

*Outrageous*  
GRACE  
EVERY  
DAY

Mary DeMuth



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Verses marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org))

Verses marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Verses marked ESV are taken from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Emily Weigel Design

Cover photo © SimpleThingsHere / Shutterstock

Mary E. DeMuth is represented by David Van Diest from the Van Diest Literary Agency, 34947 SE Brooks Road, Boring, OR 97009.

## **Outrageous Grace Every Day**

Copyright © 2019 by Mary DeMuth

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

[www.harvesthousepublishers.com](http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com)

ISBN 978-0-7369-7649-7 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-7650-3 (eBook)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: DeMuth, Mary E., author.

Title: Outrageous grace every day / Mary E. DeMuth.

Description: Eugene : Harvest House Publishers, 2019.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019015143 (print) | ISBN 9780736976497 (pbk.)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible. Romans--Devotional literature.

Classification: LCC BS2665.54 .D46 2019 (print) | LCC BS2665.54 (ebook) |

DDC 242/.5--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019015143>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019981441>

**All rights reserved.** No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

**Printed in the United States of America**

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 / VP-GL / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## Before You Start This Transformational Journey...

I must admit: I have been scared to start this book. Though I've done plenty of preparation and praying, I am one of those souls quite intimidated by the book of Romans. It's thick and rich and long and multilayered. Who am I to shepherd you through it?

What I can say is this: I am a worshipper of the God who tenaciously pursued me—a sin-scarred child rescued by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and a grateful recipient of the hope the Holy Spirit has given me.

While I consulted scholars and commentaries aplenty to better understand the nuances and intent of Paul's letter to the Romans, I first did something different. While praying about the writing, I sensed God asking me to read the entire book of Romans, all sixteen chapters, every day for three months. One day of reading for every day of this devotional. In that repetitive immersion, themes began to appear. I started feeling the rhythm of Paul's words and immersed myself in the grand story he recounted.

Romans is a long summary of the entire story of God—how he began the world, chose and delivered a people, then sent his Son so the entire world could be likewise chosen and delivered. It's a narrative of good versus evil. So much of the language within its pages is that of the law court—a judicial pardoning of sinners. It's a beautiful apologetic on the existence of God, and it's a cautionary tale for all of us who would rather live on our own terms rather than surrendering to the One who made us. There is an agonizing longing in Paul's

heartbeat—his sincere desire to see the entire world come to terms with Jesus, the One who transformed him from church persecutor to planter.

This is a love story, of the Savior who leaves the ninety-nine and pursues the reckless one, of the design all along of God's redemptive plan for humanity. All this sounds ethereal, but it's actually down-to-earth. This theology has feet. And if you linger in these pages every day for three months, your walk will be changed. Not by my words, but by Scripture's.

Immersing myself in Romans for 90 days has settled my heart. I know Jesus made me right (justified) before God the Father. There's nothing I can do to alter the reality of what he accomplished on the cross. For someone who has perennially felt insecure, this is yet another aspect of the Good News—our security cannot be based on our feelings, our failures, or our family of origin. No, our security is based on the faithfulness of our Father. And we show our gratitude not by working tirelessly in our own strength with fear as our faulty motivation. No, we respond by having simple belief, in trusting that Jesus accomplished everything on the cross. His "It is finished" is the truth, and there's nothing we can do to earn anything more.

That grace, dear one, is settled. It is bedrock. We cannot shake it. It cannot dissipate.

In my three-month journey, I also had to remind myself that Paul didn't write this book to me or any other person. No, his was a letter to a group of people who gathered together to worship Jesus. So ingrained am I in American individualism that I'm prone to forget the powerful truth that we are the Body of Christ—all of us. It's not me; it's us. And we grow best alongside one another. We experience Jesus together through the varied gifts he has given us. So here's a challenge for you. Don't just pick up this devotional and read it by yourself. Grab a few friends and read it concurrently, then discuss what you've learned every week or so. You'll double your interaction with the text and cement the beautiful truths to your soul in a way that isolated reading can't.

You're about to embark on an adventure through this wide-reaching

book of the Bible—one whose tendrils weave through the Old Testament and into the New Covenant. You will encounter Paul's bedrock theology, a robust view of the otherness of God, and a settled peace for your place in his ever-expanding kingdom. As an adopted child of God, you have an important part to play in the story of God that is both now and not yet.

