

Romans 15:1-13

¹Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not *just* please ourselves. ²Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to *his* edification. ³For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written: “THE TAUNTS OF THOSE WHO TAUNT YOU HAVE FALLEN ON ME.” ⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one purpose *and* one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us, for the glory of God. ⁸For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers, ⁹and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written:

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING PRAISES TO YOUR NAME.”

¹⁰Again he says,

“REJOICE, YOU GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”

¹¹And again,

“PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”

¹²Again Isaiah says,

“THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
IN HIM WILL THE GENTILES HOPE.”

¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Okay, so let's get into it. Starting with these first two verses:

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not *just* please ourselves. ²Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to *his* edification.”

Now, I know what you all are thinking, all of you being students of the word were surely reading your Bibles recently and read, in Galatians, something that seemingly contradicts what Paul says here in verse 2. So, you are undoubtedly thinking, “What's going on here?” Well let's take a look:

Galatians 1:10, “¹⁰For am I now seeking the favor of people, or of God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”

And Romans 15:2, “²Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to *his* edification.”

Spiritual edification refers to the process in which a Christian is being built up to stand firm against every wind of doctrines as well as attacks from the evil one.

So, what's going on here? Why does he say that we are to please our neighbor in Romans and not to strive to please people in Galatians? It's all about context folks. If we take a look at verses 6-9 of Galatians 1, you are sensible people, you can go ahead and read those for yourselves, but we see that Paul is absolutely furious with them for distorting or **changing** the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, when he is telling them not to strive to please people, he means not to try to please people by telling them what they want to hear vs. keeping the message of the gospel accurate and true.

“⁶I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel, ⁷which is not *just* another *account*; but there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹As we have said before, even now I say again: if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!” – Galatians 1:6-9

Jump to Romans 15, and Paul is just coming off of this long section about Christian liberties and making sure not to do anything that would cause a brother or sister in Christ to stumble (maybe some more examples?). In that sense, we are to please our neighbor. By putting them first and being considerate of their weaknesses.

Taking the gospel and tailoring it to fit each individual person is heresy! [belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine] And not only does this not help your neighbor, but it is dishonoring to God. We are always to please God over pleasing people. If it ever comes to the point where by pleasing people, you are no longer honoring God, then whatever you are doing is ultimately harmful for that person.

“For even Christ did not please Himself” verse 3. Even though Jesus is Lord, and He and the Father are one, during His time on earth He did not serve Himself, He served others and always gave glory to God the Father. We are to be striving to be more and more like Christ, right? That's the process of sanctification, becoming more and more like Christ. So, we are to model His behavior; glorifying God while serving and pleasing others.

Do you want to know the secret to being JOYful? Well, here it is:

JOY: Jesus first, others second, yourself last. You follow that acronym and you will be able to experience the joy that Paul speaks about in Philippians (and elsewhere).

“⁴ For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

If anyone is ever wondering what practicality the Old Testament has, we need look no further than Romans 15:4 to find one answer.

Alistair Begg, while teaching through the book of Esther, points to this verse to tell us why he is doing so. You are sensible people, you can figure it out; but one of the points of the stories in the old testament is to teach us about God and how He works and that He does have a plan for our lives and if we put our trust in Him and do what He commands, then we will be okay. Even through the difficult times, we can be encouraged by what the Scriptures say and experience a sure hope that only true believers have.

Through perseverance and encouragement, we have our hope. Our hope lies in the Scriptures. And with that we know that God will never ask us to do anything that He does not give us the ability to do.

Wise is the man that understands that everything that God requires, God provides.

“⁵ Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of **the same mind** with **one another**, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that with one purpose *and* one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Two things I would like to point out in these verses and they are right next door to each other so we don't have to go far. The first is being of the same mind, and second with one another.

Firstly, being of the same mind. This is important because this is what allows different people to preach and teach each week. Whether it be Harrison or me or Gabe, the way in which the lesson is delivered may be different, but the overall message is hopefully going to be the same. Same with Danny and Randy, and ideally any of the elders should be able to preach on any given Sunday and speak the truth of the gospel because we as believers should be of the same mind when it comes to Christ.

Second, these two words “one another”. Steven Lawson says that the “one another” is the golden thread that runs through Romans 12-15...

12:10, 12:16, 13:8, 14:13, 14:19, 15:5, 7, 14

Romans 12:5, “⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of **one another**.” All believers are one body in Christ, and how we live our lives can either be helpful or harmful to our Christian brothers and sisters.

12:10, “¹⁰Be devoted to **one another** in brotherly love; give preference to **one another** in honor”

12:16, “¹⁶Be of the same mind toward **one another**”

13:8, “⁸Owe nothing to anyone except to love **one another**”

14:13, “¹³Therefore let’s not judge **one another** anymore”

14:19, “¹⁹So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of **one another**.”

