

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Zoom Meeting ID:

 **828 7580 6094** ►

Thursday October 30, 2025

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Romans 15:13 (NLT)

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.

The Unity of Strong and Weak Christians—part 3

Please One Another as Christ Did

Romans 15:1–6 (NLT)

We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. ² We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. 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." 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. 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. ⁶ Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Romans 15:1–6 (NASB95)

- 1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.
- 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.
- 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”
- 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.
- 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 accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

POINT 1 - REGARD FOR OTHERS

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength (15:1a)

As with the principles of receiving one another with understanding (14:1–12) and of building up one another without offending (vv. 13–23), responsibility for pleasing one another falls on all believers, but especially on those **who are strong**. Consequently, they **ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength**.

The word **ought** has the basic meaning of owing a debt or having a strong obligation. It is used in Hebrews 5:3 to refer to the unique responsibility of the high priest in ancient Israel, who was “*obligated* to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself” (**Heb. 5:3**, emphasis added). In his first letter, John uses the term three times to indicate our obligation to follow God’s example. “The

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one who says he abides in Him [Christ] ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked; because Christ “laid down His life for us, ... we *ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren”; and, “if God so loved us, we also *ought* to love one another” (1 John 2:6; 3:16; 4:11).

To bear refers to picking up and carrying a burden. It is used literally of “carrying a pitcher of water” (Mark 14:13) and of carrying a man (Acts 21:35), and figuratively of bearing a yoke of obligation (Acts 15:10).

Therefore, **to bear the weaknesses** of fellow believers is not simply to tolerate those **weaknesses** but to help carry them—by not being critical or condescending and by showing respect for sincere views or practices that we may not agree with. It is to “do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind ... [to] regard one another as more important than” ourselves, not merely looking “out for [our] own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3–4).

The idea is that of showing genuine, loving, and practical consideration for other believers. We are not to argue about minor issues or be critical of those who may still be sensitive about a former religious practice or taboo. The injunction is for mature believers to voluntarily and lovingly refrain from exercising their liberty in ways that might needlessly offend the consciences of less mature brothers and sisters in Christ, those who are **without strength**.

Paul was referring to that attitude when he testified: Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being

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without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. **(1 Cor. 9:19–22)**

He was not speaking of compromising the gospel or godly standards of living in order to gain acceptance and approval by the world, a sin he strongly condemned. On the contrary, he was speaking of relinquishing personal liberties and advantages for the sake of fellow believers—even for the sake of unbelievers, if doing so might be instrumental in leading them to Christ.

POINT 2 - DISREGARD FOR SELF

and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. (15:1 b–2)

The right use of Christian liberty, which the strong believer understands and appreciates, often involves self-sacrifice. When our true motivation is to please Christ by helping “to bear the weaknesses of those without strength” **(v. 1a)**, we can expect to forfeit certain legitimate liberties, when exercising them would harm a weaker brother or sister.

The Lord designs that a relationship with Him be from the heart and so graciously grants us freedom for our own sakes. But the Lord does not grant those freedoms **just** so we can selfishly **please ourselves**. He grants them for the benefit of His entire church. Every believer has the same liberty in Christ as every other believer, but because believers vary greatly in spiritual knowledge and maturity, the careless exercise of a liberty by one member can do great harm to the conscience and spiritual well-being of another member and even to the well-being of an entire congregation.

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Paul grieved over the Philippian church when he heard that some members there, apparently in positions of leadership and influence, sought “after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus” (**Phil. 2:21**). It was not that they were teaching wrong doctrine or living immoral lives, but that they had great concern for their own interests and little concern for the interests of fellow believers. And for that reason, Paul declared, they had little genuine concern for the interests “of Christ Jesus” Himself or for His church.

Obviously, the church at Rome also had such members, and the apostle appealed to them, **Let each of us please his neighbor**. Paul did not exclude himself from the exhortation. **Let each of us** expresses all-inclusive responsibility and allows no exemptions, even for an apostle.

The objective of pleasing our **neighbor** is to promote **his good** and **his edification**, even if it requires the sacrifice of some of our own welfare and pleasure, which it often does. It is essentially the same appeal Paul had made earlier in this letter, again not exempting himself: “Let *us* pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (**Rom. 14:19**).

To do **good** for our **neighbor** and to promote **his edification** is to be “of the same mind” as our brothers and sisters in Christ, “maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose,” doing “nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind” regarding “one another as more important than [oneself]; ... not merely[looking] out for [our] own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” It is to “have this attitude in [ourselves] which was also in Christ Jesus” (**Phil. 2:2–5**).

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POINT 3 - CONFORMITY TO CHRIST

For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached Thee fell upon Me.” (15:3)

The “attitude ... in Christ Jesus” just referred to was **not to please Himself**. It is the attitude Paul goes on to explain in his letter to Philippi. During His incarnation, “although He existed in the form of God,” our Lord “did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (**Phil. 2:6–8**). Despite His perfectly righteous and sinless life, Jesus could say with David, but with infinitely greater significance, **The reproaches of those who reproached Thee fell upon Me** (cf. Ps. 69:9).

