

God can change
circumstances
but His objective is to
change lives.

The Apostle Paul's
conversion
is one of the
most dramatic
stories of
change in
the Bible.

Romans is Paul's
spiritual journal.

It reveals Paul's
theology of change.

Romans

Righteousness and Faith	Righteousness and Israel	Righteousness and Living
(Faith)	(Hope)	(Love)
ch.1-8	ch.9-11	ch.12-16

Romans 1

"16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the **righteousness** (moral virtue and just actions) of **God** is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall **live by faith**.'"

Romans

Righteousness and Faith	Righteousness and Israel	Righteousness and Living
(Faith)	(Hope)	(Love)
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If this
is true
then -



What about
the promises to
Israel?

What about
Christian
Living?

Romans

Righteousness and Faith	Righteousness and Israel	Righteousness and Living
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✓ **The Jews had reason to believe that Paul had turned against Israel.**

- Did Paul deny his Jewishness?
- Did he not appreciate the fact that Israel was God's elect?
- How could the promises of God to Israel be valid if Paul's Gospel was true?

✓ **These chapters address the question of God's promise to Israel in light of the Christian Gospel.**

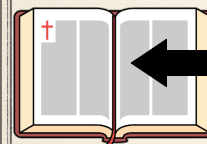
Traditional cultures

Ancient
culture

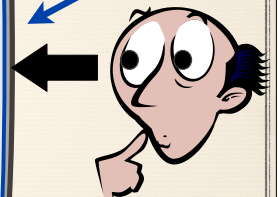
Early American
culture

Modern Western culture

Our culture



We critique other
cultures through the
lens of our present
culture.



It is hard to
critique
our cultural lens.

American cultural values and Romans 9

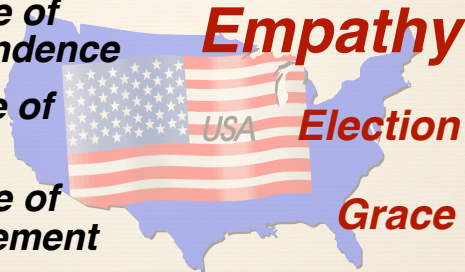
Individual right
to the good life

God's Kingdom
challenges these
values

**A sense of
independence**

**A sense of
choice**

**A sense of
achievement**



Competition
without
cooperation
& compassion
is carnal.

Too many Evangelicals
reject the theory of
evolution in biology

while they adapt an
ethic of survival of the
fittest in practical life.

Barack Obama

"We live in a culture that discourages empathy. A culture that too often tells us our principal goal in life is to be rich, thin, young, famous, safe, and entertained."

Leo Buscaglia

"I have a very strong feeling that the opposite of love is not hate - it's apathy, It's not giving a damn."

Romans 9

"¹ I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, ⁵ whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

A testimony to Paul's heart.

- Paul speaks from his heart as one who is **"in Christ."**
- Paul **feels great grief** for Israel.
- Paul is **willing to sacrifice** his own blessing for Israel's sake.
- Paul respects the **spiritual dignity** of those who have hurt him.

Note Paul's context

- **Paul's mood** - The joy of the end of ch.8 is contrasted with the lamentation of the beginning of ch.9.
- **Paul's theology** - Paul preached a message that confronted the very core of the Jewish system in his day - Sabbath, Law, Tradition, Gentile exclusion, etc.
- **Paul's experience** - The Jewish leaders had rejected him (We observe in the book of Acts that Paul was misunderstood, had his motives impugned, and his life threatened by the Jewish leaders).
- **Paul's personality** - We also might note that Paul's personality was likely to seek justice if not revenge rather than self-sacrificing mercy.

*Paul's response was consistent with
Apostolic teaching concerning basic
Christian living.*

1 Peter 3

“⁸ To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”

Know yourself
Accept yourself
Forget yourself
Give yourself

Empathy is the essence
of the Golden Rule.

Empathy is the front door to the
house of Biblical ethics.

To enter by any other way
is to never quite be at home there.

Empathy is an important
attribute of God.

Psalms 56:8

“You have taken account of my
wanderings; put my tears in Your bottle.
Are they not in Your book?”

The Incarnation reveals
God's Empathy.

Matthew 1:23

“And they shall call His name Immanuel,
which translated means, “God with us”.”

Empathy connects a caring God with
a broken world.

Jesus' ministry shows us
God's Empathy.

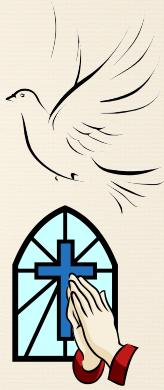
Hebrews 4:15

“For we do not have a high priest who
cannot sympathize with our weaknesses,
but One who has been tempted in all
things as we are, yet without sin.”

The Spirit's ministry is Empathetic.

Romans 8:26-27

"And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."



Our pain comes not so much from our being broken people in a broken world as it does from the sense of isolation that brokenness creates.

Isolation is the essence of hell.

Empathy removes isolation.

Empathy is vital to:



- Marriage
- Family
- Church
- Nation
- World

Stephen Covey

"When you listen with empathy to another person, you give that person psychological air."

Helen Keller

"So long as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain."

Paul's heart challenges us -

- to **forget** about ourselves and allow God's Spirit to work through us in touching others.
- to **see** God's value in others that eclipses their failures and the pain they may have caused us.
- to be willing to **sacrifice** for the spiritual blessing of those who may even have hurt us.

L isten to concerns
O verlook weaknesses
V alue strengths
E mpathize with pain

How is empathy developed?

1. It is learned as it is **modeled** for us by others (especially early in life).
2. It is burned into us as we **experience** life's ups and downs.
3. It is acquired as the **Spirit of Christ** is formed in us.

How is empathy expressed?

1. By **showing up** at critical moments with shared pain / joy.
2. By interactive **listening**.
3. By **opening up** the journal of our own souls before others.
4. By actively **loving**.



Kim Harrison
(author)

"treat people with understanding when you can, and fake it when you can't – **until you do understand.**"

The worldly
**Envy, Excuse,
or Exclude**
The godly
Empathize.

Empathy
is a doorkeeper for
Exhortation

God's empathetic
love

calls us to Him,
conforms us to Him,
and connects us to
the ones He loves.