

## Introductory Material for Romans

(taken from the ESV Study Bible)

### Who wrote it?

- The Apostle Paul wrote Romans.

### When was it written?

- Paul probably wrote Romans from the city of Corinth on his third missionary journey in A.D. 57 (Acts 20:2-3)

### To whom was it written?

- The title of the book indicates that the letter was written to all of the Christian churches in Rome.

### Why was it written?

- The theme of Romans is the revelation of God's judging and saving righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the cross of Christ, God judges sin and yet at the same time manifests his saving mercy. Due to the content of Romans, it is likely that Paul wrote this letter to address many Jew-Gentile related issues that existed between Jews and Gentiles in the church in Rome. The church in Rome was likely started by Jews in Rome yet as time passed and Gentiles came to faith, the church would have experienced various differences that caused tension in the church. The various themes found in Romans confirm the likelihood that tension existed between Jewish and Gentile Christians that needed to be addressed and sorted out. Lastly, Paul wanted the Christians in Rome to rally about the gospel so that Rome would become the base of operations by which he could proclaim the gospel in Spain (Romans 15:22-24).



### **The Setting of Romans**

(c. A.D. 57)

Paul probably wrote Romans from Corinth during his third missionary journey (Acts 20:2–3). Rome was the epicenter of the powerful Roman Empire, ruling over many of the great ancient centers of Western civilization. Paul had established the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1–11).

## KEY THEMES IN ROMANS

1. All people are sinners, therefore all, without exception, need to be saved from their sin.	1:18–3:20; 5:12–19
2. The Mosaic law, though good and holy, cannot counteract the power of sin.	2:12–29; 3:9–20; 5:20; 7:1–25; 9:30–10:8
3. Through the righteousness of God, sin is judged and salvation is provided.	3:21–26; 5:12–19; 6:1–10; 7:1–6; 8:1–4
4. With the coming of Jesus Christ, the former age of redemptive history has passed away and the new age of redemptive history has begun.	1:1–7; 3:21–26; 5:1–8:39
5. The atoning death of Jesus Christ is central to God’s plan of salvation.	3:21–26; 4:23–25; 5:6–11, 15–19; 6:1–10; 7:4–6; 8:1–4
6. Justification is by faith alone.	1:16–4:25; 9:30–10:21
7. There is a certain hope of future glory for those who are in Christ Jesus.	5:1–8:39
8. Those who have died with Christ and who enjoy the work of the Holy Spirit are enabled to live a new life.	2:25–29; 6:1–7:6; 8:1–39
9. God is sovereign in salvation; he works all things according to his plan.	9:1–11:36
10. God fulfills his saving promises to both Jews and Gentiles.	1:18–4:25; 9:1–11:36; 15:8–13
11. The grace of the gospel calls Christians to personal holiness, mutual service, good citizenship, and wholehearted neighbor-love in Christ.	12:1–13:14

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### INSTRUCTIONS:

- ***For Life Groups:*** Pick one question from the **CONTEXT, OBSERVATION, and MEANING** sections. Spend the bulk of your time in the **APPLICATION** section by choosing at least three questions.
- ***For Personal Study:*** Answer every question in every section.

### The COMA Method: Context Observation Meaning Application

The COMA method comes from the book “One to One Bible Reading” by David Helm and is a simple and holistic way to read, understand, interpret, and apply the Scriptures to your life. Its simplicity helps you study the Bible personally, one on one, or in group settings while staying faithful to the text. This method provides the tools to draw out the author’s intended meaning and forces the reader to ask good questions of the text in order to understand it clearly in order to apply it appropriately. Please use this method anytime you study the Bible and pick up a copy of “One to One Bible Reading” by David Helm wherever books are sold.

*\*Some questions are original while others are adapted from David Helm’s “One to One Bible Reading” book, Warren Wiersbe’s “BE Series” books, the Serendipity Study Bible, or other Life Application Study Bible notes.*

## Romans 1:8-17

### CONTEXT

1. What has just been said in the passage prior to this one? How do these sections connect/relate to one another?

### OBSERVATION: *What is the difference between the biblical audience and us?*

1. Using the ESV translation, identify how many times Paul uses the word “you” or “your(s)” in verses 8-15. What does this indicate? What can we learn?
  - a. What is the primary focus for Paul in these verses?
  - b. Compare these verses with Paul’s writings in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9. What do you observe?
2. What is the focus of verses 16-17?

