

## Romans Intro Part I, Daily Devotions

### ☐ Monday - Paul, the Pharisee.

Paul (formerly Saul) grew up in a family which apparently had a strong Pharisaic tradition for several generations; he called himself “a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees” (Acts 23:6). The Pharisees were active from around 150 BC until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. The word “pharisee” comes from the Hebrew *parush*, which means separated, and they called for the separation of the Jewish people from the pagan empires in which they were immersed. Such separation is an important Christian theme taught in the New Testament (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18). Yet, through the years, the Pharisees’ call for separation mutated into hypocrisy and legalism. Jesus called the Pharisees “blind guides” (Mt. 23:16), “whitewashed tombs” (Mt. 23:27) and “a brood of vipers” (Mt. 23:33). Externally, the Pharisees looked pious and holy, but their hearts were devoid of any real virtue (Mt. 23:23). Dear friend, there is a little pharisee that lives inside of you, full of self-righteousness and hypocrisy, that must be put to death every day. Indeed, Paul the ex-pharisee, would later write, “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31) Read Galatians 2:20

### ☐ Tuesday - Paul, the Zealous Persecutor.

Paul (aka Saul) was “extremely zealous for his ancestral traditions” (Gal. 1:14), and “as to zeal a persecutor of the church” (Phil. 3:6). But Paul would later realize that it was a “zeal for God without knowledge” (Rom. 10:2); that is, He was zealous without a true knowledge of God. He was religious, but not saved. He had studied in the finest rabbinical school in Israel, he had the finest rabbi in Gamaliel, he might have been first in his class, but he didn’t know God! He knew some things about God, but he didn’t know God. And if Christ had not apprehended Paul on the road to Damascus he would have gone to hell with a head full of theology but a heart that was as hard as rock! O how many who call themselves Christians and have even had some religious education will find themselves in hell? (Mt. 7:21-23). Dear friend, is that you?! Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith! Read 2 Corinthians 13:5

### ☐ Wednesday - Paul, Confronted by Christ.

Paul wasn’t seeking Christ. He didn’t raise his hand, or respond to an altar call, or say a sinner’s prayer. Paul was saved by Christ crashing into his life, by the Spirit producing an overwhelming conviction that he was dreadfully sinful, and by an unshakable belief that to live is Christ and to die is gain. Read Romans 10:9-10

### ☐ Thursday - Paul, the Persecuted.

Saul persecuted Christians to death (Acts 7:58-8:1). After his conversion, Saul (aka Paul) was himself persecuted for being a Christian. Jesus said, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (Jn. 15:20). But don’t be surprised by adversity as though some strange thing were happening to you (1 Pet. 4:12), because the same sufferings are being experienced by your brethren throughout the world (1 Pet. 5:9). Jesus said that in this fallen, sin-cursed world you will have tribulation (Jn. 16:33). But don’t be afraid, Christian, God is in control. “For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ” (1 Cor. 1:5). Read Romans 8:28

### ☐ Friday - Paul, from Pernicious Persecutor to Prolific Pastor.

The apostle Paul called himself the “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15) and “the very least of all saints” (Eph. 3:8). He said, “For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:9-10). That’s the Gospel! God can take the worst and make them one of the best. This once vile persecutor of the church traveled over 10,000 miles on foot to bring the Gospel to over 50 cities, planted at least 20 churches, and wrote 14 epistles (about 28% of the New Testament). So then, dear Christian, what are you doing for Christ? What have you done since you first believed? Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31