

Romans Chapter 15

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Introduction:

1. The first 13 verses of this chapter continue the instructions from the previous chapter.
2. Tensions had arisen between the converts from Judaism and those from Paganism, so Paul pleads for harmony between these Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Romans 15 NLT

(1) We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves.

- How to identify **the strong**? To know the mind of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is to be strong; to be ignorant of it, is to be weak. Paul included himself in this group and said that the **strong must be considerate** of those who are **sensitive** about food and day-keeping.
- **Robert Haldane** writes:
The allusion is to travelers assisting a weak companion, by taking a part of his burden and carrying it for him. The strong believer is to carry the weak believer's burden, by acting as if he had the same weakness, and abstaining from whatever would cause the weak brother to sin.

(2) We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.

- Our goal as believers is not to show that we are superior to believers with mistaken views, but to build up these weaker brethren. Make them glad to be Christians and we must listen to what they have to say.

(3) For even Christ didn't live to please Himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me."

- Paul quotes from a psalm to show prophetically that **Christ** allowed Himself to be **insulted** by others:

Passion for Your house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult You have fallen on me. (Psalms 69:9 NLT)

Christ stood in the path of **insults** aimed at the Father.

(4) Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

- Paul is showing that the Old Testament had many **teachings** that apply to present-day believers (**us**). We gain **encouragement** and **hope** while we are waiting for the next phase of our life in Christ. It is wrong to say that the old Testament was just for Israel and none applies to Christians.

(5) 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 great lesson that Paul wanted the Church at Rome to glean was that they live in **complete harmony**. They had different views on issues because of their heritage. Jewish converts were concerned about matters that had never been a concern in the past life of the Gentile believers. There were lots of subjects where they annoyed each other. They were commanded to create concert rather than discord.

(6) Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The outcome of their efforts would be **one voice** rather than cacophony. There would be **praise and glory to God** because differing cultures had been wed -- something never before accomplished.

(7) Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

- The key was to be aware that **Christ has accepted** believers of different cultures and we must be like Him.



Not all tulips are identical.

(8) Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises He made to their ancestors.

- It's beyond belief that **Christ came as a servant to the Jews**, but that is what Paul writes. The Creator of the universe is serving His **Jewish** creatures.

EVIDENCE FOR GENTILES IN THE CHURCH

(9) He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for His mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."

- While verse 8 shows that Jesus came to the Jews, this verse shows that He also came for **Gentiles**. The evidence is presented.
 - **Evidence #1**

For this, O LORD, I will praise You among the nations; I will sing praises to Your name. (Psalms 18:49 NLT)

It was written in the Hebrew hymnbook. The Jews had been singing about this at their synagogue services. Now they can see what it means! Gentiles would be among those praising God.

(10) And in another place it is written, "Rejoice with His people, you Gentiles."

■ Evidence #2

"Rejoice with Him, you heavens, and let all of God's angels worship Him. Rejoice with His people, you nations, and let all the angels be strengthened in Him . . . (Deuteronomy 32:43 NLT)

Even clear back in the time of Moses their inspired literature had been promising that the nations (Gentiles) would be rejoicing with Israel.

(11) And yet again, "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles. Praise Him, all you people of the earth."

■ Evidence #3

Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise Him, all you people of the earth. (Psalms 117:1 NLT)

Yet another psalm commands the nations to **praise the Lord**. There was no idea that **Gentiles** weren't welcome. The **Gentiles** weren't perfect, but neither were the Jews. All were saved by pure grace, not by meticulous obedience to the law. He saw good in us. Instead of dividing over trivial matters, both groups should unite on the common ground of **praise to the Lord**. There is one more evidence ahead.

(12) And in another place Isaiah said, "The heir to David's throne will come, and He will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on Him."

- **Isaiah** was the magnificent prophet who looked far ahead and told in detail what was coming. He saw a king who would **rule over the Gentiles**:

- **Evidence #4**

In that day the heir to David's throne will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to Him, and the land where He lives will be a glorious place.

(Isaiah 11:10 NLT)

David was the great hero-king of Israel and he had a special **heir**. Listen to the angel Gabriel straight from the Throne of God. He was speaking to a bewildered Mary:

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David. And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end! (Luke 1:31-33 NLT)

Paul had presented four powerful reasons from Israel's own Scriptures that the **Gentiles** were a part of God's glorious plan.

PAUL'S GREAT HOPE FOR HIS GENTILE BRETHERN

(13) I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Paul prayed for this church. He wanted them to be **filled with joy and peace**. This was possible because they **trusted God**.

The implication is that **joy and peace** are available in lesser degrees. This writer saw a believer receive a very large financial gift to erase a large debt and their response was like they had received a postage stamp. Not only did Paul **pray** these believers would be **filled**, but actually **overflowing** with **hope** through the **power of the Holy Spirit**.

(14) I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them.

- Paul commended this mixed congregation. He indicated they already knew the truths he was writing about.

(15) Even so, I have been bold enough to write about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder. For by God's grace, (16) I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit.

- Paul characterizes his **writings** as a **reminder** for the **Gentiles** in the church. He also **reminds** them of his special assignment from Jesus to them. Luke has researched this. Ananias was assigned to contact Saul (Paul) but objected because of the risk.

But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is My chosen instrument to take My message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. (Acts 9:15 NLT)

Paul had a three-fold commission directly from the Lord and taking the message of the risen **Jesus** to the **Gentiles** was part of it. What higher qualifications could a man possibly have?

