



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

I. Context

- ## II. Message

- a. Pleasing others, vv. 1-6
- b. Accepting others, vv. 7-13

For a detailed investigation into the background material, see some of the previous studies on [passages in Romans](#) at Cranfordville.com under Bible Studies. Particularly helpful will be the previous week's study on [Rom. 13:8-14](#). We will summarize that material, and supplement it as it relates to our study of 15:1-13.

External History. This letter was dictated by Paul to his writing secretary Tertius (cf. Rom. 16:22) while the apostle was finishing up his third missionary journey during a three month stay at Corinth (cf. Acts 20:1-3). As he was preparing to return to Jerusalem, he was to lead the delegation of Gentile Christians who had collected a large offering to take to their Jewish Christian brothers in Judea who were suffering both persecution and famine. While making these plans, Paul was also looking beyond the return trip to Jerusalem and then to his home base in Antioch. He anticipated a trip to Rome and hoped to turn the believing community in Rome into a home base for ministry to the western Mediterranean world, just as Antioch had been such for the preceding decade plus in the eastern Mediterranean world (cf. Rom. 15:22-33). He had not previously visited Rome, although he personally knew many of the house-church leaders of the

Christian community there (cf. Rom. 16:1-23). Thus Romans is unique in the collection of letters by Paul in the New Testament. It is a letter of introduction, in which the apostle lays out the essence of his ministry and gospel message before the Christians in Rome. This he did in the hope of gaining their support for his anticipated ministry in the western Mediterranean world. This unique quality of the document is one of the factors that has made it particularly important. In it we get a glimpse of the heart beat of Paul's mature thinking in AD 57 after over two decades of missionary activity since his conversion in AD 33. His ideas are laid out in very cohesive fashion, and Tertius' skill in writing Greek enabled the apostle to pull together his thoughts in the best Greek expression of any of his letters found in the New Testament. Thus Romans traditionally has stood at the head of Paul's documents for those wishing to understand his doctrinal perspective on Christianity.

Internal History. Because of the paraenetical nature of 15:1-13, time and place markers inside the text play only a generalized role and stand in

b. Literary

Genre. Again, for a more detailed treatment of the issues of the broad genre of ancient letter, and paraenesis, see the discussion under Literary Genre in the [Rom. 13:8-14 Bible study](#). Our passage stands as a part of the paraenetic section in 12:1 - 15:13. A few distinctive sub-form elements surface in 15:1-13 as a part of the generalized paraenetical pattern. Extensive use of OT citation occurs in verse 3 and 9-12. Although Paul commonly makes use of OT references, he does so here more extensively than typically.

Secondly, twice Paul injects a “prayer wish” that serves as the concluding declaration of each sub-section: vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-13. James Dunn (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) notes: “The form has a liturgical ring and suggests that Paul wrote with a view not only to winding up the section (see Form and Structure) but also to the letter’s being read within the context of a congregation gathered for worship (Küsemann; cf. SH, Lietzmann).” Rhetorically, it intensifies the demand made at the beginning of each section by invoking God’s blessing upon those who heed the admonition.

Literary Context. The literary setting for 15:1-13 has numerous dimensions. At one level it stands as the final section of the paraenetical emphasis in 12:1-15:13. Rom. 12:1-2 forms the foundational basis for all that follows:

- (1) Spiritual Gifts, 12:3-8;
- (2) Guidelines for Christian Living, 12:9-21;
- (3) Obeying Rulers, 13:1-7;
- (4) *Brotherly Love*, 13:8-10;
- (5) *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 13:11-14;
- (6) Not Judging your Brother, 14:1-12;
- (7) Not Causing your Brother to Stumble, 14:13-23;
- (8) **Pleasing Others rather than Self, 15:1-13.**

The imperatives of 12:1-2 form the foundation for

the background for interpretation. Thus we will treat them in the exegesis section below.

Christian living. In the subsequent pericopes in 12:3-15:13, Paul specifies some of the areas of the “living sacrifice” approach to Christian discipleship. Thus, 15:1-13 brings this emphasis to a climatic expression.

Another contextual issue commonly discussed in modern commentaries pertains to the connection of 15:1-6 especially to 14:13-23, and to 14:1-12 also. The common theme of the “weak” pervades all three pericopes. Although not mentioned directly until 15:1, the opposite group is the “strong.” Clearly 15:1-6 in theme stands closely linked to the two preceding passages.

What about 15:7-13 then? Some, e.g., Dunn, *WBC*, are inclined to link it with 15:14-21. But I question the accuracy of such a perspective. The use of the inferential conjunction $\Delta\iota\omicron$ at verse 7 serves to tie it back to vv. 1-6. The common semantic thought structure between vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-13 argue for strong connection; for a detailed discussion see the [Rhetorical Summary](#) in the larger internet version of this study. Additionally, the admonitions that are foundational to each section are virtually synonymous with one another.

