

GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

Study Outline for Romans 15:1-33

Introduction: Strengthening Unity and Service

In Romans 15, Paul continues to lay out the practical outworking of Christian unity and service in the Holy Spirit. Building on the themes of mutual acceptance and avoiding judgment from the previous chapter, he encourages believers to bear with one another and serve together for God's glory. Paul emphasizes following Christ's example and fulfilling the mission to preach the gospel to all nations.

Purpose

Paul's intent in Romans 15 is to fortify the Roman Christians in the faith and unity that is in Christ. He is aware of the differences within the community and urges them to support each other and work together harmoniously, reflecting Christ's selfless love at work among them. By living together in this way, God is glorified in their witness to Jews and Gentiles.

Themes

- Bearing with one another
- Unity in worship
- Christ Jesus as the model of service
- Fulfillment of Scripture
- Spreading the gospel to all nations

Objective

To understand how Christians can live in harmony and serve together by following Christ's example, supporting each other, and focusing on the mission to spread the gospel.

I. Bearing with One Another (Romans 15:1-6)

Paul begins by urging the strong (those who understand Christian freedom) to bear with the failings of the weak (those who continue to lean on the law). The Christian is encouraged to seek the welfare of the neighbor for their good and edification. He emphasizes that Christ Jesus did not please Himself but bore the reproaches of others. Paul encourages the Roman Christians to draw strength from the Scriptures, through which God provides endurance and encouragement, fostering hope. Ultimately, he prays that God might grant them a spirit of unity so they may glorify Him with one mind and voice.

II. Unity in Worship (Romans 15:7-13)

Paul urges the Roman Christians to receive one another just as Christ received them, which brings glory to God. He underscores that Christ came to serve both Jews and Gentiles, fulfilling the promises made to the patriarchs and showing how God's mercy extends beyond Israel. Paul cites several Old Testament passages to demonstrate that God's plan always included the Gentiles, who are now called to rejoice and hope in Him because of Christ. He concludes with a prayer for the church to be filled with joy, peace, and hope – gifts that come only in the power of the Holy Spirit.

III. Christ as the Model of Service (Romans 15:14-22)

Paul expresses confidence in the Roman Christians' goodness, knowledge, and ability to instruct one another. He speaks of his boldness in reminding them of their duties, attributing his authority to the grace given by God. Paul characterizes his ministry as a priestly duty, offering the Gentiles as an acceptable offering to God. He takes no credit for his work but boasts only in what Christ has accomplished through him. Paul's ambition is to preach the gospel where Christ is not known, ensuring that he does not build on someone else's foundation. God alone creates and sustains the church.

IV. Fulfillment of Scripture (Romans 15:23-29)

Paul expresses a strong desire to visit the Roman Christians after completing his ministry in Jerusalem. He plans to deliver a contribution from the Macedonian and Achaian churches to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Paul sees this act of service as demonstrating unity and support among believers. He expresses confidence that his visit to Rome will be marked by the fullness of Christ's blessing.

V. Preaching the Gospel to All Nations (Romans 15:30-33)

Paul concludes by appealing for prayers, asking them to join him in his struggle. He requests prayers for his safety in Judea and acceptance of his service in Jerusalem. Paul's ultimate desire is to come to Rome and be refreshed in their fellowship. He ends with a blessing of peace, again emphasizing the importance of unity and support in the mission to spread the gospel.