

## *Booklet Seven*

### *Letter Closing*

#### *Paul's Purpose and Missionary Plans for the Gospel*

<i>September 9th</i>	<i>Romans 14:1-23</i>	<i>Community Part 1</i>
<i>September 16th</i>	<i>Romans 15:1-13</i>	<i>Community Part 2</i>
<i>September 23rd</i>	<i>Romans 15:14-22</i>	<i>Mission</i>
<i>September 30th</i>	<i>Romans 15:23-16:24</i>	<i>Requests</i>
<i>October 7th</i>	<i>Romans 16:25-27</i>	<i>Established</i>

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”.*

*Romans 15:13*

## **Romans 14:1-23**

### **Community part 1**

Paul calls things that often divide the Christian community, “disputable matters”. This community we are part of in the church is a very special reality for many of us. We love our friendships and relationships we have in the body of Christ. We find great encouragement and inspiration for living out our new lives in Christ together. I like Rich Mullins' definition of the church, “the fellowship of the forgiven”. We are drawn together because of our shared faith and love in Jesus. In the letter to the Roman church Paul recognizes what pulls the 1<sup>st</sup> century church apart is also what often pulls us apart. Not the essential things of the gospel but other matters that we have personal convictions about, but are not essential to the gospel. So how do we experience unity in the essential truth of the gospel together, yet have love for each other in those things that are disputable? Answering this question is key truth for experiencing community together!

1. Paul begins this section of Scripture with a call to accept one other in the body of Christ. Why is acceptance of those in the body of Christ with differences of personal conviction so important? How is this related to God’s acceptance (v.3-4)? What do you think Paul means by accepting those whose faith is “weak”?
2. What is the particular issue in the Roman church described in these verses? Are these still an issue of division today? What are some issues today that we could put in the same category of eating meat or vegetables (v.2,6), celebrating certain holidays (v.5,6), or drinking wine (v.21)?
3. Why is it so important to leave freedom for personal convictions in the Christian community (v.5-6)?
4. What is the essential truth in verses 7-9 that helps us live in the Christian community with freedom for personal convictions? How have you seen this lived out in yourself and others?
5. What role does God’s judgment play in our attitudes toward each other (v.10-12)?
6. What does love look like with differences of personal convictions in the Christian community (v.13-18)? What are you willing to give up in order not to cause someone else to stumble?
7. Why is making every effort to bring peace and mutual edification worth it? What happens if we don’t make this effort? What is at stake in our own lives and our witness to the truth of the gospel?



**UNASHAMED**  
Of The Good News Of Jesus Christ

8. Describe verse 20 in your own words? How does this principle change the way we look at our own lives in relationship to others? Have you ever witnessed this lived out?
  
9. What is the role of our personal convictions and conscience (v.22-23)? Why is it important for our convictions and conscience to line up? What happens if they do not?

## **Romans 15:1-13**

### **Community part 2**

The devil is in the details. We get caught by this reality of the minor details tripping us up in so many areas of life. This is true in community, as well. Even though many of the issues we wrestle with together are minor, what is at stake is not minor. In fact, how we handle “disputable matters” or personal convictions relates to the greatest issue of all, what we were made for. We were created and saved by Jesus to enjoy God and glorify Him forever. How we love others is a direct result (fruit) of our relationship with God. That is why it is so important we get Christian community right. So, what is your attitude towards others in the church who have different opinions and personal convictions? We must check these attitudes at the door, and sometimes get attitude adjustments so that we can truly worship and glorify God.

1. How does a posture of “bearing” with the failings of others and not “pleasing ourselves” help us understand the definition of love? How do you see these attitudes and qualities in good parents?
2. In verse 2, Paul clarifies the motivation for “pleasing” others. What is the right motivation? How is this different from pleasing others for our own good? How did Jesus model this?
3. How have you seen attitudes affect your actions?
4. How do our attitudes reflect the true conditions of our hearts? When was the last time you examined your attitudes? Why is it important to look at Jesus when we do this examination? How can we encourage each other in this examination?
5. Verse 6-7 highlight the whole purpose for working towards Christian community? What is this purpose and how does love get us there?
6. How does Paul see his gospel ministry as a Jew to Gentiles fulfilling this purpose (v.8-13)?
7. What is the source of our power to live out this Christian community of love (v.13)? Share testimonies of how you have seen God produce this in the body of Christ?



## Romans 15:14-22

### Mission

How we end something matters. Final words and final moments have great meaning to us as human beings. Paul wants to end his letter to the Roman church with some very personal things that will help the church understand the intentions of his letter, and his desire and purpose for his life and for the church of Jesus. Paul has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to explain the good news of Jesus and why it is the power of God for everyone who believes. He has just finished explaining how the gospel produces the life of love; love for God and love for others. Paul wants to explain his mission and life purpose in proclaiming and establishing people in the good news of Jesus. These are some of the most personal and insightful words in this letter from Paul's own heart and how Jesus has transformed him.

