

# Week Four: Romans

## 5:12–21

### Key Verse

“So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone.” - Romans 5:18 (CSB)

### Key Principles

- Adam’s sin led to death and condemnation for humanity.
- Christ’s righteousness leads to life and justification for believers.
- God worked in patterns throughout the Old Testament that come to fruition in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Read**

Original sin (the idea that all people inherit a sin nature because of Adam's first, or original, sin) is a concept that many believers wrestle with. It can be hard to wrap our minds around the reality that the decisions of Adam and Eve, and their failure to obey God in the garden, still impact our lives today. And yet, if we are honest with ourselves we know that we would make the same mistake they did, and we continue to do so today. Because of sin, all of us are in dire need of redemption. Romans 5:12–21 focuses on these two truths: original sin and our long awaited redemption.

First, it's important to note that Paul wanted the believers in Rome to know that sin came into the world through one man: Adam. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned" (5:12, emphasis added). Because of Adam's sin, death and separation from God entered the world. And it didn't simply enter Adam's world, this passage states that it reigned from Adam to Moses. We all can attest that sin and death still wreak havoc in our world today.

As much as we might dispute the reality and fairness of original sin, Paul shows in Romans 5:12–21 how our sin nature and bent towards death and brokenness produce a great need for redemption. Paul is painting the picture that humanity needed Jesus, our true and better Adam, to come and redeem all of humankind.

Romans 5:14 describes Adam as a "type of the Coming One." Throughout Old Testament history, God used small stories of redemption and restoration (which, at times, seemed quite big) as ways to foreshadow how he would work

salvation through his only Son, Jesus Christ. These past saviors, redeemers, representatives, shepherds, prophets, priests, and kings were not perfect, so there are many ways to contrast their lives with Christ, especially Adam. But we typically learn important things from these human figures that help us see the depth and breadth of the gospel on display in Jesus Christ. In Romans 5:12–21, Paul is showing how Christ triumphed in every area where Adam failed us. He is boldly proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the true and better Adam. This Christ is indeed humanity’s long awaited redemption.

In Romans 5:12–21, Paul compares and contrasts what Adam and Jesus gifted to humankind.

<b>Adam</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
Sin (5:12)	The free gift of grace (5:15)
Death reigning over many (5:12)	Justification (5:16)
Judgment (5:16)	Righteousness (5:17, 19)
Condemnation (5:16)	Eternal life (5:21)
Separation from God (5:19; Isaiah 59:2)	Reconciliation with God (5:10–11)

Though it would be easy to despair when we look at what we inherited from Adam, Romans doesn't leave us hopeless. Romans 5:12–21 shows us that although death and sin entered through Adam, all of humankind has been offered life and redemption in Christ! In the words of Romans 5:18, "So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone." Whereas Adam brought death, condemnation, and sin into our world through just one decision to be disobedient, God has made a way through one righteous act to provide redemption and life in Christ for all who believe.

Paul ends the chapter by proclaiming, "But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (5:20b–21). Just in case we weren't quite getting it, Paul wants to be clear that the grace of God wins. He's made a way for our salvation. It might feel like sin has multiplied in our lives and the brokenness of this world is ever-present, but the grace provided in Christ will reign through righteousness. The true and better Adam has come, and he offers eternal life. Our great God brings a grace that is stronger than his judgment, and he brings eternal life that overcomes any form of death. May the Lord continue this work of grace in each and every one of us, transforming us more into the image of Jesus our Savior, as we study God's righteousness displayed in the gospel according to Romans 5:12–21.

## Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question before your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



**Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul’s major points. Then, read Romans 5:12– 21 in preparation for this week’s study.**

### Highlight

1. Go back through all of Chapter 5 and list out the times that something was compared and found to be “much more” than what had come previously. What does this indicate about God’s work in the world?

2. From Romans 5:12–21, describe how grace entered the world.

3. How is Jesus like Adam? How is he different? Compare and contrast in your own words.

## Explain

4. Paul repeats the words "gift" and "grace" several times in Romans 5:12–21. How do these words highlight the difference between Adam and Jesus?
5. Jesus is the obedient man in Romans 5:19. Why does "the one man's obedience" matter to us?
6. What does Paul mean when he says, "The law came along to multiply the trespass" in verse 20?
7. In your own words, how would you summarize Romans 5:12–21?

Apply

8. How can you use Romans 5:12–21 to encourage or challenge someone struggling to know if God really saved them?

9. In what ways does this passage encourage you? In what areas of your life does it convict you?

10. Using Romans 5:12–21 (or previous passages in Romans), practice how you'll share the gospel with your One. Write out main ideas and key verses you would want to share.



## Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home and together with your small group.

### **This Week's Prayer Passage: Psalm 96**

Read Psalm 96.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **Adoration:** Praise God because his deeds are marvelous, which we see most clearly in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Psalm 96:3). Declare that he is more glorious than any other god, idol, or source of happiness and fulfillment that we have sought after (96:4–5). Praise God because he is glorious and he deserves praise from everyone on earth (96:3, 8). Praise God alongside all of his creation because he has created it all (96:11–12). Praise God because he is both strong and beautiful (96:6).
- **Confession:** Ask God to divert away from idols that we seek after for beauty and strength (Psalm 96:3–6). Ask God to forgive you for looking for glory in anything other than him. Confess to God that things much less glorious than him have grabbed your attention and praise before you have given it to him. Ask God to forgive you because

you have not properly understood his splendor and holiness, and you have not lived according to his holiness in your own life (96:6).

- Thanksgiving: Thank God that he has filled the earth with his own splendor, that we can know him and be part of his family. Thank God for putting a new song in your mouth by saving you and giving you an eternal hope (Psalm 96:1–2). Thank God that he does not leave the world to rot on its own: He reigns and he comes to judge it with righteousness (96:10, 13). Thank God that he has given us reason to rejoice (96:12).

## who's your **1**ONE?

*Who's Your One?* is about each of us leading one non-Christian to faith in Christ this year. Read back through your notes from this week's study on Romans 5:12–21. How would you share the truths of Romans 5:12–21 with someone who is not a Christian? What words and phrases would you use?

This week, pray for your One. Update your small group's prayer journal with specific prayer points and look for opportunities to build friendships, initiate to the spiritual, share the gospel, and help them make a decision.