

STUDY NOTES

A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “Life Change and Working Hard in Christ” on 7/23/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 16:1-16

(read if you want to try it!)

BEGINNINGS

All these crazy names remind us that we have no control over our beginnings. We cannot control the family that we are born into. We cannot control where we are born. We cannot control our names.

- *Share with each other a little bit about where you began (i.e. what your family looked like, where you are from, and what experiences with religion was like for you).*

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

There are nine women—both married and single—listed in this list of names. Many of them have mention of how hard they worked, or how they were fellow laborers with Paul. Yes, there is controversy surrounding the role of women, but here it is plainly obvious that women have a critical role in the church.

- *How is it encouraging to you to see how active women—both married and single—were in the early church?*

WORKING HARD IN CHRIST

Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila hosted churches in their home at every city they lived in. They were deeply committed to Christ, to the church, and to Paul. At one point, it even seems as if they saved Paul’s life. Many others in the list also have mention of how hard they worked in Christ.

When was the last time you asked yourself: “How am I working hard for Christ?”

- *In what ways do you work for Christ at your convenience?*
- *In what ways do you feel like you work hard for Christ?*

We probably need to be more like a couple sisters in this passage—Tryphaena and Tryphosa. They belonged to an aristocratic family, as their names mean “dainty” and “delicate”. But Paul calls them “workers”! Apparently, their Christian convictions pushed them to lay aside their life of luxury to *work hard* for the Lord.

- *What do you honestly think Paul would say about you if he was writing to New City Church?*

JESUS CHANGES YOUR LIFE

In the church at Rome, there were countless stories about how Jesus changed the lives of people, of whole families, and of whole cities. Jesus changed the lives of Herod the Great’s family (who was the Herod that tried to kill baby Jesus). Jesus changed the lives of the family of the closest advisor to the harsh Roman Emperor, Claudius. Jesus changed the lives of Rufus’ family. All of this was possible because someone in those families made the commitment to follow Jesus.

When we come to Christ, he makes us new creatures—he literally changes our lives.

- *Sometimes it might not feel like your life has changed since following Jesus. However, reflect on how your life actually has changed since following him. Share with the group some of these ways.*
- *In what ways is the Holy Spirit leading you to continue changing to be more like Jesus? How could that change your family, your friend circles, your work, or your neighborhood?*
- *Pray with each other for strength to obey him.*