

A Word from Kathy

In the final two chapters, Paul addresses those who are strong in the faith, those who realize that their righteousness is not from anything we do or don't do, but it is Christ's righteousness lavished on us. He is our example and pattern. He was spoken of by the prophets, and seen by many and now loved and adored by millions throughout the years. Jesus is the example and pattern for all believers everywhere. Read these two chapters, and once again I encourage you to pray, asking God to open your eyes to see clearly all he has for you there.

Observation

1. Romans 15:1 describes the obligation of those strong in their faith. What are the strong to do?
2. Look at the selfless life of Christ. He is our example. Jn. 6:38: *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.*
What example does Paul speak of in Romans 15:3? Look up Ps. 69:9b.
3. Fill in the blanks in Romans 15:4: "*For everything that was written in the past was written to _____, so that through _____ and the of the Scriptures we might have _____.*"
Consider carefully the words you filled in and the thought those words convey in this verse.
What is the purpose of scripture? There is no other book like the Bible.
Hebrews 4:12: "*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*"
4. Romans 15:5-6 - when the body of Christ lives in harmony with one another, encouraging each other and bearing one another's burdens, what happens?
5. Our example is to be like Christ Jesus; in order for us to truly follow, we must know what he was like and how he lived, even when things got rough. Write a sentence or two describing him. Read Phil. 2:5-8 to help you.
Philippians 2:5-8: *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be*

grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

6. For the Jews who would be reading this letter, Paul quoted four old testament passages: Psalms 18:49, Deut. 32:43, Ps. 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10. These verses show that God had predetermined to bring the Gentiles into salvation and relationship with him at His divinely appointed time.

In verse 16 what ministry did Paul say God had given him?

In verse 19 what did he say concerning this ministry?

7. The apostle Paul had studied the scriptures carefully and knew them very well. It was his desire to be a part of fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 52:15, which he quoted in Romans 15:21. He had previously been hindered from going to Rome by of the vastness of the work to which God had called him. But now, how had things changed (Romans 15:23- 27)? What was his plan?

Romans 16

8. Paul is closing his letter to the believers in Rome and wants them to care for his friend Phoebe who is coming along with this letter. She possibly was the one entrusted to bring it to them. What did Paul say about her? Do women have a place in ministry? What example did she set in caring for those who are in full time ministry?
9. Use blue and pink highlighters to mark the names of the friends mentioned in chapter 16. Turn your paper over and jot down the people mentioned here by Paul, and briefly state what you learned from the text about each of them. They had been very important friends in the ministry, and Paul desired to send a special greeting to them and remind them of who they are in Christ, and to commend them for the faithfulness they had shown him. This is not busy work. These men and women are examples to us, and God placed them in his word for us to learn from. The Bible has no filler (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
10. What was Paul's final warning to the believers in Rome in verses 17-18?
If we know "the truth," we can recognize "the lie."

11. What did Paul say was known about this church at Rome (verse 19)? He longed to encourage them and build them up in their faith; though they did not know it yet, they would need all the encouragement they could get in just a few short years when Nero began his rampage and persecution of Christians in Rome. Who could you encourage today? We have no idea what the future holds; we must do all we can while we can.

12. Romans 16:25-27 is an amazing paragraph; jot down 2 or 3 things you learn about God from these verses.

Application

13. The simple fact that we desire to help someone else is proof that we are strong in our faith. Those who are strong in their faith are looking for ways to serve and help others grow in their walk of faith. How are you reaching out to help others grow spiritually?

14. Paul had previously been hindered from going to Rome by the vast opportunities to share the gospel and plant churches everywhere he had travelled. He made three missionary journeys, planting churches and then going back to check on them. What work has God called you to do today?
This may not be the work he has planned for you in the future, but we should do it to the best of our God given abilities each day. Are you giving it your all?
 - Perhaps God has called you to set an example for others that it is possible to live a fulfilled and happy life as a single person without giving in to the temptations of the world.

 - Perhaps he has called you to home school your children in order to raise men and women who have witnessed firsthand the love of a man and woman committed to each other and to God.

 - Perhaps God has called you to be out in the workplace showing the world that life can be lived with honesty and integrity.

15. Paul spoke of the debt that the Gentiles owed the Jews. The Jews had been entrusted with the promises of God in order to show the glory of God for all to see. The Jews

(even though not as a whole) had stood as a light for all to see. Jehovah was holy and worthy of praise. What has God entrusted to you? In what ways are you revealing his holiness to others? Do your words and actions bring him praise?

16. It does not matter what ministry God has called you to do; why not enlist others to pray with you for God's protection, provision and success in carrying out the task at hand, just as Paul did the believers at Rome (Romans 15:30-33)? I am sure you can think of someone who will join you in prayer. This does not have to be a lifelong commitment, but friends who pray together often find their hearts knit together in a way that is lasting.

17. Paul's desire was that the believers at Rome be wise concerning what is good. He mentioned his friends and the many ways they served the Lord. Proverbs 27:17-19 shows the power of right friends, and Hebrews 10:24 instructs us on the kind of friend we should be. In what ways did his friends reflect their knowledge of these scriptures?

Proverbs 27:17-19 *As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honored. As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.*

Hebrews 10:24 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

Are you the kind of friend who has the wisdom to see the truth of a situation and the strength of character to speak up if needed?

Do you look for ways to stimulate and encourage others in the direction of what is right and good?

18. Have you shared anything about God's character with others this week?

In what ways have you shared the marvelous truths learned in your study of Romans?