
a *Grace Notes* course

The Epistle to the ROMANS

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 15

Romans 15:1-33

Grace Notes

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The Epistle to the Romans

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Chapter 15

INTRODUCTION:

Although there is a chapter break here, there is not a break in the context. Paul is continuing to teach about the relationship between different types of believers, the strong believer and the weak believer.

In Romans 14:13-21 Paul directed his attention to the strong believer who exercises liberty but does so in such a way that he causes the weaker believer to stumble or even to perish.

The problem: v 15 No longer walking according to spiritual love.

No in Chapter 15 he goes from the negative to the positive

Romans 15:1

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not [just] please ourselves.

Paul includes himself as one of the strong believers and tells other strong believers that they are to bear the weakness of those without strength.

The word OUGHT begins the sentence in the GNT making it emphatic on application:

It is OFEILW and it means to owe a debt.

It is from OFELOS which means advantage. So there is an inherit advantage to doing this which we ought to do.

We recently saw the same word we have here in Romans 15:1 in Romans 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another.

PRINCIPLE: We are commanded to love one another as Christ loved us. The new commandment of John 13:34

This is an expression of that love which is to be applied by the believer, F/HS, walking in faith, walking in truth.

In Romans 13:8 we were told to own no man anything except spiritual love. Yet here we have another thing we are to owe...but there is no

contradiction. This is one of the expressions of spiritual love. To bear the weaknesses of the weak.

SO THEN, this is part of our debt to God but is fulfilled in our love for fellow believers.

The word STRONG in the GNT is DUNATOS and the negative of it for WITHOUT STRENGTH.

Generally this word looks at supernatural strength or power. In the Gospels it is most often translated with the word POSSIBLE.

Often in the NT it is used for God's strength and then it is also used for the strength of the believer.

In II Corinthians 12:10 it is the opposite of human strength: Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

In Titus 1:9 it is related to Doctrine: Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

So this is a strength not of character, not of personality, not of the flesh, but of God.

In our passage, one has it, one does not. One is strong, one is not. One is a mature believer, one is immature.

Responsibility always falls to the strong. The strong believer is the one who is to lead, to love, to nurture, to bear the weakness of the weak.

BEAR is the pres infinitive of BASTAZW and is also found in Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

The law of Christ is the new commandment that believers love one another just as Christ loved us.

Galatians 6:2 and our passage shows us how this love is expressed, the application of it.

BASTAZW referees a weight that is ready to press down and break the person.

This word does not mean to take the burden, the weight away but to help another shoulder the load.

In Galatians 6:5 where we read For each one shall bear his own load, that would not be helping, that would be taking the load off completely.

In our passages we are to help shoulder the weakness: This is a word found only here (a hapax legoumena) although it comes from the common word for weak. It is a bit different though because it looks at weakness that arise out of a weak conscience.

So these are weakness that come directly out of having incorrect norms and standards.

The job of the strong is not to straighten out the weak believer but help him bear up.

Romans 14:4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

The Lord is the one who will deal with the weak believer.

To not consider the weak believer would be self-centered and would be pleasing ourselves.

The word PLEASE here and in v 2 is the same as in Romans 14:18 where we were well pleasing to God as we served Christ.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Our objective in the Christian life is to please God
2. We do this from faith-obedience
3. Part of our obedience is in relationship to other believers
4. If we become self-centered, pragmatic, looking out only for ourselves, pleasing ourselves, we cannot please God nor can we please other.
5. As we will see in v 2, when we please others we do that which is good in God's sight
6. The greatest way we can please others is to do that which results in their edification
7. Our example for this is the humanity of Jesus Christ

Romans 15:2

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

Little different in the Greek: We do have an imperative mood, so the mandate Let each one of us please his neighbor is a good translation.

But the reason would be better stated: For the good [of his] edification.

[Notice the NASB includes this as a margin note]

Edification is singular so it would be for the one who is the neighbor.

The word GOOD is AGAQOS good of intrinsic value, divine good.

Note the difference here and in Romans 14:21. There it was good [KALOS] not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything that could cause a believer to stumble.

That passage looked at things done, this passage looks at goals achieved.

GOD'S GOAL, OUR GOAL...EDIFICATION of the believer.

