

Romans 15:1-6

- glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in unity -

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Introduction

- ❖ What is the purpose of the Christian life and the Christian Church in this world?
 - “so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:6).¹
 - The spirit of unity is needed.
 - Therefore, Paul has urged the church (in Rome) to accept one another and not to look down or to judge someone in disputable matters (Rom 14:1, 3; 15:1; also 1 Tim 3:15). “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Rom 15:7) “with one heart and mouth” (Rom 15:6). This is made possible when “each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up” (Rom 15:2; 14:18, 19) just like Christ (Rom 15:3; Eph 5: 1, 2).
 - At this point, Paul refers to the Scriptures “as it is written” (Rom 15:3; Ps 69:9). “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” (Rom 15:4).
- ❖ This outline is a companion to the study of Romans 14:7-9² and to Romans 14:17-19³, and to Romans 15:13.⁴

¹ See the Book of Revelation 7:7-19 and other passages.

² See: <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Romans%2014.7-9.pdf>

³ See: <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Romans%2014.17-19.pdf> (to be published)

⁴ See: <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Romans%2015.13.pdf> (to be published)

- ❖ The context, form and structure, and theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Letter to the Romans. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a "stand-alone". You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ An overview of the Letter to the Romans. This overview serves also as a summary of the contents of this letter.

Greetings and Introduction (Rom 1:1-17)	
Romans 1:1-17	<p>Greetings, Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:1-10)</p> <p>Plan to visit the Romans and to share the Gospel with them (1:11-17)</p>
The righteousness from God (Rom 1:18-8:39)	
Romans 1:18-3:20	<p>The wrath of God against all unrighteousness:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Of this world (1:18-32)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Of the Jews (2:1-3:8)</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Jews and the Gentiles are alike under sin (3:9-20)</p>
Romans 3:21-8:39	<p style="background-color: #ffffcc;">The righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16, 17):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">To which the Law and the Prophets testify (3:21-31)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Abraham was justified by faith (4:1-25)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Through faith, we have been justified and are reconciled with God (5:1-11)</p> <hr/> <p>The contrasts:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Death came through Adam, life came through Christ (5:12-21)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We are dead to sin, and alive in Christ under grace (6:1-14)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We are slaves not to sin but to righteousness and God (6:15-23)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In the mind a slave to God's law, in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin (7:1-25)</p>

	<p>The children of God:</p> <p>The Spirit has set us free from sin. He has made us children and heirs of God (8:1-17)</p> <p>As his children, we share in the suffering of Christ and will share in his glory (8:18-30)</p> <p>There is nothing that will separate us from the love of God in Christ (8:31-39)</p>
What about Israel, the chosen people of God? (Rom 9:1-11:36)	
Romans 9:1-11:36	<p>Not all Israelites came to faith in Christ (9:1-29)</p> <p>Because they pursued righteousness by works (9:30-10:21)</p> <p>Did God reject Israel? By no means! (11:1-32)</p> <p>Glory to God (11:33-36)</p>
Live according to the Gospel (Rom 12:1-15:13)	
Romans 12:1-15:13	<p>Renew your mind (12:1-21)</p> <p>Submit yourself to the authorities (13:1-7)</p> <p>Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ (13:8-14)</p> <p>Accept each other in Christ (14:1-15:13)</p>
Purpose, Plans, Greetings (Rom 15:14-16:27)	
Romans 15:14-16:27	<p>Purpose of the letter, Paul's plans to visit Rome and Spain (15:14-33)</p> <p>Greetings to different groups and individuals (16:1-16)</p> <p>Final words and greetings from (16:16-27)</p>

Form and structure

- ❖ The structure of Romans 14:1-15:13 is outlined below in detail. The text consists of four parts:
 - (1) Acceptance (14:1-3)
 - (2) Don't judge one another, because Christ is Lord (Rom 14:4-12)
 - (3) Therefore, make up your mind to do what leads to peace of the Kingdom (14:13-23)
 - (4) Acceptance (15:1-13)

- ❖ (2) and (3) both reveal an ABA'-structure:
 - A = Don't judge (14:4-6) because God has accepted each one of us.
 - B = We live to Christ the Lord (14:7-9).
 - A' = Don't Judge (14:10-12) because we all have to give account to him.
 - -----
 - A = Make up your mind (14:13-16)
 - B = We serve Christ the Lord – the Kingdom of God (14:17-19)
 - A' = Make up your mind (14:20-23)