The better understanding is to see it as a part of the larger paraenetical section of 12:1-15:13. Then 15:14-33 becomes literally Paul’s “travel plans,” which typically brings to a close the letter Body as well as transitions into the letter Conclusio. This is the common view of those who have done extensive form critical analysis of ancient epistolary patterns.

Conclusions here are significant because they will impact the interpretative details of the contents of 15:1-13.



II. Message

Literary Structure. The twofold division of Rom. 15:1-13 is almost universally understood among modern commentators, although the precise connection of each of the two pieces remains disputed. In my estimation the two sub-sections are deeply inter-connected to each other. The detailed reasons for this are set forth in the [Rhetorical Summary](#) of the Greek text in the larger internet version of this study.

Our study of this passage will be based on those interpretative conclusions.

a. Pleasing others, vv. 1-6

Greek NT

15:1 Ὁφείλομεν δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοὶ τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν καὶ μὴ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκειν. 15:2 ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν· 15:3 καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν· ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται, Οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ’ ἐμέ. 15:4 ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν. 15:5 ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δῶν ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, 15:6 ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἑνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Notes:

The internal thought structure of vv. 1-6 can be summarized as follows: 1) Admonitions; 2) Support; 3) Prayer Wish. For a detailed discussion of this from the analysis of the Greek text see the [Block Diagram](#), [Semantic Diagram](#), and [Rhetorical Summary](#) in the larger internet version of this study.

1) Admonitions: “1 *We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.* 2 *Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor.*” (Ὁφείλομεν δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοὶ τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν καὶ μὴ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκειν. ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν). Paul begins with a general affirmation of obligation and then comes back to individualize it with the second

NASB

1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. 3 For even 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 earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NRSV

1 We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. 3 For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.



admonition.

One central issue in the passage does play an important role at a first century historical level as well as at a spiritual level. A major interpretative issue in the text revolves around the identity of the “strong” (cf. v. 1, οἱ δυνατοὶ) and the “weak” (cf. v. 1, τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων) individuals alluded to by the apostle. Paul identified himself with the “strong” in verse one (ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοὶ). James Dunn (WBC, Logos Systems) provides helpful insight into

NLT

1 We may know that these things make no difference, but we cannot just go ahead and do them to please ourselves. We must be considerate of the doubts and fears of those who think these things are wrong. 2 We should please others. If we do what helps them, we will build them up in the Lord. 3 For even Christ didn’t please himself. As the Scriptures say, “Those who insult you are also insulting me.” 4 Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises. 5 May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other. 6 Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

the concept of “the strong”:

οἱ δυνατοὶ = “powerful people” would be a familiar usage in Greek (BGD), including the regular usage in the historical books of the OT/LXX = “the mighty men” (1 Sam 2:10; 17:51; 2 Sam 1:25, 27; 10:7; 16:6; etc.; so also 1 Macc 4:3; Acts 25:5; 1 Cor 1:26). The implication is of a strength or power which gives prominence and the possibility of dominating others. Hence the thought of greater responsibility (cf. Wisd Sol 6:6—a parallel which suggests a certain continuity of thought with 13:1–7). For Paul, of course, the thought is not of physical strength, but the strength of superior knowledge and understanding of how God’s grace works (cf. 2 Cor 12:10; 13:9). This does not, however, imply a claim to a particular charismatic endowment (cf. Michel), simply an appreciation of what Paul regards as the basic character of the gospel and of faith.

In the immediate context of 14:1-23, Paul makes himself clear that the “strong” are the Gentile believers who have no qualms over eating certain meats; cf. [14:2](#), “Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.” Jewish believers in the community of faith still adhered to the OT dietary code and thus avoided eating certain meats that were prohibited to Jews by the Torah. Ironically, Paul the Jewish



believer felt more identity with the Gentile believers than he did with the Jewish believers still seeking to follow the OT code. His conversion experience had changed his perspective dramatically in regard to dietary patterns, as he declares in 14:14, “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus

that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.”

The converse side is then who were “the weak”? Again chapter fourteen clearly identifies these as Jewish Christians in Rome -- and perhaps elsewhere -- who still practiced their Jewish religious commit-

ments as a part of their Christian faith. This included at minimum the dietary code restrictions on what was kosher food (14:1-4), and the weekly sabbath (14:5-6). The most negative term regarding them shows up on 14:1, “those who are weak in faith” (τὸν ἄσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει). At first glance this sounds rather elitist on Paul’s part to label his Jewish Christian brothers in such a way. But the ensuing discussion makes it clear that Paul does not consider these believers inferior or without genuine faith commitment. To the contrary, they are sincerely seeking to please God in their living; cf. 14:4, “it is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.” Also cf. 14:6, “Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.”