- Paul wants (verse 16) to present the **Gentiles as an offering to God**. **J. W. McGarvey** comments on this figure of speech drawn from the Old Testament:

... in the verse before us he presents himself as a priest presiding officially over their sacrifice and presenting it to God, which was, figuratively speaking, his duty as apostle to the Gentiles.

- We must note Paul's reference to the three-fold nature of God. **Christ Jesus, God** (used interchangeably with the Father and the third being the **Holy Spirit**. The Father is the leading authority among the three.

(17) So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God. (18) Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them.

- And to further prove Paul's right to speak up, he draws attention to the success he has already experienced with this seemingly impossible task of winning pagans to **Jesus** and away from their worship of idols.

(19) They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.

- Further evidence of Paul's authority was in the **miraculous signs and wonders** he was able to perform through the **power of the Spirit** working along side of him.
- **Illyricum** roughly comprises today's Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. What an overwhelming performance!

PAUL WANTED TO PLANT CHURCHES

(20) My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else.

- The great Apostle to the Gentiles had a policy of planting new **churches** rather than working with existing ones. He had **ambition**. Paul was not passive about his outreach. He was not waiting for the Lord to “call him.” There were times the Lord redirected his plans, but the underlying planning was Paul’s.

(21) I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says, "Those who have never been told about Him will see, and those who have never heard of Him will understand."

- Paul had a **plan** derived from Isaiah (Old Testament).

And He will startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in His presence. For they will see what they had not been told; they will understand what they had not heard about. (Isaiah 52:15 NLT)

(22) In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places.

- **Preaching in these places** reveals the life of a true church planter. Walking, walking, walking, getting acquainted with people, telling them that they were sinners before the Living God of Heaven, asking them to repent of their ways and accept the Lord’s salvation by faith. Merging them with others of like mind into a church. Walk to next town, repeat. Older men may not have the drive and stamina for church planting. The Lord would soon be lightening Paul’s workload.

PAUL PLANNED TO VISIT THE CHURCH AT ROME

(23) But now I have finished my work in these regions, and after all these long years of waiting, I am eager to visit you.

- Paul had been a pusher when he was a young man. He had jailed believers at Jerusalem and was reaching out to other cities to arrest Christians when he was confronted by Jesus on the way to

Damascus. Now he was again using this personal drive, this time to expand the Kingdom of God.

(24) I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey.

- Paul now envisioned another goal: Spain. It was a new frontier. On the way he would visit the church at Rome and they could finance his journey onward. This plan didn't work the way Paul had envisioned. Instead of passing their way as a free man, he came to them as a prisoner of the Roman Government. While he was under house arrest, he spread the story of Jesus to the soldiers who were chained to him and the message infected the highest ranks of government. Some believe that he was later released and finally reached Spain.

PAUL NEEDED TO DELIVER A MONEY GIFT TO JERUSALEM

(25) But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers there.

- There was one other task before visiting Rome and that was to take a financial **gift to Jerusalem**. He continues by explaining:

(26) For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem.

- **Believers** had taken up an offering to help the **poor** at Jerusalem and he was the deliveryman.

(27) They were glad to do this because they feel they owe a real debt to them. Since the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel the least they can do in return is to help them financially.

- There was something amazing in this offering: It was largely from **Gentile believers** who were saying “thank you” to the Jews who had made them aware of salvation in Christ. Some had been present at Pentecost.

(28) As soon as I have delivered this money and completed this good deed of theirs, I will come to see you on my way to Spain.

- Paul’s next travel plan was to head for Rome and then onward to Spain. He was always a man with a mission.

(29) And I am sure that when I come, Christ will richly bless our time together.

- Spending time with saints should always be a **blessing** and Paul was expecting to be **blessed** by the church at Rome.

PAUL ASKS FOR THEIR PRAYERS

(30) Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to join in my struggle by praying to God for me. Do this because of your love for me, given to you by the Holy Spirit.

- Paul’s journeys were not vacation trips, but **struggles**. He asked the Christians at Rome to pray for his success. He gives his concerns next:

(31) Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God. Pray also that the believers there will be willing to accept the donation I am taking to Jerusalem.

- Paul knew he had enemies at Jerusalem who **refused to obey** what they knew was right (Acts 21:27-28, 22:22). Also, believers might refuse the donation -- probably because it came from Gentiles, even though they were fellow Gentile **believers**. To some conservative **believers** in **Jerusalem**, Paul was a liberal guy who had to be watched.

(32) Then, by the will of God, I will be able to come to you with a joyful heart, and we will be an encouragement to each other.

- If he could get past this trip to Jerusalem and the things that might go wrong, then he could visit Rome and **encourage** the saints and be **encouraged** by them. Actually Paul did enter Rome with a splash of **joy**. Luke was there and recorded it:

The brothers and sisters in Rome had heard we were coming, and they came to meet us at the Forum on the Appian Way. Others joined us at The Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he was encouraged and thanked God.

(Acts 28:15 NLT)

(33) And now may God, who gives us His peace, be with you all. Amen.

- While the devil is the god of strife, our **God** in heaven is the **God** of **peace** who can give us **peace**.

MUSIC BOX

Come, let us sing to the LORD! (Psalms 95:1 NLT)

Verse	Link:	Put in Browser: