

Timeless Truth



ROMANS: CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WEEK FIFTEEN | JILL SNODGRASS

TIMELESS TEACHING |

Romans 15

BUILDING UP THE CHURCH AND CARRYING ON THE LEGACY OF CHRIST

I. PAUL'S EXHORTATION (Romans 15:1-12)

Paul continues with his teaching in the previous chapter on unity, but instead of focusing on dietary and ceremonial laws, his focus has now shifted to the concept of getting along with others.

“Others” in this case is you and I—brothers and sisters in Christ. He is not talking about us getting along with those in the world. He is talking about us, Christians, as a family unit getting along with each other for the sake of the gospel and the glory of God.

Paul takes it a step even further, saying that we should not only get along, but that we should build one another up in the Lord.

A. Build others up in the Lord (being selfless)

- a. We must not just please ourselves—placing greater value on others’ needs and comforts before our own.
- b. Help others do what is right—mature believers helping weak believers

Paul urged these mature believers to help the weak by helping them carry some of their load. That sometimes means just coming alongside them, teaching and guiding new believers, or being patient and encouraging to those who are not as strong in their faith.

- c. Be of the same mind—meaning unity or harmony. To be of the same mind means to have the same mind as Christ, allowing Him to direct each of us accordingly.

“The church is an orchestra. We are instruments crafted by the Artist. We

play a score written for us by the Composer, which allows our individual notes to create harmonies. Having tuned ourselves to the Perfect Pitch living within, we play as one, interpreting the Composer's masterpiece with passion and precision. And the result is stunning: We display the glory of God."—Charles Swindoll

- d. To accept one another just as Christ accepted us—welcome or receive another lovingly.

To build one another up in the Lord, it requires us to be intentional and active in laying ourselves down just as Christ did, for the betterment of others.

Being holier than thou doesn't look good on Christians, because it's not the garment of Christ. We are to extend grace for the sake of unity. We allow God to be God in every situation and allow the Spirit to work in His way and time in each believer.

II. PAUL'S EXPLANATION (ROMANS 15:13-29)

A. Paul explains his prayer for the Roman believers

It's important we pray and pray constantly for our brothers and sisters in Christ. As Paul demonstrates, this includes those believers that we have never even met. Prayer is another tool that unites us and makes the church stronger and healthier.

He calls on God, the Source of hope, because he knows God is the Source of all things good. And when we place our hope and trust in God, who is the foundation on which our hope is built, He gives us hope that is Jesus Christ who always comes through on His promises.

Paul is praying that they would be so filled to the point of overflowing with hope, joy and peace, that it's obvious it's the work of the Holy Spirit.

B. Paul explains their spiritual strengths and his purpose in serving Christ

Paul wanted these Roman believers to come out of seclusion and serve Christ in their community, advancing God's plan of salvation. They possessed the light of Jesus and they were not to hide it. Their corner of the world needed it, especially living under the rule of Nero.

Paul commends them:

- Being full of goodness, which depicts moral and ethical purity. (thoughtfulness, kindness, and giving to those in need)
- Filled with knowledge to the point of overflowing.
- Able to admonish, meaning they had the power to apply their knowledge

in a practical way and could hold one another accountable.

Paul knew exactly what God had called him to do as a special messenger from Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. And he did it. He lived out his purpose every day of his life.

Paul's humility is commendable. Though Paul was excited over all that he had accomplished for the sake of the gospel, he didn't boast. He gave all the credit and glory to Christ where it belongs. Paul knew that with Christ he could do all things, and without Him, he could do nothing.

C. Paul explains his passion

He quotes Isaiah 52:15 as his motivation to share the good news of Christ where it has never been heard before.

D. Paul explains his plan for the future

Paul had set his sights on Spain, seeing it as the very western end of the civilized world in desperate need of the righteousness of God. He saw the demand and desired to go. This new region in Spain covered exceedingly more territory than his first three missionary journeys. Paul didn't dream small, because his faith in God was big. And he knew he served a big and mighty God. God, in His goodness and faithfulness did bigger things in and through Paul's ministry than he ever imagined.

III. PAUL'S INVITATION (ROMANS 15:30-33)

Paul knew that this pioneering work would require a partnership from his fellow Roman believers, so he invites them to partner with him in both the work and in prayer.

Paul saw them as a team working together to achieve victory and knew that this victory would only be possible with them working together both physically and prayerfully.

Since Paul was hated by many of the Jews, because they saw him as a heretic undermining Judaism, he was asking these believers to pray for two things:

- a. That he would be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea.
- b. That the Gentile offering or donation would be accepted there by fellow Jews. Paul was hoping that this offering would heal the division between the Jews and Gentiles.

This invitation of Paul's was meant to remind these believers of their responsibilities as members of the church and to encourage and inspire them to

spring into action.

IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PAUL'S TEACHING

A. Follow Christ's example

Building one another up in the Lord and carrying on the legacy of Christ requires us to be selfless like Christ. Everything Christ did was to please the Father, not Himself, and it was all for the benefit of others.

He is the King who became a servant. There is no better example than Jesus. No one else was willing to bear the worst of abuses to please God the Father.

B. Study Scripture

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.—2 Timothy 3: 16-17

C. Pray for others

We are to pray for others in their struggles and efforts to live for Christ. We need to care about believers in every way, no matter who they are or where they are. If we can't reach them or physically help them, through our prayers, Christ can.

D. Encourage and inspire fellow believers to carry on in their purpose and passion for Christ.

Do we like Paul, remind others of their identity in Christ, commend them for their strengths, and cheer them on in their specific purpose and passion to serve Christ? The life of faith, when it's genuine and the love of Christ radiates from within, it's contagious to those around us. Are we passing our faith on to the next generation to carry on the work and legacy of Christ?

WEEK FIFTEEN

ROMANS: CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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.

ROMANS 15:5 NLT

DAY ONE

ROMANS 15:1-5 | Family Unity



TIMELESS TRUTH |

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.

ROMANS 15:5 NLT

Read Romans 15:1-5

In the previous chapter, Paul talked about unity the centers around understanding doctrine—the dos, don'ts, and personal convictions regarding God's Word. And since we, Christians, do not have a perfect understanding of the teachings in the Bible, this unity is not fully attained yet. However, in this chapter, the unity Paul is talking about is a family unity "of the Spirit". As a body of believers, this is something we've already received and now requires our due diligence to maintain.

How is the church like a family unit?

Why is unity (getting along others) important in the body of the church?

How are unity and selflessness tied together?

Read John 17: 20-26.

Why do you think Jesus prayed for unity among believers?

How does unity among believers bring glory to God and reflect His glory to others?

PRAYER MOMENT |

Heavenly Father, as you and the Son are one, may I be one with you also. Help me to abide in You that Your perfect love helps me to live in harmony with others. Help me to live selfless as Christ did that I live for Your glory and the benefit of others. In Your holy name. Amen.

DAILY REMINDER |

Unity doesn't just happen naturally, it takes work to build and time to cure. But in the end, its beauty is worth it all.

FURTHER READING |

Romans 15, John 17

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

DAY TWO

ROMANS 15:7-12 | Christ's Acceptance



TIMELESS TRUTH |

THEREFORE, ACCEPT EACH OTHER JUST AS CHRIST HAS ACCEPTED YOU SO THAT GOD WILL BE GIVEN GLORY.

ROMANS 15:7 NLT

Read Romans 15:7-12.

Our text tells us today that Jesus accepted both Jew and Gentile the same. However, His acceptance wasn't just limited to them. Today let's look at some other examples in Scripture that reveal just how amazing, absolute, and far-reaching His acceptance is.

Read Matthew 8:1-4.

Who approached Jesus for healing?

Often in Jesus' day lepers were **outcasts**. Because of the contagiousness and no cure of their disease, they were forced to live away from loved ones and their community.

Verse 3, says: Jesus reached out and _____ him.

Not only was Jesus willing, but did what many were afraid and unwilling to do. He looked past what was appalling and saw that He could help this man in need.

Read Mark 5:24-35

What did the woman in the crowd suffer from and for how long?

This woman's bleeding made her ceremonially *unclean*. Which meant that she could not come near anyone, for if they touched her clothing or set where she had been setting, they would become unclean too.

What did Jesus make a point to do after she touched His robe and He knew that healing power had gone out of Him?

I love that Jesus went out of His way to acknowledge this woman and both validate her and free her from her suffering.

Read Luke 5: 27-31.

Who did Jesus ask to follow Him and be His disciple, and why was this frowned upon?

In verse 30, what type of people were the Pharisees upset to see Jesus eating and fellowshiping with?

Jesus' acceptance means taking people into both our homes and our hearts, leaving behind any social, racial, and economic divides.

How do each of these examples of Jesus' acceptance challenge you on accepting others?

Jesus not only accepted the *outcasts*, *sinful*, and *unclean*, but also accepts *you* and *me*, who are sinners in thought, word, and deed.

“We are outcasts by our own deliberate actions, having turned our backs on God, trampling His mercy underfoot. In the true sense of the word unclean, we have by our many moral transgressions become filthy from head to toe. We are unclean even in our supposed righteousness, for in the sight of God “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isa.64:6).”—James Montgomery Boice

And so if Jesus loves and accepts us in this light, how can we possibly then not love and accept anyone else.

PRAYER MOMENT |

Spend time today thanking God for His acceptance of you. Ask Him to reveal how you can better show His example of accepting others.

DAILY REMINDER |

We must not just love and accept fellow Christians, but also the lost that through our example, they may come to know Christ.