In Ephesians 4 where Paul outlines the function of the local church he states that edification, building up of the body, is the goal:

Ephesians 4:11-12 And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints [so they will do] the work of service, [and] the building up of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:15-16 But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies [every gift]0, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

TWO THINGS REQUIRED FOR THE GOAL TO BE REACHED:

1. Teaching that equips the saints for work
2. Spiritual Love

One creates the skills the other creates the atmosphere

In the latter part of Ephesians 4 Paul tells what intrudes upon this...sin and self centeredness:

Ephesians 4:28-32

Romans 15:3

For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written [Psalm 69:9], The reproaches of those who reproached Thee fell upon Me.

This verse begins with KAI GAR an adverb and a conjunction which form an extreme degree of contrast...even Christ!

Paul states this very strongly because if anyone had a right to please himself it would have been Jesus Christ.

Paul used CHRIST to remind his readers and us that Jesus Christ is God and as God had an absolute undeniable right to please Himself but He did not.

John 8:28-29 Jesus therefore said, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

This statement then shows how even under extreme adversity and oppression our Lord Jesus Christ did not seek to please Himself.

This is somewhat of a hyperbole in that Paul is just talking about a stronger believer being patience and caring with the weak believer...yet he uses the extreme self denial of Jesus Christ to illustrate this a pattern in Him we can follow.

Romans 15:4

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.

Paul, having just quoted from the OT establishes a principle. The Scriptures regardless of when they were written, can be used in the present to build endurance and provide encouragement.

We go to past: The Scriptures

We apply them to the present: We endure and are encouraged

We then look ahead to the future: Our Hope

Let's consider eight principles regarding the Scriptures:

1. The Scriptures reveal a person not mere principles:

John 5:38-39 And you [Religious Jews] do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me.

2. The Scriptures publicly proclaim Jesus as the Christ. It is the Lord not the Law:

Acts 18:28 For he [Apollos] powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

3. The Scriptures reveal our manner of life. It is living not the letter of the Law.

James 2:8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well.

4. The Scriptures are not given for private understanding. Consensus not concealment.

II Peter 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation.

5. The Scriptures are the sword, weapon, tool, of the Spirit and subject to Him:

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

6. In the hand of the Spirit the Scriptures are a source of power:

Hebrews 6:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

7. The Scriptures are profitable to us not to be manipulated by us:

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

8. The Scriptures endure forever:

1 Peter 1:24-25 For, All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord abides forever. And this is the word which was preached to you.

From the Scriptures we have endurance and encouragement...

Romans 15:5

But who is the ultimate source:

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

The word GRANT is the optative of DIDWMI. So we have a statement of wish or desire.

NOW MAY...God do this

It says God who gives perseverance and encouragement, but in the GNT it is:

The God of perseverance and encouragement...

These are seen as having their source in God and are the expression of God's very essence.

He loves as His children and He will cause us to have patience and He will encourage us.

BUT IT SAYS MAY...Optative, that He may do something:

Grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.

SAME MIND is AUTOS FRONEW and is found in this verse and four other verses in the NT:

II Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Philippians 2:2-5 Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Philippians 4:2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

THIS SAME MINDEDNESS is characterized by:

1. Being comforted together in Christ
2. By having the peace of God (which passes all understanding)
3. Maintaining Spiritual Love
4. Rejecting selfishness and empty conceit
5. Having the attitude of Christ
6. Not being high minded but associating with the lowly
7. Being in harmony
8. And I saved the best till last: Rejoicing with others!

We are told that God can grant us this because He is the God of perseverance and encouragement...and we all need that from God.

BUT REMEMBER THE OPTATIVE MOOD VERB. This is a potential, that God may grant...

What stands in the way? It is not God it is us!

PRINCIPLE: God wants us to have a unity, a like-mindedness, but our self centeredness and eventual self absorption states in the way of what God wants to do in us and with us.

Romans 15:6

Gives us the ultimate purpose in this: That with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beyond the assurance that we have in God and His plan is His glory.

GOAL: The Glory of God.

ATTITUDE: Hope: (v 4) Confident assurance, Joy

Look down to Romans 15:13 God of Hope, fill you will all joy and peace in believing (faith) that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

MECHANICS: Endurance (v 4)

FUNCTION: Unity (v 5)

PRINCIPLES:

God's goal in everything he does is to bring glory to himself.

We receive maximum benefit when God is glorified. Not my will but thy will be done.

Personally, our ultimate benefit is reached at the BEMA seat when we receive rewards which glorify God.

Between now and then we anticipate that in HOPE.

Collin Brown: Hope is always a confident, sure expectation of divine action...substance, guarantee

- Its content is never ego-centric, but always Christ centered
- Basis is not human works but the gracious works of God in Jesus Christ
- It is a grace gift of God: Romans 15:13

Hope is a patient, confident expectation and thus is demonstrated by UPOMENW, endurance.