Paul in chapter fourteen is attempting to address one of the most sensitive issues that apostolic Christianity faced: how can Jews and Gentiles come together as a unified religious community of committed people? By the early 40s of the first century the issue had become very divisive. The simplest -- and for many the biblical answer -- was for Gentiles to convert to Judaism before becoming a Christian. By the mid 40s this opinion had become so strong that it threatened the gospel’s reach into the Gentile world, as Acts 15:1 makes clear: “Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers [at Antioch], ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’” This issue came to a head at the Jerusalem counsel meeting, described by Luke in [Acts 15:4-29](#). Paul and Barnabas vigorously defended the position that Gentiles need only to confess faith in Christ for salvation. They had no need of proselyte conversion to Judaism in which they both had to be circumcised and to formally pledge to obey the Law of God. Jewish Christians who were still practicing Pharisees had taken the opposite view point, as Acts 15:5 clearly shows: “But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, ‘It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.’” Although Luke described them as “believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees,” Paul described them in much blunter terms when he described this same meeting in Gal. 2:1-10: “false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us.” The apostolic leadership in Jerusalem under James’ leadership sided with Paul and Barnabas on this issue, and sent the following letter to

the following letter to the brothers at Antioch ([Acts 15:22-29](#)):

They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, with the following letter: **“The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”**

Of course, this did not silence in AD 48 the opposition to the acceptance of Gentile believers into the Christian faith solely on the basis of their faith commitment to Christ. In fact, one particularly troublesome point in the letter of James to the Antioch Christians was the request to **“abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled.”** Diaspora Jews who scrupulously sought to follow the dietary code in Leviticus (esp. [17:10-14](#)) virtually had to become vegetarians when outside their home in order to follow these regulations from that code that James mentions. Thus the hard line “Jews only as Christians” view point found expression in opposition to Paul’s preaching of the gospel first in the churches of the Roman province of Galatia that had been established on the first missionary journey. His Letter to the Galatians was written at the end of the 40s to counter their influence in those Christian communities. The issue of eating meat already dedicated to pagan gods had arisen in the early 50s with the question being addressed by Paul from Ephesus in his letter to the church at Corinth; cf. [1 Cor. 8:1-13](#). There Paul discusses the issue with the same basic conclusions as in Rom. 14. But he describes the position of openness as “knowledge” that is based on the realization that pagan gods have no actual existence (1 Cor. 8:4): **“Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘no idol in the world really exists,’ and that ‘there is no God but one.’”** Thus any dedication of meat to some pagan deity has no impact on the meat whatsoever as he affirms in 8:8, **“Food will not bring us close to**

God.’ We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.” But he acknowledges that no everyone possesses this knowledge; cf. 8:7, **“It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.”** In light of this he advocated a middle ground to the Corinthians as well; cf. 1 Cor. 8:9-13:

But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Paul’s admonitions to the church at Rome, which was made up of both Jewish and Gentile Christians, was an effort to find a middle ground where each side could respect the viewpoint of the other on matters of dietary patterns. While accepting that difference, the community could function together in a unified commitment to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers.

Could such a position be achieved? Not without considerable effort on the part of both sides! Church history doesn’t detail the outcome of this situation, but it does lay out the broad contours that in general the proposed solution was not implemented successfully over an extended period. The “Judaizing” opposition to Paul’s preaching of a faith-only gospel gradually evolved into the [Ebionite Jewish Christian movement](#) by the later decades of the first century. In their writings beginning in the second century Paul is demonized as the servant of Satan and perverter of true Christianity. The old Pharisaical position of “Jews only as Christians” reflected at the Jerusalem council in AD 48 (cf. Acts 15:4) became a central tenant of their position. Perhaps this was the source of the bitter opposition against Paul at Rome that he mentions in his letter to the Philippians about AD 61 ([Phil 1:15-17](#)):

15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 16 These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment.

But Paul in Rom. 15:1-6 proposes a goal that

divided believers need to strive for, when their differences are legitimate and honest. It's that goal that we still need to work toward.

What is it in these verses? The broad admonition is: **"We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves"** (Ὁφείλομεν δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοὶ τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν καὶ μὴ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκειν). When under the conviction of being on target with the demands of the gospel, we need to show tolerance toward those who take an opposing viewpoint to ours. Working together for larger common goals far out weights petty efforts at controlling and dominating the entire group. Paul was convinced that room exists for diversity of viewpoint on secondary matters.