Because of all that Good News, this will also be a worship journey. Even before I started writing this book, I sensed God calling me back to worship, to poetry set to words. So before we begin studying every chapter of Romans, you'll see a worship song I penned—an ode to the One who set me free and set my feet to dancing. I pray each song blesses you.

Oh dear one, you are loved. So very loved. And your God has gone to hell and back to secure that hope for you. If your trust muscle has atrophied amidst the pain and heartache of life, take this journey with me, walking through the book of Romans day by day for the next three months. And dare to do so with anticipation for what God will do in your heart. Dare to hope. As Paul writes, "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5 NASB). You are not abandoned. He lives within. And living in light of his love changes everything.

Let's begin.

# ROMANS 1

*When I read this chapter, I can't help but long to get clean  
before the Almighty God. He is everything to me,  
and I love and need his cleansing forgiveness.*

## FORGIVE ME

Lord, I've traded your glory for mine  
Ignoring your nature divine  
I've chased the opinions of man  
I'm my own clamoring fan  
Oh Lord, please forgive me

### CHORUS

Forgive me  
For preferring my will to your ways  
Forgive me  
For reveling in selfish displays  
I surrender afresh  
More of you; I'll be less  
Oh dear Lord, please forgive me

I've been greedy for unrighteous gain  
Grabbing trinkets and bits of my fame  
Lord, I worked for the treasure  
Heralding poverty, not pleasure  
Oh Lord, please forgive me

### BRIDGE

Let me boast all the more  
Of your beautiful power  
Let me shout all your worth  
My formidable tower  
You are God ever high  
Yet forgiven, I rise  
Oh Lord, please forgive me

## Day 1

### Read Romans 1:1-2

*This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures.*

ROMANS 1:1-2

Today it's hard to wrap our minds around slavery as a metaphor for our relationship with Jesus. But *slave* in this passage, *doulos* in the Greek, means exactly what you think it means: an indentured servant with few or no personal rights, signifying a relationship of servitude to a master.

But aren't we set free by Jesus's beautiful act of emancipation through the cross? In John 15:15, Jesus says he no longer calls us slaves (same word, *doulos*), but refers to us as friends. Amazing! Jesus's death and resurrection set us free to be his friends. But we, like bond servants who willingly indenture themselves to their master after emancipation, now have the freedom to exclusively serve Jesus (see Deuteronomy 15:12-17). We no longer serve ourselves, nor are we enslaved to the fleeting opinions of others. We serve Jesus only, joyfully obeying his voice because we can't bear *not* to.

Not only are we set-free slaves, but God has specifically chosen us. We are his. We are not free agents—untethered and aimless. No, we are all these things: friend, slave, an adopted child. We are wanted. Created. Sacrificed for. Loved.



In light of all that audacity, God entrusts us with a new mandate: to share the Good News (the gospel) of Jesus Christ wherever we go. Our lives are now a Christlike fragrance, infusing this broken world through the position and purpose we've uncovered. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 2:16, "To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume. And who is adequate for such a task as this?" You may not feel like an adequate *doulos*, but really, you are perfume—and perfume emits. It can't help but permeate, and that is now the reality of our lives—we woo others toward Jesus because he has infused us with this paradoxical perfume of freedom.

Go forth, dear slave, and permeate this broken world with Jesus, knowing that you were once enslaved to all sorts of sins and lusts and destructive living. We'll see this powerful before-and-after at work throughout the book of Romans—what we once were (held hostage by sin, producing all sorts of death) and who we now are (sacrificed for, loved, and adopted children of the God of the universe) and how we are to live (in newness of life through the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives audaciously within us). Romans is a book of hope, friend—a book that reminds us that nothing can separate us from God's powerful, sin-forgiving love. Pray along with me that your heart would be deeply encouraged, challenged, and changed by the Good News within its pages.

