

H O U S E o f W I S D O M

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Romans 15

With One Mind Glorify God

Romans 15:1-4: *1. We then that are strong ought to bear^(g941) the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. 3. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me (Ps 69:7-12). 4. For whatsoever things were written previously were written for our learning (or, instruction), that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* Which definition would you pick in order to understand what it means to bear the infirmities of the weak? Here is the Greek word *bastazo*^(g941) from Thayer:

- 1) to take up with the hands
- 2) to take up in order to carry or bear, to put upon one's self
 - 2a) to bear what is burdensome
- 3) to bear, to carry
 - 3a) to carry on one's person
 - 3b) to sustain, i.e. uphold, support
- 4) to bear away, carry off

Bastazo properly means *to lift up, bear away, remove*. The word is used in a physical sense of carrying something (Mk 14:13; Lk 10:4; Jn 12:6), and in a larger sense (Mt 3:11; 20:12; Lk 14:27; Jn 16:12; Act 9:15) indicating action more of empathy toward another, using words strengthen a person morally or bearing a character trait. Both senses are illustrated by what Christ did: **Matthew 8:16-17:** *16. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17. that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, (Isa 53:4) saying: Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases (ASV).* Jesus does not take on himself, our personal physical weaknesses. He literally healed people as a metaphor of removing our spiritual weaknesses caused by sin, and some may be healed physically. This same idea between individuals is illustrated in Galatians: **Galatians 6:2, 5:** *2. Bear ye one another's burdens... 5. For every man shall bear his own burden.* The two verses sound like a contradiction. Verse two means to have empathy for another's burdens, and verse five states that each is responsible for his own burdens - i.e. burdens resulting from sins and things brought about by our own conduct.

While having empathy for another we edify, or lift up their spirit, even as we read how Christ interacted with the people and brought joy to their hearts. Having lived as a human being Jesus can have empathy for each of us, as He experienced the reproaches of those who disagreed. Knowing these things bring comfort and hope because we know the suffering is but for a short time and we need to be patient and wait upon the Lord. **Romans 15:5-7:** *5. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Be like minded, i.e. everyone think the same way as did Christ, have the same loving ambition that we may glorify God by our behavior.*

Romans 15:8: *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:* The K. J. renders the Greek verb in the "passive voice," as *was*. However the verb is in the perfect, infinitive, active voice, and should have been translated: *Jesus Christ came to be to (the)*

circumcision, a minister in behalf of the truth... “The circumcision” refers to Israelites (Act 10:45) to whom Jesus became a minister of truth in their behalf (cf Mk 7:24-30). In Romans 15, verses 9-14, Paul emphasizes how the truth went to the Gentiles. Then he states: **Romans 15:15-16:** *15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me by God, 16. that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified (or, purified) by a holy spirit.* In other words, Paul is comparing the ministry of Jesus to the Jews to his calling as a minister to the Gentiles of the truth.

Romans 15:17-19: *17. Therefore I boast in Jesus Christ of the things of God. 18. For I will not dare to speak of anything that Christ did not work through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19. in mighty signs and wonders, in the power (or, ability^{gl411}) of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum (il-loo-ree-kon'), I have fully preached the good news of Christ.* (more literal to the Greek) From these and other verses, it can be seen that Paul had been teaching for several years when these letters were written. He was truly ambitious for spreading the good news of the sacrifice of the Son of God in behalf of mankind.

Romans 15:20-21: *20. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: 21. But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.* Consider the distances and means of travel available in those days. Also, it is one thing to go to people with whom you are familiar with their customs and their language; it is yet another to come before those with whom you may not be familiar. In another letter, Paul sums up some of the bad things that happened along the way, much caused by fellow Jews (cf 2Cor 11:21-31).

Paul's desire was to visit and preach in Rome (Rom 15:22-24, 29), which he planned to do on his way to Spain. However, he had contributions for the poor of Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-28) to be delivered first. Paul eventually did get to Rome, but as a prisoner and not on his own. Paul knew what was facing him in the capital city of Israel, yet he desired to go and minister to the people there. These were Jews, many which believed, who became enemies because they would not give up their Jewish traditions. He was also warned by the Spirit through some disciples to not go to Jerusalem (Act 21:4). And when he insisted, he was given another message by a prophet: **Acts 21:10-11:** *10. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.* While there is evidence that he was freed a short while, Paul was taken prisoner again, and was eventually martyred in Rome.

Romans 15:30-33: *30. Now I [call upon] you, brethren, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; 31. That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; 32. That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.* Throughout the Bible and history, those advancing the truth of God were persecuted by those refusing to listen. In the words of Jesus: *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (Jn 15:20).*

Romans 15:33: *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*