(1) ACCEPTANCE	
Acceptance (Rom 14:1-3)	<p>Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.</p> <p>One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.</p> <p>The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does,</p> <p>for God has accepted him. (See also Rom 15:7)</p>
(2) DON'T JUDGE ONE ANOTHER	
Don't judge (Rom 14:4-6)	<p>Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.</p> <p>One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike.</p> <p>Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.</p>
Christ is LORD (Rom 14:7-9)	<p>For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.</p> <p>If we live, we live to the Lord;</p>

	<p>and if we die, we die to the Lord.</p> <p>So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.</p> <p>For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.</p>
<p>Don't judge (Rom 14:10-12)</p>	<p>You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.</p> <p>It is written: "As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'"</p> <p>So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.</p>
<p>(3) MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO DO WHAT LEADS TO PEACE OF THE KINGDOM</p>	
<p>Make up your mind (Rom 14:13-16)</p>	<p>Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.</p> <p>As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself.</p> <p>But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.</p> <p>If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love.</p> <p>Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.</p> <p>Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.</p>
<p>Christ is LORD (Rom 14:17-19)</p>	<p>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.</p> <p>Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.</p>
<p>Make up your mind (Rom 14:20-23)</p>	<p>Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.</p> <p>All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.</p>

	<p>It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.</p> <p>So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.</p> <p>Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.</p> <p>But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith;</p> <p>and everything that does not come from faith is sin.</p>
<p>(4) Acceptance so that you, Jews and Gentiles together, may glorify God,</p>	
<p>Acceptance and unity in the church to glorify God (Rom 15:1-6)</p> <p>Prayer 1</p>	<p>We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.</p> <p>Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”</p> <p>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.</p> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4;">May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>Acceptance and unity in the church to glorify God together with the Gentiles (Rom 15:7-13)</p> <p>Prayer 2</p>	<p style="background-color: #e0ffff;">Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, to bring praise to God. (See also Romans 14:1, 3)</p> <p>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 so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.”</p> <p>Again, it says,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”</p> <p>And again,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.”</p> <p>And again, Isaiah says,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.”</p> <p style="background-color: #fff9c4;">May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you</p>

may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

❖ Date of writing:

- “Romans was drafted in the winter of 56–57 c.e. or the early spring of 57”⁵ and was sent from the Corinth or Cenchræa (Rom 16:1, 2) which was in the vicinity of Corinth. The letter was probably carried by Phoebe to the churches of Rome.

❖ The City of Rome and the Letter to the Romans:⁶

- “An extensive building program paid by” Emperor Augustus “and his wealthy supporters transformed Rome into a gleaming city of marble that grew to house a million people. Under his loyal son-in-law Agrippa, a new aqueduct was built along with numerous public fountains; temples were restored; public gardens, baths, and theaters were erected; and the city administration was reorganized with fire brigades and police protection; enhanced grain deliveries to Roman citizens were also provided. All of these improvements served to demonstrate that the golden age of peace and plenty had finally arrived.”
- “Of more direct relevance for the situation of Paul’s Letter to the Romans were the reigns of Claudius (41–54 c.e.) and Nero (54–68 c.e.)” “Claudius continued the process of urban development with the creation of a new harbor for the grain trade, the improvement of the roads and aqueducts, the reorganization of the court system, and the creation of an imperial bureaucracy consisting of slaves and freedmen/women who administered the affairs of the empire in areas where the emperor had direct control.”
- “Nero came to power with the pledge to restore the role of the Senate and the rule of law, and was celebrated for ushering in a golden age.” “At the time Romans was written, the Nero administration was providing an exemplary form of government and law enforcement, despite the profligate personal habits of Nero himself—an aggressive bisexual who enjoyed stalking the streets of Rome with his crowd of sycophants demanding sexual services from passersby and ‘indulging in brawls and petty thieving.’ The combination of Paul’s denunciation of immorality (*Rom 1:25-32*) combined with the command to respect governmental agents as the source of law and order (*Rom 13:1-7*) may derive in part from these peculiar circumstances.”

⁵ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 18).

⁶ This paragraph is a summary of Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 47,48).