The individualized, second admonition lays out the objectives of this: **"Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor"** (ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν). The defining of the "weak" as "neighbor" echoes [the earlier call](#) to love one's neighbor based on Lev. 19:18. The dual purpose statement, εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν, is particularly significant, as Dunn (*WBC*) points out:

Elsewhere Paul regards mere "man pleasing" as highly undesirable (Gal 1:10; Col 3:22; 1 Thess 2:4; also Eph 6:6; see also on 8:8). Hence the qualification of the double purpose phrases (εἰς ... πρὸς ...); cf. particularly 1 Cor 10:33. As usual in Romans ἀγαθός is chosen for its generality (cf. particularly 2:10; 5:7; 9:11; 12:9, 21; 13:3; 14:16), not just eschatological good (8:28), but what people of good will would widely commend as "good" (εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν—13:4; 16:19). For οἰκοδομή see on 14:19. The phrase does not have the individual as such in view ("for his edification") but, as the metaphor implies, the growth to maturity of the whole congregation πρὸς οἰκοδομήν — 1 Cor 14:12, 26; Eph 4:29; εἰς οἰκοδομήν — 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10; Eph 4:12, 16); or more precisely, the growth to maturity of the weaker brother as part of the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 14:4); cf. Fitzmyer, NEB, NJB.

2) Support, vv. 3-4. Paul turns to two areas in giving support for his admonitions. First, he calls attention to the example of Christ. Then, he affirms the value of scriptural guidelines for our spiritual benefit.

First, the example of Christ: **"For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me'"** (καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν· ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται, Οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ). Paul affirms the gospel perspective of "not my will, but Thine be done." Christ surrendered his own pleasure so that

he could achieve the greater objective of salvation for sinful humanity. The positive statement of goal is cited through quoting Psalm 69:9 verbatim (= LXX 68:10) from the Septuagint. This points not to Christ's incarnation, nor particularly to his public ministry in general. Rather, it focuses on Jesus' crucifixion as the ultimate goal of his coming to this world. As such, his example reminds us that making room for others and their "weak" viewpoint may well involve sacrifice on our part.

The *second* supporting principle has to do with the value of scripture: **"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope"** (ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν). The **"whatever was written in former days"** most immediately refers to the quote from Ps. 69:9 just before it, but also includes scripture generally. The relative clause ὅσα προεγράφη makes this clear.

The immediate purpose is given in the prepositional phrase **"for our instruction"** (εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν). That is, we can gain instruction about God's will for us from the scripture. The second purpose is in the dependent ἵνα-clause: **"so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope"** (ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν). When unswerving commitment is combined with the encouragement that comes from Scripture, we strengthen our sense of "hope." We should note that τὴν ἐλπίδα is much, much more than what the English word "hope" ordinarily suggests. It is absolute confidence in the salvation provided us by Christ; it is unswerving confidence that we will see Him in eternity in complete deliverance from our sinfulness; it is the certainty that we are God's child now and for all eternity.

Thus these two spiritual realities -- Christ's example and the role of scripture -- make it mandatory for us to "make room" for fellow believers who don't always agree with us on secondary issues.

3) Prayer Wish, vv. 5-6, "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δῶῃ ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). In formal prayer expression, Paul invokes



God's blessings upon his readers who follow the admonitions. The specific content of the desired blessing is stated as "to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus" (τὸ

αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν

ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν). He calls upon the God of steadfastness and encouragement to grant this blessing. These are the same qualities that he stressed as coming from Christ and from the Scripture. Thus through Christ and the Scripture we get back to the God who is the source of these qualities. The intended consequence of this blessing is set forth as "so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ἵνα

ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). God -- and only God -- can give us the needed resources to "please others" so that the greater goal of harmony in the midst of diversity can take place. When it does, God is the one to receive the praise for it.

What a powerful plea to work together with each other! How desperately this is needed in our day. The Christmas celebration of Advent creates the "warm feelings" of peace on earth and good will toward men. But this usually disappears quickly after Dec. 25. In large part, because it's just a warm feeling created by music and the atmosphere of the Christmas holiday. What we need is what Paul points us to here. Central is a twofold commitment: to Christ and to Scripture. We learn from His example, and we find encouragement from God's Word. Were we to take these commitments seriously, then living in harmony with one another for God's glory would become an ongoing reality in our midst.

b. Accepting others, vv. 7-13

Greek NT

15·7 Διὸ προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 15·8 λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διακονον γεγενῆσθαι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων, 15·9 τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσεται σοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνόματί σου ψαλῶ. 15·10 καὶ πάλιν λέγει, Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ. 15·11 καὶ πάλιν, Αἰνεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἐπαινεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί. 15·12 καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαΐας λέγει, Ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ καὶ ὁ ἀνίστάμενος ἄρχων ἐθνῶν, ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν. 15·13 ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπί-

NASB

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. 8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME." 10 Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE." 11 And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM." 12 Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER

NRSV

7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might 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 confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; 10 and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; 11 and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; 12 and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule

NLT

7 So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified. 8 Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. 9 And he came so the Gentiles might also give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name." F85 10 And in another place it is written, "Rejoice, O you Gentiles, along with his people, the Jews." 11 And yet again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; praise him, all you people of the earth." 12 And the prophet Isaiah

χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ
πιστεύειν, εἰς τὸ περισ-
σεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι
ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁ-
γίου.

