

Experiencing
the Power of
Life-Changing
Faith

KAY ARTHUR
DAVID ARTHUR
PETE DE LACY



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Verses marked KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Cover by Koechel Peterson & Associates, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota

EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF LIFE-CHANGING FAITH

Copyright © 2011 by Precept Ministries International

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Arthur, Kay

Experiencing the power of life-changing faith / Kay Arthur, David Arthur, and Pete De Lacy.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-7369-1273-0 (pbk.)

I. Bible. N.T. Romans—Textbooks. I. Arthur, David II. De Lacy, Pete. III. Title.

BS2665.55.A78 2011

227:1007—dc22

2010012467

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 / BP-SK / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS



How to Get Started	5
Finally Free.....	13
<i>Week One</i>	
The Power of God for Salvation to Everyone Who Believes	17
<i>Week Two</i>	
The Jews Are Without Excuse	27
<i>Week Three</i>	
Both Jews and Gentiles Need Salvation	35
<i>Week Four</i>	
The Promise of Abraham	43
<i>Week Five</i>	
Through the One Man	51
<i>Week Six</i>	
Shall We Sin So Grace May Increase?.....	57
<i>Week Seven</i>	
Why the Law?	67
<i>Week Eight</i>	
Living by the Spirit	75
<i>Week Nine</i>	
Israel Did Not Pursue by Faith	81
<i>Week Ten</i>	
Faith Comes by Hearing.....	89
<i>Week Eleven</i>	
Has God Rejected Israel?	97

Week Twelve

Present Your Bodies a Living Sacrifice 105

Week Thirteen

Bear the Weaknesses of Those Without Strength 113

Notes 123

THE POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES



We often think of the gospel (the good news) as an important truth we should believe. But it is not only true; it is also powerful! It can change lives—our own as well as those of all who believe. If we have a heart for others that they might also experience the life-changing power of real faith, we need to know the gospel so we can share it.

At the outset of this book, Paul tells the Romans that he is not ashamed of the gospel because “it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). Paul knows it has the power to change everyone, and his passion is that all people would believe in this gospel and be saved.

In the first five chapters of Romans, Paul carefully lays out *why* both Greeks and Jews need salvation, and *how* salvation comes about. We could use many theological terms to communicate these truths, but we will focus on Romans’ teachings about sin and death, faith and salvation, righteousness and unrighteousness.

When we have completed these first five weeks, perhaps we will understand how Martin Luther felt when his new faith set him free. Perhaps this will be a brand-new experience for

you. It will definitely help you explain to others from Scripture how faith produces righteousness.

But knowing *how* to explain the gospel isn't enough, is it? We must be able to see our role in God's plan of salvation for the lost. The Almighty God of heaven and earth has written you, Beloved, into His enormous plan. He has given you His words of promise of rescue from the kingdom of darkness. In His wonderful gospel lies the path to the kingdom of everlasting light. Are you eager to be an important part of His plan for the world? Do you hunger to share the gospel? Do you really believe all people need salvation?

DAY ONE

Digging into the doctrines of Romans will be easier if we understand the historical setting of Paul's letter and his audience. In fact, when studying any letter, an important first step is to discover the historical setting by observing what you can about the author and recipients of the letter. Read Romans 1:1-15. Color code every reference to Paul (including pronouns) in one color, such as blue. Then list in a notebook what you learn about Paul.

Now read verses 1-15 again. This time, color code every reference to the recipients of this letter. Use orange or some other color of your choice. Then list what you learn about the recipients.

Now turn to Romans 15:15-32 and again color code the references to Paul and to the recipients. Add what you learn about each to the lists you made from Romans 1:1-15. Discovering the historical setting includes noting *where* things are taking place. Mark geographical references by double underlining them in green. Then think about *when* in Paul's ministry he

is writing this letter. For some help, read the account in Acts 28:11-31 of his visit to Rome and compare it to what you saw in Romans 1:13.

Apart from these few verses, however, you will see the focus in Romans is not on Paul or those in Rome to whom he is writing. Rather, we will see that the focus is on the many foundational truths revealed in this book. All of the great doctrines of salvation are here. Like no other book, Romans lays out the path of salvation and the life of righteousness for every person. Once you capture the foundational truths in this book, you will be prepared to mine precious gems of truth throughout the entire Bible. Romans is a primary letter in that it helps set the stage for the wonderful message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We often describe Romans as “The Constitution of Our Faith.”

We will mark many key words throughout the 16 chapters of Romans. Some will be found in only a few chapters; others occur throughout the book. You’ll need to make a bookmark with these key words on it. A three-by-five card works well for this. Make notes on your bookmark that remind you which words to mark in each chapter. If you are diligent in this, you will be rewarded with wonderful insights into the great teachings of sin, salvation, justification, and sanctification.

But this is not just a book of doctrines. You will also understand how to practically live your life in light of all the amazing things God has done for you. We have so much to observe, so much to learn. Are you ready?



 DAY TWO

Some wise person once said, “Repetition is the mother of learning.” In inductive Bible study, reading and rereading is a key to grasping the message. Today, read Romans 1:1-15 again

and mark every reference to *Jesus* like this: **Jesus**. Use purple to draw the symbol and yellow to shade in the middle. When you're done, you may want to list what you learn about Jesus in a notebook that could contain all your notes from your study of Romans.



 DAY THREE

Read all of Romans 1 today and mark every reference to the *gospel* (including pronouns and synonyms) like this: **gospel**. Use red to make the megaphone and color it green. Also mark the words *faith* like this: **faith**, using purple to make the book and coloring it green. Mark *believe* the same way because they are the same Greek word—*faith* is the noun form, and *believe* is the verb form. Mark *grace* blue with a yellow border, and mark *wrath*¹ with a red W.

