

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Zoom Meeting ID:

 **828 7580 6094** ► **Thursday January 8, 2026**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Romans 15:30 (NLT)

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. ([Intercessory prayer](#))

Ministering in the Will of God

Romans 15:22–28 (NLT)

²² In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places. 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. 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. ²⁵ But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers there. ²⁶ For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. 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. 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.

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Romans 15:22–28 (NASB95)

- 22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;
23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you
24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—
25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.
26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.
27 Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.
28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

Introduction

The faithful servant of God knows that true success in the Lord's work can be attained only as he wholly accepts his divine calling and unstintingly commits his heart, his mind, his time, his abilities, and his spiritual gift to fulfilling that calling. Genuine success sometimes can fail as much from trying to do more than we are called to do as from doing less. Paul did not try to do the work of several apostles but only the work to which the Lord had specifically called him. He demonstrated the same kind of economy of effort as Jesus, whose ministry was strictly focused on His Father's calling and will. He did not cure every illness in Palestine, nor did He attempt to preach to every Jew, much less every Gentile. Yet, after only three years of ministry, He could say to His Father in the Upper Room, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (John 17:4).

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In Romans 15:22–32, Paul demonstrates in his own life six characteristics, or elements, of his own ministry that should be evidenced in the life and ministry of every believer who is committed to doing God’s will. These may be categorized as providence (v. 22), planning (vv. 23–24), priority (vv. 25–28), prosperity (v. 29), purpose (v. 30a), and prayer (vv. 30b–32).

POINT 1 PROVIDENCE

For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you; (15:22)

This reason refers to Paul’s fulfilling his divine calling as “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ... from Jerusalem and roundabout as far as Illyricum,” in order that “they who had not news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand” (15:16, 19, 21). Faithfulness to his calling hindered him from doing many of the things he would like to have done, including, thus far, visiting the church at Rome.

Hindered literally means to cut into or cut out. It was used of deep trenches that sometimes were dug across a road to impede an enemy army. Because of God’s plan and control, Paul was providentially and continually prevented **from coming to** the church at Rome.

God has changed the natural course of events by direct, miraculous intervention, such as in opening the Red Sea for Israel to cross safely and then closing it on the pursuing Egyptian army. But God also—and most often, as far as our human understanding can perceive—controls men and events in non-miraculous and indirect ways that we cannot observe or be aware of. This is providence—God’s sovereign control of everything exercised not through the miraculous, but through ordering all the complex natural events so that they accomplish His will. Even Paul, the most prominent of the apostles, who was used as a human instrument for

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recording much of God's Word in the New Testament, did not presume to fully understand the Lord's working in his life. But God's *providence* was a crucial element in achieving the intended purposes for Paul's service.

In the circumstance mentioned above, God did not explain to Paul His reason for not allowing him to minister in Bithynia. Somehow, Paul knew only that it was "the Spirit of Jesus [who] did not permit them" (**Acts 16:7**). And it was not until he and his companions had travelled on to Troas that their ultimate destination became clear.

The classic Old Testament illustration of God's indirect control to accomplish His will is found in the story of Joseph. During the time the events were unfolding, neither Joseph, his brothers, nor his father Jacob knew God's purpose in allowing the brothers to sell Joseph into slavery. It was many years later that Joseph's high position in Egypt was used by the Lord to save His chosen people from famine. As Joseph later realized and explained to his repentant brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (**Gen. 50:20**). In a somewhat similar way, the Lord caused King Ahasuerus to choose Esther as his queen and thereby enabled her to intercede on behalf of her fellow Jews and save them from complete destruction.

From Proverbs we learn that "the mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (**Prov. 16:9**), and that "many are the plans in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, it will stand" (**19:21**). Paul reminded believers at Philippi that "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (**Phil. 2:13**). God effected His will in Paul's life by *providentially* controlling all the intricate circumstances around him.

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Discussion Questions

- 1. What stood out to you in the introduction?**
- 2. What stood out to you in POINT 1- PROVIDENCE**
- 3. What can you apply to your life in this portion of the lesson?**

POINT 2 - PLANNING

but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—(15:23–24)

A second element for a believer who faithfully fulfills his divine calling is care in making plans for ministry. Contrary to how it may seem on first thought, sensible and careful planning by God's people does not necessarily indicate lack of trust in His providence. Waiting on the Lord's providence does not preclude personal planning.

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Jesus asked rhetorically, “Which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?... Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?” (**Luke 14:28, 31**). In this instance, Jesus was speaking of the cost of discipleship (**v. 33**), but the principle of planning is also valid in regard to the way we fulfill our discipleship.

The prerequisite in every case, of course, is that our planning, no matter how carefully and sincerely made, be constantly and completely subject to the Lord’s control and alteration—just as were Paul’s plans to minister in Bithynia and to visit Rome.

He believed there was **no further place for him in these regions** where he had been ministering, and he **had for many years a longing to come to Rome whenever** he went **to Spain**. He did not claim that God was calling him to minister either in Rome or in **Spain**, but he strongly hoped for and planned for both ministries. **Spain** included the city or region referred to in the Old Testament as Tarshish, the place to which Jonah sought to flee (Jonah 1:3) and from which ships brought King Solomon “gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks” every three years (1 Kings 10:22). **Spain** was not evangelized until the middle of the third century.

It therefore is understandable why Paul’s plan was to minister in **Spain**. And he strongly desired **to see** the believers at Rome **in passing**. Because the church in Rome was well established and mature, Paul did not want, as he had already explained, “to preach the gospel ... where Christ was already named, that [he]

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might not build upon another man's foundation" (v. 20). But, although his intended layover in Rome was to be brief, it was of great personal importance to Paul. While visiting that church, he hoped **to be helped on his way there** (Spain), after he had **first enjoyed the company** of the Roman believers **for a while**.

To be helped, in the New Testament, is used in a rather specific and technical sense. It was always used of the custom in the early church of furnishing an escort, as well as supplies, for someone being sent out to minister in a distant field. After returning to the church in Antioch, which had originally commissioned and sent them out (Acts 13:2–3), Paul and Barnabas again were "being sent on their way by the church" (15:3). The term is used of the Ephesian elders' "accompanying [Paul] to the ship" that would take him to Jerusalem.

Paul expressed other such personal plans, none of which compromised his still greater desire to fully obey God's will. He told the Thessalonian believers, "But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. ¹⁸For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.

(1 Thess. 2:17–18). Satan did not, of course, thwart God's plan, but God, for His own purposes, allowed Satan to thwart the plans of Paul. Making sensible and careful plans for serving God does not conflict with reliance on His providence, and reliance on His providence does not excuse failure to plan.

But personal plans, no matter how unselfish and spiritually motivated, must be subject to God's plan. Paul's desire to visit Rome was strong, but his desire to obey God was stronger still. He had the self-discipline and steadfast dedication to fulfill what God had given him to do, setting his personal dreams aside until, and if, the Lord brought them to pass.

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Discussion Questions

- 1. What stood out to you in POINT 2 - PLANNING**
- 2. What was most meaningful to you in this week's lesson ?**
- 3. How can you apply this lesson to your life?**

Closing Prayer