

XIV

Pleasing Others

ROMANS 14:13–15:13

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. 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.

¹⁵ For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

²⁰ Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to

make another stumble by what he eats.²¹ It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.²² The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

CHAPTER 15

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.³ For 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 former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to 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 praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name.”

¹⁰ And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

¹¹ And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him.”

¹² And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

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

READ | ROMANS 14:13–15:13

THINK ABOUT

As the apostle Paul approaches the conclusion of this letter to the church in Rome, he provides some practical admonitions on how Christians should live within the community of faith. The first was presented in Romans 14:1–12; this passage discusses the second and third of these admonitions. The second admonition focuses on brotherly love, and Paul offers ways a mature believer can use eating habits to edify younger believers rather than becoming an obstacle. The third admonition calls the spiritually strong to imitate Christ by resisting selfishness. This will facilitate the growth and edification of younger believers and avoid causing them to stumble.

Since the church in Rome consisted of Jews and Gentiles, personal and cultural eating habits along with the application of spiritual gifts became issues that caused younger believers to stumble. However, Paul calls all believers within the community of faith to use their eating habits and gifts to please and serve others.

APPLY

While the thought of abandoning self, desires, and personal ambitions does not come naturally, self-sacrifice is an important discipline for all believers and particularly for those more spiritually mature. Yet, because of our “flesh,” we do not naturally place restrictions on ourselves for the benefit of others.

Christ called us to a life of sacrifice and service and has exemplified this by His willingness to serve the needs of others over His own (15:2–3). Paul provides a good example by imposing restrictions on himself for those less spiritually mature.

ASK

Paul provides examples of how he and Jesus used their lives to please others and facilitate their spiritual development. How do you live your life to please and serve others?

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Christ paid the ultimate sacrifice so the spiritually dead may have access to the Father through a relationship with Him (Hebrews 12:2). Do you have a passion to see people's lives changed? How are you spending your life for the spiritual growth of others around you?

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Consider two or three personal preferences or habits of yours that could cause those less spiritually mature to stumble.

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If Christ expects us to use our freedoms to serve and please others, does this mean that we are not to enjoy our freedoms?

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PRAY

Father, thank You for Your willingness to sacrifice Your Son, Jesus Christ, and the practical demonstration of love through Jesus' death for our sin. His suffering brings us life, light, and liberty.

Thank You for the spiritually mature persons You have placed in our lives to aid our spiritual growth over the years. Help us understand Your desire to use each believer for the spiritual development of others.

HEBREWS 10:23–25

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

MATTHEW 5:41–48

And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



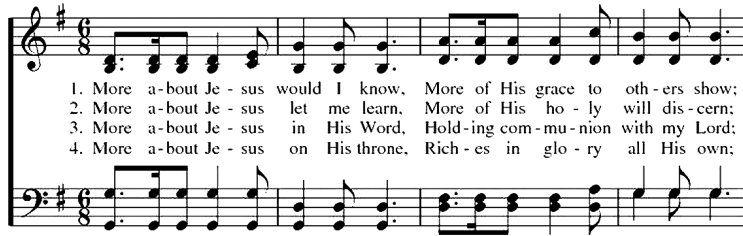
SING

“How Beautiful” — *Twila Paris*

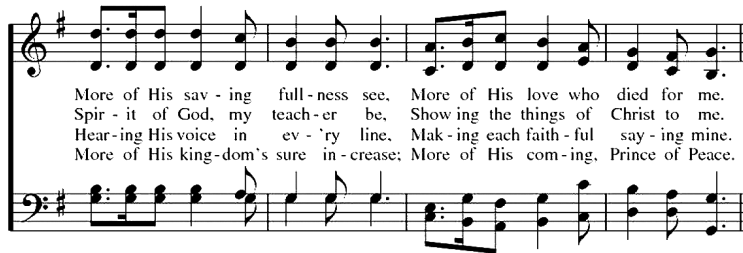
HYMN

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” — 2 PETER 3:18

More About Jesus

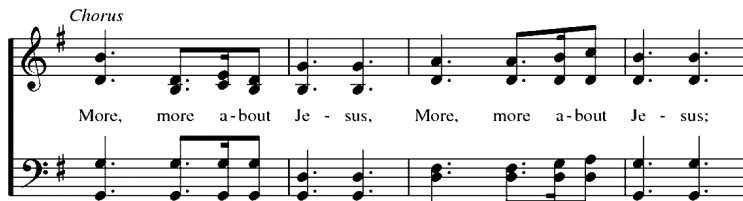


1. More a-bout Je - sus would I know, More of His grace to oth - ers show;
2. More a-bout Je - sus let me learn, More of His ho - ly will dis - cern;
3. More a-bout Je - sus in His Word, Hold - ing com - mu - nion with my Lord;
4. More a-bout Je - sus on His throne, Rich - es in glo - ry all His own;



More of His sav - ing full - ness see, More of His love who died for me.
Spir - it of God, my teach - er be, Show - ing the things of Christ to me.
Hear - ing His voice in ev - 'ry line, Mak - ing each faith - ful say - ing mine.
More of His king - dom's sure in - crease; More of His com - ing, Prince of Peace.

Chorus



More, more a-bout Je - sus, More, more a-bout Je - sus;



More of His sav - ing full - ness see, More of His love who died for me.

Text: Eliza E. Hewitt, 1887 🌿 *Tune: John R. Sweney, 1887*



“These men who have
turned the world upside
down have come here
also...”

ACTS 17:6