

"The Doctrine of Consecration"

Part 19

Romans 12:1-15:7

Introduction: As we return to our study of Romans tonight, we are going to step into Romans 15. The chapter break between Romans 14 and 15 has been placed there by man. What we shall see tonight is that the thought from chapter 14 flows right into chapter 15. The chapter break here has nothing to do with Paul changing his thought.

In chapter 14 we have looked at the importance of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by working with believers who have different convictions. As we step into Romans 15, we shall see that Paul is going to speak directly to the "strong" believer. This is the believer who understands his or her liberty in Christ. He or she knows that all food is clean and can be eaten, this person also knows that all days are holy, not just Sunday or Saturday. To this strong believer he sees the entire week as holy and so he does not esteem one day above another. This is the person Paul is speaking to as we enter into this chapter.

Admonishing the Strong Believer

Notice Romans 15:1

Here in this verse the strong is exhorted to do two things:

1. Bear the weaknesses of the weak.

This means to be patient and loving toward the believer who is weak in liberty. We are not to run ahead and leave them behind, but we are to patiently strengthen the weak in their walk. Let me point out two thoughts here:

a. This is only possible as we apply Romans 12:1-2 to our own lives.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Many times, the weak brother or sister is critical of the stronger believer. The weaker believer is often legalistic and many times they desire to "restrict" the stronger believer. This is when the flesh of the stronger believer wants to resist because of the restrictions

that are presented to him or her. This is why the stronger believer **MUST** be surrendered over to the Lord and controlled by the Spirit. It is only the believer walking in the Spirit that will be patient with the weaker believer.

b. The stronger believers must patiently love and work with the weaker believer.

If the stronger believer becomes impatient and chooses to move on, they are neglecting to edify the weaker believer. It then puts the weaker believer in a dangerous situation.

Remember Amalek's attack upon Israel in Exodus 17?

Deuteronomy 25:17-18

¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt:

¹⁸ How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.

We are one body, and we need one another.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

2. The stronger believer is not to live to please himself.

The strong believer is not to live his or her life focused completely upon themselves. In other words, we are NOT to live to fulfill my personal desires, but we are to live with the edification of others in mind. We must be willing to set the "SELF" aside. We are to be focused OUTWARD instead of INWARD.

Mark 8:34

³⁴ And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Paul continues this thought in the next verse.

Notice Romans 15:2

As believers we are to live to "please" our neighbors **FOR HIS GOOD TO EDIFICATION.**

Now, we must understand that we are not to live as "people pleasers". That is not what is being taught here. To live as people pleasers will keep us from living for the Lord.

Galatians 1:9-10

⁹ *As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

¹⁰ *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

In verse 9 of Galatians 1 we see that Paul is defending the Gospel. So, the point we must understand is that when it comes to the defense of the Word of God, we do not conform to the philosophy of man so as to keep the peace. We see this again in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-4

For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

² *But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.*

³ *For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:*

⁴ *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*

I am reminded of the Words of Jesus in Luke.

Luke 6:26

²⁶ *Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*

Getting back to the point, Paul is not calling on believers to be "people pleasers" and to compromise the Truth in order to do so. He is calling upon all believers to love their neighbors and to be willing to set aside their liberty so as to help our neighbor grow spiritually stronger or to win others to Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

³¹ *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

³² *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:*

³³ **Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.**

We are obligated to love our fellow man.

Romans 13:7-8

⁷ *Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

⁸ **Owe no man any thing, but to love one another:** *for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

When we love our fellow man the way God desires then we do not seek our own desires.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

⁴ *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

⁵ *Doth not behave itself unseemly, **seeketh not her own**, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

The Greatest Example

Notice Romans 15:3

Here in this verse Paul points to Jesus as the Greatest Example for us and he quotes from the Old Testament.

Psalms 69:9

⁹ *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and **the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.***

The end of this verse and the ending Words of Romans 15:3 are the Words of Jesus to the Father. Jesus came into a God hating world and the hatred that was against the Father fell upon the Son. The Word "reproaches" means "insults and accusations". Jesus came into a world that was made by Him and He came to a people that should have

welcomed Him, but instead they despised and rejected Him. You see, His path to the cross was a path of sacrifice. Jesus entire earthly life was lived ministering to others. He endured the hatred and the violence so that we might live and have joy unspeakable.

Notice the words of Newell:

"Christ never "looked after" Himself: the whole world knows this! "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Yet His whole life, from early morning till late at night, and often into the night, was occupied in ministry to others! The constant drawing upon Him by the multitudes,— upon His time, His love, His teaching, His healing, was a marvelous proof that they could count on the absolute absence of self-pleasing, in Him!"

Jesus is therefore our Example. He never once sought His own comfort and His own desires. He lived for the edification of others. This is the very way we are to live. If it requires setting our liberties aside to edify our neighbor, then let us be willing to do it. Let us be willing to go any distance in order to be able to minister to others.

Notice Romans 15:4

We could spend weeks upon this verse because there is so much here for us to see. In order for the strong believer to minister to the weaker believer the way in which God desires then the stronger believer must know the heart of God. This is found only in the Word of God. The Bible was written for our learning. In other words, the Bible was written so that we can learn more about our Lord. We find in the Word of God the desires of the heart of God.

Notice Romans 15:4 again.

We see at the end of this verse that there are three blessings which we receive as we study the Word of God.

1. Patience/Endurance
2. Comfort
3. Hope

Let us notice the words of Stedman on this verse.

"The Old Testament is really the richest commentary ever written on the New Testament. If you are coming to a place where faith is beginning to fail and your heart finds itself in the grasp of doubt, then turn to the record of God at work with men of the Old Testament. You will find, as you read thoughtfully, that your faith will begin to flame up again because "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," It's as the Word

of God rings in our ears that faith is created in our hearts to lay hold of the truth we hear, and to make it available in our lives."

It is through the reading of the Word that we learn to stay the course (endurance), and it is by reading the Word of God that we find comfort, and it is in the Word of God that we find hope. You will certainly find no comfort or hope in the daily paper or in the evening news. The world offers no hope or comfort. The world offers only empty philosophies devoid of Truth.

Prayer/Conclusion

Notice Romans 15:5

Our God is the God of patience and comfort. Let us notice the words of Barnes on this verse:

"The God who is Himself long-suffering, who bears patiently with the errors and faults of his children, and who can give patience, may he give you of his Spirit, that you may bear patiently the infirmities and errors of each other. The example of God here, who bears long with his children, and is not angry soon at their offences, is a strong argument why Christians should bear with each other. If God bears long and patiently with our infirmities, we ought to bear with each other."

Paul prays in this verse that we would be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. This is so important to understand! Paul is praying that we would all be in agreement with what our Lord states is the Truth. In other words, Jesus is the Absolute Truth and therefore I must accept His Word regardless of my feelings and you are required to do the same. When the Word of God is seen as the Absolute Truth and we agree on that then we are going to be like minded according to Christ Jesus. Our thinking must be in agreement with His thinking. If I am going to agree with you then we must both agree with Jesus.

Notice Romans 15:6

Here is our ultimate goal and that is to bring glory to God. We are to be of one mind and one mouth. As believers we are to all be in agreement of one goal and that is to glorify God with our thoughts and our words. We are of many minds and many mouths but in unity we are one.

Notice Romans 15:7

Here is the conclusion of the entire matter. Just as Jesus received us with our all of our imperfections, so we are to receive other believers who have different thoughts and convictions. We are to learn and grow together in Christ.