese**) is the first problem listed; this word comes from *thlibo*, which means to press or squash and metaphorically has the sense of oppression or affliction. The next is distress (Gk. *stenochoria*, **ste-no-kho-REE-ah**), which has the sense of being in constricted conditions, where it seems the world is falling down on someone. The third problem is persecution (Gk. *diogmos*, **dee-og-MOCE**), the systematic hunting down of believers for torture and execution in an effort to destroy the religion. This was a real threat for Paul, who faced much persecution in his lifetime. Famine is the shortage of food, resulting in acute hunger and death. The word for nakedness is *gumnotes* (Gk. **goom-NO-tes**), which in this context means insufficient clothing, not total exposure. Peril (Gk. *kindunos*, **KEEN-doo-noce**) is danger from any circumstance; Paul used this word in reference to his being in danger as an apostle ([2 Corinthians 11:26](#)). The believer also faces the reality of the sword (Gk. *machaira*, **MAH-khaye-rah**), which is the word for the small sword as



opposed to a large one. This designation causes some to question whether Paul intends the official “sword” of the state. However, this word is also used in [Romans 13:4](#) in connection with the state’s authority to punish. Here, Paul may have described official state execution. The general sense is that the believers face death at any moment.

Paul then quotes from [Psalm 44:22](#). This psalm was often quoted by rabbis in the second century A.D. with martyrdom in view, and Paul may have had this in view here. In contrast to this dismal fate, verse 37 has triumph and hope. Although the Christian’s life is similar to a sheep prepared for the slaughter, Paul says this is not the whole story. Believers are more than conquerors through Christ. The KJV translates the Greek as “we are more than conquerors” (*hypernikao*, **hoo-per-nee-KAH-oh**). The Greek term is a single word, with the basic verb for conquering with an intensifying prefix that tells the church this will be no normal victory—it will be the ultimate victory. To think of ultimate victory as persecuted subjects only magnifies God’s power to reward the faithful.

**38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Paul is totally convinced. Nothing physical, social, or spiritual can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Paul speaks of items in the three categories that would have the capacity to separate us from God’s love. Paul summarizes these, noting the opposites: life nor death, heights nor depths, things present or things to come with all of their abilities to frighten, paralyze, or make us turn away. None of these can separate us from the love of God.

## **Say It Correctly**

Commendeth. ku-**MEN**-dith.

Peradventure. per-ad-**VEN**-chur.

# Daily Bible Readings

## MONDAY

Mutually Sharing the Gospel of Christ  
([Romans 1:1–15](#))

## TUESDAY

Fruit of Justification by Faith  
([Romans 5:1–5](#))

## WEDNESDAY

Grace Abounded through Jesus Christ  
([Romans 5:18–21](#))

## THURSDAY

Believers' Present Suffering and Future Glory  
([Romans 8:18–25](#))

## FRIDAY

God's Will Shapes Human Direction  
([Romans 8:26–30](#))

## SATURDAY

Paul's Faithful Ministry Despite Suffering  
([2 Corinthians 11:21b–27](#))

## SUNDAY

God's Love Never Changes  
([Romans 5:6–11](#), [8:31–39](#))