- “A crucial element in understanding the situation of Christian congregations in Rome is the crowded urban environment. At the time of Paul’s letter, most of the population in Rome lived in the upper levels of ‘multistory tenement houses’ or in the rears of shops, while the nobility and the wealthy citizens of Rome occupied lower floors of these buildings or in mansions in the better parts of the city.”⁷
- “The large Jewish community in Rome had played a major role in the formation of the Christian congregations prior to the time of Paul’s letter.”⁸
- “Julius Caesar granted the right of Jewish communities to follow their own laws, which was confirmed by the Senate in 44 B.C.E. and later by Augustus and Claudius. The ‘right to live according to Jewish Laws and Customs’ included permission to have meetings for worship and meals together, to organize a communal life, the right not to give bonds on the Sabbath, to have kosher markets, and to send funds to the Jerusalem temple.”⁹
- “Although there may have been others, there is solid evidence of at least eleven synagogues in Rome; the word συναγωγή (*synagogue*) may refer to congregations rather than buildings.”¹⁰

❖ The recipients of the letter:

- “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints” (Rom 1:6). A distinction can be made between the first recipients and the second. To these second recipients belong all those who are mentioned in Romans 16:
 - Individuals like “Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus” (Rom 16:3).
 - Members of one household, like “those who belong to the household of Aristobulus” (Rom 16:10).
 - Small groups like “Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them” (Rom 16:15).
 - (Small) congregations like “the church that meets at their house” (Priscilla and Aquila; Rom 16:5).
- “All this suggests that the Christian groups formed something of a spectrum (some more Jewish in composition, some more Gentile, most mixed).”¹¹

⁷ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 53).

⁸ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 55).

⁹ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 56).

¹⁰ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 57).

- This has consequences on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. (See above.)

Exposition

Bear in mind

- ❖ The following key texts must be born in mind while studying and expounding Romans 14:1-15:13:
 - “**The righteous will live by faith.**” (Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4). “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes **through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe**” (Rom 3:21, 22).
 - Ephesians 2:8: “**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith**—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—”
 - This is fundamental to the Christian existence.
 - “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12:1, 2).
 - “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.** Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **so in Christ we who are many form one body**, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom 12:3-5).
 - “**Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.** Honor one another above yourselves” (Rom 12:10). “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8). “Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom 13:10).
 - “**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men**” (Rom 14:17, 18).

Romans 14:1-12 Summary¹²

¹² <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Romans%2014.7-9.pdf>

- ❖ Accept another, not only one's differing views but welcome him at your home and in the Christian community because God has welcomed (same verb) and justified him by his grace. He or she is your brother or sister (Rom 14:10, 15, 21). The brother who is weak in faith must be accepted and welcomed as a full member of the Christian community.¹³ It is an opportunity for love (Rom 14:15).
 - This faith seeks support in certain moral choices, such as not eating meat. His “lack is not strength of self-control but liberty of conscience.”¹⁴ Paul calls these choices disputable matters and mentions three:
 - (1) “One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables” (Rom 14:2). All food is clean (Rom 14:20) but some regard something as unclean (Rom 14:14). See also Acts 10:9-15, the vision of Peter, and Acts 15:19, 20.
 - (2) “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike” (Rom 14:5).
 - (3) “It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall” (Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 8:13).
 - We must not judge one another or look down on someone. Instead: “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Rom 15:7). Acceptance is based on the justification by God: “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:22-24; Rom 1:17).
- ❖ We belong to Christ and God, the Father. And the believer “**will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand,**” by his Spirit (Rom 8:15) and by his grace.
 - “Paul is announcing his confidence that the Lord of the community, having once received a member, can cause him to stand.... Grace is stronger than human frailty.”¹⁵ Paul is not only writing about the weak but also about the strong.
 - The emphasis is on the power of the Lord. Human judgment will not do good but can become a stumbling block (Rom 14:20).
 - A Christian must be fully convinced (about eating/not eating meat; special days/or not; drinking/not drinking wine) and give thanks to the Lord. **“If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”**

¹³ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 255).

¹⁴ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 355); Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 798).

¹⁵Käsemann quoted by Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 843).

- This is the central passage. **“Live to the Lord”** means serving him in his Kingdom with joy and thanksgiving and peace (Rom 14:17).
 - “The lordship of Christ is all-important.”¹⁶ “If Christ rules over everything from life to death, he certainly is the final arbiter in matters of calendar and diet.”¹⁷ And: “Because he is our Lord, we must live for him. Because he is also the Lord of our fellow Christians, we must respect their relationship to him and mind our own business. For he died and rose to be Lord.”¹⁸
- ❖ **“So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God”** (Rom 14:12) and not to other Christians in the first place.

