

Does Your Life Speak Well Of God?  
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Romans 15:1-13

Follow along with me as we read the first seven verses of Romans 15:

1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." 4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

(Prayer)

- If you had to leave before the end of today's study, and you said "Give me the essence, the heart of this lesson." I'd reach in and pull out verses 5 and 6.

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- As we live our daily lives as Christians, what is our goal?
- In your own words, fill in the blank: As a Christian...a child of God...a BELIEVER IN CHRIST, I want to \_\_\_\_\_.
- There could be several answers...all leading to one over-arching answer.
- If you were raised a Presbyterian or in another reformed denomination you might have been through the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The first question asks:

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

- Question: When we think about our relationship with other believers, what GLORIFIES God?
- Verse 5 and 6: "May...God...give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Turn to John 13:34-35 (Someone read)

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

- Back to our text in Romans 15, Paul spells it out:  
1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.
- Question: Remember from the past two weeks in Romans 14? What does Paul mean by "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak."? Overlook differences in the NON-ESSENTIALS.
- Verse 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up
- Clarify: "please" Galatians 1:10. Not "people pleaser" but "for his good..build him up"
- Also: Not people pleasing for the sake of getting along...we must GLORIFY GOD.
- A few weeks ago we studied Romans 12 on how to live the Christian life
- Look at Romans 12:10....someone read what Paul told us to do

Romans 12:10

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

- In order to live together in unity, believers in Christ must put the other person first.
- In other words...
- God is glorified when his children love each other, in a spirit of unity, as we follow Christ Jesus!
- Good goal...but how do we do it? Let's DISCUSS...what does it take to love other believers in a spirit of unity while following Christ? (Discussion)
- What are the obstacles?
- What is needed to overcome them?
- Look at verse 5 again. What are two things verse 5 says God gives? Endurance and encouragement.
- We just celebrated Thanksgiving and are headed to Christmas. Family togetherness.
- Question: What can all that FAMILY TOGETHERNESS lead to? FAMILY TENSIONS. What a great test of asking God for ENDURANCE and ENCOURAGEMENT!

God is glorified when his children love each other, in a spirit of unity, ...as we follow ...Christ Jesus!

- He (Jesus) is the ultimate example to follow in loving our brothers and sisters!

3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." 4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Verse 3: Quotes Ps. 69:9)

- How do we follow Christ's example? Look at verse 7:

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

- A question for you and me: When we deal with our brother or sister in Christ, do we accept them as Christ accepts them?
- You and I may say: "But, some of these people have some weird ways and ideas!"
- Here's a challenging thought: Where would I be if Christ only accepted me as much as my ideas and actions deserve?
- It's easy to look at a quirky believer and say: "Old so and so has some weird ideas!"
- "Old so and so does some weird stuff!" "Old so and so says some strange things."
- Insert rolling of the eyes HERE!
- How about this one: Compared to a holy and perfect God how do some of my ideas and actions seem to Jesus? Yet, He accepts me!
- What if Christ only accepted ME the same way I accept others?
- Verse 7: Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to (what?) bring praise to God.

God is glorified when his children love each other, in a spirit of unity, as we follow Christ Jesus!

Verse 8 says: For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs

- Then in verses 9-12 Paul reminded them that Christ came not only to be a servant and Savior to the Jews but also to the Gentiles.

9 so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written:

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;  
I will sing hymns to your name."[c]

10 Again, it says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."[d]

11 And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,  
and sing praises to him, all you peoples."[e]

12 And again, Isaiah says,

"The Root of Jesse will spring up,  
one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him."[f]

- If the church at Rome needed an example of God's plan for His people to have UNITY, the unification of Jews and Gentiles in the family of God made it plain.
- Let's pull all this together...
- In these recent chapters of Romans, Paul has reminded us that Christ called us to love one another AND to accept some differences in one another.
- Question: What is the difference between UNITY and UNIFORMITY.
- Let's be clear, we are called to UNITY NOT UNIFORMITY!
- There shouldn't be fundamental differences about our NON-NEGOTIABLE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH. But, in NON ESSENTIALS there WILL be differences.
- Question: How should those differences be dealt with? In love. And it takes ENDURANCE and ENCOURAGEMENT from SCRIPTURE through PRAYER.

You've probably noticed during this study of Romans I've quoted Chuck Swindoll a lot. His commentary on Romans has been one of my key resources along with a few others. He writes beautifully giving us a metaphor of how our differences can blend into UNITY though not UNIFORMITY.

Chuck writes:

*Imagine how boring Beethoven's Ninth Symphony would be if performed by one hundred violins. Don't misunderstand. I love the violin. But that's not the sound the composer imagined when he put quill to parchment nearly two centuries ago. He called for a variety of instruments, each producing a sound unique to its design.*

*He called for strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, and even the human voice to perform his masterpiece. He carefully crafted a specific part for each instrument. They start and stop at different times, and they play different notes in different patterns. Nevertheless, they play in one accord.*

*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.*

So, What's the TAKEAWAY?

- Is it my chief aim as a Cristian to Glorify God? If so...
- God is glorified when his children love each other, in a spirit of unity, as we follow Christ Jesus!
- To do that takes supernatural ENDURANCE and ENCOURAGEMENT from our ULTIMATE EXAMPLE...Jesus Himself...and communicated to us through SCRIPTURE and BY PRAYER.
- Verses 5&6 and verse 13 are a fitting benediction to end on today. Paul writes:

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And...

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. AMEN