
EQUIP

**What is a Christian – Small Group Session One
Week beginning 30th October**



What is a Christian?

The heart of EQUIP is reflecting on a few simple truths and allowing them to deeply impact and shape our lives. In the first half term, we thought about one simple truth - What is the gospel? In this second half term, we are now going to think about what a Christian is? This question takes us to the story of our lives - who we really are? Do we know ourselves?

To answer this question we are going to take a slightly different approach. Rather than look at passages from across the whole of the Bible, in this section we are going to look at the first four chapters of one book, the book of Romans. Romans is foundational for any Christian and we aim to equip one another by spending time there.

This journey of self-discovery could be an exciting one for each of us - but there is a problem we must address right from the start. Do we really need this? After all, isn't this so basic we feel like we should move on. I know what it means to be a Christian. Why not move on to new theological truths or move on to more practical applications? Why focus on the foundational?

In Romans Paul spends 11 chapters answering the question 'What is a Christian' (don't worry, we are just looking at the first four!) But, before Paul starts, he has to face the same challenge of why tell these experienced and holy Christians the foundational basics. So before we get into it, we are going to look at his answer.

Maybe start the session by praying together - that God would show you why we need to spend time looking at these chapters. Maybe also pray that these weeks would be a voyage of self-discovery - that each one of us would come to know who we really are.

If you want a question to start you thinking before opening up the Bible, have a think about what you would want to say to a group of keen Christians you had never met before - what might you do to encourage them?

"That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome."

Romans 1:15

Why ask the question?

1 Why look at these chapters

Time to get our Bibles open, read Romans 1:8-15.

The Roman's Christians are doing well, their faith is known all over the world (8), yet Paul wants to come and preach the gospel to them (15). What different things does he think his gospel message might achieve for the Romans (verses 11-13)?

[Text Notes: 1. We don't know what the spiritual gift might be, except that it involves the mutual encouragement of one another. 2. The word translated 'harvest' is the word 'fruit'. In this context Paul hopes his preaching of the gospel will produce fruit in the lives of the Roman Christians - holiness, obedience, generosity etc.]

How does this challenge the modern saying that there is no point in "preaching to the converted"?

At the moment how might you need spiritual encouragement to be strong in faith? What 'harvest' might you want to see in your life?

2 Not Ashamed

Having shown us what the opening chapters of Romans should do in our lives, Paul now gives us an overview of what he is going to say. Read Romans 1:16-17

Why is Paul unashamed of the gospel?

In what ways do we forget that the gospel message still has this ongoing transforming power in our lives?

List the four or five things the gospel is about.

How might knowing these things more achieve the outcome Paul is hoping for?

Now maybe spend some time praying that, as we read Romans over the next few weeks, God's word would bring deep encouragement and show a harvest of fruit in our lives.

