



Members One Of Another

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16) Romans 12:5 progresses the thinking: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." This distinct connection, linked by a common faith and the Holy Spirit, brings saints into a family-like bond. (Paul uses family terms: 'brother' and 'sister.' I Cor. 7:15) Romans 14-15 deals with the relationship between the 'weak in the faith,' and 'the strong.' Each member of the Church is at a different stage of spiritual development, responsible to God for their personal 'journey of faith.'

In some areas of thinking, a believer understands aspects of Bible doctrine, in other areas he may be weak. Paul's admonition to us in grace is to accept one another where we are in understanding and conviction.

The role of the strong is not as a 'law enforcer,' rather "...Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (II Cor. 1:24, Rom. 14:5) You can be 'a helper of their joy,' encouraging one another's growth and walk of faith.

As we begin to graciously live out these doctrines in the local Church, our unification can tighten, becoming 'likeminded one toward another,' glorifying God as 'one Body.' (Rom. 15:5-6)

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

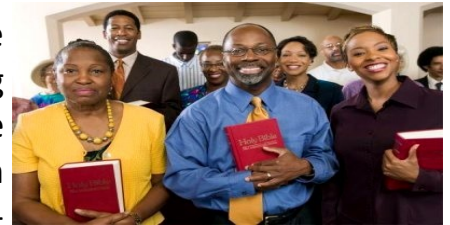
The King James Bible is used for references. Verses may be underlined/made bold for emphasis.



How To Be Likeminded, Working in Unison?

We are "...fearfully and wonderfully made..." (Ps. 139:14), yet sin is manifest causing friction, high-mindedness, and competition. Whether in the open or hidden, a lack of unity exists in all Churches, because sin lives in the flesh. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24) What can be done?

God can work in us by the Word as we yield, enabling us to exalt others above ourselves. Cooperating in the local assembly is 'a decision'



to put others first. Humbly we set 'self' aside and no longer have to 'win' or 'be on top.' "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Also, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and thing things wherewith one may edify another." (Romans 12:10, 14:19)

Like-mindedness draws us together, having a similar purpose/motive. As we learn and develop the mind of Christ, the focus shifts onto Christ, not the flesh. As this occurs, strife, envy, and divisions pale. We see each as members one of another, with the same flesh, challenges, and needs. Now we are able to *genuinely love* those who seem 'unlovable' to minister grace, rather than putting them under a performance system of do's and don'ts.

The bottom line is to focus on what God is teaching YOU, rather than on differences, problems, or changing others



in some way. Build onto what you have in common in Christ, even ministering together in love. Grace allows each believer to be who he is, and where he is, accountable solely unto God. He can then choose to walk by faith in the conviction of his heart, based on the Scripture.



Roman Epistle: Designed to Establish the Body of Christ



Romans 15: Student Study Insights

Stronger brethren have the great privilege to help and 'bear the infirmities of the weak.' Paul instructs, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good unto edification." (Romans 15:2)

As saints, we can look back at things 'written aforetime' and learn that God is a God of patience, hope, and peace. His Word is fully able to teach us how to be likeminded: "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 15:6)

Search out a few things in Chapter 15.

1. Read Romans 15 to find the main sections with their key topics: Changes in the themes can begin with a helping word, such as a time indicator: 'Now' and 'But now.'

2. Examine Verses 1-7 for the details: a) Find several, specific instructions given to saints. b) Locate three times God refers to examples to help saints learn to follow these guidelines.

**Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on studying new insights. When you're ready, try answering a few questions above.*

3. Questions can help students understand:

a) Why are the traits patience, hope, and peace used? (Verses 5,13,33) b) How do they relate to saints working together and having one mind to glorify God? c) Who is the provider of these traits and how do we get them? d) Is Romans 15 a gentle instruction with helping doctrine to live grace within the Church? Think on this and explain.

4. Notice repeating terms: The word 'minister' is used twice, in Verses 8 and 16. a) Compare and contrast the roles of these two 'ministers.' b) Since the chapter starts with being likeminded (Verse 5), could these two groups (Circumcision/Gentiles) be having challenges working together?