THE GENTILES, IN HIM
SHALL THE GENTILES
HOPE.” 13 Now may the
God of hope fill you with
all joy and peace in be-
lieving, so that you will
abound in hope by the
power of the Holy Spirit.

the Gentiles; in him the
Gentiles shall hope.” 13
May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and
peace in believing, so
that you may abound
in hope by the power of
the Holy Spirit.

said, “The heir to Da-
vid’s throne will come,
and he will rule over the
Gentiles. They will place
their hopes on him.” 13
So I pray that God, who
gives you hope, will
keep you happy and full
of peace as you believe
in him. May you over-
flow with hope through
the power of the Holy
Spirit.

Notes:

The internal structure of the ideas in this second section is the same as in the first: 1) Admonition; 2) Support; 3) Prayer Wish. For detailed analysis of the Greek text at this point, see the [Rhetorical Summary](#) in the larger internet version of this study. The content of this material is where the difference surfaces, in spite of being similar in theme.

1) Admonition, v. 7, “[Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God](#)” (προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ). Clearly Paul moves to a strongly expressed demand for Jews and Gentiles inside the community of faith to actively embrace one another in the midst of their differences. The issue of one maintaining his “Jewishness” after becoming a Christian must fade into the background and not be allowed to create hindrances to the profound sense of acceptance of one another. The present imperative form of the Greek verb προσλαμβάνεσθε defines this as an ongoing responsibility that is to become a permanent trait of the Christian community. The limits of acceptance are defined simply as to the degree that “[Christ has welcomed you](#)” (καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς). Christ welcomes both Jew and Gentile into the family of God on the same basis of faith commitment. Now the task for these Jewish and Gentile Christians is to embrace one another in the same way that Christ has embraced them. The purpose of this welcoming of one another is simply “[for the glory of God](#)” (εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ).

Paul envisioned something every Roman emperor of that era desired: a unified empire in which the whole world came together in unified adoption of Roman culture and ways of living. But each emperor from Augustus onward sought to impose the *Pax Romana*, the peace of Rome, through military might. In traditional Roman thinking, you achieve unified peace only by eliminating opposition. Thus submission to Rome was demanded or else.

But Paul’s vision was for a unified people under the leadership of Christ, not a Roman emperor. He dared think that the two most hostile groups, Jews and Gentiles, could be brought together in harmonious living through common commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord -- terms commonly applied to the Roman emperor. The emperor forced himself upon other peoples with the might of the sword. Christ accepted voluntary commitment from all on the simple basis of faith commitment to Him. The emperor sought the glory of Rome in his conquests. Jesus seeks the glory of God in his becoming Lord of all. What a difference! And He is still making it happen in our day.

2) Support, vv. 8-12, “[8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might 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 confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name’; 10 and again he says, ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people’; 11 and again, ‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him’; 12 and again Isaiah says, ‘The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope’](#)” (15·8 λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων, 15·9 τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνοματί σου ψαλῶ. 15·10 καὶ πάλιν λέγει, Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ. 15·11 καὶ πάλιν, Αἰνεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἐπαινεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί. 15·12 καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαΐας λέγει, Ὅτις ἡ ρίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαὶ καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν). The foundation for this admonition runs along the



same lines as the parallel section in vv. 3-4 in the first pericope: Christ and scripture. But the theme is expanded from the earlier one.

To the Gentile Christians at Rome Paul declares in solemn tones “that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9 and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.” Jesus’ ministry on earth focused on God’s covenant people Israel, as the truth of God had affirmed in the OT scriptures through messianic prophecy. But the objective of the Jewish focused ministry of Christ included both Jews [“in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs”] and Gentiles [“in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy”]. Thus both groups are covered in Christ’s role as Servant (διάκονον).

The OT undergirding of this contention is provided through a series of four scripture citations from all three sections of the Hebrew Bible: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

First, from Psalm 18:49: “Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name” (Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνοματί σου ψαλῶ). Concerning how closely Paul follows the text of this Psalm, Dunn (WBC) notes that

The quotation is verbatim from the LXX of Ps 18:49 [LXX 17:50] = 2 Sam 22:50, with the exception that κύριε (following ἔθνεσιν) is omitted. Presumably it is significant that the verse does not necessarily envisage the Gentiles themselves joining in the praise. The implication is either that the passage is being read messianically, as words which express the gentile outreach of the mission set in motion by Christ (so most; hence the omission of the κύριε); or that these are the words of the devout Jew (David) foreshadowing the situation of the diaspora Jew, and now particularly of the Jewish Christian. This latter seems to make better sense since it would give the order: David (v 9), Gentiles (vv 10–11), both (v 12) (Michel). Or indeed, if ἐν ἔθνεσιν could be taken to include both Jew and Gentile in the praise, this first quotation would then serve as a heading (*Überschrift*) for the complete catena (Schlier).

