

Study 15

# YOU MAY ABOUND IN HOPE

Romans 15

## In The Group

- ◆ If you were the leader of your country, what would be your first executive decision?
- ◆ Which weekly TV show would you like to make a guest appearance on?
- ◆ If you were to open a shop, what would it be called?

The Epistle to the Romans is the Bible's grandest exploration of God's gift of salvation. We often think of being saved as a purely *personal* or *private* matter. But Romans links salvation to something very *public*: belonging to a Christian community (a church). From chapter 12, the Apostle Paul has shown that being saved requires sharing your spiritual gifts with other believers, and learning how to get along with those in your church (consider Rom. 12:9-21). Romans 13 instructs believers on how to get along with those outside of the church. We have just seen that Romans 14 teaches believers to be considerate of each other. Salvation is therefore much more than just about what God has done for you, it is also about what God has done in you AND me and how that affects how *we* relate to each other.

1. According to Romans 15:1 what two things are believers instructed to do?

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2. Romans 15:2 tells us to go beyond just being considerate of others and tells us to please others. What reason for doing this does Romans 15:3 give?

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3. Based on Romans 15:4, why has God given us the gift of the Bible, and what does reading the Bible produce in the believer?

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Many people think that when someone becomes a follower of Christ that they become nice, loving, caring, considerate, and easy to get along with.

4. Consider Paul's prayer for the church in Romans 15:5-6. Why did Paul have to pray this for the church? Do we need to *pray* this for our church?

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Consider how a newcomer feels arriving at our church meeting for the first time.

5. In Romans 15:7 is Paul talking about *welcoming* Christians into the local church, or non-Christians? How are we to *welcome* people into our churches? What are some ways that will *not* make a newcomer feel welcome to our church?

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Paul says that God is glorified when new people are *welcomed* into the church. A church could have great preaching, great worship, great facilities, great programs, but if it is not a welcoming church is not a great church!

## **CHRIST THE EXAMPLE OF SERVANTHOOD**

6. Why are some in our church reluctant to make newcomers feel welcome to our church? What lesson is Paul trying to teach believers about welcoming others into our church in Romans 15:8?

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It takes both humility and maturity to put our own troubles and fears aside to reach out to another person. The ultimate expression of humility and maturity in reaching out to others who are different is Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that Christ died to redeem ungrateful Gentiles and now welcomes into His family those formerly ungrateful Gentiles who turn to Him. If Christ did this for us, how should we display His life in us to others - especially to those who are different to us?

Perhaps the worst pain anyone can feel is *rejection*. To be accepted causes a person to feel like they have *worth* in the eyes of another. Surely we all need to feel this. But there are some people who have been rejected by those they had every reason to expect to be accepted by. Their hurt is deep. They go through life feeling worthless, unloved, unwanted, without hope. Paul tells us that Jesus has reached out to such people.

7. We may have been rejected by people, but if we are accepted by Jesus Christ what effect does this have in us? (Romans 15:13)

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8. Note what Paul says in Romans 15:14. Even if someone is not *gifted* to be a teacher, can we learn something from them about following Christ? Why or why not?

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## REMINDERS

You forgot didn't you? We all forget. We all need reminding. So much of the Bible is a reminder. God has ordained that the church meet regularly so that His people are constantly reminded of what He has done, how we should follow and serve, and what His Word says. Most churches include the Holy Communion as part of their worship. Some churches do it each Sunday; others, once a month; still others celebrate it 3 or 4 times a year. Each time the church assembles to partake of the Communion together we are being *reminded* of something we *need* to be continually reminded of (note Romans 15:15).

9. Unlike some ministers who regard themselves as "priests" who offer up *Christ* continually as a sacrifice, Paul regarded his work as equally important as that of a 'priest'. What did he say was his priestly 'offering'? (Romans 15:16)

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Paul knew that he was called to give his life to preaching the Gospel. Are you?

10. But Paul also knew that Christ had called him to preach to a particular audience. Who was this audience (vs. 16) and where was his audience (vs. 20-21)?

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What challenges might Paul have faced in order to 'fulfil' (vs. 19) his ministry?

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11. Read Romans 15:22-29 and note what other ministry Paul was fulfilling with the help of Gentile churches and why these Gentile churches were so eager to be involved in this ministry.

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How does Paul telling the Romans this illustrate what he has told them at the start of this chapter?

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12. What was Paul's appeal to the Romans about this ministry of charity? (Romans 15:30-32)

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13. What does Romans 15 further teach us about the Gospel?

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14. How has God spoken to you through our study of Romans 15?

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15. Write out your prayerful response to God as a result of studying Romans 15-

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*Amen.*