Romans 14:13-23 Summary¹⁹

- ❖ **“Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.”** This is the conclusion of the preceding paragraph (Rom 14:1-12). Paul includes himself. If all stop passing judgment on one another, there will be room for peace, joy, and edification. A change of mindset is necessary. Do **“not put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way”** because **“love does no harm to its neighbour. Love is the fulfilment of the Law,”** Rom 13:10; 14:15).
 - **“I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself”** (Acts 10:14, 15). There is no theological reason, justifying certain convictions. But don't use your liberty to eat everything at the expense of your brother's well-being. “What Paul has in view is not merely a passing sense of irritation or momentary pang of grief, but **an actual wounding of conscience (Käsemann) which destroys the whole balance of the brother’s faith**”²⁰ In that case **“you are no longer acting in love.”** You might even **“destroy your brother for whom Christ died.”**
- ❖ What is important: **“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”** This righteousness, peace and joy are fruit of the Holy Spirit. Compare Galatians 5:22, 23 and Acts 13:52. See also below Romans 15:13. **“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”**
 - In verses 20-23, Paul summarizes his argument, which he started in Romans 14:1.

Verse 1-4

¹⁶ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 848).

¹⁷ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 849).

¹⁸ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 362).

¹⁹ <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/Romans%2014.17-19.pdf>

²⁰ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, Vol. 38B, p. 820).

❖ **“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak.”**

- Romans 14:1: “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.” Compare “**passing judgment** on disputable matters” <> “to bear with **the failings** of the weak.” Isn’t “the failings” a “judgment”? “To bear” is more in line with “so whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God” (Rom 14:22).
 - Dunn comments: “His address to “the strong” in their own terms, therefore, as also his identification with them (“we who are strong”), is a way of winning their confidence in the hope of gaining a more effective response”²¹ and support for his visit to Rome and mission to Spain (Rom 15:7-33
- **“We”** Paul includes himself and the readers among the **“strong”**. **“We”** is emphatic.
- **“who are strong”** and **“failings of the weak.”** See Romans 14:1. The strong have inner liberty. This will enable them to bear the failings of the weak. They have a special responsibility because of their strength in faith.
- **“ought to”** is “a ‘duty’ derived from faith in the gospel, the gift of the Spirit, and membership in the community of faith; ... he is declaring a social obligation that derives from a particular relationship in which benefits have already been received, that is, the new life in Christ.”²²
- **“bear”** = **“βαστάζω”**: 2. **to sustain a burden, carry, bear patiently, put up with.**²³
- **“the failings.”** These are the “infirmities, disabilities, embarrassments and encumbrances of their brothers who are having to live without that inner freedom which they themselves enjoy.”²⁴ This is a wider thought than the disputable matters mentioned in Rom 14:1.

❖ **“and not to please ourselves.”**

- We are not called to please ourselves but to serve the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 14:7, 8). Stott comments: “To be self-centred and self-seeking is natural to our fallen human nature. But we ought not to use our strength to serve our own

²¹ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988), p. 842.

²² Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, 876).

²³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 171).

²⁴ Cranfield, C. E. B. (2004, p. 730).

advantage. As Paul has been arguing, Christians with a strong conscience must not trample on the consciences of the weak.”²⁵

- This contrasts the natural behaviour to please oneself or please another for own benefit being socially accepted.

❖ **“Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.”**

- **“build him up”**: Romans 14:19; see also Philippians 2:4, 5. Note the contrast “please ourselves” <> “build him up.” This building him up is not aimed at an individualistic approach, but at the common upbuilding. See also 1 Thessalonians 5:11.
 - It does not mean that the neighbour must become conformed to the “strong.”
 - The whole congregation is in view because when individual members will be built up, the whole will benefit. See also Ephesians 4:11-16 and 29:
 - “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”
 - Romans 13:9, 10: “‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”
 - 1 Corinthians 10:32, 33: “Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.”
 - “If each group seeks constructively to encourage the development of integrity and maturity in other groups, rather than trying to force them to conform to a single viewpoint, the ethnic and theological diversity in Rome would no longer be divisive and destructive.”²⁶

❖ **“For even Christ did not please himself but,”**

- See Philippians 2:5-11.
- Dunn notes the use of the article in Greek: **“the Christ.”** This should be given weight— “the Christ,” titular significance²⁷ as the Messianic Ruler. An earthly ruler could please himself, “the Christ” did not do so.

²⁵ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 369).

²⁶ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, 879).

²⁷ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988). [Romans 9–16](#) (Vol. 38B, p. 838). Word, Incorporated.

- John 5:30: “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for **I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.**” See also John 4:34; 6:38; 8:29. The whole of Jesus’ earthly life is in view.²⁸
- Note the contrast “**please himself**” <> “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13).

