

# Romans

## Chapter 15

### II. Practical Godliness - Part 5

#### H. Pleasing One Another and Rejoicing in God's Plan - Romans 15:1-13

Romans 15:1-13 should not be considered the start of a different train of thought, but as an extension of the teachings of chapter 14. In these thirteen verses Paul summarizes our responsibility to one another, verses 1-7, and our common joy in the plan of God, verses 8-13.

##### 1. Pleasing One Another on Account of Christ - Romans 15:1-7

**15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 15:2 Let every one of us please [his] neighbour for [his] good to edification. 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 15:6 That ye may with one mind [and] one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15:7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.**

These seven verses form Paul's summary regarding the treatment of weaker Christian's by the strong. Verse 1 presents the summary, "**We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak**". The word "bear" is the Greek word *bastazo* and carries the idea of putting one's shoulder under a burden. In other words, we are not to bear with the weaker Christian in the sense of grudgingly condescending to their weakness, but we should do it gladly as in helping them shoulder a burden. Furthermore, we should not do this to please ourselves, but to please our brother. It is easy to do the right thing with the wrong motive. There is no room in the body of Christ for pleasing oneself at the expense of another believer. This runs counter to the whole concept of unity. Instead, we are to please one another for the purpose of building each other up. Instead of criticizing and condemning the weaker brethren, we are to help them shoulder their load with the intent of allowing them to become mature. Too often we want to hurry up the maturing process.

Verse 3 gives us the primary example of self sacrificial love found in the Bible, Christ. Verse 3 reads, "**for even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me**". Christ did not come into this world to please himself, but to please others. If he wanted to please himself, he would have stayed in glory with the Father. Perhaps no passage in the Bible reveals Christ's attitude as well as Philippians 2:1-11:

**If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Christ did not please himself! Verse 3b is a quote from Psalms 69:9, one of the most often quoted Messianic psalms. The context of this Psalm is that of the reproach Christ felt when his Father was dishonored. Just as Christ felt dishonor when his Father was dishonored, so we need to feel dishonor when God is dishonored. We should not be reproached because someone offends us in a doubtful area, but we should only be reproached when the character of God is defamed. The attitude is the all important issue.

In verse 4 we find have a statement regarding the purpose of the Scriptures. The phrase "whatsoever things were written aforetime" refers back to the Old Testament Scriptures. In the Old Testament we find a record of God's faithfulness as well as one example after another of spiritual principles. Note that because of these things that were written, we may have hope. Hope always carries the idea of a future expectation of blessing in the New Testament. This hope is obtained by patience and comfort of the scripture. In other words, as we learn what the scripture has to say, and apply those truths with patience, and rest in the promises of God, we will have hope. This hope will enable us to bear the burdens of the weaker brethren since we will take comfort in the end product.

Verse 5 is a wonderful promise to us when we are called upon to bear the weaker brother. As we restrain our liberty, it is easy to become disgruntled and bitter towards the weaker brethren. We don't understand their reluctance to rest in the liberty we have in Christ and as a result we become impatient with their narrow attitudes. However, if we rest in the scriptures as verse 4 instructs us, the God of patience and consolation will grant us the necessary resources to maintain the unity of the body. When we patiently endure the weaknesses of our fellow believers with an attitude of love, God comforts our hearts and encourages us in our efforts. God never commands us to do something he will not equip us to do. Instead of becoming bitter, we need to turn to God for the necessary strength and patience to continue realizing that someday all of the effort will be worth it.

Verse 7 concludes this section by calling us to receive one another as Christ has received us. It is sad to realize that many times we fail to receive other Christians because they do not "measure up" to our rules and regulations. We

fail to realize that Christ has received them! If Christ receives them, we should have no higher standard. In fact, one of the major criticisms leveled against Christ by the religious rulers of his time was the fact that he associated with tax collectors and sinners. Christ never held himself aloof from those who accepted him for what he was and at the same time were aware of their sin and shortcomings before God. Christ rejected more religious Jews than he did sinners! If Christ accepts all men regardless of personal tastes and preferences, can we do any less?

## 2. Rejoicing in God's Plan - Romans 15:8-13

**15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises [made] unto the fathers: 15:9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for [his] mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 15:10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 15:11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 15:12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.**

These six verses can be seen as a conclusion to the doctrinal and practical sections of the book of Romans. In these verses, we find a summary of the plan of God regarding all men and the common salvation he has provided through Christ.

In verse 8 we find a description of the ministry of Christ, "**he was made a servant of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers**". Contrary to what many Jews thought regarding Christ in Paul's day, Christ was the fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers. What the Jews had failed to realize was that the promises contained both spiritual and physical elements. Instead of seeing Christ as the fulfillment of God's spiritual promises regarding redemption, they saw Christ as the fulfillment of the kingdom promises. When Christ failed to give them the kingdom they wanted, they rejected him as a false messiah. However, there is coming a day in which every physical blessing given to the fathers by God will be fulfilled through Christ.

So much for the Jews, what about the Gentiles? Paul continues in verses 9 through 12 that God's promises did not stop with Israel alone. It is true that Israel is the agent of blessing, but it is not true that only Israel will receive blessing. God's purpose was to reveal himself to the nations through the Jews. What the nation as a whole refused to do in the Old Testament, God accomplished through his Son in the New. Christ becomes the guarantor of blessing for both Jew and Gentile in the New Covenant.

In order to solidify his argument, Paul uses four quotes from the Old Testament as outlined below:

Verse 9	Psalms 18:49	<b>Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.</b>
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Verse 10	Deuteronomy 32:43	<b>Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people.</b>
Verse 11	Psalms 117:1	<b>O Praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.</b>
Verse 12	Isaiah 11:1,10	<b>And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow our of his roots: And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles week: and his rest shall be glorious.</b>

Paul's argument is that it was God's plan all along to include the Gentiles in the covenant of grace. God's salvation was not something offered to the Jew only. It is the message of the book of Romans that God's salvation is freely available to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

Verse 13 forms a fitting climax to this section, "**Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost**". Paul makes contact with just about every foundational doctrine he has taught in Romans in this single verse. Note first of all that God is a God of hope. It is only through the revelation of God and his salvation that we can have hope in eternal life. Secondly, this hope results in joy and peace by believing. Salvation is only obtained by believing what God has said and receiving his pardon for sin. When we do that, we have joy and peace. Joy in the hope of our salvation and peace in the twofold sense that the war is over with God, and his peace floods our hearts. Thirdly, just so we don't miss it, Paul adds that our salvation causes us to abound in hope. We don't just have hope in eternal glory, but we abound in that hope. Lastly, this is all realized through the power of the Holy Ghost which dwells in us. Our joy, peace, and hope become realities in our lives when the Spirit has free reign. This is the message of this verse, this is the message of Romans.