

Romans 15

1 The thought flows over from the last chapter. When it comes to freedoms and changing for the conscience of the other, it is the stronger who must give up his freedom. How could you expect the weaker to? You will wound his conscience. The same goes for a married couple. The stronger one spiritually must change for the weaker. The other option is just pleasing yourself. Does that sound like Jesus?

2 The goal is to edify and disciple those we come in contact, not offend and blow them away. Oh, if the church of America could learn this lesson we would see a turn around. That is a heart of love instead of a spirit of pride and competition.

3 Our perfect example...If anyone had a right to, He did. It was all his creation around him. It is all to Him and through Him and for Him. If He wanted to command and insist and blow away the ones who didn't receive him He would not be at fault. They are all his creation to do with as He wills. His attributes shine from His every action showing us his heart, the heart that is pure and holy. He gives us a new heart so we can act in the same manner representing Christ to a world in need. A quote from Psalm 69 - a vision of Jesus last days. Jesus bore it all for us. It is because we were too weak to change that He did what we could not do. Will you do the same for those weaker brothers in your life?

4 Need encouragement and hope? Look to the Word. We have example after example of those who endured. Follow it. The manual for Life is in our hands. This should be our most read book, our favorite book, on our lips and in our hearts. Are you struggling to find strength in trials and temptations? Open the manual and learn. The lesson at hand is how Jesus humbled himself so we could receive his instruction and not be blown away by his freedom and power. Yes, he did offend the religious leaders, but he did so to reach those who had no hope and by it pricked the consciences of those leaders. We will offend some as we reach out to a lost world. The Word will offend those who have no desire to receive it. They are offended by the Truth, not our freedoms. Can you see the difference?

5 Instead of focussing on our differences let us focus on the common core truths of our faith! Ephesians 4:3 What a wonderful description for God, the One who gives endurance and encouragement.

6 This is what happens when we sing. It should be what happens when we share. In the different opinions I always seek the common thread that would unite the two differences into a harmony. Remember in Acts 4 when with one

mouth they prayed and sang praise? Lord, bring it again here. Help our hearts to be willing.

7 Did Jesus wait till you got it together before He opened his arms to you? So there is your example. It doesn't mean compromise, it means love. After that acceptance of the person you can begin helping to transform his/her ways by your loving example.

8 Servant - deacon Jesus came like a waiter to the Jews table to serve the truth - the promises to the patriarchs is fulfilled. When a Jew or Gentile accepts Jesus they become part of that huge - as many as the stars - family of faith.

9 2Sam 22:50 Ps 18:49 The name of Yeshua! Paul like Jesus, was a light to Gentiles for he carried Jesus to them. These Gentiles are added to the numerous children of Abraham, the seed of promise, of faith.

10 Duet 32:43 WITH together a new man.

11 Ps 117:1 They had the vision that God always wanted to include all people.

12 Isaiah 11:10 The Scriptures that foretold of the days that would bring the Gospel to the Gentile. Paul backed up his theology with plenty of Scripture. He was an example in that. Part of the acceptance of each other was the Jew and Gentile animosity. Jews had always acted like Gentiles were scum. Now they were having to break old ingrained patterns and open their arms. Gentiles, too, had to get over feelings of past hurts and accept the Jew. Prejudice is not acceptable in the life of a Christian. It is not of the spirit of unity for which Jesus prayed. It separates the body of Christ and handicaps it. Today it is more over peripheral doctrines and styles than nationalities.

13 Filled with joy and peace, overflowing with hope. This is a Spirit filled life! This is God's desire for you. It is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are all so focussed on Christ we will not notice the little differences with each other.