FURTHER READING |

Romans 3:10-18
Romans 15

As Christ has made known the glory of the Father in receiving us all into his grace when we stood in need of mercy, so we ought to establish and confirm this union which we have in Christ, in order to make known also the glory of God.

John Calvin

DAY THREE

ROMANS 15:13 | The Source of Hope



TIMELESS TRUTH |

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.

ROMANS 15:13 NLT

Whether a believer or not, being hopeful is a human characteristic that is greatly admirable. Being hopeful can be looking at the glass half full, rather than half empty. It can also mean believing something good is coming around the corner. Or perhaps it's the mentality to never give up, just keep pushing through and you will make it. But this kind of hope is not the kind of hope Paul is talking about here, because this hope is not resting on a rock solid source—God.

Ephesians 2:12 says that without God, our condition is literally and utterly hopeless. However, when we allow God to enter into our lives and we build our lives upon Him, who is the foundation of hope, He gives us through Jesus Christ's work on the cross a hope that never fails and never disappoints.

What are some things people put their hope in that can let them down?

Let's look back at Paul's previous words in chapter 5.

Read Romans 5:1-10.

According to verse 2, what makes us able to now confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory?

Explain in your own words why God gives us hope that never fails and never disappoints even when we face trials.

Explain why the hope God gives us brings joy and peace as we continue to trust in Him.

Read Philippians 4:11-13.

How does Paul show an example of this hope in these verses?

PRAYER MOMENT |

As you spend time in prayer today, reflect on the hope of God that never fails or disappoints. Thank Him for this hope and ask Him to fill you completely with joy and peace that you will overflow with this confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

DAILY REMINDER |

Our hope is certain because it rests upon God's power, His promises, and Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

FURTHER READING |

Romans 5:1-10

Romans 15

Hope is not a finger-crossing, wishful kind of thinking. It is a confident expectation that rests in God, who is faithful and always keeps His word.

Chuck Swindoll

DAY FOUR

ROMANS 15:16-21 | Humble and Holy Ambition



TIMELESS TRUTH |

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.

ROMANS 15:20 NLT

Read Romans 15:16-21

Ambition. It can be a controversial topic in the church, because it has a worldly connotation. Most often ambition is seen as the pursuit of personal gain, recognition, and advancement. However, when the motive for ambition centers on serving Christ for God’s glory, rather than selfish gain, ambition in the church is not only a good thing, it’s a God thing.

Based on the text, what was Paul’s ambition and where did he get the motivation for it?

Why should ambition in the church focus on using our gifts from God for Him?

Why does ambition in the church require us to be humble and holy?

Read Philippians 2:3-4 and James 3:14-16.

According to these verses describe the differences between godly ambition and worldly ambition.

Why should we as Christians be ambitious for God?

PRAYER MOMENT |

In prayer today, reflect on how ambitious you are for God and the ways you can improve. Ask Him to reveal your true motives, and for the Spirit's help to align your desires with His.

DAILY REMINDER |

As Christians we should all be ambitious servants for God, and have a desire to please Him and further His kingdom.

EXTRA TIME |

Romans 15

I know of nothing which I would choose to have as the subject of my ambition for life than to be kept faithful to my God till death.

– C.H. Spurgeon

DAY FIVE

ROMANS 14:20-23 | The Importance of
Intercessory Prayer



TIMELESS TRUTH |

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.
ROMANS 15:30 NLT

Read Romans 15:30-33.

Intercessory prayer is not reserved for certain Christians who appear to be closer to God than most and always pray the most eloquent and beautiful prayers. Intercessory prayer is a call upon all Christians to pray for all people (1 Tim. 2:1). And the verse above reminds us why—because of our love for them given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 8:26-27.

What do these verses say the Holy Spirit does for us?

Just as we have the Holy Spirit living in us and interceding on our behalf in accordance to God's will, we are to follow His leading and intercede for others out of the love Christ has shown to us.

Read Galatians 6:2.

How does intercessory prayer help us share each other's burdens?

How does intercessory prayer bring us both closer to God and to one another?

Read Acts 12:3-10.

What happened to Peter?

Who was praying for his safety?

How did their prayers prove to be effective?

There is power in numbers, especially in prayer. Scripture says the church was praying for Peter. This means not just a few, but everyone prayed sincerely and confidently for his safety. God answers the earnest prayers of His people.

Jesus said in the book of Matthew, *"I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."*

PRAYER MOMENT |

In prayer today, thank God for those who pray for you. Reflect on how you can be a better intercessor for others. And most of all thank Jesus who lives forever to intercede with God on your behalf.

DAILY REMINDER |

God has called you to be an intercessor. Who has He laid on your heart to pray for today?

Romans 15

*If there are any tears shed in heaven, they
will be over the fact that we prayed so little.*

—Billy Graham