❖ **“as it is written: ‘The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.’”**

- “You” (Ps 69:9) = “God.” Does Paul imply that looking down on or judging your brother, equals to insulting God and his Kingdom?
- Paul is citing Psalm 69:9 (LXX²⁹ 68:10). This Psalm received a messianic application. See also Mark 15:32 and Matthew 27:44, where the Gospel narratives depict the insults Jesus received while dying on the cross.
 - Jesus bore all insults! Therefore, “the man who eats everything must **not look down** on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must **not condemn** the man who does, for God has accepted him” (Rom 14:3).
 - **“Make up your mind!”** (Rom 14:14). “This has the stunning implication that the contempt and judging going on between the Roman congregations (and individuals) add to the shameful reproach that Christ bore on the cross for the sake of all. Whenever one of the believers hearing this letter is shamed, Christ absorbs it.”³⁰

Verse 4

❖ **“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us,”**

- This is an elaboration of verse 3.
- **“everything that was written in the past to teach us”** and the result will be wisdom. Other examples of practical and doctrinal wisdom are found in passages such as 1 Corinthians 9:10; 10:11, and Romans 4:23–25.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16, 17: **“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

❖ **“so that through endurance”**

²⁸ Morris, L. (1988, p. 498).

²⁹ LXX = Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

³⁰ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006), p. 880.

- “endurance” = “ὑπομονή”: the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance.³¹
 - “endurance” refers to verses 2 and 3.

❖ “and the encouragement”

- ESV translates: “that **through** endurance **and through** the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” This translation is preferred.
- “encouragement” = “παράκλησις”: 1. **act of emboldening another in belief or course of action, encouragement, exhortation.**³²
 - “of the Scriptures” (Old Testament). Hebrews 11 provides a good example of this encouragement: “**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**” Abel, Henoah, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, “these were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.”
- Jewett and Kotansky comment: “Facing insults and reproaches, within and without, the steadfastness and the encouragement of Scripture will sustain the Roman believers in a world-uniting hope.”³³

❖ “we might have hope.”

- Without hope, “endurance” and “encouragement of the Scriptures” become aimless and meaningless.
- This hope is the object of the prayer in verses 5 and 6. Hope is an important theme in the letter to the Romans:
 - Romans 5:1-5: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. **And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.** Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance (endurance); perseverance, character; and character, hope. **And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.**”
 - Newman and Nida comment: “The ultimate hope of the believer is that he will share in the divine qualities and attributes. This is simply another

³¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 1039).

³² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 766).

³³ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, 882).

way of speaking of the total salvation experience; Paul has already spoken of it in terms of being put right with God and of enjoying peace with God.”³⁴

- Romans 8:23-25: We “who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for **our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.** But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”
- This hope is firmly rooted in the Old Testament and related to faith and righteousness:
 - Romans 4:18:22: **“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations,** just as it had been said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why ‘it was credited to him as righteousness.’”
 - Everts comments: “Abraham is offered as an example of someone who never doubted that God would fulfill his promises. **Abraham’s hope is grounded in a personal relation with the God whom he trusts.** In fact the only ground of Abraham’s hope was God’s promise. Abraham had no external or historical grounds for his hope; but when that hope was tested by human impossibilities, it grew. This is what is meant by ‘in hope he believed against hope.’ **Abraham’s hope grew because he believed the God of hope, even though all human hope was gone.**”³⁵

Verse 5-6

- ❖ Prayer of hope and doxology: **“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

³⁴ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 94).

³⁵ Everts, J. M. (1993, p. 415). *Hope*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

- This prayer is needed because Christians “live in hope because God’s promises in Christ so often stand in contradiction to the reality around them”³⁶ just like Abraham.
 - See Romans 4:18-22 and the comment above.
- **“God who gives endurance and encouragement”** through the Scriptures: **“so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”** (Rom 15:4).
 - God is the source of endurance and encouragement.
 - Compare Romans 2:7: “To those who by persistence (=endurance) in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.”
 - Encouragement implies also mutual encouragement (Rom 1:12).
- **“give you a spirit of unity”** and not of disunity (Rom 14:3, 10, 15, and 20-21; see also Rom 12:16).
 - Paul does not pray for identity of mind, but for unity in feeling **“one heart”**). He does allow for differing opinions (Rom 14:5, 12, 22) but in worship, glorifying God.
 - This spirit of unity is described in Acts 2:41-47; 4:24; 5:12 and Ephesians 4:1-6.
 - Ephesians 4:2, 3: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**”
 - “The purpose of these exhortation is to encourage the Christians to live in harmony with one another.”³⁷
- **“follow Christ”** (Rom 15:3):
 - Christ is a model but also obedient to Christ.
 - Ephesians 5:2: **“live a life of love, just as Christ loved us** and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (See also Eph 4:24).
 - Philippians 2:4, 5: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.**”

³⁶ Everts, J. M. (1993, p. 415). *Hope*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

³⁷ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 273).

