

Rev. Richard Schwartz
“Let Each Of Us Please His Neighbor For Their Good: For Christ Did Not Please Himself”
Romans 15:1-13

1. Paul here concludes his argument about the non-essentials. As Christians, there are many decisions we make that are not directly addressed in Scripture. God gives us the freedom to have our own opinions about what to do in these cases. But those of us who are strong in faith must aim to please those who are less strong in areas of Christian freedom. Love is more important than freedom.
2. In Galatians, Paul uses the same word for “please” as in Romans 15, that he must please God and not man. In Romans, he says that we must please one another. The two are not contradictory. In essential matters that the Bible makes clear God’s will for our life, we must always seek to please God. On non-essential issues, in our own opinions, we must always strive to please our brothers and sisters in Christ. We must always seek to love them, even at the expense of our freedom.
3. Jesus Christ always did the will of the Father. But it was the Father’s will that Jesus would bear the burdens of God’s people, those who believed in Him. Christ took the reproach, or the blame, for those who deserved the Father’s reproach. He did this out of love for His neighbor.
4. We see from the original verse that is quoted here in Romans that the primary reason Christ took our blame was out of zeal, or love, for His Father. We are to take this as our example and love our brothers and sisters in Christ because of our love for God. If this means giving up some or all of our freedoms in Christ, we are in good company with our Lord and Savior, Jesus.
5. The Old Testament Scriptures, written in former days, were written for the instruction of New Testament believers. They teach us both endurance in the midst of trials and also encourage us in our walk with Christ. The end result of this encouragement is hope.
6. The hope that we have in our God, the God of endurance and encouragement, will lead us to unity and harmony with one another as we seek together to worship our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this unity with one another, we can praise and glorify Him with one voice.
7. Loving one another as Christ has first loved us will bring glory to God. Christian freedom that we have may sometimes have to be set aside for God’s glory, and this is honoring to Him.
8. Christ became a servant to the Jewish Christians so that He might prove God’s truthfulness and faithfulness to the promises He had made to Israel in the Old Testament Scriptures. He also served the Gentiles, glorifying God by extending His mercy to the whole world.
9. In bringing His mercy to the Gentiles, God has caused the whole world, both Jew and non-Jew, to rejoice in the glory of His Son Jesus Christ.
10. The hope that we have in Jesus Christ brings joy and peace among His people throughout the whole world as we trust in Him. The power of the Holy Spirit changes our hearts to cause us to love one another in unity as we grow in greater and greater hope. This hope is the foundation for our loving service and sacrifice for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Application

1. As we look to our example Jesus Christ, be willing to do whatever is necessary to see our brothers and sisters in Christ grow in their faith, even if it means giving up some or all of our Christian freedom.
2. Look to the Word of God in the Scriptures to provide all the instruction that we need in the Christian life. Through the Bible, we can see our hope grow as God fulfills His promises in our lives.

Romans 15:1-13

15 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.” ¹⁰ And again it is said, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” ¹¹ And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.” ¹² And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.” ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Galatians 1:10

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Psalms 69:9

⁹ For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the

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sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.