Jesus’ heavenly Father did not force His Son to become incarnate and to die for the world’s sins. “I and the Father are one” (**John 10:30**), Jesus declared. Therefore, when the Father “gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (**John 3:16**), the Son was as fully willing to go as His Father was to send Him. Not only that, but Jesus said, “I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again” (**John 10:17–18**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What responsibilities do stronger Christians have toward weaker ones? What are some examples of how this works among Christians?**

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2. How did Christ illustrate this principle for us ?

3. What stood out to you in this portion of the lesson?

POINT 4 - SUBMISSION TO SCRIPTURE

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (15:4)

A fourth characteristic that will lead us to please one another as Christ did is our willing and unreserved submission to God's Word.

Whatever was written in earlier times obviously refers to the divinely-revealed truths we now call the Old Testament. They were written for the **times** in which they were recorded but also for **our instruction**, for God's people in the present age. As we have seen, beginning with Romans 14:1, Paul emphasizes that the ceremonial requirements of the Old Covenant are no longer binding on believers, Jews or Gentiles. But even though we are not bound to obey all of the commands of that covenant, every part of God's revelation **written in earlier times** is still valuable for **our instruction**. Knowledge of Scripture had spiritual benefit for Christians in Paul's day and still has benefit for Christians for all time.

Paul's well-known statement that "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (**2 Tim. 3:16–17**) certainly applies to the New Testament. But in the minds of the initial readers, it referred to "**the sacred writings**" (v. 15) of the Old Testament. That same understanding was in the minds of those to whom Peter wrote, saying "that no prophecy of

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Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (**2 Pet. 1:20–21**).

Paul reminded believers in Corinth that the events of the Exodus under Moses "happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved.... Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (**1 Cor. 10:6, 11**).

Our part in this blessing is **perseverance**, which is closely related to patience. In regard to the Lord's return, James admonishes us to "be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (**James 5:7–8**). Like saving faith, **perseverance** is both commanded of us and given to us by God. It is continuing faithfulness to the Lord through all circumstances. Revelation 14:12 identifies **perseverance** with sustained faith and obedience. **2 Thessalonians 1:4** says that **perseverance** is faith that does not fail "in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure."

God also gives us **encouragement** to persevere. He provides this motivation by means of **the Scriptures**, which records all the reasons to keep believing. They give us reason to sustain **hope** for our glorious future.

Jeremiah speaks of God, the author of Scripture, as the "Hope of Israel, its Savior in time of distress" (**Jer. 14:8; cf. 17:7**). The psalmists repeatedly speak of their hope in the Lord. "My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him"

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(Ps. 62:5). In the psalm that so majestically exalts God's Word, (Ps. 119:116), pleads, "Sustain me according to Thy word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope", and testifies, "I hope for Thy salvation, O Lord, and do Thy commandments" (v. 166). Another psalmist affirms, "I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope" (Ps. 130:5).

Paul reminded Gentile believers in Ephesus that before their conversion they "were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12; cf. 4:17–18). "The covenants of promise" were part of the Old Testament, God's revealed Word to His chosen people Israel.

From those passages and many others in both testaments, it is clear that, as far as the believer's **hope** is concerned, God and His Word are inseparable. We know that God's *living* Word, His Son "Christ Jesus, ... is our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1) because that glorious truth is made known to us in God's *written* Word.

POINT 5 - DEPENDENCE ON DIVINE POWER

Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; (15:5)

As mentioned above, even the things that God *demand*s of us He *gives* to us by His sovereign grace. It is **God who gives** the **perseverance** He requires as well as the **encouragement**. Just as verse 4 is essentially a call to rely on God's power through His Word, verse 5 is essentially a call to rely on His power through prayer.

In this benediction, Paul prays that the Lord would **grant** his fellow believers in Rome **to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus**. As

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with perseverance and encouragement, the harmony God requires, He will also provide.

In his call for believers **to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus**, the apostle is speaking of unity in regard to matters on which the Bible is silent or which are no longer valid. It is disagreement about nonessential issues that causes the conflict between strong and weak believers. Paul therefore continues to call on believers, despite their differing views, to be in loving, spiritual, and brotherly harmony **with one another according to** their common Savior and Lord, **Christ Jesus**. The fulfillment of this command is by God's power.

POINT 6 GIVING GLORY TO GOD

so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (15:6)

The accomplished purpose of Christian unity, however, is not to please other believers, as essential as that is, but to please the Lord, both inwardly and outwardly and both individually and corporately. It is only when His people are in **one accord** and worship Him **with one voice** that they truly and fully **glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

In calling believers to **glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, Paul was emphasizing Jesus' deity. Jesus is not an adopted son of God, as are those who believe in Him (Rom. 8:14–17; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). He is the unique and "only begotten from the Father," who was *in Himself*, "full of grace and truth" (**John 1:14; cf. v. 18; 3:16**). He is the promised Messiah, the **Christ**, and is **our Lord**, completely equal to **God the Father** in deity.

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Through grace far beyond our comprehension, **our Lord Jesus Christ** prayed to His **Father** on our behalf, that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me. (**John 17:21–23**)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the Old Testament give us hope? What are several examples of this from the Old Testament?**
- 2. What is the big reason why God wants His people to be of one mind?**
- 3. What was most meaningful to you in this lesson, that you can apply to your life ?**

Closing Prayer