Second, from Deut. 32:43: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people” (Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ). Once more regarding Paul’s use of this OT text Dunn insightfully notes

The quotation is verbatim from the LXX of Deut 32:43, the last verse of the song of Moses. But the LXX at this point is markedly different from the MT: in place of the four (half-) lines of the MT we have eight lines in Greek (mainly by addition of lines calling for heavenly rejoicing as well; hence also the quotation in Heb 1:6);

more important, however, is the transformation of the equivalent Hebrew line—

Praise his people, O you nations (RSV) — (though the Greek phrase does raise the question as to whether the ἔθνη is original; see further Lagrange, and Skehan [21–22]). Whatever the facts of the matter on this point, the verse’s original Hebrew was clearly intended as a strong promise of God’s covenant faithfulness to his people, with more than a hint of the “us/them, God’s people/others” attitude (“he avenges the blood of his servants, and takes vengeance on his adversaries, and makes expiation for the land of his people” [RSV]). The expansion of the Greek allows not only a much more universal perspective, but the crucial reading μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ transforms a potentially very hostile meaning into one much more sympathetic to the Gentiles. This is only hinted at in the LXX, which retains all the threatening language of the Hebrew, but would make it less offensive in a diaspora context. But it enables Paul to lift out this single line and to use it as an expression of his own theology, that in accordance with God’s original purpose and promise the covenant made to Israel is now open to all who believe.

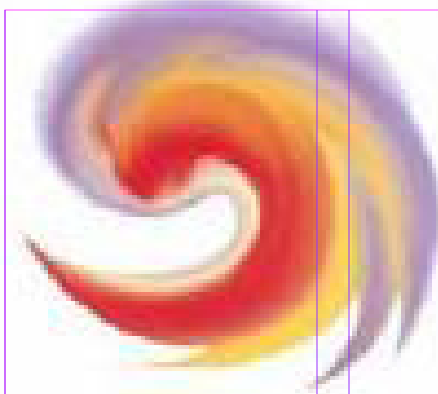
Third, from Psalm 117:1, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him” (Αἰνεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἐπαινέσατάωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί). Once more, Dunn’s comparison of Paul’s quote to the OT text is helpful:

The Greek is a close rendering of the Hebrew. Although the psalm is very brief (only two verses) it is noticeable that the reason given for the praise is God’s steadfast love (ἔλεος) “to us” and faithfulness (πιστις / ἀλλη-θεῖα) “for ever.” Awareness of the OT quotations he was going to use may well have influenced Paul’s choice of language in vv 8–9a (see on 15:8). The point once again is that Gentiles can praise God for his “mercy and faithfulness” because it is extended to them, without weakening its enduring validity to Israel.

Fourth, from Isaiah 11:10, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope” (Ἔσται ἡ ρίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαί καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν). Dunn (WBC) notes

The following quotation is highly suitable as the climax to the catena, but Paul would probably have been pleased to be able to conclude with his favorite prophet—explicitly named more often than anyone else (9:27, 29; 10:16, 20; see also on chaps. 9–11 *Introduction*).

Thus Paul has grounded Christ’s ministry in Old Testament scriptural principle that anticipated God’s sending of an Anointed Deliverer to His people Israel. In these passages, Paul found an expansion of that deliverance to include the Gentiles as well. Thus both Jew and Gentile are invited to come into God’s family on the common basis of faith commitment to



Christ as God's Messiah. The Scripture can instruct us as Paul earlier declared.

3) **Prayer Wish**, v. 13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you

may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρῶσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεῦναι, εἰς τὸ περισσεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου). Just as Paul earlier declared that scripture is to give us hope (v. 5), the apostle now prays to the God of hope to fill us so that hope will flood our lives. As that confidence in who we are as God's children increases, we can look beyond our differences so that in our expressing of faith we discover fuller joy and peace in our community. All of this comes through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the community of believers.

Wow! What a beautiful recipe for Christian unity. We respect our differences while focusing on our common commitment to Christ. God is the source of this unified community of Jews and Gentiles. They find their oneness in Christ and achieve it through the power of the Holy Spirit. Key to this unity is the common hope, which is the certainty of being God's children who have a marvelous future ahead together. In such a community peace and joy dominate, rather than war and anger.

How much we should long for this day in contemporary Christianity! American Christianity is sadly losing its focus. Unity is sought through the common bottom line of a superficial "loving every body." Profound conviction flies out the window; it makes no difference what you believe. Just love everyone, and you're welcome in the church. No wonder Christianity is losing its influence in American society, and churches are slowly dying. Live and let live is the philosophy at large in our society, but churches are adopting it at horrible costs to authentic, vibrant Christianity.

