

RD 101 Series Lesson #10

Paul's Epistles - Following The Master-Builder's Plans

Intro: Romans through Philemon, written by the Apostle Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, present a detailed, structured, and complete organized plan for accomplishing “godly edification” in the life of the believer. Each is written for a specific purpose, and they function together to build in the soul of the believer “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:13

A simple illustration that we can all relate to is building a house. You start with a foundation, then build the interior and exterior walls, installing the electrical and plumbing work, put up the roof, complete the interior, and then move in and live in the house! So too, the layout of Paul's epistles follow a similar idea in establishing a “building” of sound doctrine in the soul of the believer, and once the house is built, we “move in” and live and function in the house.

This study will provide a simple and very basic presentation of the purpose and intention of each of Paul's epistles.

Some important notes to remember.

1. Paul's epistles follow the sequence of edification identified in 2 Tim. 3:16 of doctrine, reproof, correction, providing “instruction in righteousness.
2. Each book prepares the reader for the information that is taught in the book that follows.
3. Each book is built upon and adds to information and instruction presented in the previous book/books.
4. The order of Paul's epistles in the Bible is not the sequence in which they were written. Rather, they are in doctrinal order...that is, the order necessary to accomplish edification. Though the timing of the writing of each book is very helpful and very important in understanding the ministry and apostleship of the apostle Paul, it is not as important as the doctrinal sequence in which they are placed in the Bible.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF GRACE - Romans through Galatians

Romans - To establish a four fold foundation of grace in the soul of the believer. Rom. 1:11-12; 16:25-26

1 Corinthians - To equip the believer to “see” and appreciate “the preaching of the cross” as the “power and wisdom of God” and thus to have them “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.” 1:10, 17-18, 23-24; 2:5

This book provides “reproof” in response to teaching that is “contrary” to the doctrines taught in Romans. Rom. 16:17-18

2 Corinthians - To enable the believer to know and appreciate God as “the God of all comfort” and to understand that the primary source of comfort is His Word! This will enable us to build into our soul the conviction that we must turn to the Word of God for our strength, comfort, understanding, growth, and life thus appreciating it as our “all in all.” 2 Cor. 1:3-7; 4:7-18. This book provides “reproof” in response to teaching that is “contrary” to the doctrines taught in Romans.

Galatians - To establish a clear and simple understanding of the gospel of the grace of God in the believer. To give the believer an appreciation of the source and uniqueness of this gospel, thus enabling the believer to guard against being “bewitched” by presentations that actually pervert the gospel of Christ. Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1; 5:1-4
This book provides “correction” regarding the clarity of the gospel of grace as taught in Romans.

THE EXULTED POSITION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST - Eph. through Col.

Ephesians - To equip the believer to understand that the church, the body of Christ, is the result of the eternal plan and purpose that God had “...before the foundation of the world...” with the goal being to present it to Himself a “glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle,” being “...holy and without blame before Him in love.” To enlighten the believer so they see and appreciate that the realm of this purpose and intention is “the heavenly places.” Eph. 1:3-4; 5:27; 1:20-23, 2:6

Philippians - To equip and enable the believer to abound in God’s love and grace, and, thus, to “approve things that are excellent,” so that our life here will reflect our “conversation” which is in heaven. Phil. 1:9-11; 3:20-21
This book provides “reproof” in relationship to a departure from the doctrine of the church, the body of Christ, as taught in Ephesians.

Colossians - To show how Christ will “have the preeminence” in all things. To ground the believer in understanding and grasping the glorious position that we have in Christ being made “complete” in Him “which is the head of all principality and power.” Col. 1:13-20; 2:9-10,19. This book provides “correction” in relationship to the doctrines taught about Christ and His church in Ephesians.

THE EXPECTATION OF CHRIST’S COMING - 1 & 2 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians - To give the believers a clear understanding and an appreciation about the fact that Christ will return for His church, which is His body, as well as to enable us to understand the purpose of His return for us. To also instruct the believers that His return for the body of Christ is different from

His return after “the day of the Lord” for Israel in connection with the resumption of the prophetic program. 1 Thes. 1:9-10, 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-18; 5:1-11

2 Thessalonians - To re-stabilize the believers regarding false teaching regarding the timing of Christ’s return for the church, which is His body. 2 Thes. 2:1-17. This book provides both “reproof” and “correction” in relationship to the doctrine taught in 1 Thes. about Christ’s coming for us as members of His body, as well as His coming for Israel.

FELLOWSHIP IN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY - 1 Timothy through Philemon

1 Timothy - To reinforce the truth that there is “no other doctrine” that is to be taught to the believers today other than the “sound doctrine” that Christ committed to the trust of the apostle Paul for this dispensation of grace. To provide details about the basic structure, functioning, and spiritual protection of the local assembly. 1 Tim. 1:3-11

2 Timothy - To instruct, equip, and enable believers to stand strong in the midst of the church’s complete departure from the message of grace. 1 Tim. 1:6-9

Titus - To instruct believers how to reorganize and reestablish local groups of saints for the purpose of edifying each other after the great departure from the faith has occurred. To enable the saints to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” Titus 1:5; 2:1,9

Philemon - To present a reallife living picture of what the doctrines of the grace of God can and should look like when functioning in the life of believers. Phile. 1-25