

INTRODUCTION - ROMANS 15:1-33

Self-preservation is among the first and strongest human impulses. It is also one of the first and most stubborn stumbling blocks for the practice of Christian faith. As we must care for ourselves, yet must also take care of Christ's call to serve. In this chapter, believers are motivated by Paul's model for ministry. The hope is that persons who trust in Jesus Christ will follow His example by offering themselves so that unbelievers can receive the Gospel and profess Jesus. Throughout our study, reflect on the questions presented in each section below.

Keep up: complete N.T. Wright, *Romans: 18 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, p. 84-87.

Serving others demonstrates one's understanding and acceptance of the Gospel.

~ *May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony...so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 15:5-6 NRSV) ~*

Romans 15:1-6 → To be strong in faith is to be strong enough to resist self-satisfaction.

Are you strong enough to resist placing yourself at the center of your faith practices?

- We have an obligation to resist self-satisfaction (1-3).
- We have the resource to resist self-satisfaction (4).
- There are benefits for resisting self-satisfaction (5-6).

Romans 15:7-14 → Jesus models the ministry of service.

Do your ways of service align with God's purposes and Jesus' example?

- God's glory is the primary concern, or purpose (7-9).
 - ◆ God is glorified through hospitality and acceptance reflecting Jesus' invitation.
 - ◆ God is glorified when the Word of God is confirmed through our service.
- The availability of salvation confirms God's intention for all of humanity which is the primary motive (9-12).
- The hope that comes from God and the encouragement we share with one another can sustain us as we serve (13-14).

Romans 15:15-22 → Paul's life and ministry reflect the centrality of the Gospel.

Have you yielded your life and purpose to the cause of the Gospel?

- The Gospel will lead us to promote the grace we received among those who remain in need of the same (15-16).
- The ministry of Christ propels us to engage in the same work as Jesus (17-19).
- Centering the Gospel enables fresh perspectives on what else can be even if there are setbacks (20-22).

Romans 15:23-33 → Paul's itinerary reflects his desire to share the Gospel.

What in your life or in your plans is shaped by a desire to evangelize?

- Opportunities and opposition accompany service; neither should disrupt the message or the ministry (23-26).
 - An example of mutual grace and generosity in support of the Gospel (27-29).
 - A prayer request for ministry success (30-33).
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