



## **Relentless Grace: How the Gospel Changes Everything**

Paul's Letter to the Romans

### **Session 17 – Christ's Example, Paul's Mission | Romans Chapter 15**

In a way, this chapter is what Paul has been leading up to since his opening comments in chapter 1. Remember what Paul told them? *Your faith is being talked about all over the world.* Can that be said of us? With all that Paul has written, we know they faced challenges, needed instruction, and still had some growing to do. Can that be said of us? But their obedience to God was well known (Romans 16:19). Can that be said of us?

Paul anticipated taking the gospel into Spain, and he would need help to do it. He was certain the church in Rome would partner with him, because they were a faithful, obedient, gospel-driven church. May this always be said of us.

#### **Icebreaker**

*(Paul wraps up his previous comments, telling the strong they have an obligation to help the weak.)*

If you have siblings, where are you in the birth order? Describe how much influence an older sibling's example (good or bad) can have on their younger brothers and sisters.

#### **Goals for this Session:**

- Discover what makes us stronger together.
- Consider what fuels and motivates a gospel-driven church.
- Pray honest prayers that cultivate unity, extend grace, and expand our gospel reach.

## Living to Please Others

### Romans 15:1–21

Love means that stronger believers should bear with weaker ones. In any case, *all* believers don't live to please themselves—we follow Christ's example.

1. **What love does** (verses 1–13). In this section, Paul urges the stronger (that is, more mature) Christian to be considerate and supportive in helping the weaker one. Why is this so needful?

- a. In what way is Jesus our example for living this way? Note what Paul says here, and also what you find in Philippians 2:5–8.

- b. Paul mentions two indispensable things for maintaining unity among believers. Explain how these strengthen us, individually and as a church. Give personal examples if you like.

God's Word (verse 4)

Prayer and Worship (verses 5–6)

#### #wordstoknow

Greek words/terms at a glance.

**strong** (dunatos) Established; to be capable, willing, and able.

**bear with** (bastazo) Take a burden on oneself so as to lighten the load of another.

**please** (aresko) Adapt in order to accommodate the needs of others for the benefit of all.

- c. What happens when we channel our God-given strength and experience to benefit others instead of first looking out for ourselves? Explain how living to please others is not the same as being a "people pleaser."

2. **What love sees** (verses 14–21). Paul wrapped up the difficult topics he’d covered in the best possible way—with a stirring prayer (verse 13) and sincere commendation for this church.

a. Paul expresses confidence in the Christians at Rome and mentions three vital areas that are signs of a healthy, growing church. So what does this look like in everyday life? Give some practical examples from personal experience or as part of a small group.

Full of goodness:

**#wordstoknow**

Greek words/terms at a glance.

**goodness** (agathosune) Moral and ethical purity that stirs one to act on what they know.

**knowledge** (gnosis) In context, a clear grasp of Christian doctrine and how it relates to issues of daily life.

**admonish** (noutheteo) Impart understanding; to set right; to warn, remind, and correct.

Filled with knowledge:

Able to admonish:

b. What reasons does Paul give for writing this letter? Why would he explain his reasons for having “written more boldly” to them?

c. From verses 18–21, what does Paul see when he looks back over his ministry? What does he see when he looks ahead to the future? In both cases, what was his motivation?

## Memory Verse

As you memorize this verse, let it sink in and make it part of your prayers. Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and increase your understanding.

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

Romans 15:13 NKJV

*Think About It . . .*

If you knew someone was praying this for you, how would it most encourage you today?

Every time you practice memorizing this verse, think of one specific person you will pray it for.

## Not Ready to Retire

### Romans 15:22–33

Paul shares his future plans and expresses hope that the church in Rome will partner with him.

1. When Paul said, “I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” he was summing up more than twenty-five years of tireless travel, hardships, trials, life-altering events, unfailing provisions of grace, and a legacy of churches, all for the sake of the gospel. But he had no plans to retire!

a. From verses 22–29, what does Paul hope to accomplish on his trip to Jerusalem? What does he look forward to when he visits Rome?

b. What three things does Paul specifically request prayer for in verses 30–32?

### Good to Know

The unbelieving Jews were openly hostile toward Paul and wanted him dead.

Many of the Jewish believers resented him for insisting that Gentile converts did not have to live by Jewish regulations. It was unclear whether they would even accept a gift from the Gentile churches.

c. To the best of your knowledge, were his prayers answered? In what way? (See Acts 21:30–32 and Acts 23:10–24.)

2. *How the gospel changes everything.* Paul had a plan to go to Rome and then to parts beyond. As usual, two things were on his itinerary: preach the gospel and strengthen the saints. As always, he counted on the help of people with hearts to serve. When we work together for the glory of God, the power of the gospel is good news all over again.

- a. **The gospel is incentive to serve and pray for others.** Fervent prayer is a key to fruitful service. Paul frequently prayed for others (we count three in this chapter) and didn't hesitate to ask for prayer himself. Your small group is an excellent place to start!

What hurdles do you face in your efforts to serve and minister to others? Briefly share one request, specifically, that others can pray for you.

Note what you can pray for them.

- b. **The gospel is incentive to see the need and be part of the answer.** Without help and support from others, Paul wouldn't have been able to fully preach the gospel or gather a relief offering for the Christians in Jerusalem.

Identify one or two areas where you see a need and what you can do to help meet it.

**"We are the Bibles  
the world is reading.  
We are the creeds  
the world is needing.  
We are the sermons  
the world is heeding."  
Billy Graham**



**Gospel at a Glance: Christ, our Example of Unselfish Love** | "True Christian love is not selfish; rather, it seeks to share with others and make others happy. It is even willing to carry the younger Christians, to help them along in their spiritual development. We do not endure them, we encourage them! Of course, the great example in this is our Lord Jesus Christ. He paid a tremendous price in order to minister to us. Does a strong Christian think he is making a great sacrifice by giving up some food and drink? Then let him measure his sacrifice by the sacrifice of Christ. No sacrifice we could ever make could match Calvary." – Warren Wiersbe<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary/New Testament, Volume 1*, (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications, 2001) p.562

**A**doration **C**onfession **T**hankfulness **S**upplication

“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:18 NIV

In each session, we will pray—for ourselves, for others, for our church, and for our nation. As a focus for prayer, use the memory verse, another scripture, or what the Lord has impressed on you from the chapter. No need to be profound or elaborate, just authentic.

Write a simple prayer, including each element here.

A \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

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S \_\_\_\_\_



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