

Bearing Others

Two Prescriptions, One Result

Rom 15:1-6 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.

- Paul is encouraging the people in Rome to be "one", to be together.
- Offenses, misunderstanding, ethnic issues press us to be apart, but the Cross works to tear down the barriers and bring us together.
- In Chapt.14, even issues of food were driving people apart; people were judging one another on the basis of what they were eating
- These issues stemmed from a lack of regard for the faith & conscience of others. All that follows occurs in the context of relationship. That's why Small Groups are so important. Only a very little can happen on Sunday morning. There needs to be relationship with one another
- Small groups are designed to happen in Small Groups to bring about organic interaction -- relationships

I. Strengthen The Weak; **vs. 1**

- Use the strength of conviction to bring others into an open relationship with yourself and others. Use your strength not to please yourself, but to support others & strengthen them.

II. Satisfy Your Neighbor ("please"- Gr. "aresko" meaning "to satisfy with moral agreement"; root word: "ar"- meaning "to fit" -> we are to please our neighbor by "fitting together" missing pieces in such a way that brings moral satisfaction)

- To satisfy means to build them up so as to help them improve, to make others become better.

vss. 2-3

A. For Your Neighbor's Good; vs. 3

B. For Your Neighbor's Building Up - ("edification"- Gr. "oikodome" meaning "to build up"; two words- "oiko" meaning "house" & "dome" meaning "house" or "housetop"- > it literally means "to build on top of whatever is already constructed"; **vs. 3**

- We are to build up others so as to put something in a person's life that wasn't there before; we used our strength to build them up. They become bigger on the inside because of our investment; they have something they didn't have before.
- We use our strength for ourselves if we only build up those who are closest to us.
- We tend to use our strength to build up ourselves. Sometimes we even benefit others and get so much blessing from it ourselves we've done that good for others primarily for ourselves.
- Living out your faith doesn't occur until you no longer gain any benefit from it for yourself. When your service doesn't mean anything to you it becomes an offering to God. A burnt offering is an offering completely to God wherein there is nothing in it for us. That was Jesus' offering.

C. Identify With Christ; vs. 3

1. Did Not Please Himself – Jesus gave himself completely to God and gained nothing for himself.
2. Not even Jesus used His strength to please himself. DEUT 28 speaks of the abundant blessing of God to those who please Him. Jesus could have enjoyed the very best because He blessed God. But He refused to bless himself but poured himself out.
3. Jesus cleansed the temple because the Temple had replaced prayer with money making ventures. He took up the burden for His Father's work and bore it himself.
4. He let the reproach that was directed toward God fall upon Himself. He chose not to use his strength to make himself happy, but to make us happy.
5. How do you practice "burden bearing" to strengthen others? Small Groups is an opportunity. These are organized to allow our strength to meet the need of others, to address the weakness in others. In relationship with one another we are able to do this.

III. Self-Discover Hope; vs. 4

- Natural hope "flies away" – hope is illusive. Natural hope doesn't naturally rest on our lives.
- Eternal hope reflects a heart that "desires what God desires"
- Hope is something to be secured by me and re-discovered on a regular basis
- Perseverance and building up your faith is how we keep hope in our lives. Its standing on the truth of what God has said so I continue to persevere. We can't

give into the natural.

A. Reading Scripture Gives Inspires Perseverance

- How things are looking today are not necessary determinative of what will be.
- Natural hope dies that a supernatural hope may take its place.
- Perseverance is what allows us to carve out a path when there doesn't seem a way through it. Hope inspires us to press thru things; it inspires us to move beyond what we normally have.
- When we persevere – decide not to quit – hope is renewed.
- Scripture is the way we fortify and build ourselves up so that we can persevere. The testimony of Scripture builds our ability to persevere.
- Abraham, David are examples of people who persevere and overcome in spite of tremendous obstacles.

B. Reading Scripture Gives Encouragement

- Every day, we need the Scripture for in doing so we layer truth upon truth
- We need to do the "boring" so that we will one day have a structure we can live in. We find people we can learn from whose testimony can build our faith.
- Abraham was not dependent upon natural circumstances. When things were dead, he believed God. When things are "dead", the testimony of others reminds us that God is fully able to bring about His promise when the circumstances seem overwhelming.
- David is another example of one who "encouraged himself in the Lord". His own men wanted to kill him, yet found God's presence.
- There are people who've been thru what we've been thru and we can find hope from their example, their testimony.

IV. Sustain Unity; vss. 5-6

- When we use our strength to strengthen others, when we take on burdens and allow reproach fall upon ourselves, God is glorified.
- When we do this together, God is glorified by who we are together.
- Paul wants to see US glorify God; Christianity is about more than individual interest.
- We are to value the Christ's Body; in it we can experience victory together and glorify Him together. That can only happen we are joined in such a way that life can come for organically.
- Lord's prayer is a corporate prayer, yet we rarely pray it together with someone else.

A. One Mind; vs. 5

C. One Voice; vs. 6

- When we lend our strength to building up one another, we glorify God and do it the way He intends – together with one mind, one voice.