### MEANING: *What is the timeless truth of this passage?*

1. What do verses 8-15 teach us about the Church (the body of Christ) and its purpose and relationship to one another?
2. What does this passage teach you about God?
3. Identify multiple timeless principles from verses 16 and 17.
4. What do verses 14-17 teach us about personal evangelism and evangelism in general?
5. What is the primary truth of verse 17? (See Romans 3:21-22, 2 Cor. 5:21, and Philipians 3:9 as well) How important is this?

**APPLICATION:** *How should the text change my view of God and myself?*

1. In verses 8-15, Paul was clearly focused on the spiritual well-being of the believers in Rome. Compare Paul's desire for the people in the church with your own. In terms of your relationship to other believers, do you:
  - a. Thank God for them?
  - b. Pray for them without ceasing?
  - c. Long to see them?
  - d. Long to strengthen their faith?
  - e. Long to be mutually encouraged by them?
  - f. Desire to preach the gospel to them? (Remind them of gospel truths)
  
  - g. In what ways can you (and your family) express your love, concern, care, and thankfulness to the believers at The Mission Church this week? This month? This year?
  
  - h. Identify a Paul-like person who encouraged you in your faith. Reach out to that person to thank them for their encouragement and share how their influence spurred you on in your walk with Christ.
  
2. (v.14-17) Paul was eager to preach the gospel everywhere he went. What about you? Are you "eager" to share the gospel with others? Why or why not?
  - a. What barriers keep you from sharing the gospel?
  - b. Why might someone be ashamed of the gospel?
  - c. Are you prepared to share the gospel if a lost person asked you about it today? Why or why not? What are you going to do if you're NOT ready? Are you willing to receive training at TMC?
  - d. What method do you use to share the gospel?
  - e. Who do you need to share the gospel with? Pray for an open door and boldness!
  - f. See the attached worksheet to learn a simple method of sharing the gospel.**
  
3. How does verse 17 change the way you view yourself? The way God sees you in Christ?
  
4. What does this passage teach you about being a follower of Christ? What's your next step?

# Three Circles Evangelism Guide: *How to share the gospel*

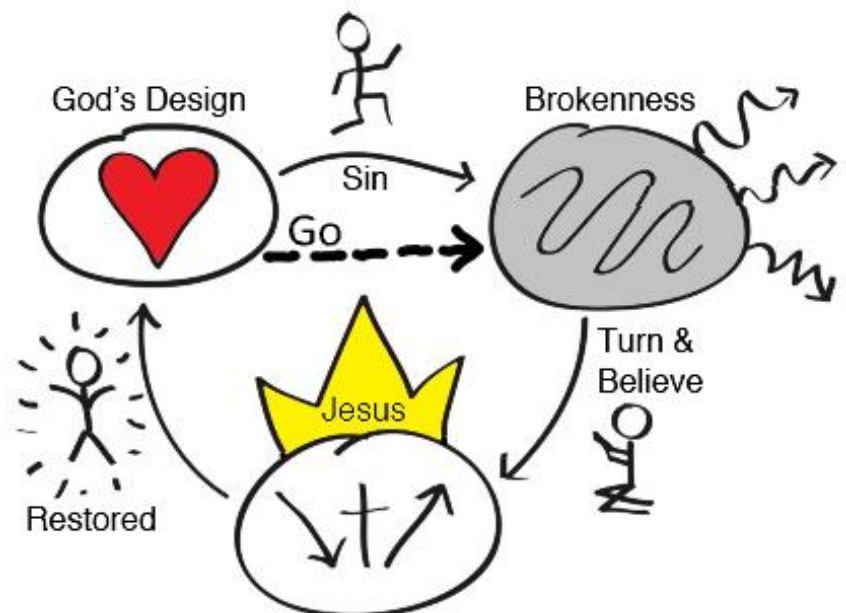
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## Introduction

This guide is designed to help Christians share their faith by incorporating a tool called three circles evangelism. This tool provides a method of turning everyday conversations about brokenness into everyday conversations about Christ. The goal of '3 Circles' is to equip Christians to share their faith with non-Christians.

## Overview of 3 circles

- This tool helps Christians to share the gospel using three simple circles. These represent (1) God's Design, (2) Brokenness and (3) the Gospel. They also illustrate how accepting and

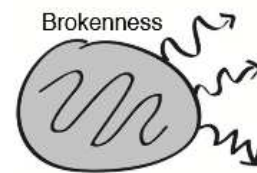


submitting to Jesus will grow faith and lead to God's perfect design.

