



REV. D. THOMAS PORTER, PH.D.

3422 Fallview Court ♦ Land O' Lakes, FL 34639

DrTom@PorterHouse.info

813.728.5713<sup>Cell</sup>

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

See more at <https://DiggingDeeper.Life>

*Digging Deeper*

*D. Thomas Porter*

## LESSON NOTES: THE TREATISE TO THE ROMANS

### OVERVIEW

#### SEVEN PEDAGOGICAL & EPISTEMOLOGICAL RULES FOR ROAMING ROMANS

- I. Your faith is based on beliefs that are wrong.  
Likewise for me, for I have learned the more I know, the less I know.
- II. I am not correct, always. Neither are you.
- III. We are here to learn more about what we do not know than what we do know. Hubris abounds when what we know begins to supplant humility in learning more about Him.
- IV. If you fail to correct me, then you are not meeting your obligations as a student—the days of “just listen, shut up, and tell the teacher what she/he wants to hear” are over. This is neither the fifth grade nor catechism.
- V. If I fail to correct you, I fail. This is neither the fifth grade nor catechism; thick skin<sup>1</sup> was one of our first gifts from the LORD God after spiritual sentience began (Genesis 3:21); and, later He noted we all need new skins.<sup>2</sup>
- VI. Perfect doctrine is not a requisite for soteriological security. Doctrine based on trust, not on our knowledge but His grace, is the doctrine that leads to soteriological sentience.
- VII. Questions are the icing of learning; declarative statements, while important, are mere flour. Question, question, question—the keys to learning. Remember how the greatest teacher taught? The Christ responded to declarative statements, even those framed as “questions” with a question.<sup>3</sup> For example,
  - 1) “But who do you say I am?”
  - 2) “What does the Scripture say?”
  - 3) “Where are you?”
  - 4) “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul?”
  - 5) “Why are you bothering this woman?” (one of my favorites)

**A QUESTION TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING:  
WHAT DOES PAUL UNIQUELY BRING TO  
UNDERSTANDING THE NEWS THAT THE CHRIST  
CAME TO EARTH AS JESUS, SON OF YUSEF?**

<sup>1</sup>Moses records ...

“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” –Genesis 3:21

<sup>2</sup>Jesus the Christ said at Matthew’s dinner party:

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’ ” –Luke 5:37-39.

<sup>3</sup>See [RedLetterChallenge.com/the-305-questions-jesus-asked-with-one-shocking-discovery](https://RedLetterChallenge.com/the-305-questions-jesus-asked-with-one-shocking-discovery) for more examples.

## AN OVERVIEW

Humans need deity. Culturally, if not instinctively, humans seek a power higher and better than themselves in one of three domains of truth, their:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_, or

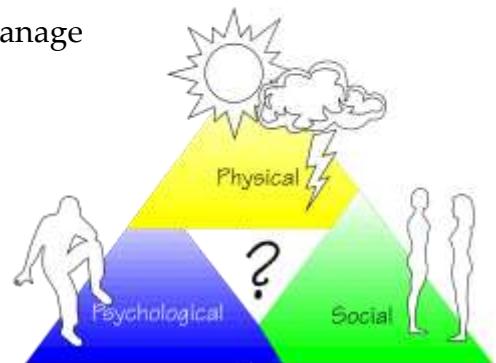
(3) \_\_\_\_\_ milieu.

↳ Religions among us use these three domains of truth to manage how and why we believe what we believe.

↳ Religions among us also use the three domains of truth to

discover   affirm   confirm

our primordial desire to know this higher, better power.



As finite beings created by infinite Deity in Their image (Genesis 1:26), we cannot escape the influence of these physical, social, and psychological domains of truth as we seek Deity's spiritual domain, Truth.<sup>4</sup>

**A QUESTION TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING:**  
WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT PHYSICAL REALITY?  
SOCIAL REALITY? PSYCHOLOGICAL REALITY?