On the other side of the spectrum is the segment of contemporary Christians who are failing at the very point that Paul warns against in 14:1-15:13: a spiritual elitism that castigates the "weak" believers. From the fundamentalists, these are "liberal" Chris-

tians who probably aren't even Christians in their eyes. From the liberal side, these "weak" Christians are the ignorant fundamentalists who don't understand the Bible. Both look down on one another and frequently cast stones at the other. The axiom Paul used on the meat offered to idols discussion in [1 Cor. 8:1-3](#) has particular relevancy to our current situation:

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

Paul goes on to declare to the "strong" ones who look down on their "weak" brothers (vv. 11-12):

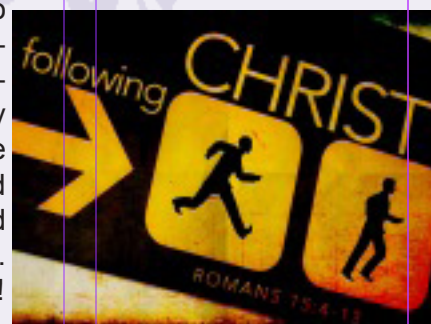
So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

What we need is genuine, spiritual "pleasing others" in the community of faith. This involves willingness to forego our desires, even though they may be legitimate.

Now "pleasing others" has to be biblical. It must cut against the American cultural grain at two important points. First, "pleasing others" is the trademark slogan for the pornography world of the sex industry in our culture. Its definition of "pleasing others" is a willingness to dehumanize oneself for the sake of making money from others. By selling itself into sexual slavery, it achieves "pleasing others," but in the most destructive way imaginable.

Second, "pleasing others" is often diagnosed as a mental illness when it reaches levels of unhealthy dependency on the approval of other people. We cannot ever become so dependent on the approval of other Christians that we are willing to compromise everything in order to gain their praise. We must be people of deep conviction that defines how we live in our world. Sometimes that goes against the surrounding world.

Instead of these destructive approaches to "pleasing others" that are present in our American culture, we must turn to Christ and to scripture for authentic ways to "please" fellow believers who are different from us. Only then can we have a healthy faith, and a genuinely unified community of faith. God help us to this!



Greek NT	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p>15:1 Ὁφείλομεν δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοὶ τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν καὶ μὴ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκειν. 15:2 ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν· 15:3 καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν· ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται, Οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ. 15:4 ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν. 15:5 ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δόξῃ ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, 15:6 ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἑνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.</p> <p>15:7 Διὸ προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 15:8 λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων, 15:9 τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνοματί σου ψαλῶ. 15:10 καὶ πάλιν λέγει, Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ. 15:11 καὶ πάλιν, Αἰνεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἐπαινεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί. 15:12 καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαΐας λέγει, Ἔσται ἡ</p>	<p>1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. 3 For even 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 earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. 8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME." 10 Again he says, "REJOICE, O</p>	<p>1 We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. 3 For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might 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 confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; 10 and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; 11 and</p>	<p>1 We may know that these things make no difference, but we cannot just go ahead and do them to please ourselves. We must be considerate of the doubts and fears of those who think these things are wrong. 2 We should please others. If we do what helps them, we will build them up in the Lord. 3 For even Christ didn't please himself. As the Scriptures say, "Those who insult you are also insulting me." 4 Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises. 5 May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other. 6 Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>7 So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified. 8 Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. 9 And he came so the Gentiles might also give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist</p>

ρίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαί καὶ ὁ ἀνι-
στάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν,
ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν.
15·13 ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπί-
δος πληρῶσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης
χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ
πιστεύειν, εἰς τὸ περισ-
σεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι
ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος
ἁγίου.

GENTILES, WITH HIS
PEOPLE." 11 And again,
"PRAISE THE LORD ALL
YOU GENTILES, AND
LET ALL THE PEOPLES
PRAISE HIM." 12 Again
Isaiah says, "THERE
SHALL COME THE ROOT
OF JESSE, AND HE WHO
ARISES TO RULE OVER
THE GENTILES, IN HIM
SHALL THE GENTILES
HOPE." 13 Now may the
God of hope fill you with
all joy and peace in be-
lieving, so that you will
abound in hope by the
power of the Holy Spirit.

again, "Praise the Lord,
all you Gentiles, and let
all the peoples praise
him"; 12 and again Isa-
iah says, "The root of
Jesse shall come, the
one who rises to rule
the Gentiles; in him the
Gentiles shall hope." 13
May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and
peace in believing, so
that you may abound
in hope by the power of
the Holy Spirit.

meant when he wrote:
"I will praise you among
the Gentiles; I will sing
praises to your name."
10 And in another place
it is written, "Rejoice, O
you Gentiles, along with
his people, the Jews." 11
And yet again, "Praise
the Lord, all you Gen-
tiles; praise him, all you
people of the earth." 12
And the prophet Isaiah
said, "The heir to Da-
vid's throne will come,
and he will rule over the
Gentiles. They will place
their hopes on him." 13
So I pray that God, who
gives you hope, will
keep you happy and full
of peace as you believe
in him. May you over-
flow with hope through
the power of the Holy
Spirit.