- Compare this prayer with 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17: “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”
- **“one heart and mouth you may glorify.”** This points to the unifying effect of singing songs together. See also Ephesians 5:18-20:
 - “Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- ❖ **“glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Compare 2 Corinthians 1:3; 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3.

Romans 15:7-13 Summary

- ❖ Paul continues to stress the importance of mutual acceptance, as he did in 14:1-15:6. Verse 7 is a transition to the next paragraph, where he finally reaches his goal of the letter to convince the Jewish Christians of Rome that they must support him to visit Rome and his mission to Spain (Rom 15:14-33).
- ❖ He concludes this part of this letter with a prayer and doxology: **“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.”**

Application

Before

- ❖ Read and meditate: “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 16:5, 6).
 - What means endurance and encouragement in our particular situation?
 - Do we have a spirit of unity when it comes to following Christ, serving Christ in daily life and mission, accepting "the weak" and having patience with them?
 - Do we glorify God and Father with one heart and mouth?

Praise God

- ❖ He is the source of endurance and encouragement through the Scriptures.
 - Explain how God encourages through the Scripture.
- ❖ He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is Lord of all (Rom 14:7-9).
 - True unity (see below) is only found in Him (Eph 4:4-6).

Praise Christ

- ❖ Christ is Saviour and Lord. He died for all of us who believe and did not please himself.

Follow Christ

- ❖ Ephesians 4:2, 3: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Unity

- ❖ Paul is writing about internal relations in the Christian community:
 - "rich" <> "poor"
 - "powerful" <> "powerless"
 - "successful" <> "unsuccessful" (losers)
 - "intellectual" <> "emotional"
 - This behaviour can set an example for the wider society, where "strong" and "weak" are major themes:
 - Morris comments: "This is very important in the Christian church, for the church is a very inclusive body, made up of people old and young, rich and poor, intellectually able and handicapped, of every race and class."³⁸ "When the church gives itself over to glorifying God there is a deep and satisfying unity."³⁹
- ❖ Please the other. The apostle Paul has set an example (1 Cor 10:33; Philip 2:4).
 - "Selfishness is always a barrier to effective Christian work, and of course it breaks up Christian unity, which is such an important consideration throughout this discussion."⁴⁰
 - Morris continues his comment: "This principle must be applied with care, for great harm is done when Christians assume that in all circumstances they know what is good for other people. It must be done with humility."⁴¹

We might have hope

³⁸ Morris, L. (1988, p. 497).

³⁹ Morris, L. (1988, p. 502).

⁴⁰ Morris, L. (1988, p. 497).

⁴¹ Morris, L. (1988, p. 498).

- ❖ “The reality of Christian hope is based on two things: the reality of God’s victory over evil in the death and resurrection of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hope is the source of present strength for believers because it is grounded in what God has done in Christ, is experienced in the power of the Spirit and moves toward the glory that is to be revealed.”⁴²
- ❖ “Hope is an encouragement to believers in the midst of suffering, but it also prevents believers from being content with present circumstances. Hope insists that Christians wait with eager longing for the great day when all of God’s promises are fulfilled.”⁴³
- ❖ “Hope that does not place its trust in God is false hope which will eventually overthrow.”⁴⁴ When this hope proves to be false, people will be left disillusioned and in the end without hope.
 - Hope based on scientific progress to solve all problems.
 - Hope based on political ideas, ideologies, and promises.
 - Recent examples of politicians making their (false) promises abound.
 - Hope based on power, might, and wealth.
- ❖ Hope in other parts of the New Testament. This is hope for the revelation of future glory by God (Rom 8:17, 18). We will share the glory of Christ.
 - Ephesians 1:18: “I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, **the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.**”
 - Colossians 1:27: “To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question 1:

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

⁴² Everts, J. M. (1993, p. 416). *Hope*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

⁴³ Everts, J. M. (1993, p. 417). *Hope*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

⁴⁴ Everts, J. M. (1993, p. 415). *Hope*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

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