In that virtue of endurance we bear the tension between the now and that time in which God receives all glory.

Hope then is the mental attitude while endurance is the mechanics by which we struggle every day to keep fixed upon the goal, the glory of God.

I Corinthians 13:13 And now remains faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these, love.

FAITH: Our Aden to God's provision, non-meritorious

HOPE: Confident anticipation with endurance in time

LOVE: The love relationship of God to us and us to God, our dependency upon Jesus Christ.

Which then leads to our love and acceptance of others...

Romans 15:7

Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

The word ACCEPT is the same word we saw in Romans 14:1 and 3

It is PROSLAMBANW and finds its original usage in the Greek societies and fraternities as one would be accepted or admitted to membership. It means to receive fully, with kindness and fellowship. To receive without reservation or hesitation.

In Romans 14:1 it is used to set the tone of the entire section of Romans 14:1 to Romans 15:14.

In Romans 14:3 it is used of God having accepted both the strong and the weak believer.

Now in Romans 15:7 it is used of the believer accepting other believers.

The standard for this acceptance is JUST AS CHRIST accepted us to the glory of God.

The adverb is KATHwS and is an exact comparison:

1. This adverb provides the exact parallel of position and function of the believer in Christ and Christ and the Father.
2. The model is: As Christ was in the Father, the believer is in Christ.
3. John 14:20 In that day (after the F/HS) you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
4. That model provided the humanity of Christ with both position and function.

His position was in the Father

His function was the power to love, to forgive, to accept others.

John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

The phrase IN CHRIST describes our position:

We are heirs, sons of God, forgiven, accepted, free, under no condemnation, saints, dead to sin, possessing eternal life, justified, new creatures, blessed forever, royal priests, royal family...ALL IN CHRIST.

5. Our function is also in this model:

John 14:11-12 Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.

The greater works are greater in volume, greater in duration, greater in intensity.

These greater works include:

Our LOVE for one another: John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Our FORGIVENESS of one another: Eph. 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:13 Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Our ACCEPTANCE of one another: Romans 15:7 Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

6. In the model of Christ in the Father and the believer in Christ the power for both sides of the model is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was lead by the Spirit, Luke 4:1 and 14

Jesus did what He did in the power of the Spirit, Matthew 12:28

7. Therefore, on our side of the model we are dependent upon the Spirit to empower us to love one another, forgive one another, and accept one another.

The pattern, the precedent is always Christ and the power is always the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION: When it comes to our position and our function there is perhaps no greater concept than the concept of acceptance. When it comes it our relationships with others there is no greater foundation than acceptance. When it comes it our sense of well being with God and others, there is no greater concept than acceptance.

People desire acceptance at every level of life, in the family, in marriage, in the classroom, in the workplace.

And yet as Christians we begin with the stated and revealed fact that God, the all powerful creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them has accepted us, unconditionally, forever, in His beloved Son Jesus Christ.

Paul Tillich stated: God's radical and unconditional acceptance of us is a fitting contemporary transition of justification by grace. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us, It strikes us when year after year, the long for perfection of life does not appear, when despair threatens to destroy all joy and courage. And it is at that moment that a wave of light breaks into our darkness, as though a voice were saying, you are accepted, you are accepted, accepted by the One who is greater than you. Do not try to do anything now, perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek to perform, to not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted. When that happens we experience grace.

v 7 Continued: So it is in the light of the great and grand acceptance that we have in the presence of the Father in Christ that we can accept one another.

The purpose of this acceptance is to bring glory to God.

Glory is DOXA which means to be well spoke of.

We represent God and when we are unified based upon acceptance the God who we represent receives glory, He is well spoke of.

On the other hand when we are divisive and rejecting and lack unity our actions reflect badly on our heavenly Father.

Romans 15:8

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

Paul uses Christ as an illustration of acceptance not from a position of strength but from His position as a servant:

Christ has become a servant...for two reasons:

First: To the Jews on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers.

The word PROMISES is plural and looks at the unconditional covenants given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Whereas in Galatians 3 and Hebrews 11 the PROMISE is singular and referees to the one who is to be sent, the Lord Jesus Christ (the promised Messiah) and the Holy Spirit (who is called the Spirit of promise in Ephesians 1:13)

So in our passage we see Jesus as a servant confirming the OT covenants, the Palestinian, the David, and the New.

Secondly He became a servant to the Gentiles that the Gentiles may glorify God because of His mercy.

This really harkens back to Romans 9-11 that shows the great mercy of God to the Gentiles...

We who are Gentiles stand in awe of the mercy of God for saving us.

God had made no promises to us, we had no covenants with Him, and yet we are heirs with Christ.

Any blessing received by the Gentiles springs forth not from promises made by mercy given from the Grace of God.

THESE TWO PURPOSES IN THE MINISTRY of Christ are being fulfilled right now.

The covenants are confirmed and await fulfillment And the church, the very Body and Bride of Christ is being formed

Romans 15:9-12

As it is written, Therefore I will give praise to Thee among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Thy name.

And again he says, Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.

And again, Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, And let all the peoples praise Him.

And again Isaiah says, There shall come the root of Jesse, And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, In Him shall the Gentiles hope.

To demonstrate the validity of what he has just stated, Paul goes to the OT. This not only validates but also shows that what is going on is not

something that is outside the plan of God...God's plan is perfect.

He quotes from Psalm 18:49, II Samuel 22:50, Deuteronomy 32:34, Isaiah 11:10 (From the Law, the books of history, the books of poetry, and the prophets):

NOTICE a progression in these four OT quotations:

In the first David praises God AMONG the Gentiles

In the second Moses tells the Gentiles to rejoice WITH Israel

In the third the Gentiles are to praise the Lord directly

In the fourth Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will be the ruler-leader-deliverer of the Gentiles

The OT never presented Gentiles as heirs together with Israel but did present them in being blessed by association with Israel. It is not until the NT, Ephesians 3:11-22 that the distinction between Jew and Gentile is removed in the Church Age.

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

These verses form a fitting close to this section. Paul expresses what he desires God to do and what he desires them to do.

It may be best to look at this verse in reverse:

1. What Paul desires to be done will only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit
2. His desire is that believers, you and me, abound in hope
3. The mechanics of this is that we are filled with all joy and peace (by the power of the Holy Spirit)
4. The potential of this is from the God of hope who works this through the power of the Holy Spirit

PRINCIPLE: Apart from the Holy Spirit we will not be filled with Joy and Peace and we will not abound in hope.

[Refer to own Doctrine of Abundant Life, ADUNC-LIFE]

Here in our passage our abundance, our overflowing, is to be in HOPE:

HOPE:

HOPE is the Greek word ELPIS and refers to the confidence that we can have in that which is not seen.

Romans 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance(endurance) we wait eagerly for it.

It is a confident expectation in that which we are confident will surely come about.

Our HOPE begins with our hope in God Himself:

I Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope

I Timothy 4:10 We have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

I Peter 1:21 Your faith and hope are in God.

Apart from a relationship with God there is no hope:

Ephesians 2:12 You 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.

And even as believers we can put our hope in the wrong things:

I Timothy 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

HOPE gives us an anchor for our souls:

Hebrews 6:19 This hope (Jesus as our High priest) we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

We fix our attention on this HOPE:

I Peter 1:13 Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope

completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, hope, our confident assurance in God and His plan, gives us stability, confidence, purpose in life.

Hope allows us to anticipate our destiny both in time and in eternity:

Titus 1:2 In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

Titus 2:12-13 Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.

The source of HOPE then is God and what He promises to do. Our access of HOPE is by faith in what God has revealed:

Romans 15:4 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.

FAITH in God and His Word, precedes HOPE. And it is the Holy Spirit who, through faith, builds this confident assurance in us:

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

In I Corinthians 13:13, I Thessalonians 1:3, and I Thessalonians 5:8 Hope is grouped together with faith and love.

In each case Faith is first. Faith in God and His promises to you regarding eternal life, the coming of Christ, that He has a perfect plan for you is the initial starting point of Hope.

It begins the process which the Holy Spirit completes.

v 13 Again: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That faith in God that is the initial step towards HOPE is found in this verse in the phrase:

Fill you will all joy and peace in believing (verb form of faith)

This is something God will do as we trust Him.

In Ephesians 5:18 we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fills us with the fullness of God as per Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:19.

The FULLNESS of God includes JOY and PEACE:

While joy and peace can come from many sources in life, the joy and peace referred to here is something that only the believer can have and it can only come from God:

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

AND REMEMBER WHAT THE WHOLE CONTENT of the farewell discourse in John 13-15 was. Jesus was saying good bye but telling them what of the great things they could expect after he left and the Holy Spirit came.