1. Notice that the tone of the book changes in verse 14 as Paul begins to share out of his own thoughts and experience. Why is it important that we see the Bible as inspired by God yet written by human authors? Read 2 Peter 1:20-21. How does this help us understand how God used human authors to reveal Himself?
2. Paul's humanity is seen in verse 14 in his desire for the Roman believers to understand their competence, yet a need for reminding (v.15). How important are reminders in our lives? Why do we continually need reminding of the good news of Jesus in our lives?
3. How does Paul understand his life mission from God (v.16)? How important is it for us to understand our role, mission, and calling from God? Are you able to write out your life mission statement in one sentence like Paul? If not, would you be willing to try and do this?
4. Where does Paul find his value and glory from? What has he seen God do through him (v.19)? How does Paul connect these things and the grace of God (v.15)? How do you connect the things accomplished in your life both personally and professionally with the grace of God?
5. What is unique about Paul's mission and calling (v.20-21)? How have you seen your unique mission and calling worked out in your life? What steps are you taking to live out your unique mission and calling? How does the gospel (good news of Jesus) shape this mission in your life?

## **Romans 15:23-16:24**

### **Requests**

Have you thought about the next season of your life? Sometimes we get so caught up in immediate season we forget that change and opportunities are in front of us. It is good to dream about what God has in store for us for the future in our lives. Paul is now looking into the future of his life with his unique mission and calling from God. I am challenged by Paul's clarity of understanding of how God made him and what he is called to do. Because he wants to share the good news of Jesus with people groups who have never heard of it, he says there is "no more place for me to work in these regions". Paul has a God sized ambition to see the power of gospel go to new people in new places. Paul makes plans to make this dream a reality, but he also recognizes his dependence and need for God to make it happen. He asks for prayer. We are challenged to think about the next season of our lives and how we are living out God's mission and calling for us. We are also challenged to ask for prayer and remain dependent on God as we boldly step out into what God has called us to do.

1. Paul has already preached and established churches over much of the known world in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, yet there are thousands in that region who have not heard the gospel. How can he say "there is no more place for me to work in these regions"? What does this say about Paul's understanding of his role and calling?
2. Where is Paul planning to go to share the good news of Jesus (v.24)? Where does he want to stop on the way?
3. What is he asking for from the Roman church on his mission to Spain (v.24)? How does the church today continue to support the work of gospel proclamation?
4. What is Paul working on as he is finishing up his letter to the Romans (v.25-27)? How did Paul connect his theology of the gospel and Israel (chapters 9-11) to the financial needs in Jerusalem?
5. We know from the book of Acts that Paul never got to go on this planned mission trip to Spain. What happened to him in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-36)?
6. Why do you think Paul asked for prayers from the Roman church? How does God use prayer in our lives? What does it say about our relationship with God?
7. Read Acts 28:11-30. How did God answer the prayers different than Paul expected? How did God answer Paul's prayer requests in the ways he did expect?

The logo for 'UNASHAMED' is displayed on a black rectangular background. The word 'UNASHAMED' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'UN' is in blue, and 'ASHAMED' is in white. Below the main text, the tagline 'Of The Good News Of Jesus Christ' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

**UNASHAMED**  
Of The Good News Of Jesus Christ

8. From the account in Acts, how can we see God is faithful to answer prayer and Paul's joy and confidence in God's plan? How will you respond as God answers your prayers differently than you expect? How have you seen God's faithfulness at this point in your life? Share with others ways God has answered prayer in your life?
  
9. What is the significance of Paul giving specific messages and greetings to people he had relationships with? What does this tell us about the church?



## **Romans 16:25-27**

### **Established**

When something is established it is proven true and reliable. It cannot be moved or disproved. It is trustworthy and fully embraced. Are you established in the good news of Jesus? Paul's final prayer and benediction in the book of Romans is for followers of Jesus to be established in this gospel. It is God's gospel that has become Paul's (my) gospel. As God has revealed and made know His amazing plan of salvation he has invited us to be partakers of this plan and establish our lives in His powerful work of salvation. Paul has established his identity completely in the good news of Jesus. His prayer is that we too would establish our identities in Jesus, so that we too can say it is "my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ".

1. Who is the one that establishes us in the good news of Jesus?
2. Share your journey of seeing the gospel as good news for you in your life?
3. What is the significance of the gospel being a mystery now revealed (v.26)? How does Paul see his writing of the book of Romans as part of God's revealing?
4. What is the connection between obedience and faith (v.26)?
5. How does the gospel reveal the wisdom and glory of God?
6. What has been the biggest "Ah Ha" moment for you in the book of Romans? How has God used this book to capture your heart with the gospel?