We will always have to deal with physical reality—time bends, gravity constrains, and oxygen gives life. We will always be social creatures—family enculturates, norms

constrain, and relationships give life. We will always be psychological entities—personality defines, intelligence varies, and the mind is life. Yet, we will always be less than Deity.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I distinguish between "truth;" i.e., consensual and/or personalized and "Truth" based on evidence independent of human perception or social agreement (orthodoxy). Jesus is the Christ is True; Jesus would never lie is true. The earth revolves around the sun is True; the sun rises in the morning is true. People need government is True; people need democracy is true. Of course, truth can be reached, easily in fact. [Porter's First Law of Human Behavior](#) states...

"People see, remember, know, understand, and do what they want to see, remember, know, understand, and do." In other words, truth is useful; Truth may or may not be useful. Whenever an assertion of truth or Truth is useful, an epistemological red flag should go up. Just where is the independent evidence?

It is Truth that is difficult, but not impossible to reach. We must seek Truth that is more than useful. We must seek Truth independent of human perception or predilection. Yeshua is not only the way and the life, He is the Truth.

<sup>5</sup>Intriguingly, some of the most disparate valleys between religions are based on this assertion. One new religion, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, for example, asserts with proper action on earth, humans upon birth go from a previous, premortal spiritual state to a deity level of status. Hindu beliefs presume deity like reincarnations from one life to another. Such valleys are difficult to bridge, intellectually and/or spiritually.

For those who answer this primordial call to seek Deity, some turn away—the potential reality of Deity is far too uncomfortable, too alien, and too humbling. Atheists deny the primordial wedge in our hearts; theists embrace it fully as evidence of Deity. Theists and atheists charge each other with naïveté. Both are correct, of course, because all seek Truth from and within these domains of truth.

Given these influences, constraints, and life-giving domains of truth, our path to the Rock is strewn with rocks. We stumble by turning the physical domain into an object of wonder and worship; e.g., the mountain in the clouds is where deity must live, and the mountain becomes sacred. We fall by revering the social domain created for us; e.g., since I am a \_\_\_\_\_ then I am righteous, reprehensible, or redeemed—entitlement becomes the black plague of the social domain. We stagger by transforming our psychological selves into deity; e.g., *vivo yo*. There is nothing more perverse, nor tragic, than elevating human to deity.

We humans will nonetheless seek Deity in all these domains. False prophets will abound. Rascals will proliferate, and the Truth will be adulterated into just another truth. The purpose of this class, then, is to identify the rascals, purify the religion, and roam with Romans. Just as the Secret Service easily knows counterfeit, not by studying counterfeit bills, but by studying genuine bills, we study Romans. Many rocks on our path may look like the Rock, but they are not. Romans is the guide, our guide, to the real Rock.



## WHY A COURSE ON FALSE RELIGIONS USING THE BOOK OF ROMANS AS A TEXTBOOK?

### 1. A definition of terms ...

- ❖ In Digging Deeper, a “course” is the interaction between three entities—the instructor, you, and Holy Spirit. My responsibility is to beseech Holy Spirit to assist me as I facilitate our interaction with the Word. Your responsibility is to beseech Holy Spirit to assist you as you interact with me and the Word. His responsibility is, as always, to point you and me in our interactions to the Word, i.e., the Christ.
- ❖ “False” means inconsistent with logical, empirical, or theological evidence. For example, it is false theologically to claim God can do anything. It is illogical for a holy God to do evil. And, it is empirically inconsistent with the nature of God to do evil things. Thus, God can not do anything.
- ❖ “Religion” ([2356](#), θρησκεια) is the practice of one’s faith, how one worships; i.e., when we believe certain things about God’s will for us as individuals and as His creation, we act on those beliefs. These acts are our religion. Just as beliefs can be false, so can our acts (see James 1:27).

ROAMING ROMANS MINDBYTE NO. 1—  
IF OUR SALVATION IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON  
HAVING PERFECT DOCTRINE, WHY BE  
CONCERNED ABOUT DOCTRINAL,  
THEOLOGICAL, OR PRAGMATIC ERRORS  
REGARDING GOD?