- "Three Circles" is something that people easily understand.
- All you need to have is a pen and paper, or napkin, or hand!
- The method provides quick answers to common questions of faith:
  - What was GOD's DESIGN?
  - How did we depart from God's Design through SIN?
  - Can anyone escape BROKENNESS and what does BROKENNESS feel like?

## Explaining the gospel using three circles

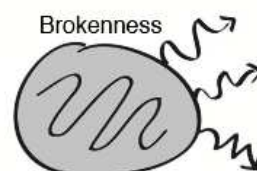
1- Draw a circle and label it "Brokenness". Draw several squiggly arrows out from it and looping back to 'Brokenness'. We are trying to show no matter what we do it just boomerangs back to brokenness.



**Conversation Example:** *"We live in a world of brokenness, full of hurting people hurting each other. We try escaping brokenness by focusing on career, gaining money, overachieving, drugs, gambling, or alcohol. But all this just leads to greater brokenness. I overachieved, and had a long string of failed relationships. But in the end I just felt more pain."*

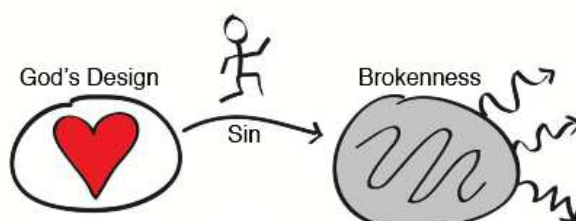
2- On the left, draw a second circle, and write "God's Design" above.

**Conversation Example:** *"Brokenness was not God's original design! God's design was perfect, like Himself, with no brokenness present."* (Draw heart to symbolize God's love).



3- Draw an arrow from God's Design to Brokenness and label it "Sin".

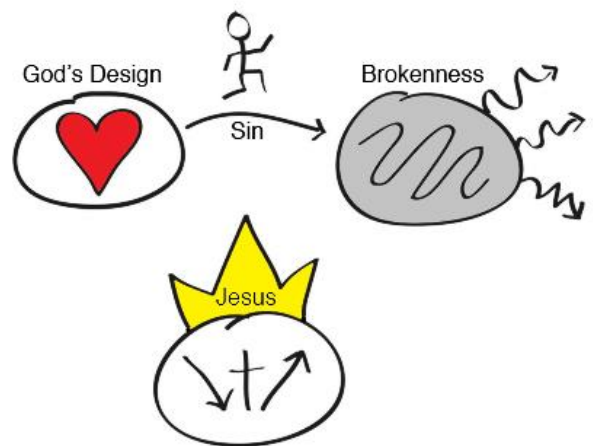
**Conversation Example:** *"Each of us has rebelled against God and walked away from His perfect design. The Bible calls this sin, and this leaves us in brokenness. Are you familiar with the concept of sin? Do you see this in your own life?"*





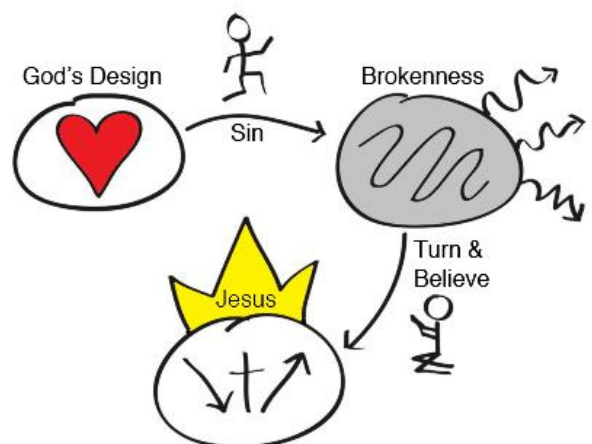
4- Draw a third circle below and between the first two (forming an upside-down triangle of circles), and write “Jesus” above it.

**Conversation Example:** “God saw we could not escape our brokenness on our own, so God demonstrated his love towards us!” Now draw a down-arrow below Jesus’ name inside the circle. “God sent Jesus to the earth. Jesus was perfect and lived a perfect life, because He was God.” Next draw a cross next to the down-arrow. “He suffered a horrible death on a cross to take our sin upon Himself.” Next draw an up-arrow next to the cross. “Then Jesus rose again proving that He has power over death! He’s alive!”