Marking the key words is important for a couple of reasons. It slows you down in your study and also makes words stand out on the page. Once you've marked the key words in your Bible, you are ready to make observations about them. Ask the 5 W's and an H about each key word—*who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. Make a list for each word, noting what you learn from each reference. If marking words feels foreign to you, don't worry. We promise you that it is not busywork, nor is it just coloring your Bible. After you experiment with marking key words, you will see the value. It has an incredible effect on your observation of the text!




 DAY FOUR

Read through Romans 1 again and mark *(un)righteous(ness)*.

This word does not appear many times in this chapter, but it is central to the message of this book. Either choose a color or mark *righteousness* with a big *R* and *unrighteousness* with a big *R* with a slash through it like this: **unrighteousness**.

You may be tempted to simply mark the key words and move on in your study, but don't do it! Each time you mark a key word, take time to see what you can learn about it.

Notice Paul's mention of Jews and Gentiles. You don't need to mark these words, but they are important to observe. Watch out for synonyms for *Gentile* too. Sometimes Paul uses *Greek(s)* for *Gentile(s)*.



DAY FIVE

Romans 1 has a turning point at verse 18. Paul declares in verse 15 that he is eager to preach the gospel to those in Rome, and in verses 16-18 he gives three reasons, each starting with *for*. List Paul's three reasons in your notebook.

Romans 1:20-32 describes people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. These verses include some key phrases to mark or underline: *exchanged*² and *God gave them over*.³ Read Romans 1:20-32 and mark these phrases. Note the progression of events as you observe what the people did and how God responded. Write out what people exchanged like this: "They exchanged _____ for _____." Under each exchange, record how God responded with the phrase, "God gave them over _____." What is the culmination of this series of exchanges? In others words, where does it all lead to?



DAY SIX

Read through Romans 1 one more time. Now, let's reason

together. Think through this first chapter. Paul begins by identifying himself and his audience. He's an apostle to the Gentiles and is writing to the "beloved of God in Rome." From this first chapter, can you tell whether these "beloved" are Jews or Gentiles? Although Paul declares the gospel is for Jews *and* Gentiles in verse 16, what audience does he seem to be addressing in Romans 1? In Romans 1:20-32, as he depicts the regression of those who suppress the truth, whom is he describing? What is his main point about these people? Should they be excused because they had no idea God exists, or is God's wrath just? What verses show this? It is so important that you let the text answer these questions, even if you have to reexamine what you have believed over the years.

Read Psalm 19:1-3; 50:6; 97:6 and compare them to Romans 1:18-20.

When we study letters in the Bible, we can keep track of the progression of events and flow of thought by summarizing the main ideas of a chapter into a theme. Now that you have read chapter 1 several times this week, what would you say is the main theme of Romans 1? Record this on ROMANS AT A GLANCE on page 121.

DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: Romans 1:16-17

Read and discuss: Romans 1:16-32

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- ∞ What do you learn about those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness? What will be their fate?

- ∞ Do these people know about God? How? Are they without excuse? Show how the text supports your answer.
- ∞ Discuss what these people did. What did they exchange? How did God respond in each case? What did He give them over to?
- ∞ Based on what you learned in these verses, why do you think Paul wanted to preach the gospel to the Gentiles?
- ∞ What would Gentiles be saved from? How can they be saved?
- ∞ What has the power to save people who believe? What is the fate of those who do not believe? Do you think that power is still available, or was it limited to Paul's preaching? Have you ever seen that power at work?
- ∞ What questions come to mind that are not answered in this chapter? Remember, we have 12 more weeks of study in Romans to answer our questions. For now, simply write the questions down so you don't forget them as you study the book of Romans.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Paul wanted to preach the gospel to the Gentiles because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. But the wrath of God is also “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

Everyone knows God exists because the creation itself shows His invisible attributes of eternal power and deity, His

divine nature. Though these attributes are invisible, Paul says they are “clearly seen, being understood” through creation. God has shown all men His power and deity, so no man is excused before God. God’s wrath on unrighteousness is just.

Even though all men knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give Him thanks. Professing to be wise, they became fools. The folly of man! The creation itself declares who God is and what His character is, but men devise other gods, other creatures, other products of their minds that are not God at all. Psalm 14:1 uses plain language to show that this endeavor is ridiculous: “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

All mankind had their chance to acknowledge God because God revealed Himself through the created world. A small group of people—the Jews—were eventually given the first Scriptures, the Old Testament. But from the very beginning, all mankind was given the creation. When mankind rejected God’s revelation of Himself in creation, God gave them over to impurity, to degrading passions, and to a depraved mind. He gave them over to what they wanted. This resulted in a horrible set of exchanges.

This regression—a downward spiral into the ugly depths of depravity—included worshipping idols and other created things and committing acts of sexual depravity. It went from hearts to bodies, from minds to behavior. As a result, people received their due penalty. God is just. He gives people a chance to acknowledge Him, and when they refuse, He gives them their just reward—wrath.

Yet people continue to sneer at God and deny His existence. They deny that He created the world in the beginning and will judge it at the end. Even though they concede that such behavior is worthy of death (verse 32), they irrationally give hearty approval to others who continue in sin like themselves.

Misery loves company. Do you know anyone like this? Do

you have friends, neighbors, coworkers, or even family members who live a life that worships self, pleasure, and whatever makes them happy or feel good? We all do. Does your heart cry out to help them? Do you see their inevitable fate—the wrath of God—and do you want them to be saved from it?

This is our world—the world we live in, a world that is depraved and headed for judgment. But the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. This is good news!

The reality is this: Without Christ, people go to hell. The opportunity is this: With Christ, people can be saved. They can be rescued through the gospel—the saving message of the good news in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe in the gospel? Are you ready to deliver the good news to the lost?