“Romans,” written by Paul the apostle as inspired by Holy Spirit, is the epitome of Scripture. Romans presents an argument by argument case for resolving the quintessential human problem:

**HOW CAN DEITY, HOLY & SOVEREIGN, JUST & INFINITE ACCEPT  
A HUMAN WHO IS UNHOLY & INFERIOR, UNJUST & FINITE?**

2. Why use Romans as the textbook? False religions abound. False thoughts abound, there among “them” and here within “us.” Romans is the best book in the Bible to demonstrate God’s will for us. It is the genuine article. When we know Romans, truly know it by making it part of us (*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.* – Psalm 119:11), we easily recognize counterfeit beliefs and religions. Even though it is the “best,” it is not of course the only book which clarifies God’s will for us. Ergo, while this class focuses upon Romans, we will strive to bring in the entire Word of God to illustrate, explain, and enhance our understanding of Romans.
3. Why should you persevere in this course on Roaming Romans?
  - ¶ “Persevere?” It takes considerable effort to study the Bible seriously. Just like college, Bible study is not for the faint of heart. And Romans? Take your Lipitor. Unlike college, however, there is no pre-requisite for Roaming Romans. Bring your Bible, a humble heart, and a teachable spirit. Holy Spirit will do the rest.
  - ¶ When you share the Word with others, misunderstanding Romans is like driving a semi without a steering wheel.
  - ¶ If you want to share the Word, knowing Romans is like elementary school. You cannot understand the value of 3.1416 unless you understand  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Romans may seem elementary at times, and as advanced calculus at other times, but it is absolutely critical when sharing the Christ with others.
  - ¶ If you want to continue to share the Word, know knowing Romans is critical to your success. If you already know Romans, then you need to help others. If you are unfamiliar with Romans, then people in your life will suffer—that is unacceptable (see Mark 9:42 and James 3:1).
  - ¶ Whether sharing Christ through words or a life of worship, Romans teaches us not only the content of the gospel, but how the gospel is to be manifested in our minds, words to others, and in our daily life. “Tangibilitize.”



**ROAMING ROMANS MINDBYTE NO. 2 –**

**“TANGIBILITIZE.” WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR BEING PATRIOTIC?**

## BACKGROUND CHECK: YOU, YOUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY, AND ROMANS

---

In order to understand Romans, you need to do a series of background checks. You need to understand yourself. You need a background on your spiritual maturity. And finally, you need to understand the background of Romans as a letter to the Christians of 50-68AD (CE “Christ’s Era”). Romans will challenge you—specifically, Holy Spirit will test you, but He will only begin from where you are on your journey to find the Rock. That’s His job; yours is to listen to His counsel.

1. A background check on you. Here are three questions about which you need to meditate and pray:

- Q How will you benefit by your active participation in and contribution to RR?
- Q How will you measure your success in RR?
- Q What will keep you going in RR when it gets tough? (It will.)

### ROAMING ROMANS HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #1—

Please provide via email or text, or printed copy your answer to these three questions. You may assume your answers will be shared with your fellow sojourners in Roaming Romans. Please do this by:

---

2. A background check on your spiritual maturity. Please respond to the brief inventory below. We will revisit this inventory toward the end of Roaming Romans.

### SPIRITUAL INVENTORY

Below you will find a list of statements by people sharing their feelings about their spiritual journey in life. Please circle the response which best indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement as it describes your feelings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. I believe in God, even though I am unsure who God is and how God is manifested.					
B. While I understand God quite well, I am unsure of how to put that understanding into practice.					
C. Correcting false beliefs about God are more important than doing what God wants.					
D. While Jesus was a great teacher and prophet, I am unsure He was actually, fully God.					
E. The beauty and reality of the universe is sufficient evidence for the existence of God.					
F. God is best understood by the nature and content of His commandments.					
G. There must be logical, empirical, <u>and</u> theological evidence to support my beliefs regarding God.					
H. Obeying God's commandments is more important than believing in God.					
I. The purpose of religion is to save people from their sin.					
J. The purpose of religion is to do righteous deeds.					
K. The purpose of religion is to get people to submit to God.					
L. The purpose of religion is to know God.					
M. There must be logical, empirical, <u>or</u> theological evidence to support my beliefs regarding God.					
N. I would still practice Christianity even if I knew I were <u>not</u> going to heaven when I die.					

### 3. A background check on Romans.

Author. Paul has been thought for almost two thousand years to be the one inspired to write Romans by Holy Spirit. The text makes this claim as well (1:4). As an apostle, not only does Paul asserts his responsibility to be God's vessel for Truth (1 Corinthians 9:1-2), Peter also affirms this role (2 Peter 3:15-16).