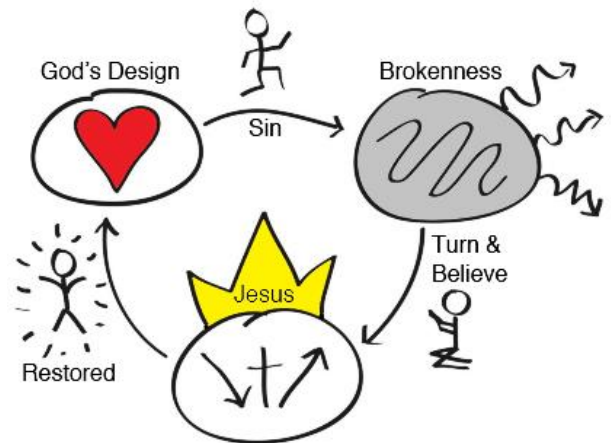
5- Draw a line from Brokenness to Jesus, draw a king’s crown and write Turn and Believe (or follow).

**Conversation Example:** “Jesus tells all people to repent and **turn** from your sins. He also tells us to **believe** that He died for your sin and that God raised Him from the dead and to follow Jesus as king of your life. Jesus promises that if you do that you will be forgiven and restored back to God’s design!”



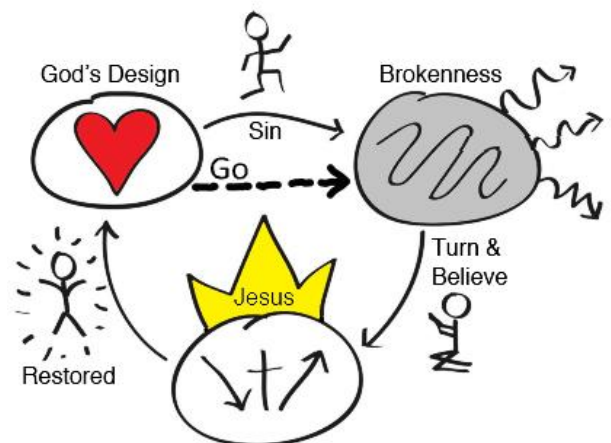
6- Draw a line from Jesus to God's Design and label it "Restored."

**Conversation Example:** *"If we turn and believe in Jesus we can leave this world of brokenness and be restored into a relationship with God and pursue His design."*



7- Draw a line from God's Design to Brokenness and write "Go" above it.

**Conversation Example:** *"More than that, God then sends us back into this "Brokenness" to tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ."*



8- After the Diagram is drawn

**Conversation Example:** Ask them, *"Where do you see yourself? Are you in God's perfect design or are you currently in brokenness?"*

There answer to this will help you understand where they see themselves in relation to God and give them an opportunity to respond to follow Jesus. This can be followed by your testimony.

## Group Practice

Break off into pairs and practice the "Three Circles" evangelism method on each other.



# The 15-Second Testimony

Personal testimony is so powerful because it demonstrates that God has power to change our lives! It is a story of contrasts between our old life and our new life in Christ. But one of the biggest mistakes in sharing our testimony is that we share too much detail. Sometimes the listener won't give you enough time to get to the part where Jesus has changed your life. The other problem is that we are too fearful to talk with an unbeliever for any appreciable amount of time—so we just don't share at all.

This amazing method makes it really easy to tell your story by just using four simple words or phrases. You will note that this is a very scripted method, but this is done purposely to keep you on track and to avoid getting wordy. Remember, it should only take 15 seconds!

Here it is:

Think of **TWO WORDS** that describe your life before you met Jesus.

Think of **TWO WORDS** that describe how Jesus changed your life.

Then share as follows:

***“There was a time in my life when I was (**insecure**) and (**angry**).***

***Then I met Jesus, put my trust in Him, and made Him number one in my life.***

***Now I am (**secure**) and (**full of joy**).***

***Do you have a story like this?”***

That last question is very important, as it invites the other person to share their own experience. When you practice this method in a group, use that last phrase to pass it along to someone else in the group to practice it...and on and on.

If you became a believer at a very young age and don't remember your life before Jesus, then think of two words that describe a time of crisis or uncertainty. Then just omit the phrase “I met Jesus” and just say, “Then I put my trust in Jesus and made Him number one in my life.” Make it work for your situation.

Most importantly:

- practice it now!
- start using it by sharing with unbelievers!
- teach other believers how to share their 15-second testimony as well!