5. Recognize when Paul uses himself as an example: The latter half of the chapter focuses on Paul's ministry. While he desires to visit the Roman church, his plan now is to go to Jerusalem. a) What is the need of the 'poor saints at Jerusalem?' (Acts 4:32-37) b) Why does this affect the Gentile saints in Rome? Vs 27 c) Considering the teaching in Chapter 15, what ought to motivate the Gentile believers to give money to these Jewish saints, whom they have never met.

Romans 15:13 "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Let Go Of Fear, Self-centeredness, and Pride to Serve In Love

'Natural defense mechanisms' can keep 'fear walls up' to protect ourselves from being hurt, yet God is our provision. We have opportunity to put others first to minister unto them, yielding to Christ's work in us, even when inconvenient. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Rom. 14:8) In thankfulness, 'constrained by Christ's love,' **we can do this!** (II Cor. 5:14)

When we think 'in the flesh,' fear, self-centeredness, and pride naturally manifests itself. The 'infirmity of our flesh' can keep us from progressing in selfless love & holding others in high esteem. Paul teaches us to trust God: "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." (Rom. 15:3) What is the lesson here?

As we each learn to "...please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Romans 15:2), 'others' are exalted. We see 'their' needs above our own. This is the core of our service and worship to God, dealt with in Romans 12. A saint is, "...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Romans 12:3) We can view each other as brothers and sisters, progressing to see them *closer than family*, members of our own body, desiring to do them good, and to help & serve.

Emotional Responses



Emotions were given by God for our protection. A 'fear response' is like a smoke alarm, sensing a 'potential' problem. Serving others who appear different can bring anxiety. They may scare us if they are too direct, lack in manners, dress oddly, or who believe differently. Yet we are to discern fleshly 'feelings' wisely. We are ALL one body.

A fear induced, chain reaction in the brain can occur as we interact with others at Church. An adrenalin surge through our system may subconsciously flag us to be cautious and protect 'ourselves.' However, Romans 12:10 instructs: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."

As members one of another we have a new role. It is to serve in love, even if it feels a bit uncomfortable, pushing us out of our 'comfort zone' into a new place, serving and exalting others. "...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Tim. 1:7) God is our protection & strength, **so we can do it!**

Exalted fears or emotions may inhibit a saint from responding as God designed, even becoming a stronghold, a protected 'high place' in the mind. This may invisibly rule interactions, inhibiting closeness and ministry with others.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6-7) This is a great service privilege; a blessing in disguise!

Personal Corner

In recent years, I've become aware that I have a 'wall of fear' that sometimes hinders me from doing certain things. Though 'I know' I have God residing within, at times I still function on this fear.



Everyone has fear walls, yet some strongholds are more inhibiting than others. How do I deal with them so they don't control me? The answer comes from Romans 6-8, realizing who I am in Christ, yielding to His power in me to live, and staying focused on things above, in the spiritual realm.

God desires that I use this body for His purpose, He bought it with the price of His own Son. Will I allow Satan to have 'his way' in my life *to amplify fear and doubt*, inhibiting growth and ministry? Or, will I focus on the Living God and push through obstacles to **trust Him**, which magnifies Christ?

It boils down to a walk of faith and trust. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (I Cor. 6:12) Satan and sin do not 'have' to control: "...If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) I can 'cast down' this wall of fear; it is simply 'a stronghold' of vain imaginations in my mind. (II Cor. 10:3-5)

So, do I TRUST what God says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me..." and that "...my God shall supply all your need...", or not? (Phil. 4:13,19) I ask myself this question often. As long as we live on this earth, there will be many things to learn. Our 'faith journey' can include dealing with potentially derailing strongholds like my fear wall. Sound doctrine renews our mind and thoughts, teaching us to be confident. (I Cor. 2:15-16)

I'm learning to recognize this fear barrier and just push through it. Visualizing the Romans 6, 'Y' in the 'road of thinking,' helps. Am I serving my flesh, and the world or pleasing my Heavenly Father? Now, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:18)

Self God's
& Flesh Way
Y

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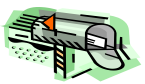
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To:

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 3:24)



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