Did they believe it? If they did they had HOPE

In Galatians 5:22 Joy and Peace are part of the fruit of the Spirit which concurs with our verse...this is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

NOW joy and peace are linked together in three verses in the NT epistles, Romans 14:17, our passage, and in Galatians 5:22 and in each verse they are products of the work and the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

As we saw in Romans 14:17 The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Peace and joy express our relationship to others and to self (whereas Righteousness expresses our relationship to God).

People today go off to counselors, spend hours in therapy, spend hundreds even thousands of dollars on self help programs, waste time and money on

the psychic hot lines, do everything and anything they can to have that which only God can give...joy in themselves and peace with others.

WHEN PAUL SAYS Now may the God of hope fill you...

FILL YOU is an optative mood verb. Wish or desire.

Looks are being filled to overflowing.

With JOY and PEACE. Inner joy and outward or relational peace. The contentment of soul that allows for us to live in peace with one another.

This occurs...in believing (trusting, having faith in the God of Hope)

So the reality occurs when we trust God to do what He alone can do.

We do not see what the Father promises, we do not see for example eternal life, but we have the Joy and Peace with the Father of knowing it is there, by faith.

And with FAITH, that is BELIEVING, God the Holy Spirit will work in us by His power, we will be filled with joy and peace, and abound more and more in confident assurance, hope, of all that God has promised He will do.

Verse 14 is the concluding verse of this section. With all that Paul has said about the relationship between the strong and weak believer, he now makes one last application.

Romans 15:14

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

Paul had never been to Roman but he was convinced of their spiritual maturity and correct application by what he had heard about them.

PRINCIPLE: We see over and over again in the NT and in the history of the church that when believers do what is right, their testimony is spread abroad.

The verse begins with: And I have been persuaded...

This persuasion came by way of their testimony.

Paul makes this emphatic...EVEN MYSELF, indicating that he was not easily persuaded by heresy.

CONCERNING YOU, this is PERI UMWN and the preposition PERI means to be all encompassing. He had good information regarding their spiritual function and this information was complete.

This information that persuaded Paul was based on two things they had and one thing they did:

1. That you are full of goodness:

FULL is MESTOS and means to be STUFF FILL with something by someone. In v 14 Paul has just spoke of the power of the Holy Spirit, filling us with the fullness of God.

This GOODNESS is part of that filling.

It is the word AGAQWSUNJ and refers to active goodness. From AGAQOS, divine good of intrinsic value which source is God alone.

In Galatians 5:22 and Ephesians 5:9 it is described as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

And then in II Thessalonians 1:11 we are told how it is obtained by the believer:

To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power;

To be worthy of you calling means your life exhibits the grace by which you were saved and with this goodness is faith with power.

Our faith and the power of the Holy Spirit

That word for power, DUNAMIS, is the same word we have at the end of Romans 15:13

2. Secondly, this GOODNESS resulted from their having been filled with all knowledge.

Here FILLED is the perfect, pass, part of PLJROW and looks to the past when they learned BD. The passive voice looks at their teachability.

The word itself means to be filled to overflowing KNOWLEDGE is GNWSIS and look at the knowledge that they received and are now able to apply.

It is not EPIGNWSIS until it is put to the test.

But they have been learning BD and now ready to apply it. Learn it --- Think it --- Apply it

3. What they are able to do: Admonish one another.

This is NOUQETEW and means to admonish but also to warn, to exhort.

Means to place something in someone's mind.

What is placed there is a warning, information, upon which the person now has more volitional options.

It is not judging or condemning, but a warning of what is wrong or an exhortation of what is right.

It includes reproof, correction, encouragement BUT NOTICE WHAT SETS IT UP: Goodness and Knowledge.

At the beginning of this epistle Paul gave his readers a very lengthy introduction. Now at the end of it he gives a very lengthy conclusion. Part of this is due to the very doctrinal nature of this epistle. Remember Martin Luther called Romans the queen of the epistles. But another reason Paul labors so extensively in the conclusion is that he has not ever been to Rome. He writes to churches he has not visited and yet hopes to visit. So Paul includes not only a summary of what he has written but also information regarding his plans and many person greetings to those he has met elsewhere and those he has heard about.

Romans 15:15-21 Summary of his method of writing

Romans 15:22-33 Paul's travel plans

Romans 16:1-16 Personal Greetings

Romans 16:17-20 A Warning

Romans 16:21-27 Benediction

Romans 15:15

But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

As Paul looks back over this letter he realizes the boldness he has used in teaching these doctrines.

He does not apologize for this but merely states this.

He was able to be bold because of what he stated in v 14. He was convinced of their goodness and knowledge and that they were involved in good relationships within the church, able to admonish (reprove, correct, encourage) one another.