Greek NT Block Diagram

1	15·1	δὲ ὀφείλομεν ἡμεῖς...τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν οἱ δυνατοὶ καὶ μὴ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκειν.
2	15·2	ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν·
3	15·3	γὰρ καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν· ἀλλὰ
4		καθὼς γέγραπται, ¹ Οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ.
5	15·4	γὰρ ὅσα προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν ἵνα...τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν.
6	15·5	δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δῶκε ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν /----- ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν,
	15·6	/----- ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι ἵνα...δοξάζετε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
7	15·7	Διὸ προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

¹The scripture quote from Ps. 69:9 stands both as a main clause assertion and also as the subject of the perfect passive voice verb γέγραπται. This comes through ellipsis and is an inherent quality of the adverbial comparative clause introduced by καθὼς. Here the coordinate conjunction ἀλλὰ affirms this main clause role, making the scripture quote the other half of the contrastive declaration in the sentence..

8	15·8	<p>γὰρ λέγω Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων,</p>
	15·9	<p>δὲ ὑπὲρ ἐλέους τὰ ἔθνη...δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνοματί σου ψαλῶ.</p>
	15·10	<p>καὶ πάλιν λέγει, Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.</p>
	15·11	<p>καὶ πάλιν, (λέγει) Αἰνεῖτε... τὸν κύριον πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἐπαινεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί.</p>
	15·12	<p>καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαΐας λέγει, Ἔσται ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσσαί καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν.</p>
	15·13	<p>δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρῶσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν, εἰς τὸ περισσεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου.</p>
9		

Semantic Diagram									
				δὲ					
	1-----	1	Pres	Act	Ind	1	P	(ἡμεῖς)	
A--									
	2-----	2	Pres	Act	Imp +3	S		ἕκαστος	
			γὰρ						
	a-----	3	1 Aor	Act	Ind	3	S	ὁ Χριστὸς	
I--	1--		ἀλλὰ						
	B--	4	1 Aor	Act	Ind	3	P	οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ	
			γὰρ						
	2-----	5	2 Aor	Pass	Ind	3	S	ὅσα προεγράφη	
			δὲ						
	C-----	6	1 Aor	Act	Opt	3	S	ὁ θεὸς	
			Διὸ						
	A-----	7	Pres	Dep	Imp +2	P		(ὕμεῖς)	
			γὰρ						
II-B-----		8	Pres	Act	Ind	1	S	(ἐγὼ)	
			δὲ						
	C-----	9	1 Aor	Act	Opt	3	S	ὁ θεὸς	

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

The pericope is clearly made up of two sections (statements 1-6 and 7-9), and each section has an essentially common internal structure: admonition - basis - prayer wish.

The first section (#s 1-6) begin with a twofold admonition in the first two statements. Declaration #1 sets forth the general idea of obligation to the “strong” to help the “weak.” Statement #2 repeats in more direct language using the Greek imperative mood the responsibility of each one to “please” his neighbor for the edification purposes. These admonitions are followed by two sets of reasons laying a foundation for the demands (cf. γὰρ). First, Paul appeals to the example of Christ (#s 3-4). He did not please himself (#3), but chose to follow the OT principle (Ps. 69:9) of taking upon himself the reproaches of others (#4). Second, Paul asserts that what has been written previously has been written for two purposes: 1. our instruction and 2. to give us hope. The first section is concluded with a prayer invoking God’s blessings on his readers.

The second section follows the same thought structure, but with slightly different content. The connecting link between the two sections is set forth by Διὸ, an inferential coordinate conjunction. Thus the second set is seen as implicit and growing out of the first set.

Paul begins with a direct command for his readers to “accept one another.” This is qualified by a comparison to Christ’s reception of them, and by the stated purpose of this being “for the glory of God.” The foundation for the command (cf. γὰρ) is then set forth with a declaration that Christ became the servant (διάκονον) to the circumcised. This is then based upon a string four OT scripture citations: Ps. 18:49, Deut. 32:43, Ps. 117:1, and Is. 11:10. In these Paul uses the OT to pull together Christ’s ministry ultimately to both Jews and Gentiles. This section ends, as did the one above, with a prayer invoking God’s blessings on his readers.

The two prayers depict God as the God of perseverance and encouragement and as the God of hope.

1. ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δόξῃ ὑμῶν
2. ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρῶσαι ὑμᾶς

The content of the prayers are different. First, Paul prays that the Roman may be unified in their thinking (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν) in regard to accepting one another. The second prayer asks God to fill the readers with joy and peace (πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης).

The passage is an exceedingly rich expression of Christian harmony and acceptance of one another.