When and Where. Romans was probably written circa 57CE, about 30 years after Christ's resurrection, most likely while he was on his third missionary journey. He is on his way back to Jerusalem with monies to assist famine-ravaged believers. Because Paul mentions Phoebe of Cenchrea (about 6 miles from Corinth) and Paul's host Gaius of Corinth, Romans was probably written from Cenchrea or Corinth.

**ROAMING ROMANS MINDBYTE NO. 3 —  
WHAT IS THE VALUE OF KNOWING  
ROMANS WAS ORIGINALLY PENNED  
AROUND 57CE?**

Why. Best answered at the close of this course, but remember nonetheless Paul has to answer to a variety of perspectives on Father God, sin, Holy Spirit, salvation, the Christ, the Law, faith, and most importantly—the source of righteousness. You will note he develops a well-developed brief on what is the source of righteousness and illustrates how that righteousness is manifested in a variety of key contexts. If you read/listen for the “legal brief” arguments he is presenting, you will understand more fully “why” he was inspired to write Romans. Questions energized Paul. They will energize you as well.

Whether looking for Biblical orthodoxy or orthopraxy in the Christian faith, you begin with Romans. Paul answers these three key questions:

- Q Do human beings need to be reconciled to Deity? Or, is submission to Deity our goal? Or, integration (being at one) with Deity?
- Q If so, on what basis is a person reconciled to Deity? Their recognition of the universe as Deity-created? Their recognition and obedience to Deity's commands? Their recognition and trust in Deity? Who does the reconciliation? What is the price of reconciliation? Who pays this price? Why was this price paid? To whom is the payment made?
- Q How does one resolve the need to obey Deity with the recognition that perfect obedience is neither possible nor inherently holy? In other words, to what extent is obedience to Deity's commands mutually exclusive with trust in Deity?

**ROAMING ROMANS MINDBYTE NO. 4 —  
WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT? TO BE  
SAVED FROM OUR EVIL (SINS)? TO  
SUBMIT OURSELVES TO GOD? TO BE  
ONE WITH GOD? TO AVOID PERDITION?  
TO AVOID LIVING LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN?  
TO LIVE LIFE AGAIN?**

## CONCERN EPISTEMOLOGICAL

---

“Epistemology”—a study of how you know what you know. If you’re like the Apostle Thomas, you do not believe anything until you have seen it/felt it/smelled it/sensed it for yourself. You’re an **empiricist**, epistemologically. If you’re like the Christians at Berea, you do not believe anything until you have had it verified by a reliable source—a holy text, a person of impeccable reputation, and/or archaeological artifacts. You’re an **historian**. If you do not believe anything until you have experienced it emotionally, mentally, and/or physically, you’re an **artist**. Of course, epistemology is much more complex than my rather crude, tri-partite analysis would suggest, but knowing on what basis you hold, and I hold, things to be true is critical for a successful understanding of Romans. For example, consider this Cult Dilemma:

CULT DILEMMA AND ANALYSIS	
DILEMMA	YOUR ANALYSIS: PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE POSITIVE AND ONE NEGATIVE COMMENT

They believe all other views of God are incorrect. This religious sect uses cannibalism as part of its worship practices. Furthermore, they deny the existence of God, and not only tolerate, but also practice homosexuality in their groups. They do not accept the government as the final authority.

- Q On what basis (epistemology) did you provide positive and negative comments on this cult dilemma?
- Q Should we try to understand Scripture, in this case Romans, with an empirical, historical, or artistic epistemology?
- Q What kinds of questions are best answered by an empirical epistemology? Historical? Artistic?
- Q If the goal is to hit home runs, which game would be the most functional? Tennis, badminton, football, baseball, or basketball?
- Q How do you overcome the inherent errors which come with analyzing dilemmas like the one above?

### ROAMING ROMANS HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #2—

Please provide via email, or text, or printed copy your answer to this question:

*What kind of evidentiary support for Paul’s claim in Romans 1:16-17 should be used: Empirical, Historical, or Artistic? Why? Please do this by:*