His BOLDNESS was because of their POSITIVE RECEPTION of the truth. They were teachable, they desired to know what God said.

A teacher is able to speak openly and frankly about the Word when believers are receptive to the truth.

When believers want to know what does the Bible say about this or that, the freedom for boldness on the part of the teacher will result.

TIMIDITY sets in when people close their minds to what is being taught. The old thinking of don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is already made up.

And positive volition, teachability, is always measured against the Word of God, not some form of theology, not some individual, not some method. It is the Word of God that we are positive to or not positive to.

Paul knew enough about these Roman believers to know that he could be very open and frank and bold in his teaching, and he was.

v 15 Continued: His boldness was in reminding them again...

What Paul taught was built upon a foundation he knew they already had and were apply yet he advanced it in a way that previously had not been realized. He took truth farther, he presented it in a striking and effective way.

EXPANDED: I am convinced (from v 14) that you are the kind of believers who are ready and able to appreciate and advance in what I have presented to you. Old truths now given new and specific applications.

BUT PAUL DOES NOT TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS. He tells his readers and us that this is because of the grace that was given to me from God.

The verb is passive, Paul received this so it was not his superior intellect, his writing skills, but the grace of God given to him.

Romans 15:16

Because of this grace I am a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest the gospel of God.

The infinitive expresses the motivation for Paul's ministry. It was the grace of God overflowing in his life to others.

Let's look at the obvious first:

1. He is a minister that belongs to Christ Jesus, of Christ Jesus.

Emphasis on Christ, His deity as the promised one first, then His humanity, Jesus.

[Refer to \doctrine\LJC-NAME.DOC]

2. And he also states he is a priest of the gospel that belongs to God

So he serves the risen Christ in matters of the Gospel

These two titles: MINISTER (a noun) and PRIEST (a verb):

1. MINISTER is LEITOURGOS and is a word that we previous saw in Romans 13 for a public official.

It also had a religious meaning in Ancient Greece for the man who would put up the heavy expense of a festive religious celebration. Thus one who at great expense to himself, served others.

So two elements are seen in this word and applied to Paul:

1) His service was public, he was a public servant of Jesus Christ

2) This was done at great expense to himself. Anyone who ministers the Gospel or the Word does so at great personal expense.

Paul could have been a leading member of the Sanhedrin, but instead was an itinerant preacher.

2. Second word that throws us in this passage is PRIEST.

The NIV translates it correctly, priestly duties.

The word is IEROURGEW and is present, active, participle.

His position is not that of a priest but his function is that of a priest.

Paul, as are all believers in this age, is a priest but here he is being specific and describing his function in relationship to the Gospel.

Now a priest in the OT differed from a prophet.

Prophets spent their time with God and then came to men. Priests spent their time with men and then went to God.

So this would fit with the idea of the public servant, he was a servant of Christ for the public spending his time with those who needed what he offered, the Gospel of God.

The word GOSPEL is found in the NT 99 times and eight of those times as here the gospel of God.

That phrase is not limited to salvation information only but all of the good news we have from God.

So Paul is a public servant of Christ Jesus the risen Lord and his priestly function is in the truth of God...

v 16 Continued: That my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

The priest serves and sacrifices and offers and the offering here is the Gentiles, they are offered to God as Paul mentioned back in Romans 12:1 a living sacrifice.

Now in Ephesians 5:26-27 this same picture is presented as Christ offers the Church to God: That He (Christ) might sanctify her (the church), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

ANY OFFERING TO GOD THAT IS ACCEPTABLE CANNOT BE BASE, OR SPOILED, OR POLLUTED. It must be pure, holy, blameless.

Paul work in his service is to present the Gentiles as an acceptable offering.

ACCEPTABLE is EV+PROS+DEKTOS a triple compound word that begins with GOOD then IN THE FACE OF, with the root which means to highly value and therefore accept.

This is what Paul wants for these Gentiles: To be highly valued as a good sacrifice in the presence of God.

The ONLY WAY HE CAN DO THIS is not by him doing it but by these believers being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In our passage and in II Thessalonians 2:13 we see that God the Holy Spirit is the agent of the believer's sanctification.

II Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation (all three) through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

SANCTIFICATION is found in three categories in the Word of God:

1. Positional: At the moment of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone the believer is sanctified, he is called a Saint. Hebrews 10:10 tells us this was accomplished by Christ offering Himself once and for all. Jesus Christ is the agent of our positional sanctification.