15:5, “be of the same mind with **one another**”

15:7, “accept **one another**, just as Christ also accepted us”

15:14, “filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish **one another**. ”

John 13:34, 1 Cor 12:25, Gal 5:13, 6:2, Eph 4:2, 32, 5:19, 2:21, Col 3:13, 16, 1 Thess 5:11, Heb 5:13, 10:24, 1 peter 4:10, 5:5, james 5:16, 4:11, 5:9,

John 13:34, “³⁴I am giving you a new commandment, that you love **one another**; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

1 Corinthians 12:25, “²⁵so that there may be no division in the body, but *that* the parts may have the same care for **one another**. ”

Galatians 5:13, “serve **one another** through love.”, 6:2, “²Bear **one another’s** burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:2, “bearing with **one another** in love,” 32, “³²Be kind to **one another**, ”

Colossians 3:13, “³bearing with **one another**”, 16, “¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing **one another** with psalms, hymns, *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

1 Peter 4:8, “⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for **one another**”, 10, “¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving **one another**”

James 5:9, “⁹Do not complain, brothers *and sisters*, against **one another**”, 16, “¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to **one another**, and pray for **one another**”

Mutual ministry one to another; it is not a solo venture. You and I are attached to one another via the Holy Spirit. You cannot live a Christian life independent of the body of Christ.

Don’t be a divider, be a uniter.

⁷ Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to the fathers, ⁹ and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy;"

Boice explains that what Paul means here is that, "Jesus served the Jews to fulfill the promises made to them regarding his coming to die for sin and be their Savior, in order that he might be not only their Savior but the Savior of the Gentiles too."

This is just one example of Jesus accepting others. He accepted sinners, outcasts, the unclean, etc. And thank goodness for that, because if God didn't accept sinners, then we would all be headed straight to hell. Why? Because we are born sinners and only by the grace of God are we called by Him, justified by Christ's work on the cross, sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately glorified.

Now, we should know by now that Paul loves to support his point by quoting from the Old Testament. So, when he says in verse 4,

"⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction..."

He isn't just saying that, he actually puts it in to practice by quoting the Old Testament and explaining what it means. Case in point, the end of verse 9-12 is all Old Testament Scripture that support what he has been saying pretty much since chapter 11; that Gentiles are a part of the body of Christ, and Jew and Gentile alike are to praise God together in unity. Take a look:

"THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING PRAISES TO YOUR NAME."

¹⁰ Again he says,

"REJOICE, YOU GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."

¹¹ And again,

"PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
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"THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
IN HIM WILL THE GENTILES HOPE."

This closes out his explanation of why Christians MUST accept all other Christians.

Stepping through these quotes we can see a progression from each quote to the next; let's see if we can step through this together to see why Paul chose these four passages:

Psalm 18:49, Deut. 32:43, Psalm 117:1, Is. 11:10

“⁴⁹ Therefore I will give thanks to You **among the nations**, Lord,
And I will sing praises to Your name.” (A Jew, praising God in the midst of non-Jews or Gentiles)

“⁴³ Rejoice, you nations, **with** His people; (The nations (Gentiles) rejoicing with His people (Jews))
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,”

“¹Praise the Lord, all nations; (Now we see the nations (Gentiles) praising the Lord on their own without the Jews)
Sing His praises, all peoples!” (So, now all peoples are praising God regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles)

“¹⁰ Then on that day
The nations will resort to the root of Jesse,
Who will stand as a signal flag for the peoples;
And His resting place will be glorious.” (Finally, this last quote tells us why this is possible. It is made possible by Him who is both the Jewish and the Gentile king. Namely, Jesus Christ.)

So, do you see that progression? Jews praising God among the Gentiles, then the Gentiles rejoice with Israel, then the Gentiles are invited to praise God on their own, and the reason why is because of what Christ did for us on the cross.

“¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

This is what is known as a benediction (bestowing of a blessing). Paul here is asking God on their behalf, to fill them with joy and peace so that the Holy Spirit will allow them to enjoy the hope that we have as Christians.

God is the source and the object of hope. He is the source of every good thing, hope being a good thing; and we have hope in Him since He is the one that will bring us into paradise with Him. How does that hymn go?

“My hope is built on nothing less
Then Jesus’ blood and righteousness”

This is the reason Paul can say that he has nothing, but possesses everything (2 Corinthians 6:10). In Christ we have eternal life, and that really is everything folks.

The last thing that I will mention is this. There are two types of peace with God: the type of peace that Paul has been hitting on the most up to this point in Romans is peace WITH God and how to receive that peace with God. Here, he transitions to talking about the peace OF God.

And that's right folks, it all leads back to Christ. Through Christ we are able to have peace with God, and once we have the peace with God, we get the peace of God, which lies in knowing that He has forgiven us of our sins and we can spend eternity with Him.

"Trust in Him, ye saints, forever;

He is faithful, changing never;

Neither force nor guile can sever

Those He loves from Him.

Keep us Lord, O keep us cleaving

To thyself and still believing,

Till the hour of our receiving

Promised joys from thee."