

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – UNITY IN THE BODY – PART 5

--ROMANS 15:1-6--

INTRODUCTION:

The unity of believers has always been a concern of our Lord. Paul has devoted all of Romans 14 to this topic and continues in chapter 15 speaking of the crucial importance of unity in the church. Through the first 13 verses of chapter 15 Paul lays out two more principles for the church to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The first principle has to do with pleasing one another, following the example left to us by the Lord. The second principle has to do with rejoicing with one another in God's eternal plan of salvation and redemption.

I. CONCERN FOR OTHERS (Romans 15:1a)

- a. Paul now begins to write about our responsibility to please one another, to show _____ for others in the church, this is a responsibility for all believers.
- b. The Greek word that is translated “_____” is a word that means “owing a debt” or “having a strong obligation to fulfill.” (1 John 2:6; 3:16; 4:11)
- c. The Greek word translated “to _____” is a word that literally means to pick up a burden and carry it.
- d. When Paul writes that we ought to bear the _____ of those without strength, he is saying that we must do more than just tolerate the weaknesses of fellow believers, but we are to help them bear them by not being critical, or condescending. (Philippians 2:3-4)

II. PLEASE OTHERS, NOT YOURSELF (Romans 15:1b-2)

- a. As strong believers our purpose should be to _____ Christ and we can do this in part by bearing the weaknesses of those without strength.
- b. Paul writes do not just please yourself, instead, “*Each of us is to please his neighbor for his _____, to his edification.*” (Romans 15:2, NASB95) (Romans 14:19; Philippians 2:1-5)

III. FOLLOW CHRIST'S EXAMPLE (Romans 15:3)

- a. Paul goes on in the Philippians passage to explain the attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His attitude was not to _____ Himself, but to please the One who sent Him and the One for whom He willingly came.
- b. Going back to Romans 15 Paul here also holds out to us Jesus Christ as our example to _____ in pleasing our neighbor.
- c. Paul's point in holding up the Lord Jesus Christ as our example of someone who did not please Himself is that by the indwelling Spirit's power we are able to be _____ to Christ and to follow His example by having the same selfless attitude in ourselves which was in Christ.

IV. FOLLOW THE WORD'S INSTRUCTION (Romans 15:4)

- a. Not only does Paul tells us to follow the Lord's example of not pleasing Himself, but he also reminds us that God's Word was preserved for our _____. (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11)
- b. Paul says that this was written for our instruction so that as we persevere in this life, we do so through the encouragement that we receive through the pages of Scripture that give us comfort and _____. (1 Timothy 1:1)

V. RELY ON GOD'S POWER (Romans 15:5)

- a. Paul goes on to tells that the perseverance and encouragement that God demands we have is _____ for us by God Himself.
- b. This verse and the next are Paul's _____ and benediction to this principle of pleasing others.

VI. GLORIFY GOD IN UNITY (Romans 15:6)

- a. Why does Paul pray for God to grant to us to be of one mind, _____ according to Christ Jesus?
- b. In calling us to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in one accord with one voice, Paul was emphasizing the _____ of Jesus Christ.

- c. The New Testament clearly speaks over and over about the _____ of God the Father and God the Son, a relationship that is unique and incomprehensible for us. (Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 2:10-11; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 John 3)

CONCLUSION:

Paul in this passage clearly expresses the principle that unity in the church is a result of our concern for others and a desire to please our neighbor for his good, to his edification. When we live like this in the church there will be unity and that unity will bring us together in one voice to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is man's chief purpose in life to do whatever we can to glorify God.

I said in the beginning of this message that the unity of believers has always been a concern for our Lord, and I want to end this message with a portion of His High Priestly prayer in which He prayed for us to be one, unified. Why is this so important to the Lord? Because He understands to fellowship, the joy, the glory that comes from being one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus prayed in John 17:21-23, *"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; **that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.**"* (John 17:20–23, NASB95)