In I Corinthians 1:2 and 6:11 Paul calls these believers Saints who have been sanctified.

And yet that epistle was written to correct some grave problems of sin. They were positionally sanctified but far from it in their daily lives.

3. (Yes I know I skipped #2) Ultimate Sanctification: This sanctification will not occur until we are in the very presence of Jesus Christ himself.

I John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

God the Father is the agent of our ultimate sanctification.

2. Experiential Sanctification: That is what we are dealing with here. And this is what we deal with in our daily lives.

This was Jesus' prayer in John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.

II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same

image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

I Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Holy Spirit is the agent of our experiential sanctification:

Three Factors involved in this:

1) Our dependence upon the Holy Spirit. The manner in which we live our daily lives comes down to two procedures...dependence upon one's own ability, knowledge, effort, performance, works OR dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

These methods are incompatible. To attempt to have them co-exists will not work:

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another.

WE must be conscious of our own inability as well as the Holy Spirit's infinite ability.

Chafer (vol VI, page 168): The faith method of life, which stands wholly apart from human strength, is that alone which secures or realizes the Spirit's power and achievements.

2) The second factor is in relationship to sin: The believer in depending upon the Holy Spirit by faith will experience deliverance from sins and victory over the sin nature. This is progressive and never perfected until ultimate sanctification. We will never be sinless but as we depend upon the Holy Spirit we will sin less.

3) The third factor is our growth in Christ: Learning, thinking, and applying the Word of God will cause the believer to advance in experiential sanctification.

II Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

This is not only learning, it is thinking and applying and a test for you in your learning: Does

it result in more grace? To grow in knowledge and not in grace means something is very wrong.

This is a challenge to anyone who teaches the Word of God whether as a pastor, a parent, a Sunday school teacher. The task before us is not to gain followers but to present believers to God acceptable and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:17

Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

Paul did boast but never in himself, rather in the things pertaining to God.

[I Corinthians 1:26 through 31]

Romans 15:18

For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

In v 17 he states that his reason for boasting is in the things pertaining to God and now in v 18 he boasts in these things.

We have a double negative in the Greek text in a structure that makes it similar to our English double negative. This is a LI-TOTES, a negative wording done to secure a much stronger affirmation of a thought.

So will might expand it: I will be bold to speak of some of the things Christ has accomplished through me...

The THROUGH ME shows us exactly what Paul was in the process and exactly what each of us are in the process. We are instruments for God's use, channels of His grace and truth and power, nothing more but in the same sense, nothing less.

Paul looks at the end result first then in the next verse goes back to the way he was used:

Resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed

OBEDIENCE here is as we originally saw it way back in Romans 1:5

There: Through whom (Jesus Christ) we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the

obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake.

The word FAITH is a genitive giving both definition and description to the word OBEDIENCE.

These two words are in apposition to each other. Paul in Romans 1:5 and here is looking at obedience as that which BELIEVES something, not that which DOES something.

Think back for a moment to our study of Ecclesiastes. The major theme of that book, enjoy what God has given you today.

HOW? By obedience to the Word of God: Eccl. 12:13 Fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

SOUNDS GOOD BUT HOW? By faith, not by doing something but by believing something.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Faith is a volitional decision to trust God
2. That decision is made in relationship to other things and systems we could trust in. Self, others, government, a human leader, a spouse, a job, an education, health, wealth.
3. We make a decision that we will trust God instead of trusting in other things.
4. We make that decision once, then it is tested over and over again.
5. Daily we have opportunity to trust God instead of other things, and when we continue in that resolve of faith-trust, we can enjoy life that day.
6. At times we will put our trust in a specific promise we know from the Word. At other times our trust is placed in a person we know, God.
7. That is how to be obedient, when we start trying to be obedient by what we do we end up trying to earn grace, which is impossible.

OBEDIENCE demands FAITH, and apart from faith obedience is works.

And Paul was never used to promote works...

By word and deed refers to Paul's words and deeds

Romans 15:19

In the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

The word POWER in both cases is the same word and the same as we saw back in v 13, as here, the power of the Holy Spirit.

That power was demonstrated through Paul in signs and wonders...

1. In the OT signs and wonders were accomplished by God in the presence of unbeliever for the deliverance of his people:

For Pharaoh in Egypt: Eleven times

For Daniel: Three times

In Acts 7:36 Stephen refers to this OT used of signs and wonders to Egypt

2. In the Gospels signs and wonders were spoken of by Jesus in the negative:

In Matthew 24:24 and Mark 13:22 it is the false Christ and false prophet who will use signs and wonders in the Tribulation to mislead the people, even believers.