*Father, thank you that you've set me free from slavery to sin and given me the privilege of being a *doulos* in your kingdom, one who serves you with absolute joy and gratitude. Would you take me on a spiritual journey through the book of Romans? Keep my heart open to all the growth you want to inaugurate in me. I am your willing, attentive servant. Amen.*

## Day 2

### Read Romans 1:3-7

*Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.*

ROMANS 1:5

Half the joy of experiencing a sought-after vacation is the anticipation of it. We peruse pictures of the new-to-us locale, ask questions of friends who have already adventured there, and dream alongside our family as we wait together.

In Genesis, we see God giving Abram this kind of anticipatory prelude. He's told that one day the whole earth will be blessed by his offspring (12:1-3). It's a foretaste of what would unfold—a holy teasing of the Good News. And God's not-so-subtle hinting didn't stop with Abraham. No, he continued to woo the nation of Israel through forefathers, judges, kings, and prophets—pointing to the day when his Son would change everything for everyone. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus confirms he is the fulfillment of all God's promises: "Don't misunderstand why I have come," he said. "I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose." Later in Matthew, Jesus explains, "I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it" (13:17).

Jesus arrived into our sin-darkened world wrapped in the swaddling clothes of prophetic utterances and holy Scriptures—two staples of the Jewish spiritual wardrobe. And yet they missed him. Jesus told them, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life” (John 5:39-40 NASB). It would be like planning your dream vacation to Fiji only to content yourself with holding your tickets, thinking that is all there is to the experience. Today, revel in the beauty of God’s Old Testament wooing while embracing the One who brings grace and peace.

This grace and peace Paul talks about here are not fleeting; they are permanent truth—all secured through the plan of God through Jesus Christ. That is the essence of the gospel. May you grow more and more in your knowledge of his calling and your position as a well loved child of God who daily experiences needed grace and the peace that surpasses the world’s understanding.

*Father, help me live in anticipation of gospel transformation. I want to better understand your ever-unfolding plan from ancient epochs until now. Thank you for sending your Son to die for this broken world. Thank you for securing grace and peace for me, for everyone. Thank you for loving me. Help me spend my day worshipping you for all you have done. Amen.*

## Day 3

### Read Romans 1:8-12

*Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the world. God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son.*

ROMANS 1:8-9

Here we see the heart of Paul toward the people he's addressing in his letter—the Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. The word *first* here is the Greek word *proton*, which means taking a primary role. We must first thank God—not only for the people he's surrounded us with, but also for our lives, the air we breathe, and even the difficulties we face. The word *thank* has a common ring to it: *eucharisteo*—a word that means grateful. It's where we get the term *Eucharist*, which Jesus inaugurates in the last supper, where he gives thanks for the bread and wine—powerful reminders of his body and blood and essential elements of the New Covenant. This particular rendering of *eucharisteo* is present tense, which means we, like Paul, are to offer gratitude continually—all day long.

Paul transitions from gratitude to prayer, which is a powerful pattern for us to follow. We praise God for what he is doing in our midst, then we entreat him, asking him to intervene in the lives of our friends and family members. This type of prayer is similar to the kind the seventeenth-century monk Brother Lawrence practiced—a

moment-by-moment interaction with God throughout the day. He wrote, “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with GOD. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.”<sup>1</sup> This is the kind of prayer that changes the landscape of our inner world, and Paul practiced it often.

Paul’s heart for the believers in Rome is an expanded presence. Yes, he connects with them through prayer, and he reaches them with the written word, but he longs to see them in person. You can hear his pastoral heart in these words—the longing he has to be mutually encouraged. He knows that we grow best in community, not isolation, and he demonstrates a reciprocal humility here. He is not merely a teacher, but a student who anticipates receiving from them.

May all these verses inform your day, infusing it with a holy rhythm. Make it your first jump-out-of-bed choice to worship God, then continue your dialogue with him about what worries you, particularly those people he’s entrusted to your care. Then connect with others, being open to the Holy Spirit’s encouragement in the two-way street of receiving and giving. Perhaps today is the day you send a card to an ailing loved one, or take the hand of a stranger and pray for a pressing need, or simply step away from the demands of life to tell God you love him.

*Father, I want to worship you first. I want to spend my life thanking you, talking with you, hearing from you. Remind me today not merely to think about my own needs, but to offer prayer for others who need your intervention. Intersect my life with those who need to know that you love them. I choose to obey any promptings you give. I love you. Amen.*