

ROMANS

Week 12: Romans 13:1 – 16:27



JUNE 1: LIVE FOR ALL TO SEE

(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)

Romans 13:13-14 reads, *Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*

There's a strong biblical principle that says, "We are to live *in* the world, but not *of* the world." In this world, we may hear about or be invited to participate in wild parties, drunkenness, or sexual promiscuity. We may also participate in negative behaviors that aren't as visible, such as quarreling, jealousy, envy, greed, and more.

But like Christ, Paul appeals that we live decent lives for all to see. In John 13:35 Jesus says, *"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."* In other words, living good lives for all to see isn't about adhering to a list of right's and wrong's, do's and don'ts. It's simply about loving others in the same way Christ loved us.

JUNE 2: DON'T CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE

(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)

We all have a tendency to determine what is right and wrong in our own minds. When it comes to clear topics in the Scriptures - like the command to love God and love others - we would all say that's a *good* and *right* thing to do. But sometimes we determine other things are *wrong* even if they may not be.

Paul deals with this tension in Romans 14. As he wrestles with this tension, he's sure to say that the one *wrong* thing we can do is to condemn or look down on another Christian for something they've done that may not actually be *wrong*.

Some of the examples he uses include (1) Eating anything vs. eating only vegetables, (2) Thinking one day is holier than another day, (3) Drinking wine verses not drinking wine.

What's the solution presented? The NLT Life Application Study Bible notes, "Everything we do affects others, and we have to think of them constantly. God created us to be interdependent, not independent. We who are strong in our faith must, without pride or condescension, treat others with love, patience, and self-restraint."

READING & JOURNALING:

ROMANS 13

Take some time to write out your own definition of the word *love*. What does it mean to truly *love* others?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I know there are times when I may say or think that my actions towards others are loving. But when I take opportunities to fully reflect on these actions I recognize that my desire isn't always to truly love them. Instead, I discover some self-centered tendencies within my actions; "loving" others in order to get something in return. As Your Word says, Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. (Psalm 139:23-24)

(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers).

Read: Mark 16 (Week 37, Day 1)

READING & JOURNALING:

ROMANS 14

How regularly do you find yourself condemning or judging other Christians for things that may go against your personal convictions, but may not be considered *wrong* by God?

What sticks out to you most from Romans 14?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that it's sometimes easy for me to look at others' actions or behaviors and have judgmental thoughts towards them, even when their actions aren't necessarily *wrong*. Help me to remember that others may have a personal perspective or conviction a little different from my own, but that I can be united with them simply due to our faith in You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Luke 24 (Week 37, Day 2)

JUNE 3: ACCEPT OTHERS AS CHRIST ACCEPTED YOU

(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)

Ancient Rome had a lot of diversity. As the Roman Empire spread, people from many different backgrounds, cultures, education, and status moved into this major city. With so much diversity and so many different perspectives within the city, there was sure to be some level of tension. Paul did not want to see the Christians in Rome experience this tension.

Romans 15:5 reads, *May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.*

The NLT Life Application Study Bible notes, "The Roman church was a diverse community. It was made up of Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, rich and poor, strong and weak. So it was difficult for them to accept one another. Accepting means taking people into our homes as well as into our hearts, sharing meals and activities, avoiding racial and economic discrimination, and going out of our way to avoid favoritism. How can you accept others as Christ has accepted you?"

READING & JOURNALING:

ROMANS 15

Not everybody lives in a city or community as diverse as ancient Rome. How regularly do you find yourself avoiding others who look, think, vote, spend, worship, or live differently than you?

How can you more intentionally accept others from different backgrounds and cultures in the same way Christ has accepted you?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess there are a lot of thoughts that come to mind when I think of the word *diversity*. Generally speaking, I find that I prefer to be with others who look, think, vote, worship, and live similarly to myself. But this isn't the full life You've called me to live, as You've invited me to live in harmony with all other Christians. Help me see all others as You do. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: John 20 & 21 (Week 37, Day 3)

JUNE 4: AVOID THOSE WHO SEEK DIVISION

(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)

Romans is a pretty lengthy letter, and it's clear Paul took a tremendous amount of time crafting it, ensuring he communicated everything he wanted to communicate to this young church. Toward the end of the letter, he makes one final appeal in Romans 16:17, *And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them.*

Unity is something worth striving for. For example, there may be some you interact with who regularly share their opinions or perspectives on things, but not be domineering about it. However, there may be others who share their opinions or perspectives on things, and be overly condescending towards you or others who adhere to a different way of thinking. Paul's response? Stay away from those who seek division.

As Paul writes in Philippians 2:2, *...make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.*

READING & JOURNALING:

ROMANS 16

Think of a time when you may have created division instead of seeking unity. What life-lessons did you learn as a result?

Think about it, what are some specific ways that avoiding those who seek division will actually strengthen the unity among Christians?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I know there are some who may claim to seek unity but are actually teaching or saying things that go against some of the teachings of Christ. Continue to provide me with wisdom and discernment so that I may live out Your purpose for my life well. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Matthew 28 (Week 37, Day 4)

JUNE 5: JOURNALING

Take some time to review the questions and topics presented throughout this study on the Book of Romans. What was most memorable about this study throughout the book of Romans?

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Acts 1 (Week 37, Day 5)