In John 4:48 Jesus bemoaned the fact that the Jews were always demanding signs and wonders prior to belief.

False signs and wonders are also mentioned by Paul In II Thessalonians 2:9 The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.

3. In the book of Acts signs and wonders seven times as a proof or sign of the true apostle.

This same use is found in II Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

4. At the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas told how God had worked signs and wonders through them in the presence of the Gentiles and the Gentiles had been saved:

Acts 15:12 And all the multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders

God had done through them among the Gentiles.

5. In Hebrews 2:4 signs and wonders are said to be part of the witness of God but not the only part: God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

NOW IN Romans 15:19 the power of signs and wonders along with the power of the Holy Spirit was the testimony of the apostle to Jews and to Gentiles.

Jews in Jerusalem and Gentiles in Illyricum the farthest point Paul had gone at that time. North of the Adriatic in what today would be Sin Nature.

Paul ministry, however, became a ministry to the Gentiles:

Galatians 2:8 Paul stated: For He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:20

And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation;

Paul's ministry was one of breaking new ground. Some people have this ministry today, they go where no others believers can be found. Others are not called to such a ministry, it depends upon how you are lead by the Holy Spirit.

Paul did not desire to build upon another man's foundation because up to that time, so much of the foundation was false, it had too much Jewish Law mortared in it.

It is easier to teach grace where no legalism has existed. When people have been bound to rigid systems, they resist the grace of God.

Romans 15:21

But as it is written, They who had no news of Him shall see, And they who have not heard shall understand.

Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:15 to show that his ministry of breaking new ground is not new nor outside the plan of God

Romans 15:22-33 PAUL'S TRAVEL PLANS:

Romans 15:22-24

For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you;

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...

Paul knew about the greatness of Rome, it was after all the capital city of the empire, the world (at least all the world that counted). Also he had heard of the churches there and the many believers that were learning, growing, in the word and in grace.

He had meet people who were from Rome and who were there at the time of his writing of this epistle.

So he wanted to go there for years and now it looked like he would.

HIS PLANS: Travel to Spain with the Gospel and enroute, go through Rome.

He was in Corinth so he could take a ship through the Corinthian canal, across the Adriatic, and right across Italy to Rome. Maybe a three day trip...

Romans 15:25

But now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

Now, you cannot get to Rome by first going to Jerusalem. That is as much in the wrong direction as it was for Jonah to go to Tarshish instead of Nineveh.

This is a literal 180 degree turn...

Romans 15:26,27

For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

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.

The principle taught is very good, very correct. The one who ministers in spiritual things shares and benefits in material gifts.

The Gentiles had received much from the church in Jerusalem by way of teachers and encouragement, and now were willing to give to their distress.

II Corinthians 8-9 deal with the request Paul made on behalf of the church in Jerusalem.

This is all good but others could have very well served as the delivery boy to take these gifts to Jerusalem.

Paul was in Corinth, would have to leave there, travel north, go through Macedonia and Achaia, down through Asia Minor, then the long journey on to Jerusalem, then have to retrace all of his steps...

There was no reason whatsoever that Paul was needed to deliver this gift.

But he volunteered to do it and in doing so now has an excuse to go back to Jerusalem where he had failed in his early ministry.

Acts 9:26-31 Note especially the last verse.

So now Paul has a chance to erase the wrong he committed.

Romans 15:28

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.

Do you see anything there that is odd? Why does Paul have to put his seal on their production, their fruit?

Paul even uses the word SFRAGIZW, a signet ring seal (the NIV did not seem to catch that). The seal not only seals but also approves.

And every time that word is found in John, the epistles, and in the Revelation except for here it is always God doing the sealing, the approving.

But now for some reason Paul sees himself as having to do this.

Romans 15:29

And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Little did Paul know when he wrote this that when he would eventually arrive in Rome it would be in chains as a prisoner of Nero.

Acts 28:14-16 Not as he had planned but God's will won out.

v 30-33 Paul's Requests for Prayers while He is in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:30,31

Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

That I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

This is almost prophetic: To be delivered and Paul will need that because his entrance into Jerusalem is going to prove a disaster.

Notice who Paul wants to be accepted by...the saints.

This is the same word he just used in v 16 where he desired the Gentiles to be accepted by God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

But now he desires and asks for prayers that the believers in Jerusalem who had once rejected him would not accept him.

Romans 15:32, 33

so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

Not rest but arrest: Paul spent two years in Rome under house arrest prior to being released.

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.